



HCAT Recruitment & Selection Policy

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Name of Trust committee with responsibility for this policy	Trust Board
Date of Approval	14.10.26
Date of Review	September 2027
Monitoring and Review	This policy will be monitored by the People & Culture Team and reviewed by means of the Trust's trade union consultation process
Policy applies to:	All Employees
Related Legislation and Statutory Guidance: This policy has been developed with reference to: Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 Education Act 2002 Equality Act 2010 Employment Rights Act 1996 Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions Order) Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006 Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document Disclosure and Barring Service Guidance Teacher Regulation Agency Guidance	Related Documents: This policy should be read alongside: Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy Staff Code of Conduct Equality Policy Data Protection & Document Retention Policy Induction Policy Probationary Period Policy Pay Policy Redundancy, Restructure and Reorganisation Policy Whistleblowing Policy Disciplinary Policy Flexible Working Policy Conflict of Interest Policy
If English is not your first language and you require any assistance/translation in order to understand this policy, or if you have any visual impairment which makes the reading of this policy difficult for you, and you would like help, please contact the People & Culture Team on 01482 375248 or by emailing pandc@hcat.org.uk	

1. Introduction

Hull Collaborative Academy Trust recognises that the quality of education provided to pupils is dependent upon the quality, commitment and professionalism of its workforce. The Trust is committed to attracting, selecting, developing and retaining talented individuals who share its values and are dedicated to improving outcomes for children and young people.

Recruitment and selection should be fair, consistent, transparent and based on merit. At all stages of the process, safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people remains paramount. The Trust is committed to a culture that safeguards and promotes the welfare of children, ensuring that safer recruitment principles are embedded throughout every stage of the process.

The Trust is equally committed to developing existing employees and creating opportunities for career progression. Recruitment decisions should support the long-term sustainability of the Trust, contribute to workforce planning objectives and promote a culture of continuous development and improvement.

This policy ensures the Trust follows current statutory guidance and good practice in safer recruitment, with procedures reviewed and updated when guidance or practices change. It establishes the principles, responsibilities and processes which apply to all recruitment and selection activities undertaken across the Trust.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all recruitment and selection activity undertaken by Hull Collaborative Academy Trust.

It applies to all appointments including casual workers, agency workers, apprentices, fixed-term employees, volunteers and contractors engaged in regulated activity.

The policy covers all stages of the recruitment process, including workforce planning, vacancy approval, advertising, shortlisting, interviewing, and appointment. It also applies to internal appointments, secondments, acting-up opportunities, Teaching and Learning Responsibility (TLR) appointments and organisational change situations where appointments may be made without advertisement.

3. Principles of Recruitment and Selection

The Trust is committed to ensuring that recruitment and selection processes are safe, fair and effective.

Recruitment decisions will be made based on an individual's skills, knowledge, experience, qualifications, values and ability to perform the requirements of the role. The Trust will seek to ensure equality of opportunity for all applicants and will not discriminate unlawfully on the grounds of any protected characteristic, whether current or future, as defined in equality legislation.

Safeguarding considerations will be embedded throughout every recruitment process. The Trust will seek to deter unsuitable applicants, identify safeguarding concerns at the earliest opportunity and prevent unsuitable individuals from working with children and young people.

The Trust is committed to promoting diversity within its workforce and creating an environment where all employees, pupils and stakeholders feel respected, valued and included.

4. Safeguarding and Safer Recruitment

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people is the responsibility of everyone involved in recruitment. The Trust's recruitment processes are designed to deter unsuitable applicants, identify concerns at the earliest opportunity and ensure robust assessment of suitability to work with children and young people.

The Trust expects all individuals involved in recruitment to understand their safeguarding responsibilities and to challenge any concerns appropriately. The Trust will ensure that appropriate safeguarding and safer recruitment training, guidance and support is provided to those involved in recruitment activities.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

The **Trust Board** has overall responsibility for ensuring that appropriate governance arrangements are in place to support safe and effective recruitment. The Board will approve this policy and seek assurance that recruitment practices remain compliant with statutory and safeguarding requirements.

The **Chief Executive Officer** is responsible for ensuring the effective implementation of this policy across the Trust and for making recruitment decisions in accordance with the Trust's Scheme of Delegation.

The **Executive Team** is responsible for providing strategic workforce leadership, supporting succession planning, organisational development and ensuring consistency of recruitment practices across the Trust.

