

WOODLANDS PRIMARY SCHOOL



RECRUITMENT PROCEDURE

Updated: September 2024

Review: September 2025



CHESHIRE WEST AND CHESTER

SCHOOLS HR

Model Recruitment Procedure

1. Introduction

Woodlands Primary School recognise the need to have a dedicated workforce who are committed to raising standards, safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. We aim to promote these values through fair and transparent recruitment policies and practices that ensure that the right people with the right skills are employed to work in our school.

It is vital that schools adopt good recruitment and selection procedure which follow the principles of safer recruitment. The procedure is designed identify suitably skilled, qualified and experienced people to work in our school, and to deter and reject those people who may be unsuitable to work with children.

This procedure takes into account the relevant employment and education guidance and legislation including DfE 'Working Together to Safeguard Children', DfE 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' and School Staffing Regulations.

This procedure should be used for all recruitment in schools including both teaching and support staff. They can also be used to support the recruitment of volunteers in school as the same principles should apply. For the appointment of Headteachers, DfE and NGA Guidance is available (which can also be broadly applied to Deputy and Assistant Headteacher appointments). In schools with a religious character, appointing managers or Governors are also advised to consult the guidance produced by the Dioceses.

Consideration should also be given to applying these principles to those people who although may not be employed by the school, regularly come into contact with children, or who will be responsible for children, as a result of their work. They are also people who regularly work in a setting such as a school when the pupils are present, who may not have direct contact with children as a result of their job, but nevertheless will be seen as safe and trustworthy because of their regular presence in the school. This includes workers not on the payroll e.g. staff employed by contractors, including supply teachers employed by agencies and unpaid volunteers.

Schools should ensure that the terms of any contract they let that requires the contractor to employ staff to work with, or provide services for, children for whom the school is responsible also requires the contractor to adopt and implement the measures described in this document. The school should also monitor the contractor's compliance.

It is important to remember that schools and Governing Bodies should retain sufficient notes of the recruitment process that would be able to use these in the event of any potential challenge of their decision making.

The information should be retained for 6 months.

2. Safer Recruitment

The principles of safer recruitment have been developed following the Bichard enquiry which provided recommendations for the recruitment of people working in schools. The main purpose of safer recruitment is to deter and prevent those people who are unsuitable to work with children being able to work in schools. The procedure will cover each of these areas in more detail but broadly the principles of safer recruitment are as follows:

- ensuring the job description makes reference to the responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children;
- that the person specification includes specific reference to suitability to work with children;
- obtaining and scrutinising comprehensive information from applicants, and taking up and satisfactorily resolving any discrepancies or anomalies;
- 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;
- a face to face interview that explores the candidate's suitability to work with children as well as their suitability for the post;
- verifying the successful applicant's identity;
- verifying that the successful applicant has any academic or vocational qualifications claimed;
- checking the candidate's previous employment history and experience
- verify the candidate's mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities.
- a Disclosure and Barring Service check via the DBS.

The School Staffing Regulations clearly detail that at least one member of the recruitment panel should be trained on safer recruitment (which should be refreshed every three years) governed and overseen by the Lucy Faithful Foundation and provides an overview of the principles of safer recruitment. However, it is not intended to be a comprehensive training course on recruitment and selection and it would be advisable to have further training in this area too.

3. Managing Vacant Posts

Job roles can become vacant for a variety of reasons including resignations, retirements, reduction in hours, absence of the substantive postholder. The first decision that a Governing Body or Headteacher will need to make in any recruitment process is to consider if the vacant role should be filled and if so in the same way as previous. It is important to consider:

- Whether appropriate budget is available?
- If the post is necessary?
- Whether the duties of the role could be fulfilled in a different way?
- Whether there is a permanent or temporary need to fill the role, and if temporary, how long should this be for?
- Are there any workforce changes or reductions being considered or planned in the short/medium term which may affect the vacant role?
- If there are any longer-term plans such as federation or conversion to become an academy which may affect the replacement?

