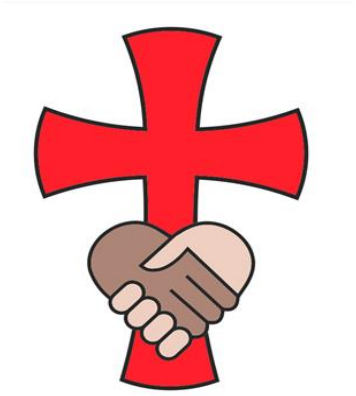
Schools Model Recruitment and Selection Guidance



This Guidance has been formally adopted by the Governing Body of St Matthew's church of England Primary School on Tuesday 30th November 2021

Sandwell
Metropolitan Borough Council

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Recruitment & Selection - Guidance for Schools

This Guidance must be read and applied in conjunction with the Recruitment and Selection Policy for Schools (HR95s).

1. Preparing to Recruit

In normal circumstances recruitment will take place when a vacancy or need for a limited period of cover arises. This occurs for a variety of reasons:

- An employee leaves an existing post
- An employee requests to work more flexibly or reduce their hours
- An employee is sick for a long period
- An employee takes maternity leave
- A new post is created
- Specific project work/fixed term funding

On identifying a vacancy, recruiting managers should consider the following:

- Whether the vacant post is still necessary.
- How the post will be funded.
- Whether the post is established or outside of the agreed budget or structure.
- Whether the Job Description for the post needs updating
- Whether the post is appropriate for job share or flexible working.
- Whether the post could provide an opportunity for a secondment.
- Whether the post needs to be filled on a temporary basis due to the needs of the school.

If it is decided that changes need to be made to a role, a new Job Description (JD) and Personnel Specification (PS) outlining the tasks and responsibilities of the job, should be created and submitted to HR for job evaluation. This applies to non-teaching posts only and must be done before advertising/recruitment can start.

For Teaching posts please refer to the School Teachers Pay and Conditions Document.

2. Creating a Job Description

Before recruiting for a new or existing position it is important to invest time in gathering information about the nature of the job. This means considering not only the role and responsibilities but also the job's overall purpose, the outputs required from the post holder and how it fits into the overall structure of the school. The job description must also make reference to the responsibility for safeguarding the welfare of children and young people.

The requirements listed in the Job Description and Personnel Specification must be clear, fully justifiable and associated to the role. These measures will help to increase the pool of potential applicants and reduce the risk of discrimination occurring.

Written effectively it helps:

- Ensure that you attract the right candidates for the role.
- Evaluate applications quickly and accurately during the shortlisting process.
- Provide a basis for writing the advert and interview questions.

Please contact your HR provider for a Job Description template.

3. Creating a Personnel Specification

The Personnel Specification should describe what is required to perform the job in terms of qualifications, experience, skills, knowledge, personal characteristics, and attributes. The qualities must be objective, and care should be exercised not to specify unnecessary qualifications or attributes as these may indirectly discriminate against certain groups of people. For example, members of one gender, people with disabilities, or certain age groups. Consideration should be given to how the qualities will be measured at selection stage.

Please contact your HR provider for a Personnel Specification template.

4. Advertising a Vacancy

Contact your HR provider in relation to placing an advertisement. They will help with the design, drafting and publication of adverts

During the pre-recruitment stage, it is good practice to create a plan/recruitment schedule, this should include advertisement closing dates and modes of advertising, plus timescales and deadlines. If a post requires evaluation, then this should also be factored into the timescale.

Schools are responsible for their own recruitment/advertising costs and budgetary management.

Once all the above has been considered, Headteachers/Managers/Governing Body should contact their HR provider to ensure the necessary documentation is completed. At this stage there should be prepared, an up to date job advertisement, Job Description & Personnel Specification.

It is the position of the School that the advertising of any vacancies should support Equalities Act 2010 by ensuring that:

- All vacancies are advertised internally and, where appropriate externally
- The content of advertisements complies with anti-discrimination legislation.
- Where possible, advertisements are placed in media sources that will support the School's aim to develop a skilled and diverse workforce.
- Any advertising opportunity will be used to the fullest advantage to promote the School and the Borough as a whole and the benefits of working and living in Sandwell.