The **People and Culture Lead** is responsible for providing strategic oversight of recruitment and selection, ensuring compliance with employment and safeguarding legislation, advising on complex recruitment matters and, alongside the Strategic Safeguarding Lead, supporting the delivery of safer recruitment training and the consistent application of safer recruitment practices across the Trust.

The **People and Culture Team** is responsible for supporting Headteachers, Managers and school-based Office Managers with recruitment across the Trust. The team administers central team appointments, manages the Trust's recruitment system, coordinates vacancy approvals, maintains recruitment records, monitors compliance and compiles equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) outcomes.

The **Strategic Safeguarding Lead** is responsible for advising on safeguarding matters arising during recruitment, supporting safer recruitment decision-making, working alongside the People and Culture Lead to deliver safer recruitment training, providing advice on safeguarding risk assessments and supporting the Executive Team in ensuring compliance with safeguarding legislation, statutory guidance and safer recruitment requirements.

Headteachers and recruiting managers are responsible for identifying staffing requirements, participating in recruitment processes and ensuring compliance with this policy.

All employees involved in recruitment activities are expected to act professionally, maintain confidentiality, declare any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest and contribute to safeguarding children and young people.

A conflict of interest may arise where an individual has a family relationship, close personal friendship, previous reporting relationship, financial interest, commercial interest, or any other association with an applicant, recruitment agency, contractor or supplier which could influence, or be perceived to influence, the recruitment process or outcome.

Where a conflict of interest is identified, the Trust will determine, through its Conflict of Interest Policy, whether it can be appropriately managed or whether the individual should withdraw from all or part of the recruitment process.

6. Equalities, Fair Recruitment and Inclusive Practice

The Trust is committed to ensuring that all recruitment, selection and appointment decisions are fair, transparent and compliant with the Equality Act 2010. All processes must actively promote equality of opportunity, foster an inclusive working environment and eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

Equality Considerations Throughout Recruitment

Managers must consider equality implications at each stage of the process, including:

- role design and job description
- advertising and communication of opportunities
- shortlisting
- assessment and interview
- appointment decisions

All decisions must be based solely on merit, skills, experience and the requirements of the role. Recruitment documentation must clearly record the rationale for decisions made at each stage.

Managers must ensure that advertising and communication methods do not disadvantage any group and that language used in job descriptions and adverts is inclusive and accessible.

Reasonable Adjustments

The Trust will provide reasonable adjustments throughout the recruitment and selection process to remove or reduce disadvantage for disabled applicants. Adjustments may include:

- alternative formats for application materials
- modified assessment methods
- additional time for tasks
- accessible interview arrangements
- adjustments to the working environment

Applicants will be asked proactively whether adjustments are required, and all adjustments offered must be recorded.

Monitoring and Analysis

The Trust will monitor recruitment activity termly to identify trends, barriers and areas for improvement. Monitoring will normally include:

- diversity of applicant pools
- progression through shortlisting and assessment stages
- appointment outcomes
- voluntary disclosure data (age, gender, disability, ethnicity)
- throughput analysis to identify disproportionate outcomes

Findings will inform improvements to recruitment practice, advertising strategies and workforce diversity initiatives.

7. Workforce Planning

When a vacancy arises, the Trust will consider whether the role remains necessary and whether alternative staffing solutions should be explored before recruitment commences.

Consideration should be given to educational priorities, curriculum requirements, financial position, organisational structure, succession planning objectives and opportunities for internal career development.

Job descriptions and person specifications should be reviewed before recruitment activity begins to ensure that they accurately reflect the duties, responsibilities and expectations of the role.

8. Agency Supply Staff and Education Recruitment Framework

The Trust is committed to securing value for money and ensuring compliance with procurement requirements when engaging agency workers or procuring education recruitment services.

Where agency supply staff or recruitment agencies are required, schools and Trust departments must procure such services in accordance with the requirements of the Department for Education, the Academy Trust Handbook, the Procurement Act 2023 and the Trust's Financial Regulations.

The Trust expects schools and managers to use the Government Commercial Agency (GCA) Supply Teachers and Education Recruitment Framework (RM6376) when procuring agency supply staff and education recruitment services. Where an alternative procurement route is used, the school or department must be able to demonstrate that the approach delivers equivalent levels of compliance, transparency, value for money and quality assurance.

