

Safer Recruitment Policy

Version 2.0

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1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to define the Trust's strategic approach to recruitment and selection activity and to establish a consistent framework for the application of these activities.

The Trust Board and Academy Committee recognises that safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people is an integral factor in recruitment and selection and is an essential part of creating safe environments for children and young people. The Trust and each school is committed to ensuring that recruitment and selection activities are undertaken in a fair and transparent way and that appointments are based on the candidate judged to be most suitable. The aims, therefore, of this policy are to:

- attract and appoint the highest calibre of applicants;
- ensure safe and equitable recruitment and selection practice is conducted at all times;
- deter, identify and reject prospective applicants who are unsuitable for work with children or young people.

This document is available to all members of school staff and will be made available to any prospective applicant.

2. Legal context

The Trust Board and Academy Committee recognises that recruitment and selection is governed by many statutory provisions, too numerous to list separately, and are committed to ensuring that all legislative requirements are met in the application of this policy. However, particular reference is made to the School Staffing (England) Regulations 2009, as the fundamental basis for recruitment in maintained schools.

This policy does not form part of any employee's contractual terms and conditions and any links within this document to other documents are for ease of use and do not form part of this policy.

3. Delegation of authority

In respect of the position of the Headteacher the responsibility and authority to appoint lies with the Pele Trust Directors. This will be coordinated by the CEO and will be carried out in conjunction with the Academy Committee in line with the procedures laid out in the Scheme of Delegation.

Where such recruitment activity is required the CEO and Academy Committee Chair will convene a recruitment and selection panel in accordance with the School Staffing (England) Regulations 2009.

When a panel is convened, the CEO will ensure members of the panel have knowledge and understanding of the school's needs, the appropriate experience and training in recruitment and selection, including safer recruitment training, as well as the confidence in carrying out the process effectively. The selection of appropriate individuals is a matter for the Academy Committee to consider carefully with advice from the CEO and, where applicable, the Diocese, as necessary. Unless statutory legislation has been contravened, the Pele Trust Directors will normally endorse the recommendation for an appointment made by the selection panel.

In respect of the position of the Deputy Headteacher the responsibility and authority to appoint lies with the Headteacher and Academy Committee. This will be coordinated by the Headteacher with support, as necessary, from the CEO who will usually sit on the panel for the final interview.

In respect of all other posts, the Academy Committee has delegated responsibility and authority to appoint to the Headteacher. However, as stated in the Scheme of Delegation (SoD), a member of the Executive Leadership team will be involved in the appointment process for key posts (as specified in the SoD).

4. Equal opportunities

The Trust Board and Academy Committee is committed to providing equality of opportunity at all stages of the recruitment and selection process and ensuring

that candidates are treated fairly and lawfully throughout the process. Shortlisting, interviewing and selection will always be carried out without regard to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, political affiliation or trade union membership.

Reasonable adjustments to the recruitment process will be made to ensure that no applicant is disadvantaged because of their disability.

Recruitment and selection activities will be undertaken in line with the principles of the school's equalities policy.

5. Vacancy determination and initiating recruitment activity

Where a Headteacher vacancy arises, the CEO will notify the Pele Trust Directors, and where applicable the Diocesan Authority, that such a vacancy exists. Liaison with the Academy Committee Chair will normally take place at the outset of this process.

The Directors will review such a leadership vacancy in accordance with the current needs of the school, including the Headteacher's pay range, job description/person specification and the key tasks the new Headteacher will need to address, having regard to school improvement.

Subject to the delegation of authority detailed above, where a vacancy relates to any other position within the school's existing staffing structure, it is the Headteacher's (and Academy Committee for a Deputy Headteacher vacancy) responsibility to determine that a vacancy exists and to review whether any such vacancy is to be filled or reviewed before initiating any recruitment activity.

Where the Headteacher wishes to create a new position, which is in addition to the agreed staffing structure of the school, they will present a case for such a position to the CEO for approval. Once approved, the Headteacher can initiate recruitment activity.

