

# TONBRIDGE SCHOOL

## STAFF RECRUITMENT POLICY

### SUMMARY AND SCOPE

1. The Governors of Tonbridge School are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people: they expect and require all staff, boys and volunteers to share this commitment.
2. It is therefore vital that the school adopts recruitment and selection procedures and other human resources management processes that help to deter, reject, or identify people who might abuse children, or are otherwise unsuited to work with them. This policy sets out policies and practices that are to be followed for the recruitment of all staff: it seeks to achieve the aim stated at para.1 by strengthening safeguards for boys and young people through deterring and preventing abuse. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is an integral factor in HR management and an essential part of creating safe environments for boys and other young people.
3. This policy details a range of recruitment best practices, and is to be followed by all governors and staff who take part in recruiting and selecting people to work in any capacity in Tonbridge School, Tonbridge Services Limited, The Tonbridge Foundation and St Augustine's Chapel Charity. This also includes workers not on the payroll, e.g. staff employed by contractors, and unpaid volunteers.

### ELEMENTS OF SAFER PRACTICE

4. Safer practice in recruitment means thinking about and including issues to do with child protection and safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children at every stage of the procedure. It starts with the process of planning the recruitment exercise and, where the post is advertised, ensuring that the advertisement makes clear the school's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. It also requires a consistent and thorough process of obtaining, collating, analysing, and evaluating information from and about applicants. The main elements of the process include:
  - a. ensuring the job description makes reference to the responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children;
  - b. ensuring that the person specification includes specific reference to suitability to work with children;
  - c. obtaining and scrutinising comprehensive information from applicants, and taking up and satisfactorily resolving any discrepancies or anomalies;
  - d. obtaining independent professional and character references that answer specific questions to help assess an applicant's suitability to work with children and following up any concerns;
  - e. a face-to-face interview that explores the candidate's suitability to work with children as well as his or her suitability for the post;
  - f. verifying the successful applicant's identity;
  - g. verifying that the successful applicant has any academic or vocational qualifications claimed;
  - h. checking his or her previous employment history and experience;
  - i. verifying that s/he has the health and physical capacity for the job; and
  - j. a mandatory CRB check to the appropriate level specified for the post or duties in question.
5. It is important not to rely solely on CRB checks to screen out unsuitable applicants. Those checks are an essential safeguard, but they will only pick up abusers who have been convicted, or have come to the

attention of the police, or who have been listed. Many individuals who are unsuited to working with children will not have any previous convictions.

6. A checklist is to be used to sign-off each stage of the process and is to be retained as a permanent record at the end of the process so to fulfil the statutory requirement to maintain a record of the recruitment and vetting checks.

## **CONTINUING AWARENESS**

7. It is vital that the measures described above are applied thoroughly whenever someone is recruited to work with children, but that must not be the end of the matter. Schools are safe environments for the great majority of children, and the vast majority of people who work with children, have their safety and welfare at heart. But we must not be complacent. Some people seek access to children in order to abuse, and that abused children very often do not disclose the abuse at the time. All members of staff are to be briefed regularly on the School's Child Protection Policy and should not hesitate to report any concerns, no matter how tenuous, to the School's Child Protection Officer, the Second Master or the Bursar during school holidays.

## **SAFER RECRUITMENT PRACTICE**

8. The School's statement of overall policy for the protection of children set out in para.1 above is to be repeated in all publicity materials, recruitment websites, advertisements, candidate information packs, person specifications, job descriptions, competency frameworks and induction training.
9. Planning is vital to successful recruitment. It is important to be clear about what mix of qualities, qualifications and experience a successful candidate will need to demonstrate, and whether there are any particular matters that need to be mentioned in the advertisement for the post in order to prevent unwanted applications. It is essential to plan the recruitment exercise itself, identifying who should be involved, assigning responsibilities, and setting aside sufficient time for the work needed at each stage so that safeguards are not skimmed or overlooked. For example, it is important to organise the selection process to allow references to be obtained on short-listed candidates before interview. This responsibility will fall primarily to the Headmaster's Secretary and the School's Personnel Officer.
10. The person specification will need careful thought and drafting. It is also good practice to make sure at the outset that all the other material, e.g. the application form, job description, and information or guidance for applicants that will form part of the candidate information pack is up-to-date, and clearly sets out the extent of the relationships and contact with children, and the degree of responsibility for children that the person will have in the position to be filled. Time and effort spent in this stage of the process should help minimise the risk of making an unsuitable appointment.

## **ADVERTISEMENTS**

11. When a vacancy is advertised, the advertisement is to include a statement about the school's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, and reference to the need for the successful applicant to undertake an Enhanced or Standard CRB Disclosure as well as the usual details of the post and salary, qualifications required, etc.