When engaging agency workers or recruitment agencies, managers must ensure that:

- procurement arrangements comply with Trust procurement requirements and delegated approval levels;
- agency costs represent value for money and are proportionate to the operational requirement;
- contractual arrangements are clear, documented and compliant with relevant procurement legislation; and
- appropriate records are retained to demonstrate compliance with procurement and audit requirements.

The Trust reserves the right to review, challenge or decline agency engagements where procurement requirements have not been followed or where sufficient evidence of value for money cannot be demonstrated.

9. Vacancy Approval – My New Term

The Trust uses My New Term as its recruitment management system and all advertised recruitment activity will normally be managed through this platform.

Before any vacancy is advertised or recruitment activity commences, approval must be obtained through the Trust's vacancy approval process within My New Term. This process ensures that recruitment decisions are informed by organisational need, affordability, workforce planning considerations and the Trust's commitment to developing internal talent.

When considering a vacancy, Headteacher or managers should review:

- whether the post remains necessary;
- whether any changes are required to the duties and responsibilities of the role;
- whether the knowledge, skills, experience or competencies required for the role remain appropriate;
- whether any organisational changes / restructures may affect the position;
- opportunities for redeployment, internal progression or succession planning; and
- the budget available to support the appointment.

Where appropriate, job descriptions and person specifications should be reviewed and updated before recruitment activity commences. Support staff posts may be subject to job evaluation in accordance with the Trust's agreed arrangements.

The vacancy approval process will consider a range of factors including the business need for the post, organisational structure, workforce planning priorities, employee relations implications, safeguarding requirements and budget availability. Approval must be obtained in accordance with the Trust's Scheme of Delegation and related policies before any recruitment activity is undertaken.

Once approved, My New Term will be used to administer the recruitment process, including advertising, application management, candidate communications, shortlisting and interview administration.

All advertised vacancies, including TLR opportunities, will be advertised through My New Term. The Trust application form available through My New Term must be used for all recruitment campaigns. CVs will not be accepted as an alternative to a completed application form.

10. Internal Recruitment and Career Development

The Trust is committed to developing and retaining talented employees and supporting clear career pathways across schools and central services. Before external recruitment is considered, managers should explore whether staffing needs can be met internally.

Internal-Only Recruitment (a vacancy exists)

Where a vacancy exists and internal recruitment is appropriate, the opportunity will normally be advertised internally only in the first instance. Internal-only advertising will be used where:

- opportunities support career progression or redeployment
- the vacancy arises from organisational change (restructuring)
- there are eligible employees within the Trust who are at risk of redundancy

All internal-only adverts must be placed through My New Term to ensure consistency, transparency and accurate record-keeping.

Vacancies may be advertised internally and externally simultaneously where there is a clear business rationale for doing so.

Internal Advertising – School or Trust-Wide

Internal-only adverts must be visible Trust-wide unless there is a clear, documented rationale for restricting the opportunity to a single school.

Trust-wide internal advertising will normally be required where:

- the role could reasonably be performed by employees in more than one school
- there are employees elsewhere in the Trust who are at risk of redundancy
- the role forms part of a recognised Trust-wide career pathway
- the opportunity may attract interest from employees beyond the originating school

School-specific internal advertising may be appropriate only where:

- the role is unique to that school and requires school-specific knowledge or context
- only employees within that school could reasonably be eligible or interested
- the opportunity is a short-term arrangement limited to that school's staffing structure

Where internal advertising is restricted to a single school, the rationale must be agreed with the People & Culture Team before the advert is published.

Selection Process Requirements

Where an internal-only recruitment exercise is undertaken, a selection process appropriate to the level of the role must take place. This may include an interview or other assessment activity. The process must be fair, transparent and based on merit.

Where more than one employee could reasonably be interested in an opportunity, a competitive internal process must be undertaken to ensure equality of opportunity and compliance with the Trust's equality commitments.

Where only one eligible employee exists, or only one employee expresses interest, an appropriate assessment (such as an interview) must still take place to confirm suitability for the role. The proposed assessment approach must be agreed with the People & Culture Team before proceeding.

11. Circumstances Where an Appointment May Be Made Without Advertisement

The Trust recognises that there will be occasions where running a full recruitment process is neither necessary nor appropriate. In these situations, an appointment may be made without advertisement, provided there is a clear organisational rationale and the approach is demonstrably in the best interests of the Trust.

