SAFER RECRUITMENT POLICY

Title	Safer Recruitment Policy
Author	Director of People and Operations
Owner	Director of People and Operations
Status	FINAL
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1 SCOPE AND PURPOSE

1.1 The purpose of this policy is to set out South East Essex Academy Trust's (SEEAT) requirements for the recruitment of staff within the Multi-Academy Trust. The aim of a safer recruitment process is to:

1.1.1 attract the best possible applicants to vacancies

1.1.2 deter prospective applicants who are unsuitable for work with children or young people

1.1.3 identify and reject applicants who are unsuitable for work with children and young people

1.2 Decisions concerning the need to recruit staff are delegated in line with the SEEAT's Scheme of Delegation. All decisions will be made with regard to curriculum or operational needs and financial circumstances.

1.3 Decisions regarding remuneration for posts will be made in accordance with the SEEAT Pay Policy.

1.4 This policy considers the provisions of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'. SEEAT will ensure that the statutory requirements for the appointment of staff will be met. Requirements will change from time to time and this policy will be updated accordingly.

1.5 SEEAT is committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all staff and job applicants and will abide by existing legislation including the Equality Act 2010. SEEAT does not unlawfully discriminate against staff on the basis of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

1.6 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment, and it may be amended at any time by agreement with the People Committee or SEEAT Board.

1.7 This policy applies to SEEAT central team, including Executive appointments, and all schools within the Multi-Academy Trust without variation.

2 WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE POLICY?

2.1 SEEAT's Director of People has overall responsibility for the effective operation, maintenance, and review of this policy and for ensuring compliance with the relevant statutory framework. The Local Governing Body of each school is also responsible for monitoring compliance by the school with this policy.

2.2 With the exception of leadership roles SEEAT has delegated day-to-day responsibility for operating the policy to the Headteacher.

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

2.3.1 ensure that their school operates safe recruitment procedures

2.3.2 ensure all appropriate checks are carried out on all staff and volunteers who work at their school

2.3.3 monitor contractors' and agencies' compliance with this document

2.3.4 promote welfare of children and young people at every stage of the recruitment process.

2.4 It is the responsibility of all potential and existing workers, including volunteers to comply with this document.

2.5 It is the responsibility of all contractors and agencies to comply with safer recruitment pre-employment checks.

3 SAFER RECRUITMENT TRAINING

3.1 Subject to the availability of training, SEEAT will ensure that at least the Headteacher and at least one Governor at the school have successfully completed accredited training in safe recruitment procedures within the previous three-year period.

3.2 The school must ensure that one person on any recruitment panel will have undertaken safer recruitment training.

4 ADVERTISING POSTS

4.1 Advertisements for posts and candidate information packs issued to prospective applicants will include the following statement:

[Name of School] *is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects its entire staff to share this commitment. All post-holders working in our schools will be considered to work in Regulated Activity and will be required to have an Enhanced Disclosure from the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS). In line with Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance all shortlisted candidates may be subject to online searches that may include social media. For further information please contact HR@seeat.org.*

4.2 Prospective applicants will be supplied, as a minimum, the following:

4.2.1 job description and person specification

4.2.2 SEEAT's Safer Recruitment Policy

4.2.3 an application form

4.3 Applicants will also be made aware of the relevant school policies, including the Child Protection Policy.

4.4 SEEAT will consider the most appropriate methods of advertising any vacant posts and the format for the advert. This may include advertising the post on professional social media sites in addition to other methods, e.g., website and local/national publications.

4.5 To ensure equality of opportunity, all positions will be advertised to encourage as wide a field of candidates as possible, and normally this will entail an external advertisement. However, there may be circumstances where an internal advertisement may be considered appropriate which may be approved by the SEEAT Director of People or, in the case of SLT and other leadership roles excluding CEO, Trust Executive Team, Headteacher, Head of School, or Deputy Headteacher, the Chief Executive Officer.

4.6 CEO, Headteacher, Head of School, and Deputy Headteacher posts will be advertised in the manner considered appropriate by the SEEAT Board. To ensure the widest possible field of candidates, advertising will usually be national for these roles, unless there is a good reason not to do so.