6. Planning for recruitment

Where the Directors have given the Diocese rights to attend proceedings related to recruitment and to offer advice in the appointment of a church school headteacher, any advice offered will be considered by the selection panel.

Prior to undertaking recruitment activity for vacancies other than the Headteacher, the Headteacher will, working with a senior manager as appropriate, ensure that there is a review of the job description and person specification and ensure that these documents are an accurate reflection of the role to be filled.

The Academy Committee and/or Headteacher will make a determination as to whether a role is to be filled on a permanent, fixed-term, temporary or any other basis, taking into account any advice received from the CEO.

7. Advertising vacancies

It will be normal practice for all vacancies to be advertised unless there is a good reason not to do so. This should be discussed with the CEO/COO and agreed upon before recruitment to a non-advertised post is made.

Advertisements may be either internal or external (such as via the TES, North East Jobs, Schools North East Jobs Board or Indeed), depending on the type of vacancy, the nature of the contract, and the context of the current recruitment market. When advertising externally, the school must ensure that school staff are aware, to allow current members of staff to apply, should they wish to do so.

Headteacher vacancies will always be advertised. The vacancy will be advertised in such a manner as to reach the target audience.

Deputy Headteacher vacancies will always be advertised unless the Academy Committee has good reason not to do so. Where the Academy Committee and

Headteacher express a preference not to advertise, this will be discussed with the CEO before a final decision is made.

Job adverts will always include:

- a safeguarding statement, highlighting the school's commitment to child safeguarding in an effort to deter any unsuitable candidates
- an equal opportunities statement, and
- a statement regarding the declaration of convictions, under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (as amended), along with the necessary information needed to attract suitable candidates to the post and to the school.
- A statement regarding our policy of undertaking online searches on shortlisted applicants.

8. Shortlisting and selection processes

Pele Trust Directors and Academy Committees recognise that it is a legislative requirement (School Staffing (England) Regulations 2009) that at least one member of a selection panel must have completed safer recruitment training. A selection panel will not be convened without at least one panel member having been appropriately trained in safer recruitment. Interview notes should identify the panel member with the appropriate training.

There is no statutory requirement to renew safer recruitment training within a set time period, however, Pele Trust Directors require this to be every 3 years with at least 2-3 trained individuals available.

For the position of Headteacher, the shortlisting panel will consist of a minimum of three Academy Committee members (excluding the Headteacher) supported by the CEO and one named Director.

For the position of Deputy Headteacher, the shortlisting panel will consist of a minimum of three Academy Committee members, which should include the Headteacher and a member of the Executive Leadership team.

For all other posts, the panel will normally consist of at least two senior members of staff (who may be from another Trust school or Executive team). A member of the Executive Leadership team will be involved in the appointment process for key posts as specified in the SoD.

During the shortlisting process, all applications will be assessed equally against the same criteria, without exception or variation. All applications will be carefully scrutinised, with particular care paid to any gaps in employment; repeated and/or regular/frequent changes in employment; and anomalies or discrepancies in the information contained within the form. Any such concerns will be taken up with the candidate at the interview and will be satisfactorily resolved before any firm offer of employment is made.

For Headteacher appointments, the CEO will notify the Directors of the shortlist for the post.

Prior to interview, the following will take place in respect of shortlisted candidates:

- In line with Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance, an online search will be carried out by the school's nominated representative.
- References will be requested prior to interview, to enable the panel to compare the information received against the candidate's application form and their answers at interview, as well as allowing for any discrepancies to be explored at interview.
- References requested at this stage of the process will exclude requests for attendance and/or health information.

The selection process for shortlisted candidates will, as a minimum, consist of a face-to-face interview with an interview panel, with other selection activities (such as classroom observation; panel activities; written tasks) determined by the nature and duties of the vacant post.

