

ST JAMES' RC PRIMARY SCHOOL SAFER RECRUITMENT POLICY

This policy has the School's Motto at its heart.

Faith in action,

Growing together,

Walking in the footsteps of Christ

INTRODUCTION

The safe recruitment of staff in schools is the first step to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in education. St James' RC Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all pupils in its care. As an employer, the school expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aims of the Safer Recruitment policy is to help deter, reject or identify people who might abuse pupils or are otherwise unsuited to working with them by having appropriate procedures for appointing staff.

The aims of the School's recruitment policy are as follows:

- To ensure that the best possible staff are recruited on the basis of their merits, abilities and suitability for the position;
- To ensure that all job applicants are considered equally and consistently;
- To ensure that no job applicant is treated unfairly on any grounds including race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or religious belief, sex or sexual orientation, marital or civil partner status, disability or age;
- To ensure compliance with all relevant legislation, recommendations and guidance including the statutory guidance published by the Department for Education (DfE), Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), the Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales 2015 (the Prevent Duty Guidance) and any guidance or code of practice published by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS); and
- To ensure that the school meets its commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people by carrying out all necessary pre-employment checks.

Employees involved in the recruitment and selection of staff are responsible for familiarising themselves with and complying with the provisions of this policy. The recruitment and selection process should ensure the identification of the person best suited to the job at the school based on the applicant's abilities, qualification, experience and merit as measured against the job description and person specification. The recruitment and selection of staff will be conducted in a professional, timely and responsive manner and in compliance with current employment legislation, and relevant safeguarding legislation and statutory guidance (including KCSIE and Prevent Duty Guidance). If a member of staff involved in the recruitment process has a close personal or familial relationship with an applicant they must declare it as soon as they are aware of the individual's application.

This policy should be read alongside the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the responsibility of the Governing Body to:

- Ensure the school has effective policies and procedures in place for recruitment of all staff and volunteers in accordance with DfE guidance and legal requirements.
- Monitor the school's compliance with them.

It is the responsibility of the Head teacher to:

- Ensure that the school operates safe recruitment procedures and makes sure all appropriate checks are carried out on all staff and volunteers who work at the school.
- To monitor contractors' and agencies' compliance with this document.
- Promote welfare of the children at every stage of the procedure.

Definition of Regulated Activity and Frequency

Any position undertaken at, or on behalf of the School will amount to "regulated activity" if it is carried out:

- Frequently, meaning once a week or more; or
- Overnight, meaning between 2.00 am and 6.00 am; or
- Satisfies the "period condition", meaning four times or more in a 30-day period; and
- Provides the opportunity for contact with children.

The school is required to carry out an enhanced DBS check for all staff, supply staff, volunteers and governors who will be engaging in regulated activity.

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCEDURE

Identification of the need for an appointment

The staffing structure and need for certain posts will be assessed when a member of staff leaves, when the budget is under review or at other appropriate times.

Documentation

Before advertising, the Head teacher will ensure appropriate documentation is available for prospective applicants including an up-to-date job description and person specification. Once the need for an appointment has been identified, the school will proceed to advertise internally, locally and nationally as appropriate.

A job description is a key document in the recruitment process, and must be finalised prior to taking any other steps in the process. It will clearly and accurately set out the duties and responsibilities of the job role.

The person specification is of equal importance and informs the selection decision. It details the skills, experience, abilities and expertise that are required to do the job.

Advertising

Any advertisement will make clear the school's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. All documentation relating to applicants will be treated confidentially in accordance with GDPR.

Potential candidates will be sent an information pack containing the following:

- Job Description and Person Specification
- Details of how to apply and the closing dates
- Information about the school and whether it will be possible to make an exploratory visit prior to applying
- An application form

- A statement of commitment to safeguarding children and young people:

“This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. An enhanced DBS Certificate is required for this post prior to commencement”.

Short listing

An appointment team will be established at this stage which will usually consist of the Head teacher, the Deputy Head teacher and the Chair of Governors.