5 APPLICATIONS

5.1 Prospective applicants will respond to the advertisement by requesting or downloading further information and completing an application form which includes an equal opportunities monitoring form. The application form will be returned to the school electronically by the specified closing date accompanied by a supporting letter or personal statement. Other forms of curriculum vitae are not acceptable in place of a completed application form.

5.2 Applications received after the published closing date will be considered at SEEAT's discretion.

5.3 The school will require applicants to account for any gaps or discrepancies in employment history on this application form. Where an applicant is shortlisted, these gaps should be discussed at the interview.

5.4 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.

6 SHORT LISTING AND REFERENCES

6.1 The selection panel will shortlist applicants against the person specification for the post. The criteria for selection will be consistently applied to all applicants. The selection panel will agree the applicants to be invited to interview.

6.2 Two references, one of which must be from the applicant's current/most recent employer, will be taken up before the selection stage, where possible so that any discrepancies may be probed during this stage of the selection process.

6.3 References should cover a minimum period of five years. Where an applicant has had more than two employments in the minimum period of five years more than two references will be sought.

6.4 Where an applicant has had one long period of employment – over seven years – it may be appropriate to take one professional reference. Where this is the case, the Headteacher should ensure a written risk assessment is recorded on the applicant's record.

6.5 References will be sought directly from the referee and, where necessary, they will be contacted to clarify any anomalies or discrepancies. Written records will be kept of such exchanges.

6.6 Where necessary, previous employers who have not been named as referees may be contacted to clarify any such anomalies or discrepancies. Written records will be kept of such exchanges.

6.7 If an applicant for a post working with children is not currently employed in a post working with children, a reference should be sought from the most recent employment in which the applicant has worked with children to confirm details of the applicant's employment and their reasons for leaving.

6.8 Reference requests will ask the referee to confirm, in writing:

6.8.1 the referee's relationship to the applicant

6.8.2 details of the applicant's current post and salary

6.8.3 the applicant's performance history and conduct

6.8.4 For teaching posts, whether the applicant has been subject to capability procedures and the outcome of this

6.8.5 whether the applicant has been subject to disciplinary action relating to the safety and welfare of children, including where the sanction has expired, and the outcome of this

6.8.6 details of any substantiated allegations or concerns about the applicant relating to the safety and welfare of children

6.8.7 whether the referee has any reservations as to the applicant's suitability to work with children and young people (if so, the school will ask for specific details of the concerns and the reasons why the referee believes the applicant may be unsuitable to work with children)

6.8.8 the applicant's suitability for the post with explicit reference to the job description and person specification.

6.9 In line with Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance, SEEAT will complete focused online checks to ensure that no information exists in the public domain regarding the candidate that could indicate they are unsuitable to work in Regulated Activity.

6.10 All appointments are subject to satisfactory references, vetting procedures, and DBS clearance.

6.11 Employer testimonials i.e., those provided by the applicant and/or marked 'to whom it may concern' will not be accepted. References must be in writing and be specific to the job for which the applicant has applied. The selection panel will not accept references from relatives or people writing solely in the capacity as a friend of the applicant, for any post. References will be verified, and any discrepancies or areas of potential concern will be discussed with the applicant at interview.

6.12 If the field of applicants is felt to be weak, the post may be re-advertised.

7 INTERVIEW & SELECTION

7.1 Prior to the interview and selection process applicants will be given any relevant information, e.g., details of any selection methods that will be used.

7.2 Applicants who have a disability or any other needs will be given the opportunity to highlight this prior to any selection activities in order that reasonable adjustments may be made to the recruitment process.

7.3 All vacancies will require an interview of short-listed applicants. Interviews will always be face-to-face. Telephone interviews may be used at the shortlisting stage but will not be a substitute for a face-to-face interview (which may be via visual electronic link in exceptional circumstances).