Appointments made without advertisement may arise through:

- Redeployment following organisational change: where an employee is placed into a suitable alternative role as part of a restructure or redundancy-avoidance process.
- Assimilation into revised structures: where roles change during a restructure and employees move into the new structure without a competitive process.
- Ring-fenced recruitment exercises: where opportunities are limited to a defined group of eligible employees.

- Redundancy avoidance measures: where an employee is placed into a role to prevent compulsory redundancy.
- Appointments arising from formal consultation: where outcomes of a statutory or organisational consultation process result in direct placement.
- Job evaluation outcomes: where the duties of an existing post change and the role is re-graded, meaning no vacancy is created.
- Medical redeployment and workplace adjustments: where, following an occupational health process, disability-related adjustment, capability process, ill-health process or other formal employment procedure, an employee is appointed to a suitable alternative role because their substantive role is no longer appropriate or sustainable.

Any decision not to advertise under this section must be objectively justified, supported by a documented business rationale, approved in accordance with the Trust's Scheme of Delegation, and retained on file for audit and governance purposes. Decisions must demonstrate fairness, consistency and compliance with equality and employment legislation.

All appointments made without advertisement must be capable of withstanding internal and external scrutiny, align with the principles of this policy, and uphold the Trust's commitment to transparency, safer recruitment and equality of opportunity.

12. Job Re-Evaluation

Job re-evaluation relates to the assessment of an existing post where the duties and responsibilities have changed over time. It is not a recruitment process. Where a role has evolved materially, the job description will be reviewed and, where appropriate, evaluated in accordance with the Trust's agreed job evaluation arrangements.

Job re-evaluation may result in an adjustment to grade or remuneration; however, it does not create a vacancy and does not require advertisement. The postholder will normally remain in the role following re-evaluation, provided the revised duties are a natural and reasonable development of the existing position.

Job re-evaluation must not be used to circumvent fair recruitment practices or to confirm an employee into a substantively different role without advertisement. Any re-evaluation must be supported by a documented business rationale and approved in accordance with the Trust's Scheme of Delegation.

13. Temporary, Developmental and Interim Opportunities (including Temporary TLRs)

Temporary opportunities may arise to cover short-term needs, support continuity or provide additional capacity. These may include acting-up arrangements, secondments, interim cover, temporary project roles, fixed-term responsibilities and temporary TLR duties.

The approach taken will be proportionate to the nature and duration of the opportunity.

Advertising Temporary Opportunities

Some temporary opportunities must be advertised internally, particularly where:

- more than one employee could reasonably be interested
- the opportunity is developmental or career-enhancing
- access to the opportunity could influence future progression

Where temporary opportunities are advertised, they must be advertised through My New Term in line with the Trust's internal advertising requirements.

Short-Term Operational Cover Arrangements

Some temporary opportunities do not require advertisement, particularly where they relate to short-term operational cover rather than developmental roles. These situations include:

- Urgent short-term cover needs, where immediate deployment is required to maintain safe or effective operations
- Naturally limited eligibility, for example where only one or two employees possess the necessary skills or qualifications
- Non-developmental duties that do not provide career progression or influence future appointment decisions
- Purely operational short-term arrangements such as brief periods of acting-up, emergency cover, or temporary redistribution of duties

In these cases, managers may make a direct temporary deployment decision. Wherever practicable, the opportunity should still be communicated to the relevant group to support fairness and transparency, while recognising that the purpose of the arrangement is short-term continuity, not recruitment or development.

Appointment Following a Temporary or Interim Role

Where an employee has undertaken an interim, acting-up or secondment arrangement, their performance should be formally reviewed at appropriate intervals and at the conclusion of the arrangement.

Temporary, acting-up, secondment and interim arrangements are intended to meet operational needs, provide continuity and support employee development. Participation in such an arrangement does not create an entitlement or expectation of permanent appointment.

Where the Trust decides to make a permanent appointment to a role that has been covered through an interim, acting-up or secondment arrangement, the substantive vacancy will normally be advertised and filled through a competitive selection process in accordance with this policy.

Employees undertaking the temporary arrangement are encouraged to apply and may draw upon the knowledge, skills and experience gained during the assignment as part of the selection process.

A substantive appointment may be made without advertisement only where this is expressly permitted elsewhere within this policy, including through redeployment, assimilation, organisational change, redundancy avoidance or other approved processes that provide for appointment without a competitive recruitment process.

Temporary deployment arrangements must not be used to circumvent fair recruitment practices, restrict equality of opportunity or provide an unfair advantage in securing permanent appointment.