## **THE JOB APPLICATION FORM**

12. Good practice indicates that employers should use an application form to obtain a common sense of core data from all applicants as a curriculum vitae drawn up by applicants in place of an application form will

only contain the information the applicant wishes to present and may omit relevant details. For applicants for all types of post the form is to require:

- a. full identifying details of the applicant including current and former names, date of birth, current address, and National Insurance Number;
  - b. a statement of any academic and/or vocational qualifications the applicant has obtained that are relevant to the position for which s/he is applying with details of the awarding body and date of award;
  - c. a full history in chronological order since leaving secondary education, including periods of any post-secondary education or training, and part-time and voluntary work as well as full-time employment, with start and end dates, explanations for periods not in employment, education or training, and reasons for leaving employment;
  - d. a declaration of any family or close relationship to existing employees or employers (including councillors and governors);
  - e. Details of referees. One referee should be the applicant's current or most recent employer: normally two referees should be sufficient. Where an applicant who is not currently working with children has done so in the past a reference is also to be obtained from the employer by whom the person was most recently employed in work with children. The form is to make it clear that references will not be accepted from relatives or from people writing solely in the capacity of friends; and
  - f. a statement of the personal qualities and experience that the applicant believes are relevant to his or her suitability for the post advertised and how s/he meets the person specification.
13. The application form is also to include an explanation that the post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and therefore that all convictions, cautions and bindovers, including those regarded as "spent", must be declared. It also requires a signed statement that the person is not on List 99, disqualified from working with children, or subject to sanctions imposed by a regulatory body, e.g. the General Teaching Council (GTC), and either has no convictions, cautions, or bindovers, or has attached details of their record in a sealed envelope marked confidential.
14. It should record that:
- a. where appropriate the successful applicant will be required to provide a CRB Disclosure at the appropriate level for the post;
  - b. the prospective employer will seek references on short-listed candidates, and may approach previous employers for information to verify particular experience or qualifications, before interview;
  - c. if the applicant is currently working with children, on either a paid or voluntary basis, his or her current employer with children will be asked about disciplinary offences relating to children, including any in which the penalty is time expired (that is where a warning could no longer be taken into account in any new disciplinary hearing for example) and whether the applicant has been the subject of any child protection concerns, and if so, the outcome of any enquiry or disciplinary procedure. If the applicant is not currently working with children but has done so in the past, that previous employer will be asked about those issues; and
  - d. that providing false information is an offence, and could result in the application being rejected, or summary dismissal if the applicant has been selected, and possible referral to the police.

15. Applicants for teaching posts are also be asked:

- a. to provide their DfES reference number;
- b. whether s/he has Qualified Teacher Status (QTS); and
- c. if s/he is registered with the GTC for England.

## **JOB DESCRIPTION**

16. The Job Description should clearly state the main duties and responsibilities of the post and the individual's responsibility for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children and young persons s/he is responsible for, or comes into contact with.

## **PERSON SPECIFICATION**

17. The Person Specification is to:

- a. specify the qualification and experience, and any other requirements needed to perform the role in relation to working with children and young people;
- b. describe the competence and qualities that the successful candidate should be able to demonstrate; and
- c. explain how these requirements will be tested and assessed during the selection process. For example:

*“In addition to candidates’ ability to perform the duties of the post, the interview will also explore issues relating to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children including:*

- *motivation to work with children and young people;*
- *ability to form and maintain appropriate relationships and personal boundaries with children and young people;*
- *emotional resilience in working with challenging behaviours;*
- *attitudes to the use of authority and maintaining discipline; and*
- *an explanation that if the applicant is short-listed any relevant issues arising from his or her references will be taken up at interview.”*

## **CANDIDATES INFORMATION PACK**

18. The pack is to include a copy of:

- a. the application form, and explanatory notes about completing the form;
- b. the job description and person specification;
- c. any relevant information about the school and the recruitment process, and statements of relevant policies equal opportunities, the recruitment of ex-offenders, etc;
- d. School's Child Protection Policy Statement; and
- e. a statement of the terms and conditions relating to the post.

## **SCRUTINISING AND SHORTLISTING**

19. All applications are to 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. Incomplete applications are not to be accepted and should be returned for completion. Any anomalies or discrepancies or gaps in employment identified by the scrutiny should be noted so that they can be taken up as part of the consideration of whether to short list the applicant. As well as reasons for obvious 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 teaching or temporary work, also need to be explored and verified.

20. All candidates are to be assessed equally against the criteria contained in the person specification without exception or variation.