9. Outcome of selection processes

A selection decision will be made based on a fair and thorough assessment of the skills and abilities demonstrated by all the candidates against the requirements of the person specification/job description during the selection process.

Any offer of employment made to the preferred candidate will be made conditionally subject to the satisfactory completion of pre-employment checks. An initial verbal offer, usually on the day of the interview, will be quickly followed by a written offer of employment.

In Headteacher recruitment, the Day 2 interview panel comprising up to 4 Directors, CEO and 2 members of the Academy Committee will make the final decision on the appointment. This will be communicated to the Directors and full Academy Committee by the CEO.

For all other appointments, the power to appoint is in accordance with the delegation of authority detailed on page 2. The Headteacher will report any appointments made under such delegation to the Academy Committee.

10. Pre-employment checks

The Pele Trust Directors and Academy Committee recognises its statutory responsibility to carry out pre-employment checks for all new staff as well as to update the Single Central Record prior to new staff commencing employment.

The selection panel will act reasonably in making decisions about the suitability of prospective employees based on checks and evidence, which may include the following where appropriate:

- DBS checks
- barred list checks
- prohibition checks
- right to work checks
- identity checks
- References
- application forms

- interview information
- checks of relevant academic and professional qualifications.

The selection panel will assess all information gathered from pre-employment checks as the information is received. Any unsatisfactory pre-employment checks may lead to the consideration of withdrawal of a conditional offer of employment. Where consideration is being given to withdrawing an offer on the basis of pre-employment checks, advice will be sought from the CEO/COO.

The candidate will not normally commence employment until all relevant pre-employment checks have been completed and must not start until at least the candidate's identity and right to work in the UK have been established. In exceptional circumstances, the Headteacher may determine to allow an individual to commence employment in regulated activity prior to the receipt of a DBS check. In these circumstances, all other checks, including a separate barred list check where appropriate, must have been completed and he or she will not be left to work unsupervised. A risk assessment will also be carried out to determine whether other safeguarding measures may need to be put in place.

For volunteers, the school will undertake the appropriate checks in line with the guidance provided.

Individuals who have lived or worked outside of the UK will be subject to the same pre-employment checks as all other staff. In addition, further appropriate checks, such as an overseas police check, will be made as necessary, in order to sufficiently establish the individual's suitability to be appointed.

For individuals who work at the school via an employment agency, the school will obtain written notification from the agency that the necessary checks that the school would normally otherwise perform have been carried out, prior to engaging the individual. The school will also check photo identity to ensure that the individual arriving at the school for work is the same person on whom the checks have been made.

For trainee/student teachers who are salaried by the school, the school will ensure that all necessary checks are carried out. For other trainees/student

teachers, it is the responsibility of the initial teacher training provider to carry out the necessary checks and for the school to ensure that such checks have been undertaken prior to deployment within the school. Trainee teachers/student teachers will have their identity checked when they start their placement period.

11. Offers of employment

Offers made prior to the satisfactory completion of pre-employment checks must be made on a conditional basis. Conditional offers of employment must only be confirmed once all pre-employment checks have been satisfactorily completed.

Contracts of employment will be received by the individual no later than the first day of their employment.

12. Retention of recruitment records

For unsuccessful applicants, all paperwork gathered as part of a recruitment exercise will be kept confidentially and securely in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018, for a period of 6 months after the interview date to ensure that if there are any claims raised, the school is able to rely on its records to justify its judgement and decision. After this period these records will be confidentially disposed of.

For staff appointed to work at the school, information gathered during the recruitment process will be used to form part of the employee's personnel file and, where applicable, will be mandatorily recorded on the school's Single Central Record.

Safer Recruitment in education training

The NSPCC offers both face-to-face (1 day) and online (4 hrs) training. More details can be found [here](#).

Document Control

Version	Date	Notes
2.0	September 2024	Updated to reflect changed to Scheme of Delegation
1.0	September 2022	New policy