

Denefield School

Safer Recruitment Policy and Procedure

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SAFER RECRUITMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE

1. Introduction

This policy and procedure have been designed to ensure that at Denefield we hire staff and volunteers who are suitable and safe for their roles. This policy is crucial for creating a secure environment and protecting those in the school's care.

2. Purpose

This document describes the recruitment procedure for all staff, including volunteers, at Denefield. All provisions of the Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2024) are incorporated within this procedure.

3. Applicability

The guidance applies to all people working or applying to work in the school. This includes teaching staff, support staff, trustees, volunteers and other people that may work with students.

4. Delegation

Decisions concerning the need to recruit staff, outside of the leadership team, are delegated to the Headteacher by the Trust Board. All such decisions will be made in the context of the relevant curricular needs and financial circumstances.

Decisions concerning the remuneration for teaching posts will be made in accordance with the Teacher's Pay Policy. Decisions concerning the remuneration for support staff will be made in accordance with the Support Staff Pay Policy.

5. Equal opportunities

The school is committed to equality of opportunity for all, this is essential for fostering an inclusive and supportive school environment. All staff are encouraged to actively eliminate discrimination and promote equality.

Ensuring a fair and consistent recruitment and selection process is crucial for promoting diversity and inclusion within the school. By treating all applicants equally, regardless of their personal characteristics or background, creates a more equitable and supportive environment for everyone.

6. Advertising posts

The Headteacher will liaise with the Human Resources Manager to determine where and how to advertise the post; nationally, locally or internally.

Teaching staff posts

Advertisements will be placed online via the MyNewTerm recruitment platform, and/or with a recruitment agency or partner organisation where experience indicates that this may be necessary to attract a suitable field.

Support staff posts

Advertisements will be advertised on 'My New Term', placed on the school website, a variety of social media platforms and other local sources such as post offices. They will be shared with parents via the school's communication platform.

In cases where a member of staff is employed on a fixed term contract for a post which then becomes available as a permanent post, the school may choose to offer the permanent post to that individual without further advertising.

Prior to all advertisements going live, the relevant job description and person specification should be reviewed by the line manager and approved by a senior member of staff.

7. Content of advertisements

Teaching posts

Advertisements will specify the main subjects to be taught and/or the nature of any management responsibility, the start date of the appointment, whether the post is permanent or fixed term and, in the case of fixed term contracts, the end date of the contract. The remuneration for the post will be expressed in terms of the applicable pay scales for teachers. The closing date for applications will be stated.

Support staff posts

Advertisements will specify main responsibilities, whether the role is term-time only, hours per week, the start date of the appointment, whether the post is permanent or fixed term and, in the case of fixed term contracts, the end date of the contract. The remuneration for the post will be expressed in terms of the local government pay grade and will reflect the actual salary range associated with the post as well as the full-time equivalent salary. The closing date for applications will be stated.

Safeguarding statement

Advertisements for roles will include the following sentences:

Denefield is committed to safeguarding, safer recruitment and promoting the welfare of students and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Our comprehensive recruitment and selection processes aims to discourage and screen out unsuitable applicants. Successful candidates are subject to rigorous pre-employment checks. All short-listed candidates will be subject to online searches, and any successful candidates will be required to complete a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. All candidates will be required to submit the names of two referees, one of which must be your most recent employer. CVs will not be accepted.

We are equally committed to eliminating discrimination and encouraging diversity. We aim for our workforce to be representative of society and that each employee feels respected and able to give their best. We are committed to providing equality and fairness in our recruitment and employment practices and not to discriminate on any grounds. We oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination.

8. Application process

Prospective applicants will respond to the advertisement by requesting or downloading further information which will include a person specification and a job description. Applications should be completed and submitted via the MyNewTerm portal by the specified closing date. In the case of teaching staff applications, a supporting statement should be included. Any form of curriculum vitae is not acceptable in place of a completed application form.