14. Teaching and Learning Responsibilities (TLRs)

The Trust recognises the important contribution that TLR holders make to school improvement and educational outcomes.

TLRs will be allocated in accordance with the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document and the Trust Pay Policy.

Permanent TLR opportunities will be advertised internally to promote career progression and leadership development opportunities that align to the needs of the school.

Temporary TLR3s may be awarded where there is a specific need or project. The allocation of TLR3 payments will be made in accordance with the Trust's Pay Policy. The duration, expectations and review arrangements associated with any temporary TLR3 will be confirmed in writing and will not normally exceed 12 months. Where a temporary TLR3 opportunity is developmental or where more than one employee could reasonably be interested, it will be advertised internally through My New Term in line with the Trust's internal advertising requirements.

15. Advertising Vacancies Externally

Vacancies will be advertised in a manner which attracts a diverse and suitably qualified field of applicants.

All job advertisements must accurately reflect the requirements of the role and include appropriate safeguarding statements.

Job advertisements will include wording confirming that Hull Collaborative Academy Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and that appointments are subject to satisfactory pre-employment checks.

Where a recruitment process identifies a strong appointable candidate who is not appointed, the Trust may consider that individual for a substantially similar vacancy arising within three months of the original recruitment exercise.

16. Applications

All applicants will be required to complete the My New Term application form and provide a full employment history.

Applicants must account for any gaps in employment and provide details of qualifications, professional memberships and referees. Incomplete applications may be rejected.

Providing false, misleading or incomplete information may result in an application being withdrawn, an offer being rescinded or employment being terminated. The Trust reserves the right to refer matters to appropriate authorities where false information has been provided.

17. Shortlisting

Shortlisting will be conducted against the published job description and person specification.

Wherever possible, shortlisting should be undertaken by at least two individuals, one of which must have completed safer recruitment training. Only in extenuating circumstances should the shortlisting panel differ from the recruitment panel. To ensure a fair process, the panel identified should remain the same throughout.

For the purposes of shortlisting, panel members will only have access to Part 1 of the My New Term application form, titled "Information for Shortlisting and Interviewing". This section contains

information relevant to assessing candidates against the published criteria and does not include personal information, equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) data, or other information not required for shortlisting decisions.

Shortlisting panels will review candidates against the essential criteria for the role and may use desirable criteria where many applicants meet the essential requirements.

At-Risk Employees

HCAT is committed to seeking suitable alternative employment for employees who have been formally identified as being at risk of redundancy or who are subject to redeployment through another formal Trust process, including organisational change, capability, attendance, ill-health or disability-related workplace adjustment processes.

Where an at-risk or redeployee employee submits an application for a vacancy through the MyNewTerm recruitment system, they will be guaranteed an interview provided their application demonstrates that they meet the essential criteria set out in the person specification.

Recruiting managers must ensure that such applicants are shortlisted for interview where the essential criteria are met.

Online Searches & Self-Declaration

In accordance with statutory safeguarding guidance, the Trust will undertake and record online searches of all shortlisted candidates as part of its due diligence and safeguarding responsibilities. Searches will be limited to information that is publicly available online.

Online searches will be undertaken to identify any incidents, behaviours or information which may:

- call into question a candidate's suitability to work with children and young people;
- raise safeguarding concerns;
- indicate conduct that may be inconsistent with the Trust's values; or
- present a potential reputational risk to the Trust.

Online searches will normally be undertaken by a member of staff who is not part of the recruitment panel. Where this is not possible, the reasons will be documented and the search undertaken in a manner that minimises the risk of bias and ensures compliance with equality legislation. Only information relevant to safeguarding, suitability for the role or significant reputational concerns will be shared with the recruitment panel.

Any concerns arising from an online search will be discussed with the candidate during the selection process and considered alongside all other available information before a recruitment decision is made.

A record will be maintained confirming that the online search has been completed, whether any relevant concerns were identified, and how those concerns were considered and, where appropriate, explored with the candidate.

Shortlisted candidates will also be asked to complete a self-declaration of their criminal record, and they will be asked to sign the declaration confirming the information they have provided is true. Where there is an electronic signature, the shortlisted candidate should physically sign a hard copy of the declaration at the point of interview. The purpose of the self-declaration is so that candidates have the opportunity to share relevant information and allow this to be discussed and considered at the interview before the DBS is received.

