

# Recruitment and Selection Policy (Staff)

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|--------------------------|-------------------|--------------|---------------|
| <b>Version:</b>          | v4                |              |               |
| <b>Ratified by:</b>      | Board of Trustees | <b>Date:</b> | 21st May 2025 |
| <b>Next Review date:</b> | May 2027          |              |               |

## 1. Aim

1.1. At Sussex Learning Trust we are passionate about attracting, recruiting and retaining talented individuals who are dedicated to the academic growth and overall well-being of young people. We recognise that our staff are our most valuable asset and seek those who will thrive in our inclusive, supportive environment, align with our Trust's values, and contribute to the ongoing development and success of our academies.

1.2. This policy outlines how we ensure a fair, consistent, and effective recruitment process that complies with all relevant employment and safeguarding legislation, including the Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) guidance. It sets out our approach to recruitment and selection, which includes safer recruitment practices and how we handle the recruitment of ex-offenders.

## 2. Scope

2.1. This policy applies to all recruitment activities across our Trust, whether you are applying for a teaching role, support staff position, leadership role, or governance position on a permanent, temporary, or fixed-term contract basis. Please note, this policy is not part of any employment contract and may be updated as necessary.

## 3. Principles

3.1. We uphold the following key principles in our recruitment and selection process:

- **Safeguarding:** We ensure that all recruitment processes include rigorous safeguarding checks to protect children and young people.
- **Equality, Diversity & Inclusion:** We are committed to providing equal opportunities for all candidates and ensuring a fair recruitment process free from discrimination.
- **Transparency and Fairness:** We make recruitment decisions based on merit, skills, experience, and alignment with our Trust's values.
- **Compliance:** We adhere to employment law, GDPR, and safer recruitment guidance.

#### 4. Responsibilities

##### 4.1. **Recruiting Managers** are responsible for:

- Becoming familiar with this policy and their responsibilities throughout the process.
- Communicating openly and clearly with candidates, offering a supportive and transparent recruitment experience free from discrimination.
- Managing the recruitment process fairly and consistently, ensuring that all candidates are assessed based on the same criteria.
- Keeping accurate and confidential records of the recruitment process in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and maintaining confidentiality at all times.

##### 4.2. **Candidates (including internal applicants)** are responsible for:

- Familiarising themselves with this policy and internal application procedures.
- Ensuring their application accurately reflects their current role, experience, and qualifications, submitting their applications on time, and responding promptly to selection processes and queries.
- Maintaining professionalism and continuing to perform effectively in their current role during the application process.
- Cooperating with the recruitment process, engaging in interviews, and following internal transfer procedures.
- Keeping all information confidential and demonstrating professionalism throughout the process.
- Notifying the recruiting manager promptly of any reasonable adjustments needed for the recruitment process.

##### 4.3. Working in partnership with the **Chief People Officer, Headteachers and Chief Officers** are responsible for:

- Lead the process of defining recruitment needs within their sphere of responsibility, ensuring role profiles and person specifications align with both the academy/ department goals and the Trust's ethos.
- Collaborate with the Trust's Finance and People teams to maintain budget compliance and adhere to best practices, pay scales, and recruitment strategies.
- Oversee the safer recruitment processes within their sphere of responsibility, ensuring all processes are led by an individual who has undertaken Safer Recruitment Training and that all required safer recruitment checks, including DBS and references, are completed.

##### 4.4. The **People team** are responsible for:

- Providing expert advice and guidance to hiring managers on effective workforce planning strategies and appropriate role profiles.
- Developing and overseeing robust, transparent and fair selection processes that are streamlined, digitised, effective, consistent and in line with legislation and best practice.

- Ensuring systems are in place for the maintenance of accurate, confidential records and safeguarding checks to be completed.
- Ensuring the availability of safer recruitment training for recruiting managers, overseeing reasonable adjustments for candidates, and gathering feedback to enhance the process.
- Ensuring compliance with equality, diversity, and data protection regulations throughout the recruitment process through effective monitoring and analysis of available data.

## **5. Before the Recruitment Process Begins**

5.1. Before starting the recruitment process, the hiring manager, in consultation with the People team will review whether the role is still needed or if any changes should be made to the position and follow locally agreed vacancy recruitment authorisation processes. Consideration can be given as to whether there is value in offering the role on a secondment basis.

Secondments are temporary in nature (up to 2 years) and can aid the sharing of knowledge of new/different skills/perspectives and experiences that might benefit both the releasing and receiving teams, as well as the professional development and retention of staff.

