St Stephen Churchtown Academy

Safer Recruitment Policy

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Safer Recruitment Policy Statement

The safe recruitment of staff in academies is the first step to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the children in education. St Stephen Churchtown Academy is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. It is recognised that this can only be achieved through sound procedures, good inter-agency cooperation and the recruitment and retention of competent, motivated employees who are suited to, and fulfilled in the roles they undertake. St Stephen Churchtown Academy recognises the value of, and seeks to achieve a diverse workforce which includes people from different backgrounds with different skills and abilities. St Stephen Churchtown Academy is committed to ensuring that the recruitment and selection of all who work within it is conducted in a manner that is systematic, efficient, and effective and promotes equality of opportunity. The academy will uphold its obligations under law and national collective agreements to not discriminate against applicants for employment on the grounds of age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, religion or creed.

This document provides a good practice framework to comply with the principles set down in the Aspire Single Equality Scheme.

All posts within the academy are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and therefore all applicants will be required to declare, initially on the Aspire application form, and whilst attending interview, spent and unspent convictions, cautions and bind-overs, including those regarded as spent.

An Enhanced Criminal Records Disclosure is required for all employees and volunteers before they commence work.

Our academy is committed to ensuring people who have been convicted are treated fairly and given every opportunity to establish their suitability for positions. Having a criminal record will not necessarily be a bar to obtaining a position.

Safer Recruitment Training

St Stephen Churchtown Academy will:

- ensure that appropriate staff who undertake recruitment have received safer recruitment training including hub councillors where appropriate
- ensure every appointment panel includes at least one member who has received safer recruitment training
- implement robust recruitment procedures and checks for appointing staff and volunteers to ensure that reasonable steps are taken not to appoint a person who is unsuitable to work with children, or who is disqualified from working with children, or does not have the suitable skills and experience for the intended role.
- ensure that the Prevent Strategy is taken into due consideration and staff all have an understanding of the implications involved through a clear induction and training process
- keep and maintain a single central record of recruitment and vetting checks in line with DfE requirements which is checked on a termly basis

- ensure that the terms of any contract with a contractor or agency requires them to adopt and implement measures described in this procedure. Aspire Academy Trust will monitor the compliance with these measures, and hold a central list of contractors, who have carried out the appropriate insurance and safeguarding checks.
- require staff who are convicted or cautioned for any criminal offence during their employment with the academy to notify the academy, in writing of the offence and the penalty.

The following pre-employment checks will be undertaken:

- Receipt of at least two satisfactory references, one of which will be from the former or most recent employer
- Verification of the candidate's identity in line with the requirements of The Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006
- A satisfactory enhanced DBS check, including a Barred List check
- Verification of the candidate's medical fitness (clearance from Occupational Health where applicable)
- Verification of qualifications
- Verification of professional registration as required by law for teachers
- A prohibition from teaching check (for teachers)
- A prohibition from management section 128 check
- Verification of successful completion of induction period (for those who obtained QTS after 7 May 1999)

Roles and responsibilities

It is the responsibility of Aspire Board of Trustees to:

- Ensure the school has effective policies and procedures in place for the recruitment of all staff and volunteers in accordance with DfE and Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Safeguarding Children Board guidance and legal requirements
- Monitor the academy's compliance with them

It is the responsibility of the Principal / Headteacher and other managers involved in recruitment to:

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

It is the responsibility of all potential and existing workers, including volunteers to comply with this document.
It is the responsibility of all contractors and agencies to comply with safe recruitment pre-employment checks.
St Stephen Churchtown Academy subscribes to a service level agreement with Cornwall Council to provide HR safer recruitment and DBS advice.

In accordance with the School Staffing Regulations, the trust has delegated responsibility to the Principal / Headteacher to lead in all appointments outside of the leadership group.

Hub Councillors may be involved in staff appointments, but the final decision will rest with the Principal / Headteacher. The Principal / Headteacher may delegate the selection process of staff outside of the leadership group to other managers in the academy, but remains responsible for the decision to appoint.

The Procedure

Advertising

To ensure equality of opportunity, the academy will advertise all vacant posts to encourage as wide a field of candidates as possible, normally this will entail an external advertisement.
However, where there is a reasonable expectation that there are sufficient qualified internal candidates within Aspire or where staff are at risk of redundancy, an internal advertisement may be considered appropriate.

Applications

The form – Aspire uses a standard application form. CVs will not be accepted.
Aspire requires candidates to account for any gaps or discrepancies in employment history on this application form. Where an applicant is shortlisted, these gaps will be discussed at interview.
Applicants should be aware 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 and other professional regulatory bodies.

References

References for shortlisted candidates will be sent for immediately prior to interview.
References must be in writing and be specific to the job for which the candidate has applied - open references or testimonials are not acceptable. The school will not accept references from relatives or people writing solely in the capacity as a friend. Only references from a trusted authoritative source will be acceptable. References should be on headed paper.

Reference requests will specifically ask:

- About the referee's relationship with the candidate
- Whether the referee is completely satisfied that the candidate is suitable to work with children and, if not, for specific details of the concerns and the reasons why the referee believes that the person might be unsuitable.

Referees will also be asked to confirm details of:

- The applicant's current post, salary and attendance record (where appropriate)
- Performance history and conduct (if known)
- Any disciplinary procedures in which the sanction is current
- Any disciplinary procedures involving issues related to the safety and welfare of children, including any in which the sanction has expired and the outcome of those
- Details of any allegations or concerns that have been raised that relate to the safety and welfare of children or behaviour towards children and the outcome of these concerns
- St Stephen Churchtown Academy uses a standard Reference Request Form to ensure the details outline above are included. References will be compared to the information provided to ensure it is consistent. Any discrepancies will be taken up with the applicant at interview.