18. Interviews and Selection Activities

All recruitment processes will include a formal interview as part of the final selection decision. The structure and range of assessment activities will be proportionate to the role, but all candidates must be assessed fairly, consistently and in accordance with safer recruitment principles.

Screening and First-Stage Interviews

Where a large pool of candidates exists, the Trust may undertake a screening or first-stage interview to identify those who should progress to the final selection stage. Screening interviews may be conducted online and will focus on core suitability, motivation, safeguarding awareness and essential criteria.

Screening interviews must:

- use a structured set of questions
- be applied consistently to all candidates
- be recorded appropriately
- be used only to determine progression to the next stage, not to confirm appointment
- A face-to-face interview must always take place before any appointment is confirmed, even where earlier stages were conducted online.

Face-to-Face Interview Format and Questioning

At interview stage, applicants will be required to sign a printed copy of their application form to confirm the accuracy of the information provided and to support safer recruitment verification processes.

Interview questions may be selected from the Trust's approved question bank, or managers may create their own questions where appropriate. Any bespoke questions must be relevant to the role and aligned to safer recruitment expectations.

All candidates must be asked the same core questions to ensure fairness, consistency and compliance with equality legislation. Supplementary probing questions may be used to explore individual responses, safeguarding concerns or discrepancies in employment history. Additional questions and responses must be recorded and retained.

In accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), all candidates must be asked safeguarding questions to assess their understanding of safeguarding responsibilities, professional boundaries, appropriate conduct and their ability to protect children and young people.

Interview questions will explore:

- suitability for the role;
- safeguarding awareness and understanding of child protection responsibilities;
- motivation for working with children and young people;
- understanding of professional boundaries, appropriate conduct and safeguarding expectations;
- relevant professional experience, competence, behaviours and values; and
- the candidate's ability to create and maintain a safe environment for children and young people.

Candidates will be expected to explain satisfactorily:

- any gaps in employment history;

- any history of frequent changes in employment;
- any discrepancies or anomalies identified during the recruitment process;
- any concerns arising from references; and
- any concerns identified through online searches.

Interview panels must be satisfied that candidates demonstrate an appropriate commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, and that any concerns identified during the recruitment process have been appropriately explored and resolved before an appointment is confirmed.

Assessment Activities

The Trust may use a range of assessment methods to support selection decisions. Depending on the role, this may include:

- presentations;
- lesson observations;
- written or practical exercises;
- role-specific tasks;
- pupil panels; and
- stakeholder engagement activities.

Teaching and leadership appointments will include activities involving pupils to support assessment of professional practice, communication skills and suitability for working directly with children.

19. Recruitment Panels and Safer Recruitment

Recruitment panels should consist of at least three members, with at least one member of every recruitment panel must have successfully completed recognised Safer Recruitment Training. In some instances, such as an internal appointment, a panel of at least two may be used.

All staff involved in shortlisting, interviewing or appointment decisions must maintain up-to-date safer recruitment knowledge. Refresher training should be completed every five years or whenever significant changes occur in KCSIE.

The People and Culture Team will arrange Safer Recruitment training and maintain a register of employees who have completed Safer Recruitment Training.

20. References

References will normally be sought before interview wherever possible. The Trust will ordinarily obtain a minimum of two references, including one from the candidate's current or most recent employer.

Where an applicant is not currently working with children but has done so previously, a reference must be obtained from that employer to verify their suitability to work with children.

References must be obtained directly from referees and will not be accepted where addressed "To Whom It May Concern". Character references from relatives or friends, and testimonials provided by the applicant, will not be accepted. Where a candidate is not currently employed, the Trust will seek verification of their most recent period of employment and the reason for leaving from their last employer. If an applicant has no previous employment, references should be sought from any voluntary experience they may have undertaken.

Reference requests will specifically seek information regarding the candidate's suitability to work with children, any safeguarding concerns, and any disciplinary matters relating to safeguarding or child protection. Where a candidate has worked for a HCAT school within the last five years, one reference must be provided by the Headteacher of that school.

All references will be scrutinised, and any concerns or discrepancies must be resolved before an appointment is confirmed. Additional references may be sought where further clarification is required. Where necessary, referees will be contacted by telephone or email to clarify anomalies, with a written follow-up obtained to confirm the discussion.

All references must be provided by a senior person with appropriate authority, not a colleague. In compliance with the Equality Act, reference requests will not seek information relating to an applicant's sickness record or disabilities; such information will only be requested for the successful candidate after interview.