## **REFERENCES**

21. The purpose of seeking references is to obtain objective and factual information to support appointment decisions. They are always to be sought and obtained directly from the referee and must not rely on references or testimonials provided by the candidate, or on open references and testimonials, i.e. "To Whom it May Concern".

## **CHECK BEFORE INTERVIEW**

22. If a short-listed applicant claims to have some specific qualification or previous experience that is particularly relevant to the post for which s/he is applying that will not be verified by a reference, the facts are to be identified before interview so that any discrepancy can be explored at interview. The qualification or experience can usually be verified quickly by telephoning the relevant previous employer and asking for written confirmation of the facts.

## **INVOLVING BOYS & STAFF WITH APPLICANTS**

23. Involving boys and staff in the recruitment and selection process in some way, or observing short listed candidates' interaction with them is common, and recognised as good practice. Candidates for teaching posts will normally be asked to teach a lesson and short-listed candidates will generally be shown round the school by students or a senior member of staff, and/or meet with pupils and staff.

## **INTERVIEWS**

24. The interview should assess the merits of each candidate against the job requirements and explore their suitability to work with boys. The selection process for people who will work with children is always to include a face-to-face interview even if there is only one candidate.

## **INVITATION TO INTERVIEW**

25. In addition to the arrangements for interviews, time and place, directions to the venue, and membership of the interview panel, the invitation is to remind candidates about how the interview will be conducted and the areas it will explore including suitability to work with children. Enclosing a copy of the person specification can usefully draw attention to the relevant information.
26. The invitation is also to stress that the identity of the successful candidate will need to be checked thoroughly to ensure the person is who he or she claims to be, and that where a CRB Disclosure is appropriate, the person will be required to complete an application for a CRB Disclosure straight away. All candidates are to be instructed to bring with them documentary evidence of their identity that will satisfy CRB requirements, i.e. either a current photo driving licence or passport, or a full birth certificate, plus a document such as a utility bill or financial statement that shows the candidate's current name and address, and where appropriate change of name documentation.
27. Candidates are also to be asked to bring documents confirming any educational and professional qualifications that are necessary or relevant for the post, e.g. the original or a certified copy of a certificate, or diploma, or a letter of confirmation from the awarding body. If the successful candidate cannot

produce original documents or certified copies written confirmation of his or her relevant qualifications must be obtained from the awarding body. A copy of the documents used to verify the successful candidate's identity and qualifications are to be kept for the personnel file.

## **INTERVIEW PANEL**

28. The interview panel will normally consist of a minimum of two interviewers: for senior or specialist posts, a larger panel might be appropriate. A panel of at least two people allows one member to observe and assess the candidate, and make notes, while the candidate is talking to the other. It also reduces the possibility of any dispute about what was said or asked during the interview.
29. The members of the panel are to:
  - a. have the necessary authority to make decisions about appointments;
  - b. be appropriately trained, (one member of interview panels is to have undertaken the on-line training provided via the National College for School Leadership);
  - c. meet before the interviews to: reach a consensus about the required standard for the job to which they are appointing; consider the issues to be explored with each candidate and who on the panel will ask about each of those; and agree their assessment criteria in accordance with the person specification.
30. The panel is to agree in advance a list of questions for each candidate that they will not deviate from, but they should agree a set of questions they will ask all candidates relating to requirements of the post, and the issues they will explore with each candidate based on the information provided in the candidates' application and references (if available). A candidate's response to a question about an issue will determine whether and how that is followed up. Where possible, hypothetical questions are to be avoided as they allow theoretical answers. It is better to ask competence based questions that ask a candidate to relate how s/he has responded to, or dealt with, an actual situation, or questions that test a candidate's attitudes and understanding of issues.

## **SCOPE OF INTERVIEW**

31. In addition to assessing and evaluating the applicant's suitability for the particular post, the interview panel are also to explore:
  - a. the candidate's attitudes toward children and young people;
  - b. his or her ability to support the school's agenda for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children;
  - c. gaps in the candidate's employment history; and
  - d. any concerns or discrepancies arising from the information provided by the candidate and/or referee.
32. The panel are also to ask the candidate if they wish to declare anything in light of the requirement for a CRB Disclosure.
33. If for any reason references are not obtained before the interview, the candidate is to be asked at interview if there is anything s/he wishes to declare or discuss in light of the questions that have been (or will be) put to his or her referees. References are to be obtained and scrutinised before a person's appointment is confirmed and before s/he starts work.