- If collaboration with other schools could be considered, especially when considering the appointment of Headteachers

Further guidance and information is available in the DfE Workforce Planning Guide https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/737168/Workforce_planning_guidance_August_2018.pdf.

4. Preparing to Recruit

As soon as it has been decided to fill the vacant role, the job description and person specification should be prepared to fully outline the key elements of the job and the qualifications, skills and attributes which will be needed.

All support staff job roles should be evaluated using the NJC job evaluation scheme. Many jobs have already been evaluated using the NJC scheme and copies of the evaluations can be found on the ecwip website. Where the job is a new support staff job, this will need to be evaluated under the NJC job evaluation scheme. A job description questionnaire (JDQ) will need to be prepared in order to evaluate the job. It is possible to tailor an existing job to meet the schools requirements as long as the content of the job is not fundamentally changed which may then impact on the evaluation.

The Job Description should provide a summary of the main tasks which will be required in the job. This should be the main 8 to 10 tasks which the postholder will be expected to carry out.

The Person Specification should detail the qualifications, skills and experience that will be required of the postholder. It can be helpful to differentiate if the qualifications, skills and experience are essential i.e. required to do the job, or if they are desirable and therefore not required to do the job but having those attributes would be an advantage.

Where the vacancy is an existing job the content of the job should be reviewed to ensure that it is accurate and up to date. It is important to check

- for any changes to terminology, service names or qualification changes.
- that there are no references requiring candidates to have x number of years' experience.
- the essential and desirable criteria are correctly identified.
- if the role is required to speak to members of the public as a regular and intrinsic part of the role, then the following statement should be included under 'Other Requirements' '***The ability to converse at ease with customers and provide advice in accurate spoken English***'.

It is helpful to plan dates for the recruitment process at this stage, such as dates for hosting visits (if applicable), the closing date, shortlisting candidates and interviews. This will ensure that there are no unnecessary delays in the process.

5. Recruitment Panel

The Governing Body or Headteacher should bring together a panel who will be involved in the recruitment process. There should always be a minimum of two people on the panel, however

in some cases such as the appointment of a Headteacher, leadership or specialist teacher, it may be necessary to have more people on the panel.

School Staffing Regulations set out who should be involved in recruitment in schools. In Community and controlled schools the local authority may be involved in the recruitment process of a teacher. In Aided, Foundation and academy schools, this is not a requirement. Schools of a religious character may seek to have involvement of the diocese in appointments too.

Where a Headteacher is being appointed further guidance is available in the DfE and NGA document [Recruiting A Headteacher - GOV.UK](#).

6. Preparing The Advertisement

The job advertisement will provide potential candidates with the first opportunity to find out more about the job vacancy so it is important to make sure that the content of the advert provides a good summary of the job.

The advertisement should be fairly succinct but should be detailed enough to provide candidates with information about the job. There should be information about what the job will entail and also what skills and experience are needed.

Safer recruitment guidance details that all job advertisements should include details of the school's safeguarding policy and also that a DBS check is required of candidates.

It may be appropriate to circulate the job vacancy only within the school, however this will obviously limit the pool of potential candidates who are available.

Most job searches are started online and therefore take some time to consider key words, phrases and terminology that potential candidates would search for. If these key words are included in your job advert, it is more likely to appear in search engines and be seen by candidates.

There is a Cheshire West School's recruitment website to which schools can subscribe to and post all job vacancies on the site. Jobs advertised on this site will also be advertised on Indeed and Google For Jobs at no extra cost. There is no specific requirement to advertise a job vacancy in any specific media and School Staffing Regulations (covering maintained schools) detail that a Headteacher vacancy should be advertised in such a manner it considers appropriate, unless there is good reason not to.