9. Selection process Shortlisting

Shortlisting of the most suitable candidates will take place as follows:

- For the post of Headteacher, by a panel of trustees which will include the Chair of the Trust Board and the HR Manager
- For the post of Deputy Head, by the Headteacher, a panel of trustees and the HR Manager
- For other leadership posts, by the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and the HR Manager
- For the posts of Finance Director, Operations Director and HR Manager, the Headteacher, and a panel of trustees

- For other teaching posts, by the member of the Senior Leadership Team responsible for the faculty and the relevant Faculty Leader and Head of Department as appropriate.
- For support staff, by the HR Manager and the Line Manager and, for more senior support roles, the Headteacher.

The shortlisting will be carried out by considering each application against an agreed set of criteria. This will detail essential and desirable qualifications, qualities and experience for the post holder and will be based upon the person specification.

Those shortlisting application forms should check to ensure that dates line up and there are no unexplained gaps in employment history. If there are gaps, the lead interviewer will need to take this up at interview.

10. References

References will be requested for all applicants, including internal applicants, following shortlisting. Referees will be asked to complete a reference request form via MyNewTerm portal, which asks for confirmation about the suitability to work with children and whether the applicant has been subject to any disciplinary or capability procedures

For posts where it is known that recruitment is likely to be difficult, references may be requested as the applications are received in order to reduce the time from the closing date to making the appointment.

References will be requested directly from the referee and open references will not be accepted, for example in the form of 'to whom it may concern' testimonials. References should be sought from a senior person within the organisation and not, for example, a colleague. If a candidate for a teaching post is currently employed as a teacher, one referee must be their current Headteacher. If they are not currently working as a teacher, one referee must be the Headteacher from the last school in which they were employed.

References will be checked by the HR Manager to ensure that all specific questions have been answered satisfactorily. The referee should be contacted to provide further clarification as appropriate: for example, if the answers are vague.

References will be compared for consistency with the information provided by the candidate on their application form. Where necessary, clarification will be sought by telephone, and a



record of the conversation will be kept on file. Any discrepancies should be taken up with the candidate at interview.

Electronic references will be vetted to ensure they originate from a credible source.

In the case of the Headteacher, the Chair of the Headteacher's Appointment Panel will verbally verify both of the successful candidate's references with the referees. Referees must be contacted via the organisations main contact telephone number as listed on the organisation's letterhead/company profile. Direct dial or personal telephone numbers should not be used. A record of these conversations will be kept on file. Any information about past disciplinary action or allegations should be considered carefully when assessing the applicant's suitability for the post (including information obtained from the Teachers Regulation Agency).

In the case of all other appointments, there is no need to verify the successful candidate's references where the source of the email is verified as official, and not from a personal email address. Where there is any doubt regarding the source of the reference it must be verified by telephone and by the person who provided the reference. The referees must be contacted via the organisations main contact telephone number as listed on their letterhead / company profile.

A minimum of two references should be obtained for all applicants including internal candidates. Where reference responses provide very little or inadequate information, consideration should be given to taking up additional references.

- **Internal references**

Referees should be employed in a more senior position than the candidate and must not be part of the interview panel for the advertised post.

- **Character references**

Character references will only be accepted where a candidate has been out of work for an extended period of time. References will not be accepted from family members, including extended family members. Where possible referees should be an upstanding member of the community. Clarification on the suitability of a referee should be sought from the HR Manager.

11. Right to work checks

The school will obtain evidence that all candidates for a position have the right to work in the UK by either conducting a manual document-based check, or by using the government's [online portal](#). This will be done before a candidate is offered a position. When conducting a manual, document-based check, the school will ensure that the documents received from candidates are acceptable in line with government guidance, and from the appropriate list: [List A](#) for candidates with a permanent right to work in the UK, or [List B](#) for candidates with a temporary right to work in the UK. Checks on documents will be conducted in line with this policy.

The school will obtain proof of candidates' immigration status in the UK.

The school will contact the Home Office in the event that a statutory excuse must be established in the following circumstances:

- The candidate provides a document confirming receipt of an application to EUSS on or before 30 June 2021
- The candidate provides a non-digital certificate of application confirming receipt of an application to the EUSS on or after 1 July 2021
- The school has checked a digital certificate of application and has been directed to the Home Office's Employer Checking Service
- The candidate provides an Application Registration Card stating the holder is permitted to undertake the work in question
- The school is satisfied it has not been provided with any acceptable documents because the candidate has an outstanding application with the Home Office made before their previous permission expired, or has an appeal or review pending against the Home Office's decision and cannot provide evidence of their right to work as a result
- The school considers that it has not been provided with any acceptable documents, but the person presents other information indicating they are a long-term resident of the UK, i.e. having arrived before 1988.