## **CONDITIONAL OFFER OF EMPLOYMENT PRE-EMPLOYMENT CHECKS**

34. An offer of appointment to the successful candidate is to be conditional upon:

- a. the receipt of at least two satisfactory references (if not already been received);
- b. verification of the candidate's identity (if that could not be verified straight after the interview) and right to work in the UK;
- c. a satisfactory CRB Disclosure at the appropriate level;
- d. verification of the candidate's medical fitness;
- e. verification of qualifications (if not verified after the interview; and
- f. for non teaching posts, satisfactory completion of a probationary period.

35. All checks are to be:

- a. confirmed in writing;
- b. documented and retained on the personnel file (subject to relevant advice contained in the CRB Code of Practice and the school's data protection arrangements); and
- c. followed up where they are unsatisfactory or there are discrepancies in the information provided.

36. In the event that the CRB Disclosure shows the applicant has been disqualified from working with children by a Court; or an applicant has provided false information in, or in support of, his or her application; or there are serious concerns about an applicant's suitability to work with children, the facts are to be reported to the police and/or DfES Children's Safeguarding Operations Unit (formerly the Teachers Misconduct Team).

## **OVERSEAS CANDIDATES**

37. Enhanced CRB Disclosures are to be completed on overseas staff in accordance with the specialist direction issued by the DfES.

## **INDUCTION**

38. There is to be an induction programme for all staff and volunteers newly appointed regardless of previous experience. Its purpose is to:

- a. provide training and information about the school's policies and procedures;
- b. support individuals in a way that is appropriate for the role for which they have been engaged;
- c. confirm the conduct expected of staff within the school;
- d. provide opportunities for a new member of staff or volunteer to discuss any issues or concerns about their role or responsibilities; and
- e. to enable the HOD/person's line manager to recognise any concerns or issues about the person's ability or suitability at the outset and address them immediately.

39. The content and nature of the induction process will vary according to the role and previous experience of the new member of staff or volunteer, but as far as safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is concerned, the induction programme should include information about, and written statements of:

- a. policies and procedures in relation to safeguarding and promoting welfare e.g. child protection, anti-bullying, anti-racism, physical intervention or restraint, intimate care, internet safety and any local child protection and safeguarding procedures;
- b. safe practice and the standards of conduct and behaviour expected of staff and boys;
- c. how and with whom any concerns about those issues should be raised; and
- d. other relevant personnel procedures e.g. disciplinary, capability and whistle-blowing.

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

## **CONTRACTORS**

41. The Bursar and Clerk of Works are to ensure that the terms of any contract they let that requires the contractor to employ staff to work with, or provide services for the school requires the contractor to adopt and implement the measures described in this policy. They are also to monitor the contractor's compliance.

## **VOLUNTEERS**

42. Volunteers are, like teachers, seen by children as safe and trustworthy adults. If the school is actively seeking volunteers, and those concerned are considering candidates about whom they have little or no recent knowledge, they are to adopt the same recruitment measures as would apply for paid staff. In other circumstances, for example where a parent who is well known is asked to take on a particular role, a streamlined procedure can be adopted by seeking references, checking to ensure others in the school community know of no concerns and can make a positive recommendation, conducting an informal interview to gauge the person's aptitude and suitability, and undertaking a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) disclosure. In other circumstances, e.g. where a volunteer's roles will be one-off, such as accompanying teachers and pupils on a day outing or helping at a concert or school fete, such measures would be unnecessary provided that the person is not to be left alone and unsupervised in charge of boys. Where volunteers recruited by another organisation work at Tonbridge, e.g. sports coaches from a local club, the supervising member of staff is to obtain assurance from that organisation that the person has been properly vetted. This will normally be undertaken in consultation with the Personnel Officer.

## **MAINTAINING A SAFER CULTURE**

43. Para.7 above describes the need for continued awareness. It is important that all staffs have appropriate training and induction so that they understand their roles and responsibilities and are confident about carrying them out. Staffs, boys and parents also need to feel confident that they can raise issues or concerns about the safety or welfare of children, and that they will be listened to and taken seriously. That can be achieved by maintaining an ethos of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and protecting staff which is supported by:
- a. a clear written statement of the standards of behaviour and the boundaries of appropriate behaviour expected of staff and pupils that is understood and endorsed by all;
  - b. appropriate induction and training;
  - c. regular briefing and discussion of relevant issues;
  - d. including relevant material from the framework for Personal Social and Health Education in the curriculum;
  - e. ensuring all those working with children in education settings are familiar with the good practice; and
  - f. clear reporting systems if a pupil, learner, member of staff or other person has concerns about the safety of children.

## **MONITORING**

44. Monitoring of both the recruitment process and induction arrangements by both the Second Master and Bursar will allow for future recruitment practices to be better informed. It is to cover:
- a. staff turnover and reasons for leaving;
  - b. exit interviews; and
  - c. the attendance of new members of staff at Child Protection Training.

