



# Gosford Park Primary School

## Safer Recruitment Policy

### 1. Purpose & Aims

Gosford Park Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and requires all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. This policy should be read in conjunction with our Safeguarding Policy.

We will ensure that all our recruitment and selection practices reflect this commitment. All successful candidates will be subject to Disclosure and Barring checks along with other employment checks.

Robust and rigorous recruitment and selection practices helps deter or reject unsuitable applicants from gaining positions within the school and helps to ensure that the workforce is fully committed to the safe welfare of children. The appointment of all employees will be made on merit and in accordance with the provisions of Employment Law and DFE Keeping Children Safe in Education.

### 2. Roles & Responsibilities

The **Governing Body** is responsible for:

- Agreeing and monitoring effective policies to ensure recruitment at the school is in accordance with relevant legislation.
- Ensuring that staff recruitment is as safe as possible, as well as fair and compliant with the relevant legislation.
- Ensuring appropriate checks have been carried out on staff, volunteers, contractors and agency workers working within the school.
- Appointing an appropriate recruitment panel.
- Ensuring that at least one member of the recruitment panel has undergone safer recruitment training.
- Ensuring that all members of the recruitment panel understand their role, i.e., advisory or decision making.
- Monitoring the advertising of vacancies, assessing how they are being advertised and whether the adverts are maximising all of the opportunities to attract the appropriate candidates.

- Benchmarking the success of any advertising methods used, as well as the overall success of the recruitment process.
- Ensuring a member of the Governing Body is on the recruitment panel for a new Headteacher.
- Ensuring that all members of the recruitment panel are familiar with their obligations with regards to safer recruitment, as set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE).
- Monitoring the school's Single Central Record (SCR) to ensure that the necessary vetting checks for employees are carried out.
- Ensuring that equal opportunities are established and implemented throughout the recruitment process.
- Ensuring that the salary of the successful candidate is determined.
- Accommodating the needs of new employees and making reasonable adjustments when necessary.
- Ensuring that they have the skills to carry out effective selection processes, including knowing when and how to request references.

The **recruitment panel** is responsible for:

- Creating the advert and ensuring it meets all the necessary requirements.
- Shortlisting the potential candidates with the aim of reducing the application field and identifying those with the potential to effectively undertake the role.
- Appropriately delegating responsibility for recruitment to the headteacher.
- Ensuring that the interview addresses leadership ability (where appropriate), team working skills, integrity, understanding of the school's ethos and vision, and why the candidate believes they would be a good fit for the school.
- Ensuring that the interview addresses safeguarding practices.
- Ensuring that the interview addresses the candidate's motivation, reasons for being interested in joining the school, and attitude to working with children.
- Appointing an appointing officer who will be responsible for the entire management of the recruitment process.
- Agreeing with the successful candidate when other members of the school community will be informed about their appointment, including staff members and parents.
- Ensuring that references have been received where requested.
- Ensuring that all references for a shortlisted candidate are obtained prior to interview, properly scrutinised, and that information is not contradictory, unclear, or incomplete, with clarification requested when appropriate.
- Where possible, ensuring that the shortlisting panel and interviewing panel are comprised of the same people.

The **appointing officer** is responsible for:

- Managing the entire recruitment process.
- Sourcing suitable candidates.
- Acting as a point of contact between candidates and the school.
- Reviewing and scrutinising candidates' applications and identifying any gaps.
- Preparing the recruitment panel to conduct interviews.
- Organising interviews with shortlisted candidates.

- Ensuring the recruitment process is carried out in line with the relevant school policies.
- Ensuring that the candidate chosen to fill a vacancy is suitable for the role.

The **Headteacher** is responsible for:

- Ensuring appropriate checks have been carried out on prospective staff, volunteers, contractors and agency workers working within the school.
- Ensuring that appropriate supervision of employees and volunteers is organised, and for promoting the safety and wellbeing of pupils generally and throughout the recruitment process.
- Leading the interview when the candidate is at a lower level.
- Ensuring that the successful candidate receives the appropriate training, e.g., safeguarding and induction.
- Ensuring that all relevant staff members are familiarised with this policy.

During the recruitment process, and especially during the initial stages, the **recruitment panel** and the **Headteacher** will be watchful of candidates displaying the following characteristics:

- No understanding or appreciation of children's needs
- Expressing that they want the role to meet their needs at the expense of children
- Using inappropriate language in relation to children
- Expressing extreme views or views that do not support safeguarding practices
- Displaying unclear boundaries with children
- Providing vague answers when asked about their experience and being unable to explain gaps in their employment

The **DPO** is responsible for:

- Ensuring that all references are handled in line with the Data Protection Policy and relevant legislation.

