

Athelstan Primary School

Safer Recruitment Policy

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Safer Recruitment Policy

Athelstan Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment in every aspect of their work.

The purpose of this policy is to set out the requirements of a recruitment process that aims to:

- Attract the best applicants to vacancies.
- Deter prospective applicants who are unsuitable to work with children or young people.
- Identify and reject applicants who are unsuitable to work with children or young people.

The appointment of all employees will be made on merit and in accordance with the provisions of employment and equalities law; the DfE's latest Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) document; and the school's equality statement.

Roles and responsibilities

The Governing Body of the school will:

- ensure that the school has effective policies and procedures in place for the safe and fair recruitment of all staff and volunteers, in accordance with DfE and legal requirements and guidance.
- ensure that the school has recorded completion of all pre- and post-recruitment checks in line with KCSIE and other statutory requirements, particularly in regard to the Single Central Record.
- monitor the school's compliance with the above.
- ensure that appropriate staff and governors have completed Safer Recruitment Consortium-accredited Safer Recruitment training (always including the Headteacher and Chair of Governors), and that this training is updated on a regular basis.

The Headteacher will:

- ensure that the school operates safe and fair recruitment and selection procedures, which are regularly reviewed and updated to reflect any changes to legislation and/or statutory/mandatory guidance.
- ensure that all appropriate checks have been carried out on staff and volunteers in school, including, where necessary, overseas checks.
- monitor contractors' and agencies' compliance with this document and secure written confirmation of this compliance.
- promote and prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children and young people at every stage of the process.

Delegation of Appointments and Constitution of the Selection Panel

For any post, the selection panel will not accept references from relatives or people writing solely in the capacity as a friend of the candidate. For volunteers, we may accept personal character references providing the referee is in a position of responsibility, such as a faith leader, GP, councillor, academic/teacher etc., and the candidate is not able to provide an employment reference.

With the exception of Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher appointments, the Governing Body delegates the power to offer employment for all posts to the Headteacher. The Headteacher may delegate the selection of staff outside the leadership group to other members of the Senior Leadership Team, but remains accountable for the appointment decision. Where the school recruits a Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher, a minimum of three non-staff, non-associate governors will be on the selection panel.

Apart from the appointment of volunteers, selection panels will comprise a minimum of two people (normally three; volunteers may be appointed with a face-to-face interview providing the interviewer has been Safer Recruitment trained). Wherever possible, at least one member of the Governing Body will be part of the selection panel. In accordance with the School Staffing (England) Regulations, every selection panel will include at least one member who has undertaken accredited Safer Recruitment training. All interview panel members will have previously been involved in the shortlisting process for the post for which they are interviewing.

Advertising

To ensure equality of opportunity, the school will advertise all vacant posts to encourage as wide a field of candidates as possible. This will normally entail an external advertisement.

Where, however, staff are at risk of redundancy, an internal advertisement may be considered appropriate to mitigate this risk.

All advertisements will include the following statement:

"Athelstan Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. An enhanced DBS check with a Children's Barred List check is required for this post. This post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Shortlisted candidates will be asked to provide information of any cautions, convictions or bind-overs that are not 'protected' prior to interview. Athelstan Primary School will carry out a search of online profiles which are publicly available. Shortlisted candidates will be asked to provide details of the platforms they use and their social media handles."

Candidates are expected to read the school's safeguarding policy, which is available on the school website - www.athelstanprimaryschool.co.uk.

Applications

All applicants, whether for paid or voluntary work, will be provided with:

- a job description and person specification
- an application form (CVs will not be accepted)
- an equal opportunities monitoring form (this will not be viewed by the selection panel)
- the closing date for receipt of applications

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Prospective applicants must complete the application in full. Candidates submitting an application form online will be asked to sign the form if invited to interview. The school requires candidates to provide an account on the application form for any gaps or discrepancies in their employment history. Where an applicant is shortlisted, these gaps will be discussed at interview. The panel may also ask further questions of specific candidates relating to aspects of their application. Candidates will also be asked to confirm their contractual reason for leaving previous posts (e.g. resignation, end of temporary contract, dismissal etc.).

All shortlisted applicants will be required to complete, sign and return a Criminal Records Declaration form prior to interview. On this form, they must disclose all convictions, cautions, warnings, reprimands, bindings over or other orders, pending prosecutions or criminal investigations that are not 'protected' as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (exceptions) Order 1975 (as amended 2020). They will also be required to confirm that they have not been placed on the DBS Barred List (unless they are applying to be a supervised volunteer).

Failure to disclose this information could result in the withdrawal of a job offer, disciplinary action, dismissal and/or referral to the Teaching Regulation Agency and/or Disclosure and Barring Service. Any information given will be completely confidential and will be considered only in relation to the application.

The chair of the selection panel will discuss any relevant declarations confidentially with the applicant at the beginning of the interview. In most cases, this will be a one-to-one conversation with the chair, prior to the other panel members' involvement.