Job adverts can also be posted on a wide range of job sites some of which are free to post and others which may incur a cost:

- School Website
- School's Recruitment Website
- Social media – job vacancy details can be posted on school social media such as Facebook and Twitter (it is also possible to pay for advertising to target specific groups using social media)
- Teachers Vacancy Service – operated by DfE and schools can post teacher job vacancies only at no cost <https://teaching-vacancies.service.gov.uk/>

- Job vacancy website – there are a wide range of job vacancy sites available specifically for job seekers
- Sector specific media – Education sector specific sites often have a jobs section to post jobs e.g. TES

It is important to give candidates enough time to see the job advert and prepare their application and so a suitable closing date should be set to allow them to do this.

7. Application Form

Safer recruitment guidance stipulates that schools should use an application form for candidates to apply for the job vacancy. Governing Bodies may select the most appropriate application form for their school which could be either the online application form which allows candidates to complete and submit their form, a Word document that candidates can complete and submit by e-mail or post, or alternatively schools of a religious character may use a diocesan application form.

For applicants for all types of post the form should obtain full identity details of the applicant including current and former names, current address, and National Insurance number. Equal opportunities monitoring form should contain any sensitive information such as date of birth, ethnic origin, gender etc.

- 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.
- a full history in chronological order since leaving secondary education, including periods of any post-secondary education/training, and part-time and voluntary work as well as full time employment, with 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 councillors and governors).
- details of referees. One referee should be the applicant's 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 his/her suitability for the post advertised and how s/he meets the person specification.

By using an application form, it allows any breaks in employment to be more easily identified and challenged. It also enables equality and diversity information to be more easily separated so that this cannot be challenged as part of the recruitment process.

It is important to remember that the application form, where equality and diversity information is included, not only contains sensitive personal data but also contains special category data, and therefore should be handled in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation.

8. Assessment Methods

Governing Bodies and Headteachers may find it helpful at the initial stage to plan the assessments that will be used to establish if the candidates meet the requirements of the job. A range of methods can be used to assess candidates and each of these methods provides a different insight into the candidates.

Assessment methods should be appropriate for the role and include a range of tasks to assess the suitability of the candidates and provide an effective method of measuring the differences between the candidates. The person specification should be used to identify the areas that are being assessed and establish how the requirements are going to be measured. When selecting assessment methods, consideration should be given to those applicants who may have a disability and any adjustments which may be needed.

Observations – these can be a useful way of assessing how well a candidate can engage with children and also their attitude and approach in the classroom.

Work Based Tasks – this could involve carrying out tests which the candidate which may be expected to do as part of the job e.g. in-tray exercise, writing a letter etc

Assessment Tests – these are normally tests which are undertaken by candidates to systematically assess candidates ability, aptitude or attainment. Candidates are required to complete a short test which is normally online. This provides an overall score which is normally measured against a norm group (which is dependent upon the type of role).

Personality Profiles - provide an insight into the behaviours of the candidate and can be used to provide information about a candidates style which is especially useful for leadership roles where it helpful to understand how a candidate would respond in particular circumstances.

9. Shortlisting Candidates

All applications should be shortlisted against the essential and desirable criteria for the job. In the case of teaching appointments, where there is no job description or person specification available, it can be helpful to use the Teacher Standards or National Standards of Excellence for Headteachers as a way of assessing candidates.

Using the essential criteria initially, the recruitment panel should review each application and determine whether or not the candidate has met the essential criteria. Where there are a significant number of candidates who meet the essential criteria, you can use the desirable criteria as a further means of shortlisting candidates.

A matrix to demonstrate how each candidate has met the criteria for the job role can be a helpful tool. Where a candidate has not been shortlisted for the job vacancy, the recruitment panel should be prepared to justify the reasons why the candidate has not been shortlisted for the role and provide feedback should the candidate request this.

It isn't necessary to wait until the closing date to shortlist candidates and the recruitment panel can seek to review applications as they come in or every couple of days.

