

SAFER RECRUITMENT TRAINING POLICY

This policy was adopted on September 2009

Next policy review: July 2016

The School

At Vauxhall Primary School we take all reasonable steps to guard against employing people who might harm children. Safeguarding children is a priority for our school and incorporating safeguarding measures in the recruitment process is an essential part of that.

AMENDMENT TO SCHOOL STATEMENT FOR RECRUITMENT PACK INFORMATION

Policies for safeguarding children

- **Safer Recruitment Policy**
- **Child Protection Policy**
- **Induction Policy**
- **Health and Safety Policy**
- **Security Policy**
- **Behaviour Policy**
- **Restraint Policy**
- **Educational Visits Policy**

The lead person for safeguarding children at the school is the Headteacher, Shirley Wilson. The person with direct responsibility for personnel and premises administration is Michelle Dunkley, School Business Manager. The Governor who has been trained in Safer Recruitment procedures is John Acland Hood. ((JAH is due to complete the training this term). The second Governor trained in Safer Recruitment is Melody Brown, Chair of the Pupils, Parents and Community Committee.

Vauxhall Primary School is concerned with procedures and practices that emphasise the safeguarding of children. To that end the following must take place:

- Recruitment advertising and applicant's information contains a prominent safeguarding statement
- The job description is clear and succinct
- The person specification is clear, specific and includes safeguarding information
- Written references are taken up at short-listing stage prior to interview

- The interview is conducted by at least two senior members of staff, at least one of whom has been trained in Safe Recruitment practices

In addition, the following is ensured:

- A careful process of gathering information about applicants and carrying out checks on them is followed in every case
- Both the candidate's suitability to work with children and their suitability for the advertised post are explored at interview
- Appointments are confirmed after all pre-employment checks have been completed satisfactorily
- All new staff and volunteers have an induction including appropriate training and mentoring
- The person responsible for induction procedures is Edison David, Deputy Headteacher (Acting)

At Vauxhall Primary School we will review our policies and procedures based on the following guidance from the Safer Recruitment training undertaken by the Headteacher and Safer Recruitment Governors. In all matters in which we are unclear, we will take advice from Lambeth HR, and the Lead Officer for Safeguarding Children in Lambeth, Graham Griffin.

At Vauxhall Primary School, our Recruitment panels will be concerned where the candidate demonstrates:

- *attitudes which attribute adult experience and knowledge to children, especially sexual knowledge or behaviour*
- *disproportionate amount of extra-curricular time spent in activities involving children*
- *personal life/work imbalance, including paucity of adult relationships/leisure pursuits*
- *attitudes which appear to underestimate the incidence and impact of sexual abuse*
- *an inability to recognise or respect boundaries around physical contact*
- *an inability to appreciate or describe the appropriate boundaries of a professional relationship with children or to distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour*

We will therefore take care when developing questions for all applicants, in order to safeguard the appointment of anyone who may demonstrate any of the above.

To explore and assess an interviewee's stance on these sensitive issues in the time available during an interview is a challenge and it is important that the subject is dealt with carefully.

Some of these features may have entirely satisfactory explanations. Others, or combinations of these features, should raise serious concerns.

Not everyone whose responses arouse concern will be a potential abuser. Poorly articulated, hesitant or contradictory responses at interview may cause concerns, but such responses may be signs of embarrassment, caution or interview nerves.

For example; someone who has never worked with children might find it difficult to think of examples of appropriate and inappropriate behaviour off the cuff or have the vocabulary to discuss the matter freely.

Physical Abuse

Indications that an applicant may have a tendency towards physical abuse may be revealed in references which may contain evidence of past incidents involving physical abuse.

In interview, the indicators for a physical abuser may include:

- *A lack of ability to manage conflict, or to cope with challenging behaviour*
- *Inability to recognise or respect boundaries around physical contact, e.g. when physical intervention is appropriate and reasonable to restrain or control a pupil, and what kind and degree of intervention might be acceptable in different circumstances*
- *A world-view in which physical violence is an acceptable solution to problems or disputes*
- *An inflexible authoritarian approach to classroom discipline, or an unrealistic reliance on children's reasonableness*
- *Poor classroom management and an inability to exercise appropriate control and discipline*

Unlike sexual abusers, physical abusers are unlikely to seek employment in a school in order to further an abuse agenda.

Their physical abuse may take a variety of forms:

- Inappropriate physical contact (e.g. handling children, mismanagement of classroom behaviour etc)
- Verbal threats of violence
- Physically aggressive outbursts
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Such behaviour is likely to occur when the individual is unable to manage his/her own emotions at times of particular stress or challenge.

It is most likely to arise where the school lacks appropriate procedures and guidelines in handling and managing difficult children in physical situations. This in turn means that adequate training in appropriate methods to deal with such situations is not available.