4.1 Eligibility to Apply for Vacancies

Any internal employee within the school can apply for any vacancy providing they meet the minimum criteria for the vacant post. Internal candidates are defined as staff who are employed on either permanent or fixed-term contracts, i.e. substantive staff. Agency staff are not employees of the school but can also apply for internally advertised vacancies.

5. Shortlisting

The Recruiting Manager will normally be the Panel Chair. The selection panel will be responsible for the shortlisting of applicants, the interviewing and if required, further testing of candidates.

From all applications received, managers should short-list the candidates who best match the Personnel Specification, as the aim of the selection is to predict how likely a person is to succeed in a particular job. This prediction is more successful when based on a systematic approach that is fair, unbiased and objective.

If only one candidate meets the shortlisting criteria the selection process may still go ahead.

All applications should be checked to ensure that they are fully completed, that the information provided is consistent and does not contain any discrepancies, and to identify any gaps in employment.

Reasons for obvious gaps in employment, a history of repeated changes of employment without any clear career progression, or a mid-career move from a permanent to a temporary post should be explored and verified at interview.

It is essential that all staff involved in the recruitment and selection process ensure the confidentiality of information supplied by applicants and referees.

Please contact your HR provider for a Short-listing Grid template.

5.1 Training

As a minimum, the Chair of the panel should have attended recruitment and selection training within the last three years, but preferably all panel members so they understand:

- The legal impact and consequences of not following consistent recruitment and selection procedures.
- The School's Recruitment Policy and Procedure.
- How to draw up effective Job Descriptions, Personnel Specifications and adverts.
- The reasons for equal opportunities monitoring.
- The importance of developing the necessary skills for effective interviewing.
- The importance of safeguarding children and young people.
- Safer Recruitment Training.

6. Interviews

To be effective, interviews should be carefully prepared. It is recommended that the interview panel consists of at least three members, ideally all of whom will have undertaken recruitment and selection training which has been refreshed every three years. If this is not possible, it is a minimum requirement that the Chair of the panel has attended recruitment and selection training within this period.

The interview panel must be gender diverse and if possible also diverse in terms of other protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, especially in terms of race.

The Personnel Specification must be used to determine appropriate questions or/and any additional selection method, such as a presentation or test. All selection methods must be:

- Relevant
- Measurable
- Weighted appropriately

The panel's role is to find out to what extent each candidate demonstrates the essential requirements outlined on the Personnel Specification.

6.1 Suitability to Work with Children and Young People

Depending on the amount of contact with children and young people, the interview questions may need to explore issues relating to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

In accordance with the guidance defined in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education', the interview questions must also explore:

- The candidate's attitude toward children and young people and their motivation to work in this area.
- The candidate's ability to form and maintain appropriate relationships and personal boundaries with children and young people.
- Their emotional resilience in working with challenging behaviours.
- Their ability to support the School's agenda for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

6.2 Conducting the Interview

To ensure fairness, each candidate should receive the same interview experience. The panel will be assessing the candidate and the candidate will be assessing the School as a potential employer.

It is therefore advisable to ensure that candidates are made aware at the beginning of the interview:

- What the selection process and methods are.
- How they will be assessed.
- That they will be given the opportunity to ask questions.
- Be advised on how and when they will be informed of the selection outcome.

The panel should also:

- Ensure that each candidate is greeted and escorted to and from the interview room.
- Ensure that the room is appropriate for the interview (free of interruptions, comfortable, etc.).
- Ensure that arrangements are in place for candidates with a disability. Due diligence is necessary to ensure that any additional needs are accommodated at the interview.
- Give all interviewees a comparable amount of time.

Questions asked during an interview should be relevant and 'open' (Who? What? Where? When? How?) and will fall into three categories;

- Competency & skills-based questions - based on the Personnel Specification, which will be structured and asked of all candidates.
- Specific questions - clarifying the information given in each candidate's application form.
- Follow-up/probing questions - clarifying and exploring information given during the interview. All candidates should be given the same opportunity to expand on their answers.