The **Designated Safeguarding Lead** is responsible for:

- Deciding when it is appropriate or necessary to disclose any safeguarding concerns or allegations as part of a reference, in line with KCSIE.
- Discussing with the Headteacher the suitability of a candidate when a reference has disclosed safeguarding concerns or prior allegations.

### 3. Equal Opportunities

The school is committed to securing genuine equality of opportunity. The recruitment and selection process will be applied fairly and consistently to all applying for the positions within the school regardless of gender, race, marital status, national or ethnic origins, nationality, disability, sexuality, sexual orientation, age, religion, union membership, status or hours worked.

#### **4. The recruitment processes**

The main elements of the process are as follows:

##### **a) *Job Descriptions and Person Specifications***

- Ensure job descriptions are up to date and refer to the responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. Job descriptions should include:
  - Main duties and responsibilities of the post.
  - Individual responsibility for promoting safeguarding and welfare of children they are responsible for or come into contact with.
- Ensure the person specification includes specific reference to suitability to work with children. The person specification should:
  - Include qualifications and experience and any other requirements needed to perform the role.
  - Describe the competencies and qualities that the successful candidate should be able to demonstrate. This should include the required commitment to demonstrate positive behaviours in support of the school's ethos around safeguarding.
  - Explain how these requirements will be tested and assessed during the selection process.

##### **b) *Advertising***

All vacant posts will be advertised to ensure equality of opportunity and encourage as wide a field of candidates as possible. This will normally mean placing an advertisement externally. However, where there is a reasonable expectation that there are sufficient, suitably qualified internal candidates, or staff are at risk of redundancy, vacancies may be advertised internally before external candidates are considered.

All advertising will:

- Be clear about what skills, abilities, qualification(s) and experience a successful candidate will need to demonstrate.
- Be planned to allow sufficient time for shortlisting and for references to be obtained.
- Include a statement about the school's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

All advertisements for posts will include the following statement:

*Gosford Park Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and requires all staff and volunteers to share and demonstrate this commitment.*

*The successful candidate must meet the requirements of the person specification and will be subject to pre-employment checks including a health check, enhanced DBS check (and for teaching appointments a barred list check) and satisfactory references.”*

**c) Information for applicants**

All applicants will be provided with:

- A job description outlining the duties of the post and a person specification.
- An application form.
- A description of the school, relevant to the post being advertised.
- Reference to the Child Protection Policy, Safeguarding Policy, Safer Recruitment and Selection Policy, DBS, and other pre-employment requirements.
- An outline of terms of employment including salary.
- A copy of the school’s Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct
- The closing date for receipt of applications.

A CV will not be accepted in place of a completed application form.

**d) Application forms**

For all advertised posts the application form will request the following:

- Full identifying details of the applicant including current and former names, date of birth, current address, and national insurance number.
- Information regarding any academic and/or vocational qualifications that the applicant has obtained that are relevant to the post applied for, with details of the awarding body and the date of the award. Applicants will be asked to bring proof of qualifications to any interview. Teachers must provide their DfES reference number and prove their Qualified Teacher Status.
- A full employment history in chronological order since leaving secondary education, including periods of any post-secondary education/training, part time and voluntary work as well as full time employment (including start and end dates), explanations for periods not in employment or education/training and reasons for leaving employment.
- A declaration of any family or close relationship to existing employees or employers (including LA counsellors or school governors).
- Details of referees. One referee should be the applicants current or most recent employer and normally two referees should be sufficient. Where an applicant who is not currently working with children has done so in the past it is important that a reference is also obtained from the employer by whom the person was most recently employed in work with children. The form should make it clear that references will not be accepted from relatives or from people writing solely in the capacity of friends.
- A statement of the personal qualities and experience that the applicant

believes are relevant to their suitability for the post advertised and how they meet the person specification.

All shortlisted candidates who have applied online for a post will be asked to sign a copy of their application form at the interview.

### **e) *Shortlisting and References***

All applications will be scrutinised to ensure that they are fully and properly completed, that the information provided is consistent and does not contain any discrepancies and to identify any gaps in employment. As well as reasons for gaps in employment, the reasons for a history of repeated changes of employment without any clear career or salary progression, or a mid-career move from a permanent post to supply or temporary work, will also need to be explored and verified.

The selection panel, which will comprise at least two people, will shortlist applicants against the person specification for the post. The criteria for selection criteria will be consistently applied to all applicants. The selection panel will agree the applicants to be invited to interview.