At Vauxhall Primary School we aim to reduce and minimise the possibility of incidents of physical abuse, by establishing and implementing clear procedures and guidelines about bullying, the management of difficult behaviour and the school's response to physical abuse. These should be embedded in the daily practice of staff. Pupils and parents will also know and understand the policies and procedures through access to information on the school website.

Vauxhall Primary School Culture for Safeguarding children

We will:-

- Implement and communicate a clear and confident child protection policy.
- Make it clear to possible applicants from the outset that the school will implement a rigorous and robust recruitment process that gathers evidence about candidates' suitability to work with children as well as their suitability for the post in question, and has proactive safeguarding procedures in place that address inappropriate behaviour.
- Implement a tailored induction programme for all new staff and volunteers that includes appropriate information, training, observation, and mentoring.
- Create a culture that is visibly intolerant of abuse and in which child protection issues are always on the agenda and able to be discussed.
- Implement procedures (eg clear boundaries) that make it too risky for abusers to 'groom' children or commit abuse.
- Ongoing observation of all staff as part of the professional development process and training and management where needed.
- Ensure that everyone connected with the school (staff, volunteers, governors, pupils, and parents), knows how any concerns they might have about safeguarding issues can be raised and to whom they should be addressed. They should be reassured that any concerns they do express will be listened to and taken seriously.

At Vauxhall Primary School we believe that to achieve this requires persistent effort in 5 key areas.

1.Communication

The procedures and guidelines must be communicated to pupils, staff and parents in a way that changes behaviour. It is not enough just to write a report or announce the measures at a single staff meeting. They must be discussed, applied and reviewed. Incidents must be recorded, analysed and lessons learned.

School Action

The School Induction Policy will require that all staff receive, read, and sign that they have understood the contents of all policies related to safeguarding children.

2.Visibility

Procedures and guidelines need to be seen to be implemented in the classroom and playground.

Appropriate behaviour should be demonstrated daily so it becomes the norm by which the behaviour at school can be judged by pupils, staff, parents and the community as a whole.

School Action

Safeguarding notices in classrooms and around the school:

- **Stay Safe poster**
- **Stay Safe procedures – yellow, green, red**
- **Equal Opportunities poster**
- **Anti Bullying Poster / guidance**
- **Health and Safety Notice**
- **Talk Time Procedure**
- **Talk Team message**

3. Understanding

Testing a person's understanding of procedures and guidelines cannot wait until they are put under the kind of pressure that may provoke, in some, a physically abusive response. Understanding arises from training, discussion and role play that explore the range of possible reactions to provocative situations and equip teachers with a repertoire of responses with which to deal with them. By sharing their experiences, teachers can develop a better understanding of their colleagues' strategies for dealing with difficult classroom situations.

School Action

We will ensure that Child Protection training both external and internal is scheduled to take place each term to monitor and evaluate the daily school practices, and review their impact on safeguarding children.

4. Evidence

Evidence of the success (or otherwise) of the anti abuse procedures and guidelines adopted by a school is necessary for the regular appraisal and review of the measures.

This evidence can be drawn up from reports of incidents that have taken place over a given time. The lessons learned will serve to improve the adopted measures.

School Action

Each term the SMT will review the CP procedures and their impact on pupils, staff and parents. A Child Protection Governor will meet with the headteacher to review the appraisal and report to the full Governing Body.

5. Checking

Schools must continually check that their procedures and guidelines are implemented.

Most schools today have established a structure of support of senior management to help manage difficult classroom behaviour as they accept that it's almost impossible for a single teacher to manage such behaviour alone. However, if a teacher sees their role as controlling a classroom rather than managing the learning (and fails to appreciate the support available to them),

they may respond in a physically abusive manner at times of particular stress or provocation.

Schools can help staff to avoid putting themselves in this position by developing standard responses of appropriate behaviour to use in any situation and the backup plans to go with them. This can be achieved through training, guidance and mentoring with the result that members of staff will be less likely to improvise a response (and get it wrong) when faced with difficult behaviour in the classroom. Sometimes, that which seems like reasonable behaviour in the heat of the moment may, in fact, be abusive.

School Action

All teachers and support staff will receive feedback on behaviour management during lesson observations, and informal classroom visits by the headteacher/deputy headteacher. Teachers will receive ongoing training and guidance in behaviour management strategies through the monitoring and review of the school's reward and sanction scheme, and in the monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning. Key Stage Leaders will provide specific guidance to individual teachers.

Emotional abusers

Emotional abuse occurs in all incidents of sexual abuse due to the mendacity employed by the abuser in targeting, manipulating and exploiting the child. The fact that the abuser is, commonly, someone in a position of trust compounds the psychological impact on the victim.