5.2 The role profile and person specification will be updated or created accordingly and reviewed to ensure it is compliant with our Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy and consideration is given to the level of flexible working arrangements that could be accommodated.

The hiring manager will also need to decide who will be involved in the process and set a realistic recruitment timeline. Additionally, strategies will be developed in discussion with the people team to attract the best candidates for the role.

## **6. Safer Recruitment and General Recruitment Principles**

We take our duty to safeguard children seriously. All recruitment and selection processes will be in line with the principles of Safer Recruitment.

### **6.1. Job Descriptions and Person Specifications**

6.1.1. All advertised roles will have clear role profiles and person specifications that outline the necessary skills, experience, and qualifications as well as the Trust values particularly relevant to the role - making clear both essential and desirable criteria. These documents will also emphasise the safeguarding responsibilities of the role.

### **6.2 Advertising Vacancies**

6.2.1. All vacancies will be advertised internally across the Trust and for at least 5 working days to allow time for part-time staff to see and complete an application. Additionally, they may be externally advertised at the same time. Vacancies will be advertised in ways that ensure a broad range of applicants, with safeguarding responsibilities clearly included in relevant advertising material on our online job portal. Salary ranges and grades will also be displayed in the adverts.

### 6.3. Application Forms

6.3.1. All candidates must complete a standard application form and any relevant equal opportunities paperwork. CVs will not be accepted. Internal candidates must at a minimum complete the skills and competencies section of the application form demonstrating how they meet the selection criteria as set out in the person specification.

### 6.4 Recruitment of ex-offenders.

6.4.1 We actively promote equality of opportunity and welcome applications from a diverse range of candidates, including those with criminal convictions. Having a criminal record will not necessarily prevent a candidate from obtaining employment within the Trust. Each case will be considered on its merits, with due regard to the nature of the role and the circumstances of the offence(s).

6.4.2 As an organisation working with children, we require all relevant staff to undergo an enhanced DBS check, including a check against the Children's Barred List where appropriate. Any disclosure of a criminal record will be treated with confidentiality and handled in accordance with the DBS Code of Practice.

6.4.3 When considering applicants with criminal records, we will:

- Assess the nature, seriousness, and relevance of the offence to the role applied for, taking full account of keeping children safe in education.
- Consider the length of time since the offence was committed.
- Review the circumstances surrounding the offence and any mitigating factors.
- Evaluate whether there is evidence of rehabilitation and positive change.
- Consider the impact of non-recruitment on the individual and the wider community.

6.4.4 Our recruitment portal and application forms will state that a criminal record will not necessarily bar an applicant from employment. Shortlisted candidates will be asked to disclose any unspent convictions in accordance with the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Where a DBS check is required, candidates will be informed in advance.

6.4.5 If a disclosure is received, a fair and confidential discussion will take place with the applicant to consider the circumstances before any recruitment decision is made.

#### 6.4.6. Confidentiality & Data Protection

All information regarding criminal records will be handled sensitively and in strict confidence, in line with data protection laws and the Trust's Data Protection Policy. Information will only be shared with those involved in the recruitment decision-making process.

## **6.5. Shortlisting**

6.5.1. Shortlisting will be done by at least two individuals who will be part of the interview panel.

This will be undertaken using the Trust selection framework available through the recruitment portal. Candidates will be evaluated based on the criteria set in the job description and person specification. Only candidates who meet the essential criteria will be shortlisted for an interview.

6.5.2. To help address our gender pay gap, we will aim to ensure that, wherever possible, the percentage of females shortlisted reflects the percentage of female applicants for the role, provided they meet the essential criteria.

6.5.3 Where internal candidates have been shortlisted, in advance of the interview the recruiting manager must obtain at least a verbal reference from their existing Headteacher / Chief Officer.

## **6.6. Interviews**

6.6.1. Interviews will be structured and conducted by at least two interviewers, at least one of whom will be Safer Recruitment trained. The interview panel will ask questions about safeguarding and child protection along with some values-based questions to ensure the candidate's ethos aligns with the Trust's values.

6.6.2. Whenever possible, the recruitment process will include skill-based assessments that align with job requirements. These assessments will be standardised and scored to ensure fairness for all candidates.

6.6.3. Wherever possible, candidates will receive at least 5 working days' notice before an interview to prepare and make necessary arrangements. All recruitment documentation will be stored confidentially and kept for 6 months from the interview date, and all recorded information will be objective, accurate, fair, and relevant.