Any information about past disciplinary action or allegations will be considered in the circumstances of the individual case. Cases in which an issue was satisfactorily resolved some time ago, or an allegation was determined to be unfounded or did not require formal disciplinary sanctions, and which no further issues have been raised, are not likely to cause concern. More serious or recent concerns or issues are more likely to cause concern. A history of repeated concerns or allegations over time is also likely to give cause for concern.

Self-declaration of convictions by job applicants

Aspire Academy Trust requires shortlisted applicants for all posts (including volunteers) to declare all criminal convictions whether "spent" or "unspent" and include any cautions and pending prosecution. Such declarations will be made on the application form or in an envelope marked confidential. The chair of the panel / Principal will discuss relevant, positive declarations confidentially with the applicant at interview.
The disclosure of convictions, cautions or pending cases will not necessarily prevent employment but will be considered in the same way as positive DBS disclosures.

Interviews

The selection process will include the following:

- Face to face professional interview including a question related to safeguarding children
- Young people panel / activity with children where appropriate to post applied for.

Proof of Identity and Right to Work in the UK & Verification of Qualifications and/or Professional Status.

Shortlisted applicants for all posts will be required to provide proof of identity by producing documents on the day of interview in line with those set out in The Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006. Similar information is also required to undertake a Criminal Records Bureau check on the preferred candidate.
Short-listed candidates will also be required to provide proof of their qualifications and professional status by producing documentation on the day of interview. The academy will verify that candidates have actually obtained any qualifications legally required or deemed essential for the job and claimed in their application by asking to see the relevant certificate, or a letter of confirmation from the awarding body / institution. If the original documents are not available, the academy will require sight of a properly certified copy. Where candidates have obtained qualifications abroad, a certified comparability check by NARIC will also be required. Proof of identity and other documentation will be verified by Business Manager or appointed person.

Commencement of Employment prior to DBS check being received

It is Aspire policy that any employee / volunteer must not commence employment prior to receiving an enhanced DBS check.

Employment Offer

It may be possible to negotiate a provisional start date with the preferred candidate, however, with the exception of DBS disclosures, the checks detailed above must all be completed BEFORE a person's appointment is confirmed. In the case of DBS disclosures, the certificate must be obtained before or as soon as practicable after appointment.
Once all pre-employment checks have been satisfactorily completed / received, an offer of employment will be made and the contract of employment issued.

Record Retention / Data Protection

The academy will retain all interview notes on all applicants for a 6-month period, after which time the notes will be destroyed (ie: shredded). The 6-month retention period will allow the academy to deal with any data access requests, recruitment complaints or to respond to any complaints made to the Employment tribunal.
Under the Data Protection Act 1998, applicants have a right to request access to notes written about them during the recruitment process. Applicants who wish to access their interview notes must make a subject access request in writing to the chair of the panel / Principal within 6 months of the interview date.

Personal file records

From January 2008, the academy will retain the following information which will make up part of the personal file, for the successful candidate:

- Application form
- References
- Disclosure of convictions form
- Proof of identification
- Proof of academic qualifications
- Proof of QTS Status (for teaching staff)
- Disqualification by Association declarations
- Certificate of Good Conduct (where applicable)
- Evidence of medical clearance from Occupational Health (where applicable)
- Evidence of the DBS clearance (ie: the notification email from the Disclosure and Barring Service and the DBS certificate reference number, NOT the actual DBS form or certificate).

Single Central Record of Recruitment Vetting Checks

In line with DfE requirements, the academy will keep and maintain a single central record of recruitment and vetting checks. The central list will record all staff who are employed at the academy, including casual staff, supply agency staff whether employed directly or through an agency, volunteers, hub councillors who also work as volunteers, and those who provide additional teaching or instruction for pupils but who are not staff members, eg: specialist sports coach or artist.

The central record will indicate whether or not the following have been completed:

- Identity checks
- Qualification checks for any qualifications legally required for the job
- Additionally, for those applying for teaching posts, QTS details where appropriate
- Prohibition from teaching checks
- Prohibition from management section 128 check
- Disqualification by Association declarations (updated annually)
- Checks of right to work in the United Kingdom
- Barred List checks
- DBS Enhanced Disclosure
- Further overseas records where appropriate. It shall also indicate who undertook the check and the date on which the check was completed or the relevant certificate obtained.

In order to record supply staff provided through an agency on the record, the academy will require written confirmation from the supply agency that is has satisfactorily completed the checks described above. The academy does not need to carry out checks itself except where there is information contained within the disclosure. However, identity checks must be carried out by the school to check the person arriving is the person the agency intends to refer to them. Reference will be made to the Prevent Strategy.

Probation periods

Staff who are new to the employment of Aspire Academy Trust will be subject to the academy's probationary period.
Academy staff will be given an induction with copy of the DfE guidance on Safe Working Practice, KCSIE Sept. 2016, Child Protection Policy and asked to sign a declaration that they have read and understood the document and will follow the guidelines required to maintain professional boundaries at all times.

They will also be issued with relevant Prevent Duty guidance leaflet.

The academy has a specific safeguarding related whistle blowing policy which has been disseminated to all staff and volunteers. St Stephen Churchtown Academy has a linked whistleblowing hub councillor – St Stephen Churchtown Academy The academy adopts a culture of vigilance where all concerns are listened to and taken seriously.
The academy will follow DfE and Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Safeguarding Children Board allegation procedures and refer any allegation for initial consultation with the Local Authority Designated Officer.