During the interview, panel members must not ask questions related to protected characteristics or medical sickness absence.

Every effort should be made to ensure that during the interview there are no interruptions or distractions.

During the interview, notes should be taken to help monitor the effectiveness and fairness of procedures and help if the reasons for appointing or not appointing a candidate are challenged.

Please contact your HR provider for an Interview Grid template.

All documents and notes should be kept for 6 months by the hiring Headteacher/Manager/Governing Body and should then be destroyed.

A sound appointment decision can be made if the candidate has been matched against the demands of the job using objective criteria and Personnel Specification and then against other candidates.

A decision to appoint should not be made until all candidates have been interviewed and all scores have been completed.

Selection decisions do not have to be made the same day of interviews but should be as prompt as possible, preferably within 3 days of interviews taking place.

Your HR provider should be informed as soon as possible of successful appointments, with the completion of relevant appointment documentation, so that all necessary pre-employment clearances can be obtained prior to a start date being agreed with the successful candidate.

7. Making a Conditional Offer

7.1 Unsuccessful Applicants

The School will notify unsuccessful applicants via email. If feedback is requested, the Panel Chair should provide a valid reason for rejection and feedback to support the unsuccessful candidate in identifying areas for development. Candidate details will be kept on file in line with the Council's document retention schedule.

7.2 Offer of Employment

The successful applicant should receive a verbal offer no later than 5 working days after the interview.

Written offers of employment will only be produced by the School upon receipt of all required documentation and authorisation by the Headteachers/Governing Body

This must include:

- Relevant Job Description and Personnel Specification.
- Signed interview and selection testing notes.

Conditional Employment Offer letters are sent to the selected candidate containing the following:

- DBS Application Information - including Overseas (if applicable to the role)
- Information regarding A&I/Medical/References/Qualifications (applicable to the role)
- Job Description and Personnel Specification.
- Pension Scheme Information
- Declaration of Interest form (if identified from the application form)

This approach will guarantee:

- A structured approach to recruitment across the School.
- Auditable outcomes of recruitment campaigns.

7.3 Declaration of Interest

As a responsible employer the school aims to ensure that any possible conflict of interests are identified at the recruitment stage.

If the successful candidate has declared a conflict of interest on their application form, then this needs to be risk assessed. The recruiting manager needs to work with the candidate to ensure that an actual conflict of interest will not arise or have any material effect in relation to their work or duties.

If the manager cannot identify an obvious way to avoid the conflict of interest, then this situation must be reported to the Governing Body for advice.

A register of any Declarations of Interest will be maintained by the School.

8. Agency Worker Appointments

The recruitment of agency workers enables schools to cover short-term absences, to complete specific projects and to cope with peaks in the volume of work.

Before the use of agency workers, alternative options should be considered. Alternative options could include redistribution of duties and assessing the impact of the work not being undertaken.

If it is necessary to engage agency staff, your HR provider will advise you on this process.

9. Pre-employment Checks

The School should ensure all pre-employment checks are complete prior to the successful candidate starting employment. No-one can begin employment without the relevant clearance.

All offers of employment will also remain conditional until the following have been received:

- Two satisfactory references covering 5 years where possible.
- Satisfactory DBS Enhanced Check for regulated activity and DBS Children's Barred List clearance (where applicable for the post).
- Prohibition from Teaching check (if applicable).
- Medical fitness clearance.
- Evidence of the right to work in the UK.
- Verification of the applicant's identity.
- Evidence of qualifications required for the job.
- Declaration of Personal and Pecuniary Interest (where identified).
- Verification of professional status, where required.
- Verification of successful completion of statutory induction period (applies to those who obtained QTS after May 1999) for teachers. This does not apply for NQT's currently in their induction period.

If any of the above checks are not satisfactory, the offer may be revoked. Where this is necessary, written reasons will be supplied.