## **6.7. References**

6.7.1. We will request and verify two references for all candidates, including one from the most recent employer. We will specifically inquire about the candidate's suitability to work with children and any concerns regarding their conduct. We will also check for any relevant disciplinary actions.

## **6.8. Pre-employment Checks** for external candidates:

- All successful candidates will undergo an enhanced DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check. We will verify the identity of the successful candidate and ensure they are not prohibited from working with children (via the Teacher Regulation Agency, when applicable).
- We will conduct overseas checks for candidates who have lived or worked outside of the UK.
- An occupational health check will confirm that the candidate is fit to carry out the role.

6.8.2. All offers of employment are conditional upon satisfactory pre-employment checks. If results are unsatisfactory or if the candidate is deemed unsuitable, the offer may be withdrawn. All checks must be completed before the candidate begins work. In certain circumstances a risk assessment may be completed by a Headteacher or Chief Officer to allow an individual to start before this is received with certain restrictions in place and depending on the nature of the role. All relevant information from pre and post employment checks will be recorded on the appropriate academy's Single Central Record for both new employees and those who have secured new positions within the Trust. Advice should be sought from the People Team.

### **6.9. Induction and Training**

6.8.1. All new employees will undergo an induction specific to their role, including safeguarding training and familiarisation with the Trust's policies on safeguarding children. Ongoing training will be provided to ensure staff remain up-to-date on the latest best practices.

### **7. Pay Point on Appointment**

7.1. Teachers will be appointed in line with their current pay point on the main scale.

7.2. Support staff will generally be appointed at the bottom point of the relevant pay grade. However, if a candidate meets all the criteria (both essential and desirable), is currently earning more than the bottom point of the scale and has relevant prior experience, we may offer a higher pay point.

### **8. Internal Application Process**

8.1. We encourage internal candidates to apply for roles within the Sussex Learning Trust as part of our commitment to providing development and growth opportunities. If you're interested in applying for an internal vacancy, please follow the steps outlined below:

- Before applying, notify your line manager of your intention to apply for the role. This ensures transparency and helps manage any changes to your current responsibilities.
- Carefully review the job description and person specification to ensure you meet the criteria and understand the role's requirements.
- Submit a completed application form by the deadline, ensuring all necessary equal opportunities documentation is included.
- If shortlisted, prepare for the interview by reflecting on how your skills and experience align with the role.
- If the role has a different health related profile from your current role you may be asked to undertake an Occupational Assessment. We will always endeavour to put appropriate support and adjustments in place to enable you to successfully undertake the new role, as long as these can be accommodated operationally.
- Once the process is complete, inform your line manager of the outcome. If successful, work with them to transition smoothly into the new role.

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## 9. Reapplying for a Role

### 9.1. Internal applications

If your internal application is unsuccessful, you may generally reapply for the same or similar roles. However, we reserve the right not to shortlist your application for an interview within 6 months of your initial submission. This period is designed to give you the opportunity to gain additional experience or qualifications that could enhance your future applications. In the meantime, we encourage you to reach out to your line manager or the People team for guidance on development opportunities.

### 9.2. External applications

If your application is unsuccessful, you are welcome to reapply for the same or similar roles. However, we reserve the right not to shortlist your application for an interview within 6 months of your previous application. This time frame allows you the opportunity to gain additional experience or qualifications that may strengthen your future candidacy. In the meantime, we encourage you to explore other development opportunities and continue building your skills.

**Document Version Control**

| Date    | Version | Comment   | Ratified by  | Reviewer             |
|---------|---------|---|--|----------------------|
| 20/5/20 | V2      | Sections 4, 5 & 6 added   | Board of Trustees<br>(20.5.20)   | SB                   |
| 20/2/22 | V3      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appendix 1 updated</li> <li>• section 3.1 - footnote added to clarify "volunteers" for this purpose does not include Members, Trustees or Governors</li> <li>• section 6 - replaced "OH" with "Occupational Health" for clarification</li> <li>• section 7.1 - clarify the the policy will be monitored by "the HR Manager"</li> </ul> | Considered by Board of Trustees<br>25.5.22 and approved in writing 17.6.22 | SB                   |
| 14/5/25 | V4      | Substantial re-write<br>Support staff pay on appointment adjusted to be in line with the principles of teachers in terms of recognising previous pay rates and experience. The ex-offenders policy has been incorporated.   | Board of Trustees<br>21/5/25   | Chief People Officer |