21. Appointment Decisions and Record Keeping

All recruitment and appointment decisions must be objectively justified, evidence-based and capable of demonstrating that the successful candidate was appointed on merit against the requirements of the role.

Panels must ensure that decisions are fair, transparent and consistent with the Trust's safer recruitment expectations.

Following interviews, the panel will consider all information available and record the reasons for its decision. Notes of the panel's decision-making, including scoring and rationale, must be completed, signed and dated.

Candidates who attend interview will be offered feedback based on the evidence gathered through the selection process and the requirements of the role.

The Trust will maintain accurate, secure and confidential recruitment records to demonstrate compliance with employment, equality, safeguarding and data protection requirements. Records may include, but are not limited to:

- shortlisting records;
- assessment outcomes;
- interview notes;
- records of reasonable adjustments;
- advertising and recruitment communications;
- references and pre-employment checks; and
- appointment decisions and supporting rationale.

Recruitment records will be retained, stored and securely disposed of in accordance with the Trust's Data Protection & Document Retention Policy, and relevant legislative requirements. Access to recruitment records will be restricted to authorised personnel with a legitimate business need.

22. Pre-Employment Checks

All offers of employment are conditional upon the satisfactory completion of all required pre-employment and safeguarding checks. Successful applicants must complete all relevant checks before employment is confirmed.

Mandatory Checks

- Identity verification
- Enhanced DBS, including Children's Barred List
- Medical clearance
- Right to work
- Certificate of Good Conduct (where applicable for overseas employment)
- Verification of professional qualifications and conditions

Additional Checks (role-dependent)

- Section 128
- Prohibition from teaching
- Childcare Disqualification (where applicable)

The Trust may also undertake: qualification verification, references, overseas vetting, and verification of mental and physical fitness to carry out the responsibilities of the role. Original qualification certificates must be produced wherever required and verified appropriately. Where childcare disqualification regulations apply, candidates will be required to complete the relevant declarations.

Section 128 Direction

A Section 128 check will be undertaken as part of the pre-appointment and suitability checks for any role that involves, or is likely to involve, the management of a school. Individuals subject to a Section 128 direction cannot be appointed to, or permitted to undertake, any role to which the direction applies.

Roles requiring this check include, but are not limited to: Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, Assistant Headteacher, Executive Leaders, Trustees, and Local Tier Board members.

23. Overseas Applicants

Applicants who have previously lived or worked overseas may be subject to additional safeguarding checks.

These checks may include criminal record checks from overseas jurisdictions, certificates of good conduct, checks with relevant professional regulatory bodies and other enquiries deemed appropriate to assess suitability. Where available, applicants will be required to provide evidence of their conduct and suitability to work with children from countries in which they have lived or worked.

Where information cannot reasonably be obtained, alternative evidence will be sought and a documented risk assessment completed before any appointment is confirmed.

Advice may be sought from the Strategic Safeguarding Lead and the People and Culture Team.

24. Ongoing Safeguarding Obligations

Employees have an ongoing responsibility to disclose information which may affect their suitability to work with children.

Employees must inform the Trust immediately if they:

- are charged with or convicted of a criminal offence;
- receive a caution or other formal disposal from the police;
- become barred from working with children;

- become subject to DBS action, referral or investigation;
- become subject to investigation, restriction or sanction by a professional regulatory body;
- become disqualified from working in relevant childcare provision; or
- become aware of any other circumstance that may affect their suitability to work with children and young people.

Failure to disclose relevant information may result in disciplinary action and may be treated as a serious disciplinary matter.

25. Recruitment of Ex-Offenders

The Trust is committed to treating all applicants fairly and will not discriminate unfairly against individuals with criminal convictions. Each case will be considered on its own merits, taking into account the nature and seriousness of the offence, how long ago it occurred, whether it was an isolated incident or part of a pattern, the circumstances surrounding the incident, its relevance to the role, whether the individual accepted responsibility for their actions, safeguarding considerations, and all relevant legal requirements.

The existence of a criminal conviction will not automatically prevent employment; however, the Trust's safeguarding responsibilities will always remain paramount. It is unlawful for the Trust to employ any individual who is barred from working with children, and it is a criminal offence for a barred person to apply for, or attempt to undertake, work in a school.