7.4 Whilst an interview is always likely to be used as the primary feature of the selection process, the selection panel will consider whether any additional selection methods are required to supplement the interview. These may include presentations, teaching observation, interaction with pupils, in-tray exercises, psychometric, verbal or numerical tests, according to the requirements of the role. Any psychometric tests used will have been validated in relation to the job, be free of bias, and be administered and validated only by a suitably trained person.

7.5 Whichever methods are chosen, the panel will use these to assess the merits of each applicant against the person specification and explore their suitability to work with children. This will include exploration of the applicant's understanding of child safeguarding issues.

7.6 The selection panel will ensure that all applicants are asked the same main questions at interview based on the list of essential criteria for the post, although supplementary questions may differ according to the applicants' answers and backgrounds.

7.7 Applicants will always be required:

7.7.1 to explain satisfactorily any gaps in employment

7.7.2 to explain satisfactorily any anomalies or discrepancies in the information available to the selection panel

7.7.3 to declare any information that is likely to appear on a DBS disclosure

7.7.4 to demonstrate their capacity to safeguard and protect the welfare of children and young people

7.8 The interview will also include a discussion of any convictions, cautions, or pending prosecutions that the applicant has declared and are relevant to the prospective employment.

7.9 Care will be taken to ensure that no questions or selection methods could be viewed as discriminatory.

8 PRE-EMPLOYMENT CHECKS

8.1 All successful applicants are required to:

8.1.1 provide proof of identity (e.g., passport, driving licence photocard)

8.1.2 complete an enhanced DBS disclosure application and receive satisfactory clearance.

8.1.3 obtain a barred list check if the individual will start work in regulated activity before the DBS certificate is available.

8.1.4 provide actual certificates of professional qualifications (teaching staff or where required)

8.1.5 provide proof of address (e.g., recent utility bill, bank or credit card statement)

8.1.6 provide proof of eligibility to live and work in the UK.

8.2 Further pre-employment checks may be required dependent on the job role. These include:

8.2.1 prohibition from teaching check; teaching posts only

8.2.2 section 128 check; for those employed to manage or govern a school

8.2.3 additional checks, as considered appropriate, for applicants who have lived or worked outside the UK.

8.2.4 childcare disqualification check; for those providing relevant childcare to children under the age of 8.

8.3 Documentation will be checked by a member of staff suitably trained in safer recruitment processes.

8.4 Once an applicant has been offered the post, they may be required to complete a confidential health questionnaire to verify their mental and physical fitness to carry out their work.

9 CONFIRMING THE APPOINTMENT

9.1 The final offer of employment will be subject to:

9.1.1 confirmation of the applicant's identification and right to work in the United Kingdom

9.1.2 confirmation that the applicant's professional qualifications have been checked and verified (where applicable)

9.1.3 a satisfactory enhanced DBS and barred list check

9.1.4 confirmation that the applicant does not live with a disqualified person (if the member of staff is expected to provide relevant childcare to children under the age of 8)

9.1.5 a check that the applicant is not subject to a prohibition order using the Employer Access Online Service (teachers only)

9.1.6 receipt of a completed confidential health questionnaire which is required to verify the applicant's mental and physical fitness to carry out their work

9.1.7 receipt of final references from previous employers

9.1.8 a valid work permit for overseas applicants and/or confirmation of settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme (where applicable)

9.1.9 a check that the applicant is not subject to a prohibition or restriction order under section 128 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 (where applicable); and

9.1.10 the applicant's details have been added to the school's Single Central Record (SCR).

9.2 The school reserves the right not to proceed with or to terminate employment with immediate effect if the DBS check reveals convictions which have not been declared

on the application form or if any of the documents provided have been falsified in any way.

10 INDUCTION - TRAINING

10.1 All employees who are new to the school will receive full induction training that will cover all relevant matters of the school policy including safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, child protection procedures, whistle blowing, and guidance on safe working practices.

10.2 Employees will also be required to read, and confirm that they have read, Part 1 of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'.

10.3 All new employees internally promoted staff and volunteers (including Trustees and Governors) will be provided with an induction programme, which will seek to ensure that they are introduced to key staff, they clear about their job role and the expectations of them in terms of standards of performance and conduct as well as all applicable policies and procedures. Any training and development needs will be identified and supported appropriately.