There is further guidance that sets out in more detail how the selection process applies to Deputy and Head teachers.

Once the closing date has passed, the appointment team will shortlist the candidates using criteria established within the person specification. Shortlisted candidates will then be invited for an interview explaining that referees will be contacted and they will be given further information about what they need to do in preparation. This will include bringing appropriate documentation so that a DBS check can be initiated for the successful candidate. Carry out an online search on shortlisted candidates as part of due diligence.

References

References for short-listed applicants will be sent for immediately after short-listing. All offers of employment will be subject to the receipt of a minimum of two references which are considered satisfactory by the school. One of the references must be from the applicant's current or most recent employer. If the current/most recent employment does/did not involve work with children, then the second reference should be from the employer with whom the applicant most recently worked with children. The referee should not be a relative. References will always be sought and obtained directly from the referee and their purpose is to provide objective and factual information to support appointment decisions. All referees will be asked whether they believe the applicant is suitable for the job for which they have applied and whether they have any reason to believe that the applicant is unsuitable to work with children. The school will request a written reference and will request information about whether the referee would re-employ were there a suitable post. References will be read before the interview so that the panel chair may decide whether any issues arising can be investigated during the interview.

Pre-visits

Any pre-visits to the school will normally start with a welcome by the Head teacher and at some stage a tour of the school. Time will be set aside to provide candidates with information about the post.

Interviews

There will be a face-to-face interview wherever possible, and a minimum of two interviewers will see the applicants for the vacant position. The interview process will explore the applicant's ability to carry out the job description and meet the person specification. It will enable the panel to explore any anomalies or gaps which have been identified in order to satisfy themselves that the chosen applicant can meet the safeguarding criteria (in line with Safer Recruitment Training). Any information in regard to past disciplinary action or allegations, cautions or convictions will be discussed and considered in the circumstance of the individual case during the interview process, if it has been disclosed on the application form. At least one member of any interviewing panel will have undertaken safer recruitment training. All applicants who are invited to an interview will be required to bring evidence of their identity, address and qualifications. Original documents will only be accepted and photocopies will be taken. Unsuccessful applicant documents will be destroyed 6 months after the recruitment programme.

A variety of selection procedures will be used, relating to essential and desirable characteristics including competencies identified within the person specification for example:

Competency based questioning – candidates are asked a series of probing questions around past activities to establish what experience they have of typical situations (e.g. running a project, leading a team, communicating with angry parents), what they did, what happened as a result, what they learnt about such situations, what they might do differently, what feedback they have received.

Critical Incident interviewing – candidates are asked to talk about particular events or development in their career. This can provide insights into motives and ways of working.

Teaching a lesson - this provides very important information especially about how well the candidates plan lessons, how they interact with pupils and how well they teach. This does need careful planning and pupils need to be told in advance what they are doing and why. Where it is not practical for a lesson to take place, something as simple as a discussion between the candidate and pupils can provide useful insights.

Student Interview Panel - candidates are quizzed by pupils. This allows pupils to provide feedback to the final panel and often provides a fascinating and very useful insight into how candidates communicate with pupils. Pupils very often provide interesting and useful feedback which adds much to the selection procedure.

In-tray / e-mail response exercises - these show how effectively candidates can organise their work, prioritise, interpret and respond to messages. Candidates may be asked to communicate their initial thoughts in writing if written communication is key or orally to a panel where their underlying assumptions and beliefs may be explored further.

Presentation - useful for head teacher appointments or other senior posts where the ability to present information and ideas to parents and other stakeholders is important.

Group exercise - a structured discussion with other candidates to assess team working and negotiation skills.

Questions and tasks for all the above activities need to be planned in advance. All candidates must be given the same opportunity to provide evidence of competency against the chosen selection criteria. The agreed questioning framework should be followed for all candidates but panellists may exercise discretion as to which supplementary questions they ask. If they feel there is a need to probe further, they should do so. However, if they believe they have sufficient evidence to make a judgment about an area of competency there is no need to ask further questions. It is entirely appropriate to ask candidates about issues arising from their initial application and from other selection methods used on the day.