The Trust will ensure that all decisions relating to applicants with criminal records are made in accordance with DBS filtering rules, the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (Exceptions) Order, and statutory safeguarding guidance. All information disclosed will be handled sensitively, securely, and in line with data protection legislation.

26. DBS and Regulatory Referrals

The Trust acknowledges its legal responsibilities in relation to referrals to the Disclosure and Barring Service and the Teaching Regulation Agency.

Where legislation requires, the Trust will make referrals to the DBS where individuals have harmed a child, presented a risk of harm or satisfy the relevant statutory thresholds.

The Trust will also consider referrals to the Teaching Regulation Agency where a teacher, instructor, or HLTA has been dismissed, or would have been dismissed had they not resigned, because of serious misconduct.

Where an individual commences employment before receipt of an enhanced DBS certificate, a children's barred list check (where applicable) and all other pre-employment checks must be completed, a written risk assessment undertaken and appropriate supervision arrangements put in place in accordance with statutory guidance.

27. Induction and Probation

The Trust recognises the importance of supporting new employees to become successful, confident and effective in their role. Following appointment, new employees will participate in an induction programme designed to support their integration into the Trust and ensure they understand their responsibilities, expected standards and key policies and procedures. This will include safeguarding, child protection, safe working practices, whistleblowing, health and safety

and role-specific requirements. All staff will be required to read and confirm that they have understood Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

Where applicable, employees will be subject to a probationary period in accordance with the Trust's Probationary Period Policy.

Managers are responsible for ensuring appropriate induction, supervision and support arrangements are in place throughout the induction period.

28. Agency Workers, Contractors, Peripatetic Staff and Volunteers

Where individuals are not directly employed by the Trust, including agency workers, contractors and peripatetic staff, the Trust will obtain written assurance from the relevant employer or service provider that all required safeguarding, vetting and suitability checks have been completed in accordance with statutory requirements. Responsibility for undertaking these checks rests with the employing organisation or service provider.

The Trust will satisfy itself that appropriate written assurances have been received before permitting individuals to undertake work on its behalf.

The Office Manager (or Operations Team for Central Roles) will carry out identity checks when the individual arrives at school/Central Office and add the individual's details to the Single Central Record until their services are no longer required.

Volunteers

The Trust recognises the valuable contribution made by volunteers and is committed to ensuring that appropriate recruitment and safeguarding arrangements are in place.

All volunteers will normally be required to complete a volunteer application form and provide a minimum of two references. References should be obtained from individuals who are able to comment on the volunteer's suitability to work with children and young people and will be scrutinised in accordance with the Trust's safer recruitment procedures.

Where a volunteer is undertaking a recognised placement, work experience programme, initial teacher training placement, apprenticeship, or other formal training programme, the Trust may determine that a volunteer application form and references are not required where suitable assurances have been obtained from the placing organisation.

Under the Crime and Policing Act 2026, volunteers who engage in teaching, training, instruct or supervise children frequently, (on more than three days in any 30-day period, or overnight), are considered to be engaging in regulated activity. Where this applies, the school must obtain an enhanced DBS check with children's barred list information.

Any concerns arising from the application process, references or safeguarding checks must be appropriately explored and resolved before the volunteer commences their role.

29. Single Central Record

Schools will maintain an accurate and up-to-date Single Central Record (SCR) in accordance with statutory requirements and Keeping Children Safe in Education. The SCR will be monitored by the Trust to ensure statutory requirements are met.

The SCR will include employees, casual workers, supply and agency staff, volunteers, contractors and individuals who provide teaching, training, coaching or other instruction to pupils, whether

employed directly by the Trust or engaged through a third party, where required by legislation or statutory guidance.

The SCR will record the safeguarding, vetting and recruitment checks applicable to each individual, including confirmation that required checks have been completed, the date the checks were undertaken and any other information required by statutory guidance.

Where applicable, the SCR will clearly identify individuals working in Early Years provision or management roles and specify any additional checks required for those roles.

The SCR will be maintained securely and will be subject to regular monitoring, audit and quality assurance to ensure ongoing compliance with safeguarding, employment and statutory requirements.

30. Monitoring and Review

The People and Culture Team will monitor recruitment activity across the Trust, including recruitment outcomes, internal promotion rates, equality data and safeguarding compliance. Monitoring will be used to identify trends, ensure consistency of practice and inform improvements to recruitment processes.

This policy will be reviewed annually, or earlier where changes in legislation, statutory guidance or organisational requirements make this necessary.