When shortlisting, safer recruitment principles require the recruitment panel to review the application forms for any breaks in employment and also to give consideration to attitudes towards children and safeguarding.

10. Scheduling Interviews and Assessments

Interviews and assessments should be scheduled as soon as possible after the closing date, but ensuring candidates are given sufficient notice to make arrangements to attend.

It is helpful for both the recruitment panel and the candidates if the dates for the recruitment process can be detailed at the start of the process so that there are no unnecessary delays.

Candidates should be invited to interview and/or to complete any assessments which may be required prior to attending for interview.

11. Obtaining References

At this stage in the process, it is important to seek to obtain references for the candidates who have been shortlisted. Keeping Children Safe in Education requires that references should be obtained before interview so that there is an opportunity to verify, confirm and challenge the contents of the references.

References should always be obtained from the current employer, or where the candidate is not currently in employment, from their most recent employer. The purpose of the reference is assess past behaviour as an indicator of future behaviour. Where a candidate has previously worked with children or young people then a reference from that period of employment should also be obtained.

Referees should be asked to complete a reference questionnaire so that specific questions can be asked about the candidate's previous employment history (including dates of employment), attitudes towards children and any concerns that may have been raised about the candidate. It is important to ensure that references are addressed to an individual and not 'to whom it may concern.' Where references are e-mailed, ensure that they are from a legitimate address.

The contents of references should be considered carefully and where appropriate, it may be necessary to discuss the content of the reference with the referee or the candidate. Further advice should be sought as required.

12. Interviews

It is important to make sure that the appropriate resources are in place for the interview and assessment process. The room should be suitable for the interview or assessment, have the necessary space available and is appropriately equipped and accessible (especially where a candidate has requested adjustments), more than one room may be needed if candidates are completing a test as well as attending an interview. Reception should be made aware that candidates are expected and if possible arrange for someone to meet and greet candidates.

The recruitment panel should agree a set of questions to explore the candidate's suitability for the role. These questions should be open questions designed to ensure that the candidate is able to demonstrate how their skills and experience would fulfil the role. The job description and person specification should be used to prepare the questions, or alternatively [Teacher Standards](#) or [Headteacher Standards of Excellence](#) may be helpful, as appropriate.

The questions should be recorded on an Interview Assessment Form, along with the expected response and an area to record notes of how the candidate responded to the question. It may be appropriate to probe the candidate's response to a question by asking appropriate supplementary questions. The responses to the questions and assessments should be scored so that comparisons can be made between candidates. It may be appropriate to weight certain questions where the questions are testing particularly important aspects of the role.

Candidates should be asked to bring along a copy of a document to confirm that they are eligible to work in the UK. This is normally a UK passport, a birth or adoption certificate (alongside a letter from a government agency confirming name and National Insurance number), but could include other documents too which can be checked using the following link to the .gov.uk website (<https://www.gov.uk/legal-right-work-uk>). It is important to take a copy of the appropriate documents to confirm this eligibility.

From 1st January 2021, it will be necessary to be particularly vigilant about checking the candidates right to work in the UK as we leave the European Union and free movement ends.

Following the introduction of the English Speaking Requirement for Public Facing Roles, it is important that where an employee is required to speak to members of the public as a regular and intrinsic part of the job, that this requirement is considered in appointments. For further information, please contact your HR Adviser.

This can be a two stage process and candidates can have a first and second stage interview and assessment process. It is advisable to notify candidates of this at the beginning, so that they know what to expect.

13. Making a Selection Decision

All of the interviews, assessments and scoring should be used to make the selection decision. Consideration should be given to all of the selection tools used and this is where it is helpful to score each exercise to effectively compare candidates. Details of the reason for the selection decision should be retained.

An initial offer should normally be made verbally and is subject to pre-employment checks including references (if there are any outstanding which hadn't been received before interview), medical questionnaire and DBS check.