Please note that 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. We recognise that consideration of the specific context in which the above took place is an important factor in determining suitability to work in our school.

Short Listing, References Requests and Online Checks

The selection panel will shortlist applicants against the person specification for the post to which they have applied. The selection panel will agree which applicants are to be invited to interview. Applicants must demonstrate how they meet each element of the person specification, providing examples and, for teaching posts, evidence of positive outcome. For senior leadership posts (particularly Headship), the school may also consider candidates' track record as evidenced from Ofsted reports and the publicly available data for their previous schools.

A minimum of two references for shortlisted candidates will be requested immediately after shortlisting so that they can be considered prior to interview. The only exception is where candidates have indicated on their application forms that they do not wish for their current employer to be contacted. In such cases, the reference will be taken up immediately after interview and prior to any offer of employment being made. Note that where a candidate is in more than one current post, a reference will be required from each current employer.

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Employer testimonials (i.e. those provided by the candidate) will not be accepted. The school will only accept references from referees it has contacted directly. Candidates are asked not to provide generic email contacts for referees (such as Hotmail, gmail etc.). Referees may be contacted by telephone, and will always be contacted where a non-generic email address is not available.

If a candidate is not currently employed in a post working with children but has done so in the past, a reference will always be sought from that most recent child-centered employment to confirm details of the candidate's role, their reasons for leaving and their suitability to work with children.

Reference requests will ask the referee to confirm in writing the following:

- the referee's relationship to the candidate
- whether the referee is completely satisfied that the candidate is suitable to work with children and, if not, the specific details of the concerns and the reasons why the referee believes that the person might be unsuitable
- the applicant's current post, salary and the responsibilities of the role
- performance history and conduct (if known)
- any disciplinary procedures in which the sanction is current (or, for teachers, were issued in the last two years)
- any disciplinary procedures involving issues related to the safety and welfare of children, including any in which the sanction has expired
- 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
- the candidate's suitability for the post with explicit reference to the job description and person specification.

Any information about past disciplinary action or allegations will be considered in the circumstances of the individual case.

References will be verified, and any discrepancies or areas of potential concern will be discussed with the applicant at interview.

At the discretion of the panel's chair, a risk assessment will be completed if the applicant is unable to provide the references requested by the school. This will only be done under exceptional circumstances and, in all cases, at least two references must be provided.

All shortlisted applicants will have an online check conducted. The only information recorded will be suggestions the candidate is unqualified for the role, poses a potential safeguarding risk or risks damaging the reputation of the school. The information is only to be discussed with the interview panel. The person conducting the online checks can not be on the interview panel.

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Interviews

The selection panel will agree on the interview format before interviews take place.

Selection techniques will be determined by the nature and duties of the vacant post, but all vacancies will require an interview of shortlisted candidates. Interviews will always be face-to-face (although this may be reviewed in exceptional circumstances, such as the Covid pandemic, but always with regard to statutory and LA advice and in compliance with DfE regulations).

Candidates invited to interview will receive:

- a letter or email confirming the interview and any other selection techniques.
- details of the interview day, and of any tasks to be undertaken as part of the interview process.
- a request to provide any information regarding reasonable adjustments we may need to make to enable them to participate in the process (please note that this is **not** a request for any reasonable adjustments that might be required to fulfil the role).

The same areas of questioning will be covered for each applicant and no questions which directly or indirectly discriminate under the Equality Act, will be asked. In line with Safer Recruitment guidance, additional questions may be asked of individual candidates providing those questions arise from the application form, references or within the recruitment process itself (e.g. performance in any additional activities or the probing of candidates' responses during the interview).

The selection process for every post will include exploration of the candidate's understanding of child safeguarding issues and motivations for wanting to work with children.

Candidates will always be required:

- to satisfactorily explain any gaps in employment
- to satisfactorily explain any anomalies or discrepancies in the information available to the selection panel
- to declare any information that is likely to appear on a DBS disclosure
- to demonstrate their capacity to safeguard and protect the welfare of children and young people

The interview will also include a discussion of any convictions, cautions or pending prosecutions, other than those that are protected. Any concerns raised from online searches will be discussed at interview. Consideration will be given to the seriousness of the content, the nature of the incident/behaviour uncovered; the likely impact on the candidates suitability for the role; and how long ago the incident/behaviour occurred.

The school will retain interview notes, application forms and shortlisting grids for all applicants for a six-month period, after which they will be confidentially destroyed (i.e. shredded). This

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six-month retention period will allow the school to deal with any data access requests, recruitment complaints or to respond to any complaints made to an 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 this material must make a subject access request in writing to the Headteacher within six-months of the interview date. (Candidates applying for a Headteacher post should make this request to the Chair of Governors.)