The school will not make assumptions about a person's right to work in the UK, or their immigration status, on the basis of their race, ethnicity and nationality, length of residence in the UK or background. All candidates, including British citizens, will have their right to work in the UK checked.

Where a candidate's right to work is time-limited, the school will conduct a follow-up check in advance of its expiry.

The school may use a certified digital identity service provider (IDSP) to conduct right to work checks on candidates.

12. Identification checking process

When checking the validity of identifying documents, the school will ensure that this is done in the presence of the holder, e.g. in person or via a live video link. In both cases, the school will be in physical possession of the original documents. The school will only accept valid, current and original documentation in its physical form. The school will not accept photocopies or documentation printed from the internet, e.g. internet bank statements.

The school will request documents with photographic identity, such as a passport, and compare this against the candidate's likeness. The school will not accept documents that are not in the candidate's current name as recorded on the application form.

The school will ensure that the candidate declares all previous name changes and provides documentary evidence to support the name change. If the candidate is unable to provide evidence to support the name change, the school will hold a discussion with the candidate about the reasons why. The school will always aim to check the name on the candidate's birth certificate in order to validate their identity.

The school will compare the candidate's address history with any other information the candidate has provided, such as their CV. The school will ensure that all letters and statements provided by the candidate are recent e.g. within a three-month period.

The school will keep a dated record of every document that has been checked for the duration of the candidate's employment and for a further two years after they have left the school. This will be either as a hard copy or in a scanned format which cannot be manually altered, e.g. JPEG or PDF document, and will be made available to the appropriate authorities if and when requested.

In line with the UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018, the school will only retain copies of DBS certificates where there is a valid reason for doing so, and only for as long as is needed to consider the information provided – this will not be for longer than six months.

When information is destroyed, the school may keep a record of the fact that vetting was carried out, the result of this vetting, and the recruitment decision taken.

The school may use a certified digital IDSP to secure DBS checks on candidates.

13. Online Searches

Online searches, including social media searches, will be carried out on all shortlisted candidates prior to interview. The searches will include a google search of the candidate's name, and further checks including their employment and educational establishments. Checks will also be made on various social networks such as Facebook, 'X' (formerly Twitter), Instagram and LinkedIn. Any cause for concern will be raised with the lead member of the interview panel for further discussion during the interview. All checks will be documented.

14. Calling for interview

Invitations to interview will include details of all arrangements such as date, time, and length of the selection process and selection activities. Candidates will be reminded that the interview is used to assess their suitability for the job as well as their suitability to work with children. Candidates will also be asked to bring relevant documents, including proof of identity and a birth certificate if available, proof of qualifications where appropriate and their completed criminal records self-declaration. Only original documents will be accepted, and copies will be taken and certified to be kept on the school file.

15. Interviews

On arrival at Denefield, candidates will sign in at reception where they will be asked for their documentation. Only original documents will be accepted. They will be reviewed by a member of the HR team to verify their authenticity, before being copied for school records. Any concerns or discrepancies will be relayed to the chair of the interview panel and taken up with the candidate during the interview. DBS certificates are not retained on file once a recruitment decision has been made. Documents that have been copied for a candidate that is not appointed will be shredded at the end of the selection process.

- **Tour of school**

Students from various years will be used to show interview candidates around the school site during interviews. A minimum of two students will lead a tour, and students will be briefed prior to the tour. Details of which candidates are with which students will be recorded.

- **Formal interview**

For all posts, at least one person on the interview panel must have current accreditation in Safer Recruitment by the DfE and a minimum of two people must make up the panel. The panel will convene before the start time for the interviews in order to agree the questions that the candidates will be asked.

- **Length of interviews**

Interviews should normally be of 20 to 40 minutes duration. All candidates will be questioned about their employment history. Any breaks in employment will be explored and the reasons for them will be recorded.