Emotional abuse can occur on its own, for example, in cases where a child is consistently singled out for negative attention by a staff member or whose need for protection and/or assistance is consistently ignored.

Bullying, harassment, ridicule, and discrimination all can amount to emotional abuse and schools should have a clear policy that all such behaviour is unacceptable particularly on the part of members of staff.

Guard against naivete

Sometimes, in trying genuinely to protect or support a pupil, a member of staff may display behaviour that seems abusive or inappropriate to an observer.

For example, a member of staff may:

- attempt to restrain a child and bruise the child's arms where they were held
- sit a child on their lap to comfort them after a bad playground fall

Staff need to be able to assess their behaviour in a given situation from the point of view of an outsider - a parent or governor for example, and avoid traps they may naively create for themselves.

Induction training should cover these issues and help staff gain awareness of how their behaviours may be interpreted and the proper procedures to follow in different situations. Sometimes, "I was just trying to help." isn't a sufficiently good explanation.

Inappropriate language

Sometimes a teacher or a member of staff will try to relate to pupils - usually older children - by adopting their mannerisms and slang, or treating them as peers and sharing inappropriate comments and humour. This is dangerous. This behaviour does not build an effective relationship with the pupils, despite what the member of staff might believe. It erodes the basis of a professional relationship in which the adult is expected to act objectively in the best interest of the child, and blurs the boundary between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour.

In many cases this kind of behaviour is never quite serious enough to lead to a complaint, but it will leave the member of staff in a very vulnerable and difficult position if an allegation of abuse is made against him/her.

For teachers and support staff, the principle is well established: they should be role models. They should not model their behaviour on that of the children, nor should they follow their lead. The same principle applies to other staff even though they do not have the same pupil/teacher relationship.

It is also important to recognise that this kind of over familiarity, or befriending behaviour, can be the start of a grooming process with older pupils. Schools need to put in place clear guidelines and codes of conduct that make it clear that this kind of behaviour is not acceptable. It is an area that should be covered in induction and the behaviour should be addressed by senior management if it is displayed by a member of staff.

Who are the targets?

Child sex abusers exploit the trust that children implicitly have in anyone associated with their school. This trust is misused to develop inappropriate relationships with children who are vulnerable, or who can be manipulated by the abuser to comply with his/her wishes.

Abusers may target those children in whom they detect particular vulnerabilities. For example those who have an unhappy home life, or who have been abused previously, or who have been bullied, or are immature and lack friends. These children are more likely to need and want adult support and friendship. Abusers can exploit this neediness to form inappropriate relationships for their own gratification.

Children from more supportive and caring family backgrounds may still be targeted for abuse, especially if they are under-assertive, experiencing personal difficulties or if they believe that their good progress is dependent upon their relationship with a particular staff member.

There are a number of ways in which a school might provide a soft target for abusers. One is by failing to apply the safeguarding measures we recommend when recruiting staff. For example:

- failing to obtain comprehensive information about candidates' background, or accepting an applicant's c.v. instead of an application form
- accepting open testimonials or references provided by the candidate rather than obtaining independent references that answer specific questions about his or her past performance and suitability to work with children
- accepting a candidate's statements at face value and not carrying out pre-employment checks to verify identity, qualifications, etc
- during recruitment, only focusing on acquiring someone who is good at their role rather than also considering that person's attitudes towards children
- operating less stringent procedures for non-teaching staff or those who will not have direct responsibility for children

In addition other factors may contribute, e.g.

- the lack of a clear, confident and *actioned* child protection policy and procedures, for example a child protection policy that is either just a book on a shelf or still 'in development'
- complacency about the likelihood of abuse happening in the school
- feeling overwhelmed and helpless in the face of an important issue - the feeling that bad things happen all the time and nothing can be done
- a feeling of awkwardness or discomfort in the school about discussing child protection issues that leads to a lack of dialogue and openness about the subject
- a defensive or authoritarian culture that does not allow concern or criticism about poor or unsafe practice to be addressed

Whilst, of course, no school actively encourages sexual, physical or emotional abuse, there are schools where the culture can inadvertently support abuse. Cultures that support abuse can include:

In an 'ok to look' culture, it may be considered routine for male teachers to watch the girls playing hockey for reasons other than an interest in the sport, or for teachers in the staffroom to make sexual references or comments about pupils. The teachers making these comments might themselves not take them further, but the fact that regarding children in a sexual light seems to be an acceptable part of the culture can support an abuser in thinking that their own sexual interest in the children is acceptable. This is inappropriate and disrespectful and could, for example, help a potential abuser to 'overcome their conscience' and move into a more active and dangerous phase.

A complacent culture is one that allows pupils' inappropriate or abusive language and behaviour to go unchallenged, or fails to help pupils to explore distorted or stereotypical attitudes about gender roles, human sexuality and relationships.