Please note that temporary contracts should not normally be offered as an alternative to a probationary period. Where a contract is offered on a temporary basis, schools should be aware of potential redundancy costs if the employee has continuous service under the Redundancy Payment Modification Order (RPMO).

Unsuccessful candidates should be informed as soon as possible after the job role has been offered. It is important to offer all candidates feedback following an interview or assessment process.

When the candidate has verbally accepted the offer of employment, a formal written offer should be made to the candidate, subject to pre-employment checks. A copy of the offer, along with the contract of employment should be retained on the employee's file.

14. Pre-employment Checks

A range of pre-employment checks are undertaken to provide further confirmation of the candidate's suitability for the role.

References – A minimum of two references should be available for the candidate and these should be detailed in writing from the referee.

Medical Questionnaire – All candidates should be expected to complete a medical assessment form to identify if there is anything which may need to be further considered in appointing the candidate to the role. This may require the candidate to have a telephone discussion or attend an appointment with an Occupational Health Adviser.

DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) Check – In most cases, those working in schools will be engaged in regulated activity and this means that they will be required to have an Enhanced DBS and Barred List check. Where school based staff are not engaged in regulated activity, they will be required to have an Enhanced DBS check only.

Professional Membership or Registration Checks – some job roles may require candidates to have membership or registration of a professional or registration body e.g. Teacher Regulation Agency. It is important to check that the candidate has the appropriate registration and in most cases this can be done online.

Where copies of documents have been taken, these should be retained for the candidate. It is important to make sure that all pre-employment checks are completed satisfactorily before arranging a start date. In some circumstances, it may take longer for some checks to be undertaken, e.g. DBS checks can take a number of weeks to be returned, and where this is the case and a start date is arranged, appropriate safeguards should be put in place to minimise any risk.

15. Agreeing a Start Date

When all pre-employment checks have been obtained and verified, a start date can be arranged with the candidate.

It is important to ensure that where necessary, a candidate's continuity of service between employers is maintained, e.g. if a candidate moves between schools or public sector organisations. Further information can be obtained from HR.

16. Induction

It is important to take some time to consider how to help the candidate to settle into their new role. A thorough induction should take place over a number of weeks so that the candidate has sufficient time to understand their role. A good induction should include:

- School systems, policies and procedures
- Mentor or buddy available
- Opportunities for review

- Opportunities to develop knowledge and understanding
- Attending any training as necessary and appropriate

Appendix 1 – Job Description & Person Specification Template

[SCHOOL]

JOB DESCRIPTION

JOB TITLE: [insert job title]

EVALUATION REFERENCE: [reference number allocated by HR]

GRADE: [insert job grade details – where job has not yet been evaluated this should include Indicative Grade]

RESPONSIBLE TO: [job title of role responsible to]

JOB PURPOSE: [this section should be a short summary of the job role]

PRINCIPAL RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1 [This section should include details of the main responsibilities of the job and should include no more than 12 separate points]
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10
- 11
- 12

NOTE

Notwithstanding the detail in this job description, the job holder will undertake such work as may be determined by the Manager from time to time, up to or at a level consistent with the Principal Responsibilities of the job.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Qualifications	<i>[detail here in each section the requirements for the job and include (Essential/Desirable) next to each criteria]</i>
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Experience	
Job Related Knowledge	
Skills and Aptitudes	
Other Requirements	Enhanced DBS [<i>plus Children's Barred List</i>] The ability to converse at ease with customers and provide advice in accurate spoken English

Appendix 3 - Interview Assessment Form

INTERVIEW ASSESSMENT FORM

Job Title: _____

Date: _____

Candidate's Name: _____

Question Scores	0 - Inadequate	1- Adequate	2 – Average	3 – Good	4 – Very good	5 – Excellent
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	Question	Who is Asking Question	Weighting	Score	Notes
Q1					
Q2					
Q3					
Q4					
Q5					
Q6					

Name of Interviewer: _____

Signature of Interviewer: _____