The appointment

Taking all the evidence gathered, the panel makes its choice. The successful candidate is made a verbal offer of the post. If they accept, then they are sent a formal offer which states that the appointment is subject to satisfactory completion of pre-employment checks including DBS checks. The unsuccessful candidates are informed and offered a debrief on their performance.

Safeguarding procedures on the interview day

During the day, the following checks will be made

- Proof of identity
- Academic qualifications
- A DBS check will be initiated for the successful candidate – all candidates will be asked to bring appropriate documentation for this.
- The candidate will be asked in the interview to explain any gaps in time on the application form

After the Appointment

The successful candidate will be sent a formal offer of the post which they must respond to in writing. A contract of employment will be issued in due course. An induction programme will be compiled by the relevant member of staff which will include ensuring the appointee understands the school's safeguarding procedures. Training will be provided where gaps have been identified.

DBS AND VETTING

As soon as a new member of staff has accepted the position, the Head teacher will arrange for an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). If any issues are raised by the check, the Head teacher should investigate them by speaking to the person concerned and, following discussion with the Chair of Governors, decide whether to proceed with their recruitment. All staff and volunteers will, as appropriate, be checked with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). All staff and volunteers will, as appropriate, be checked against the prohibition lists if appointed after September 2014. Candidates must confirm their identity by supplying official documents and must show their passport to prove their right to work in the UK. When employing supply teachers or teachers from abroad, the school will carry out appropriate checks. Teachers' TRN numbers will be kept and recorded. NI numbers will be obtained and recorded. Once staff have been employed the school will keep a live single central record.

Volunteers will have an enhanced DBS and show identification. Agency workers will be checked by the agencies, but the school will hold their DBS numbers and ask for identification to be shown.

INDUCTION

Induction is the process of familiarisation, allowing new members of staff to settle in quickly and easily. It will make the new starter feel welcome and ready to contribute fully to the team by becoming familiar with the people, the surroundings, the role and the school and its values and the community. Induction should be seen as the first stage of a training programme. It can help staff become effective more quickly, help them fit in and reduce the stress of starting a new job, improve motivation, performance and confidence, extend their range of skills, work towards continuous professional development and decrease staff turnover and absences. The member of staff will be given a suitable mentor and a date will be arranged for a visit to the school before first day of work. Staff induction should be timetabled after the acceptance of appointment and before the first day at work. It should be as follows:

1. Give Induction Checks List for completion together with Health and Safety Policy.
2. Meet appointed mentor.
3. Be given a tour of the school.
4. Meet key people.
5. Be given the Staff Handbook.
7. Give Safeguarding and Child protection policy.
8. Give Teaching and Learning Policy.

INDUCTION FOR EARLY CAREER TEACHERS

The Head teacher will comply with the statutory guidance on Induction for EARLY CAREER TEACHERS (ECTs).

VOLUNTEERS

The school will request an enhanced DBS disclosure and Children's Barred List information on all volunteers undertaking regulated activity with pupils at or on behalf of the school (the definition of regulated activity set out above will be applied to all volunteers). Under no circumstances will the school permit an unchecked volunteer to have unsupervised contact with pupils. In addition the school will seek to obtain such further suitability information about a volunteer as it considers appropriate in the circumstances. This may include (but is not limited to the following):

- formal or informal information provided by staff, parents and other volunteers;
- character references from the volunteer's place of work or any other relevant source; and
- an informal safer recruitment interview.

Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy will be updated in line with any new developments in the school and/or any new government guidance. It was last reviewed in: spring 2023 and it will next be reviewed in: spring 2026

This statement of policy was approved by the Governing Body at their meeting on:-

Date: _____

Signed:

_____ (Chairperson)

_____ (Head teacher)