- **Interview questions**

The core interview questions should be the same for each candidate and must include a selection of safeguarding questions, the answers to which must be recorded by all members of the panel. The only variation between candidates will be for those questions which refer directly to the application form, letter of application, references or issues that have arisen earlier in the selection process.

16. Making the final selection

The panel will make the final selection. The reasons for the unsuccessful candidates not being appointed will also be agreed so that the chair of the selection panel can provide feedback to those candidates. The appointment must be approved by the Headteacher, in the case of teaching staff, or the HR Manager for support staff, prior to any job offer being made.

The successful candidate will be formally offered the post, subject to the completion of pre-employment checks being completed to the school's satisfaction.

The unsuccessful candidates will be informed of the decision and, wherever possible, they will each be offered feedback on their interviews. Interview notes for unsuccessful candidates will be kept on file for six months, after which they will be destroyed in line with the school's retention policy.

17. Confirming the appointment and taking up the post

A letter and contract of employment confirming the offer of the post will be sent to the successful candidate as soon as practically possible following the interview. The letter will ask the candidate to confirm their acceptance of the post, by signing and returning the contract of employment. The offer of appointment must be conditional on satisfactory completion of the following pre-employment checks:

- Verification of the candidate's identity
- References that are satisfactory to the Headteacher
- Site of the candidate's DBS certificate, and where appropriate a check of the children's barred list, showing clearance which is satisfactory to the Headteacher

- Satisfactory overseas police checks, if the candidate has lived or worked outside the UK for three months or more within the last five years
- Verification of the candidate's mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities
- Verification of the candidate's right to work in the UK
- Verification of the candidate's professional qualifications, as appropriate
- Confirmation that a candidate employed to carry out teaching work is not subject to a prohibition order issued by the Secretary of State for Education or any sanction or restriction imposed by the GTCE (prior to March 2012)
- Confirmation that a person taking up a management position is not subject to a section 128 direction made by the secretary of state
- Post offer fitness for work reference

Where an enhanced DBS certificate is required, the application must be completed by the candidate before, or as soon as practical, after the person's appointment. If the candidate commences work prior to the DBS clearance being received, a separate barred list check must be completed. The candidate will be required to attend a formal risk assessment meeting with the HR Manager. The candidate must be adequately supervised until satisfactory clearance is received. This will only happen if all other checks have been completed to the school's satisfaction.

Where a declaration is made, or a DBS check reveals a positive disclosure of concern to the HR Manager, the candidate will be required to attend a formal risk assessment meeting with the Headteacher and HR Manager.

The school reserves the right not to proceed with, or to terminate, employment with immediate effect if any of the above conditions are not met, or if any of the documents referred to above are found to be falsified in any way.

18. Induction

All new employees, permanent or temporary, should be appropriately inducted. The content and nature of the induction will be specific to the role and the previous experience of the new starter. Some of the induction will take place during the onboarding process.

A new starter's induction will include information about:

- Policies and procedures in relation to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, e.g., anti-bullying, racism, e-safety, health and safety

- Safe practice and standards of conduct and behaviour expected of staff (code of conduct)
- Other relevant procedures (disciplinary, capability, grievance, dignity at work, absence etc)
- Safeguarding training (online or face to face depending on role)
- Prevent training
- Information on the role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Part 1 of the Keeping Children Safe in Education Guidance

19. Other people in school

Between the hours of 8.00 am and 5.00 pm it is necessary for the school to have clear information regarding other adults on site. Arrangements must be put in place to ensure any additional adults have the appropriate level of checks or suitable supervision arrangements are in place. Outside of these hours, any students on site must be under the direct supervision of a member of the school's staff.

20. Trustees

All trustees are subject to the following checks which should be completed before they take up the post.

- An enhanced DBS check
- A section 128 direction check
- Identity checks
- Checks to confirm their right to work in the UK
- Any other checks deemed necessary where the trustee has lived or worked outside the UK
- Any trustee engaging in regulated activity will also need a barred list check (conducted alongside the enhanced DBS check).