Pre-appointment checks

An offer of appointment to a successful candidate, including one who has lived or worked abroad, will be conditional upon satisfactory completion of pre-employment checks. When appointing new staff, we will:

- ensure we are in receipt of at least two satisfactory references, one of which will be from the current or most recent employer
- verify a candidate's identity from current and original photo ID (wherever possible) and proof of address (originals)
- verify a candidate's identity in line with DBS guidance where photo ID is not available
- check any names changes by, wherever possible, viewing a candidates' birth certificate
- obtain a satisfactory enhanced DBS clearance with (unless a supervised volunteer) Barred List information
- check that any candidate to work in the classroom or in non-classroom-based teaching role is not subject to a Prohibition Order issued by the Secretary of State
- verify professional qualifications, as appropriate
- verify the candidate's right to work in the UK
- make any further checks we consider appropriate, especially if the candidate has lived or worked outside the UK as an adult for three-months or more in the last 10 years
- Request evidence of good conduct from the appropriate regulatory agencies where an applicant has taught overseas
- verify the candidate's medical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities (all applicants to complete an Occupational Health pre-placement questionnaire).
- use the Employer Access Online Service to verify prohibition checks, professional qualifications and the successful completion of induction period for teachers
- ensure the candidate completes a Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2009 declaration
- carry out online searches

All checks will be:

- documented and retained in the staff personnel file
- recorded on the school's Single Central Record
- followed up if they are unsatisfactory or if there are any discrepancies in the information received

Offer of Employment by the Selection Panel

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The selection panel's offer of employment (either verbal or in writing), and its acceptance by the candidate, is binding on both parties, **subject to the satisfactory completion of the pre-employment checks**. Successful candidates will be informed that the appointment is subject to satisfactory completion of these checks and that it may be withdrawn on the basis of these checks.

Once all pre-employment checks have been satisfactorily completed/received, the start date will be agreed and a contract of employment issued.

Personnel Files and the Single Central Record

For successful candidates, the school will retain the following information, securely and confidentially, on the staff member's personnel file:

- application form
- interview notes
- references
- the candidate's disclosure of convictions and any notes relating to this (but never a copy of the DBS certificate)
- proof of identity and address
- proof of the right to work in the UK
- proof of relevant academic qualifications
- evidence of medical clearance from the Occupational Health Service
- contract of employment
- online search log

The school will maintain a Single Central Register of employment checks in accordance with the requirements of KCSIE. This information will always include the employee's DBS issue number and the date the original certificate was seen and verified by an employee of the school (note that successful candidates will always be required to bring their DBS certificate into school prior to being allowed to commence in post).

Start of Employment and Induction

The pre-employment checks listed above must be completed before the employee commences in post.

All new employees will be provided with a staff handbook. This covers relevant matters of school policy, including staff code of conduct and guidance on safe working practices. New employees will also receive safeguarding training from one of our Deputy Headteachers before beginning employment.

Adults Working With Children and Who Are Not Employed Directly by the School

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Supply Staff

We will only use agencies which operate a satisfactory Safer Recruitment policy and supply written confirmation that all relevant checks have been satisfactorily completed prior to the supply staff member's arrival at school. This must always include the staff member's DBS issue date, issue number and confirmation that they have been checked against the Children's Barred List. We will carry out identity checks when the supply staff member arrives at school. They will always be provided with safeguarding and behaviour policy information.

Volunteers

Volunteers who wish to work in school on a regular basis are required to complete a volunteer application form. We carry out an enhanced DBS criminal records check for all volunteers (along with a DBS Barred List check for volunteers who are 'unsupervised'). In addition, we will request references (always including the current employer, where applicable). In addition, we will complete a written risk assessment for all new volunteers.

Volunteers are also given a safeguarding induction by one of our Deputy Headteachers prior to them beginning work in school.

Volunteers who help on an occasional or one-off basis (e.g. school visits) are not required to complete these checks. Instead, they are supervised, in accordance with legislation and the Safer Recruitment Consortium's Safer Practice guidance.

Students on Placements

When students are working in school as part of a recognised training course (such as PGCE etc.), references and completion of an application form are not required. We will, however, require proof of an enhanced DBS criminal records check with a Children's Barred List check from the training provider. We will also carry out identity checks when the student arrives at school and any other measures we determine necessary to confirm their suitability to work in school. Any students on a paid route into teaching will be checked on the same basis as any other staff member.

Students on Work Experience

Children on work experience will always be supervised and appropriately inducted.

Contractors

We ensure that employees of contracting firms engaged to provide staff for the school, have been subject to an enhanced DBS check with Children's Barred List check (along with the same level of checks they would have otherwise been subject to had they been directly employed by the school). This information must be provided in writing by the contractor's employer prior to them working in school. In addition, the contracting organisation will also be asked to provide a

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copy of their safeguarding/safer recruitment policy before a staff member starts in school (and on an annual basis, if the employment is ongoing).

Contractors working on a one-off basis (e.g. photocopier repair), will not be subject to the above, but will be appropriately supervised at all times.

We will check the identity of all contractors upon arrival at school.

This policy will be regularly reviewed and updated to reflect any changes to legislation and statutory guidance.

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