Two references, one of which must be from the candidate's current/most recent employer, will be taken up on all shortlisted candidates (including internal candidates) before the interview stage so that any discrepancies may be probed during the interview process. Candidates are entitled to see and receive copies of their employment references and should request these from their referees.

The School Business Manager is responsible for obtaining the references. The School Business Manager will ensure that a copy of the job description and person specification is sent along with the reference request. The school's standard request form will always be used to obtain references.

References will be sought directly from the referee and, where necessary, they will be contacted to clarify any anomalies or discrepancies. Detailed written records will be kept of such exchanges.

Where necessary, previous employers who have not been named as referees may be contacted in order to clarify any such anomalies or discrepancies. Detailed written records will be kept of such exchanges.

If a candidate for a post working with children is not currently employed in a post working with children, a reference will be sought from the most recent employment in which the candidate has worked with children to confirm details of the candidate's employment and their reasons for leaving.

Reference requests will ask the referee to confirm, in writing:

- The referee's relationship to the candidate.
- Details of the candidate's current post and salary.
- The candidate's performance history and conduct.

- Whether the candidate has been subject to capability procedures and the outcome of this.
- Whether the candidate has been subject to disciplinary action relating to the safety and welfare of children, including where the sanction has expired, and the outcome of this.
- Details of any substantiated allegations or concerns about the candidate relating to the safety and welfare of children.
- Whether the referee has any reservations as to the candidate's suitability to work with children and young people (if so, the school will ask for specific details of the concerns and the reasons why the referee believes the candidate may be unsuitable to work with children).
- The candidate's suitability for the post with explicit reference to the job description and person specification.

In accordance with Section 60 of the Equality Act, employers should not be asking for any information pertaining to health (including sickness absence records) in reference requests or during selection processes (including interviews). This is to ensure that there can be no suggestion that you have discriminated on the grounds of potential disabilities. This information can be requested once a conditional offer has been made.

All appointments are subject to satisfactory references, vetting procedures, and DBS clearance.

References are the "property" of the selection panel and strict confidentiality will be observed. Employer testimonials i.e., those provided by the candidate and/or marked 'to whom it may concern' will not be accepted. References must be in writing and be specific to the job for which the candidate has applied. The selection panel will not accept references from relatives or people writing solely in the capacity as a friend of the candidate, for any post. References will be verified and any discrepancies or areas of potential concern will be discussed with the candidate at interview.

Shortlisted candidates will be asked to complete a self-declaration form of their criminal record and/or provide any information that would make them unsuitable to work with children.

If the field of applicants is felt to be weak, the post may be re-advertised.

**f) *Online searches on shortlisted candidates***

The school is committed to ensuring that safeguarding is a top priority; therefore, in line with KCSIE, the school will consider carrying out online searches on shortlisted candidates as part of our due diligence. Online searches solely aim to help identify any incidents or issues that have happened, and are publicly available online, which the school may want to explore with the applicant at interview.

Online searches will be conducted on shortlisted candidates only, and only where the school considers this appropriate. The school will consider any potential risks of online searches, e.g., unlawful discrimination or invasion of privacy, and will be clear

on the reasons that online searches are being conducted. Online searches will only examine data that is publicly available.

Online searches will be carried out by a senior member of staff who is independent of the recruitment process, to minimise the risk of bias or discrimination and to ensure that only relevant information is considered. The person responsible for carrying out online searches will have due regard to Part three of KCSIE.

The online search process may include searching for the candidate by name via search engines and social media, such as:

- Google
- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram
- LinkedIn

When carrying out searches of shortlisted candidates' online presence, the school will look out for indicators of concern, such as:

- Inappropriate behaviour, jokes or language.
- Discriminatory comments.
- Inappropriate images.
- Drug or alcohol misuse.
- Anything that suggests the candidate may not be suitable to work with children.

The school will determine which sites they will search, and how far back they are going to go, for each recruitment. The search parameters and details of any concerns raised will be recorded on the Online Search Record.

Any concerns will be addressed during the interview process. The school will ensure that candidates are given an opportunity to discuss any concerns raised by the online search.

#### **g) Interview**

The interview process will assess the merits of each shortlisted candidate against the job requirements and assess their suitability to work with children.

Interviews will ask appropriately robust and pre-planned questions. The questions asked will be aimed at obtaining evidence of how each candidate meets the requirements of the job description and person specification and each candidate will be assessed against all criteria for the post. The same area of questioning will be covered for each applicant and no discriminatory questions will be asked. The selection process for every post will include exploration of the candidate's understanding of safeguarding issues with a specific question about this.



The interview process should also include a task of some sort where appropriate e.g., observing a teacher applicant teach a class.