On first appointment, the Chair of the Trust Board must apply to the DfE for an Academy Trust Chair Suitability Check, which is counter signed by the Secretary of State.

21. Trainee and student teachers

Trainee teachers are subject to the same pre-employment checks as a permanent member of staff. The responsibility for these checks will differ depending on the route that the trainee teacher is following:

If the school is paying the trainee teacher, i.e., they are following a salaried route, the school is responsible for all pre-employment checks and as such the candidate would be subject to the same checks and conditions imposed on all new members of staff.

If a trainee teacher is following a fee funded route all pre-employment checks would be the responsibility of the teacher training provider. In these circumstances the training provider will provide Denefield with written confirmation that the appropriate checks have been completed to their satisfaction. The candidate would be expected to present us with their original DBS certificate and photo ID on their first visit to the school.

Any candidate where checks have not been fully completed, or evidence has not been received, will need to be escorted in school between the hours of 8.00 am and 5.00 pm.

22. Volunteers

In the first instance, staff engaging with a volunteer will be asked to complete a short questionnaire to allow the school to determine whether they will be engaged in regulated or nonregulated activity (as defined in the flow chart published in KCSIE 2024). This will determine the checks that we will complete. All volunteers must complete a volunteer application form.

References will be called, checked and verified, and a short interview conducted. A minimum of two people must make up the panel and at least one person on the interview panel must have current accreditation in Safer Recruitment by the DfE. The interviewers should explore the volunteer's motivation for working in the school environment and ask safeguarding questions, ensuring the responses are recorded.

If a volunteer is deemed to be in regulated activity, an enhanced DBS certificate, including the children's barred list check, must be obtained. The volunteer will be expected to present their original DBS certificate and photo ID on or before their first session as a volunteer.

Those not in regulated activity may be required to obtain an enhanced DBS certificate, which does not include a check of the children's barred list. They will be expected to present their original DBS certificate and photo ID on or before their first session as a volunteer.

A volunteer should not begin volunteering until all necessary checks have been completed and under no circumstances should a volunteer for whom no checks have been obtained be left unsupervised in school or on a visit.

23. Candidates who have lived outside the UK

For candidates who have lived outside the UK within the last 10 years, all mandatory checks outlined in this policy will be carried out, along with additional checks where necessary, including an enhanced DBS certificate with barred list information for those engaging in regulated activity, even if they have never been to the UK before.

The school will make any further checks that it deems appropriate so that any relevant events occurring outside the UK can be considered, e.g. obtaining proof of past teaching conduct for any candidate for a teaching position from the professional regulating authority in the country in which they worked, where available.

If a candidate is unable to provide the correct documentation, they cannot submit a DBS check. This is because the right to work in the UK cannot be established.

Following the UK's exit from the EU, schools and colleges should apply the same approach for any individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK regardless of whether or not it was in an EEA country or the rest of the world.

24. Supply staff

It is the responsibility of the agency providing the member of supply staff to complete all relevant employment checks. The agency must provide written confirmation that all checks have been completed to a satisfactory level prior to the candidate being admitted for work.

On arrival at Denefield the candidate must present their DBS certificate and photo ID for scrutiny. Under no circumstances should supply staff for whom we have not received confirmation of employment checks and/or photo ID be left unsupervised in school.

25. Contractors

Contractors that are on the school site on a daily basis, such as catering staff, cleaning team and IT staff are subject to the same checks as our own staff. The company providing the service to us will be required to provide letters of assurance confirming they have carried out these checks in advance of their employee commencing work at Denefield. On arrival they will need to provide photographic ID. These staff will not be given unsupervised access if the appropriate letter of authority has not been received and will therefore need to be supervised at all times by a member of the contractor's staff until the required checks have been completed.

26. Single Central Record

The pre-employment checks undertaken by the school for staff, trainee teachers, volunteers, trustees and members are recorded on the school's Single Central Record (SCR). A record is also kept in respect of any supply staff and contractors attending the school, the organisation responsible for making those checks and the date that the information was provided.

27. Monitoring and evaluation

The HR manager will monitor the implementation of this procedure to ensure it complies with the requirements listed above. The procedure will be reviewed by the Resources Committee annually.