All pre-employment checks will be confirmed in writing, documented and retained on the employee's Personal file. Where they are unsatisfactory or there are any discrepancies in the information provided, these must be followed up with advice from your HR provider.

If a candidate is found to be on the DBS Children's Barred List, a result notification will be provided from the DBS to the HR provider for discussion with the Headteacher/Governing Body and this person must **not** be employed.

If a candidate has an unclear DBS Disclosure, a result notification will be provided form the DBS to the HR provider. The HR provider must discuss with the School and the applicant and decide whether to continue with the offer of employment. The ultimate decision will be made by the Headteacher/Governing Body. Please refer to the DBS Policy for further information.

Once satisfactory clearances are received, a formal offer will be made to the candidate, and a contract will come into being.

9.1 References

Candidates should provide details of two referees, one of whom must be their present or most recent employer, who are able to comment on their suitability for the position they are applying for.

There are occasions when a candidate will request “no contact with their current employer unless they are a successful candidate after interview”. This can be requested on the application form and should be respected.

References should seek objective, verifiable information and not subjective opinion.

9.2 Criminal records

Candidates who have access to children and young people will normally not be employed until a clear DBS Disclosure is received. In exceptional cases, candidates may commence employment prior to DBS clearance provided there is **no** unsupervised access to children or young people and following a clear check of the DBS Children’s Barred List. The Headteacher/Governing Body will make a recommendation to the Executive Director of Children’s Services who is responsible for the final decision. Please refer to the DBS Policy for further information.

9.3 Convictions

The Headteacher/Governing Body is responsible for recommending to the Director of Children’s Services whether a candidate’s criminal record does or does not render them unfit for the post. The Executive Director of Children’s Services is responsible for the final decision.

Posts which are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (in which case criminal convictions never become “spent”) should be identified as exempt when seeking references.

9.4 Occupational Health

Once the conditional offer of employment has been made, all successful candidates must be cleared by Occupational Health before confirmation of appointment can be made. Depending on the circumstances of a candidate, Occupational Health may require a personal appointment with the candidate to ascertain fitness for work. This may delay the appointment process.

In some cases, Occupational Health may declare that on medical grounds the candidate requires reasonable adjustments to enable them to carry out the role. Where reasonable adjustments are not possible or appropriate, the offer may be retracted.

9.5 Eligibility to work in the UK

Under the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996 it is a criminal offence to employ someone from outside the European Economic Area (EEA) who is subject to immigration control unless the person has permission to work in the UK. As an employer, the School is required to make basic document checks to make sure it does not break the law by employing illegal workers. See *Appendix A – Eligibility to work in the UK and documents for overseas staff*.

9.6 Evidence of Qualifications Required for the Job

In posts where qualifications are an essential requirement, successful candidates must provide proof in the form of a certificate of achievement, membership number or other documentary evidence that may be relevant. For centrally-employed teaching staff, you can contact your HR provider who have access to an online service which enables a quick verification of qualifications, induction and registration status of all teachers, via the DfE – Teaching Agency.

10. Commencement of Employment

Prior to commencement of employment and once in receipt of satisfactory pre-employment checks,
employment can be confirmed, and the candidate can be sent the following:

- Confirmation of employment and start date.
- Contract of employment.
- New Starter form to HR provider.
- Pensions form.
- New Starter Checklist
- Job Description and Personnel Specification.

11. Evaluation

It is extremely important to evaluate the success of the recruitment and selection process at each stage to see whether mistakes were made and whether a repetition of them can be avoided in the future.

Effective monitoring is essential as a key element to inform the recruitment strategy and is an important tool in fulfilling the responsibility to provide equality of opportunity to all job applicants. Data collected for monitoring should not be used for any other purposes.

It is also advisable to monitor where applicants have heard about vacancies in order to identify which source is most effective.

Candidates have the right to request feedback on the status of their application at any stage of the recruitment process.

12. Monitoring and Review

The Recruitment and Selection Guidance will be reviewed and updated in line with current legislation and best practice. Any review and revisions will be undertaken by HR in consultation with the council's recognised Trade Unions.

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