During the interview, further questions may be asked of individuals, seeking clarification or explanation from the detail gained in the application form. All applicants will be asked to declare any safeguarding issues in the interview.

Candidates will always be required to:

- explain satisfactorily any gaps in employment.
- explain satisfactorily any anomalies or discrepancies in the information available to the selection panel.
- declare any information that is likely to appear on a DBS disclosure.
- demonstrate their capacity to safeguard and protect the welfare of children and young people.

The interview will also include a discussion of any convictions, cautions or pending prosecutions, other than those protected, that the candidate has declared and are relevant to the prospective employment.

#### Invitation to interview

All shortlisted candidates will be given the following information:

- Confirmation of the date, time, and place of the interview.
- What the selection process will include (e.g., teach a class, a test, a presentation etc.)
- An instruction to bring proof of identity (that will satisfy DBS requirements) and original documents certifying education or professional qualifications.
- State that all relevant information in relation to the successful candidate will be retained.
- Confirm that appropriate checks will be undertaken for the successful candidate before an unconditional job offer is made.

#### The interview panel

The interview panel will comprise at least two people, one of whom will be safer recruitment trained. For a senior post a larger panel will be more appropriate. They should liaise before the interview to reach consensus about required standards and their assessment criteria, consider any issues and determine who will ask each question.

#### **h) Conditional offer and pre-employment checks**

The successful candidate will receive a conditional offer subject to satisfactory receipt of the following pre-employment checks:

- Receipt of at least two satisfactory references.

- Verification of candidate's identity.
- Acceptable DBS and, where appropriate, List 99 and Barred List Check.
- Medical fitness.
- Verification of qualifications.
- Verification of professional status.
- Verification of Qualified Teacher Status.
- Check completion of statutory induction period.
- UK residence or permission to work in the UK.

All of the above must be closely checked to ensure that they can all be attributed to the same person. These documents will be retained on the personnel file and followed up where there are discrepancies.

Where a candidate has been found to be on the Barred List, List 99 or the DBS check shows that they have been disqualified from working with children and/or the candidate has provided false information, or there are serious concerns about the candidate's suitability to work with children, the facts must be reported to the police and/or the Independent Safeguarding Authority.

In the event that a DBS check shows that a candidate has a previous conviction, but one that does not bar them from working with children, the Headteacher, in consultation with Governors, will make the final decision as to whether to offer the job or not. The school will consider the following:

- The seriousness and relevance to the post which they have applied for.
- How long ago the offence occurred.
- Whether it was a one-off incident or a history of incidents.
- The circumstances around and at the time of the incident.
- Whether the individual accepted responsibility for what happened.
- Whether the offence has been decriminalised.

All pre-employment checks must be completed before the candidate starts work

### ***i) Induction***

There should be an induction programme for all new employees and volunteers regardless of their experience. The induction will include:

- Training and information about the school's policies and procedures.
- Confirmation of the conduct expected of staff within the school.
- Providing support in a manner appropriate for the role which they have been appointed to.
- Provide an opportunity for a new member of staff to discuss any issues or concerns about their role and responsibilities.

The content and nature of the induction programme will vary according to the role and previous experience of the new member of staff or volunteer. However, as far as safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is

concerned, the induction programme should include information about and written statements of:

- Policies and procedures in relation to safeguarding and promoting welfare e.g., child protection, anti-bullying, anti-racism, physical intervention/restraint, intimate care, internet safety and any local child protection/safeguarding procedures.
- Safe practice and the standards of conduct and behaviour expected of staff and pupils in the school.
- How and with whom any concerns about those issues should be raised.
- Other relevant personnel procedures e.g. disciplinary, capability and whistleblowing.

The programme should also include attendance at child protection training appropriate to the person's role.

## **5. HR file and Single Central Record**

Recruitment and selection information for the successful candidate will be retained securely and confidentially for the duration of their employment with the school including:

- Application form (including the names of the interview panel noted on the form)
- Interview notes - including explanation of any gaps in the employment history.
- References - minimum of two.
- Proof of identity.
- Proof of right to work in the UK.
- Proof of relevant academic qualifications.
- Evidence of medical clearance from the Occupational Health service.
- Evidence of DBS clearance, Barred List (where applicable) and Teacher Prohibition checks.
- Offer of employment letter and signed contract of employment.

The school will maintain a Single Central Record of employment checks in accordance with DfE guidance. This will be checked by someone not employed by the school at least once a year.

## **6. Monitoring**

Monitoring of both the recruitment process and induction arrangements will allow for future recruitment practices to be better informed. Monitoring will include:

- Staff turnover and reasons for leaving.
- Exit interviews.
- Attendance of new staff at child protection training.