10.4 Where applicable, Early Career Teachers will be subject to the Statutory Induction Period.

11 PROBATION

11.1 All employees will be subject to a probationary period relevant to their job role.

11.2 Probationary periods will be set out in the employee's contract of employment and managed in line with SEEAT's performance management procedures.

12 HR FILE AND SINGLE CENTRAL RECORD

12.1 Recruitment and selection information for the successful applicant will be retained securely and confidentially for the duration of their employment with the school including:

12.1.1 application form – signed electronically by the applicant

12.1.2 interview notes – including explanation of any gaps in the employment history

12.1.3 references

12.1.4 proof of identity

12.1.5 proof of right to work in the UK

12.1.6 a check of professional qualifications

12.1.7 proof of relevant academic qualifications

12.1.8 a completed confidential health questionnaire and any medical clearance obtained from the Occupational Health service

12.1.9 evidence of DBS clearance, Barred List (where applicable), a section 128 check (where applicable) and Teacher Prohibition checks

12.1.10 offer of employment letter and signed contract of employment.

13 The school will maintain an electronic Single Central Record of employment checks in accordance with relevant Department for Education guidance. The school will remove an individual's details from the single central record once they no longer work at the school.

14 The SEEAT Director of People will oversee the Single Central Record in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education guidelines.

15 Headteachers are responsible for monitoring the compliance of the single central record in their school(s).

16 Trustees and Governors with responsibility for overseeing safeguarding should routinely 'spot check' the single central record and scrutinise HR files.

17 ADULTS WORKING WITH CHILDREN WHO ARE NOT EMPLOYED DIRECTLY BY SEEAT

17.1 Visitors

The school does not require DBS checks or barred list checks for visitors such as children's relatives. The Headteacher shall determine the appropriate level of supervision required for visitors with a professional role (e.g., educational psychologists or social workers). The school will require visitors with a professional role to provide assurance of an appropriate DBS check and will carry out identity checks when they arrive on site. These details will be recorded on the Single Central Record.

17.2 Supply Staff:

The school will only use those agencies that operate a Safer Recruitment Policy and supply written confirmation that all relevant checks have been satisfactorily completed to the same standard of SEEAT. The school will carry out identity checks when the supply staff member arrives on site. These details will be recorded on the Single Central Record.

17.3 Volunteers

The school will carry out DBS and pre-start vetting checks appropriate to the post (subject to a risk assessment) and require regular volunteers to provide details of two referees. References are taken up, as detailed in this policy. Volunteers who help on an occasional basis (e.g., trips/PTA events) should be supervised by a person who is in regulated activity relating to children. These details will be recorded on the Single Central Record.

17.4 Students on placement

When volunteers are working in a school as part of a recognised training course (such as PGCE, NVQ etc.), references and completion of an application form will not be required. However, the school will require proof of DBS enhanced clearance with a barred list check and will carry out identity checks when the student arrives on site. It will be the responsibility of the initial teacher training provider to carry out the necessary checks that the school would otherwise perform. SEEAT will also require students to complete a childcare disqualification check if they are working within the EYFS. These details will be recorded on the Single Central Record.

17.5 Students on work experience

Students on work experience will always be supervised and must not be left unattended with pupils. Students on work experience for two weeks or less should sign in to the school as a visitor daily. Longer term work experience should be treated in the same manner as students on placement (see 15.5).

17.6 Contractors

The school must ensure that contractors, or any employee of a contractor, working at the school have been subject to the appropriate level of DBS check, if any such check is required. The school will set out their safeguarding requirements in the contract between the organisation and the school.

Contractors and contractors' employees for whom an appropriate DBS check has not been undertaken will be supervised if they will have contact with children.

If a contractor working within a SEEAT school is self-employed and will be in regulated activity, the school will undertake the DBS check, as self-employed people are not able to make an application directly to the DBS on their own account. The contractor may be asked to cover the cost of the DBS application.

The school will check the identity of contractors and their staff on arrival at the school. These details will be recorded on the Single Central Record.