A 'silent' culture, is one in which abuse is not an acceptable topic for discussion. Schools need to allow abuse issues to be discussed openly. A whole staff meeting to discuss the issues - what is acceptable and what is not acceptable - is an effective way to raise the profile of the subject and to engage all staff. As with any school policy, it is essential that staff take ownership of how the policy applies to their own individual practice. Issues to discuss could include whether

touching and physical contact is appropriate at all in a school, and if it is, what the boundaries are. Guidelines can be found in the document Guidance For Safe Working Practices, published by the DCFS.

A 'this is a good school' culture can develop for several reasons. For example, because of geographical location or the socio-economic status of the intake or the school is complacent about the dangers it faces. Or, where staff do not have appropriate knowledge or training to recognise actual or potential risks.

Changing the culture in a school from one that might inadvertently support abuse to one that deters abuse and has effective child protection measures is a difficult process.

All staff in the school need to be aware not just of the child protection measures that have been implemented but why those steps exist. If the processes are implemented without staff 'buy-in' as to why they are important and what they can achieve, then the processes will be eroded and again the school will become a 'soft target' for abusers.

SAFER RECRUITMENT GUIDANCE

Module 1

The Context of Abuse

Abusers don't look any different from other people. The stereotype of a child sex abuser as a middle aged man living alone with no friends or close relationships is misleading. Some child sex abusers fit that description, but by no means all do. Some abusers are married, or in long term relationships, some are women, and some children are abused by older children or peers.

The risk is not confined to people who work or seek work that involves direct contact with children. Children, especially young children, are likely to see anyone who works in a school setting as a safe and trustworthy adult. In that respect, children will not distinguish between paid staff or volunteers, regardless of their roles and whether or not they are full time or part time. A caretaker or administrative assistant that children see around the school every day will be seen as just as safe and trustworthy as a teacher, classroom assistant or mid-day supervisor.

Because children will not make a distinction between teaching staff and the people in other roles, the same safeguarding principles must be applied when recruiting to fill any role in a school.

Nevertheless, it is important to keep the issues in perspective. The overwhelming majority of people who work with children are safe and trustworthy and have the safety and welfare of children at heart.

In the educational setting, it is estimated that around 50% of abusers enter the profession with a partial or single motivation to abuse, while the remainder develop their propensity for abusive behaviour during their time at schools. Thus, although we shall avoid some bad appointments by improving the recruitment process, we will be unable to prevent examples of ostensibly 'good appointments' turning bad.

The motivation to sexually abuse children often develops over years, with its origins in childhood and adolescence. Factors related to child sexual abuse include emotional congruence with children (ie, they feel emotionally connected to children and experience interactions with children as particularly fulfilling), a sexual arousal to children and a blockage to intimate adult relationships.

To friends, colleagues and the outside observer, there may appear a lifestyle imbalance as the abuser/potential abuser seeks to meet his/her emotional and intimacy needs through children. For example, while they may work in or around children all day, we might notice that evenings, weekends or holidays feature further and extensive child-related activities.

The next stage abusers and potential abusers go through involves overcoming their own consciences about sexually abusing a child. They may convince

themselves that such sexual contact is ok because "most kids are interested in sex", "I enjoyed it as a child", or "other adults have sex with children - it is

perfectly normal". The availability of indecent and abusive images of children on the internet 'validates' the activity as something that is acceptable.

At this stage, potential abusers will often observe children's behaviour and re-interpret it to conform with the sorts of beliefs about children, which support abuse. For example, they might describe the behaviour of pre-pubertal children as 'flirting', or claim they were making sexual comments or innuendoes. Most persuade themselves that such behaviour is not harmful, and will sincerely say that they would never hurt a child.

The function of 'grooming' is to create the opportunity to abuse without being detected by others. Most human beings engage in a similar process when they want to do something they know to be reprehensible or shameful.

By 'grooming' other adults around them to see them as responsible, respectable and 'normal' adults, abusers and potential abusers endeavour to keep their sexual agenda hidden. They will seek to create an environment in which they can exploit the vulnerability of children. Once in an environment where they can act out their sexual thoughts/feelings towards children (ie sexually abuse one or more children) they will need to continue to groom others around them to deflect any suspicion of wrongdoing and to maintain the impression of normality.

This serves to increase the probability of any suggestions of inappropriate behaviour being disbelieved and dismissed.

For example, they may present themselves to parents and colleagues as very caring, having children's welfare very much at heart, and may be willing to take on extra work or responsibility such as providing extra tuition or running extra curricular activities to benefit children.

Once in an environment where there are opportunities for contact with children, abusers and potential abusers can begin to create relationships with certain children. S/he might begin by forming a relationship with several children (those, perhaps, who appear particularly 'needy' for adult attention) and testing the boundaries of each child to see who is less rejecting of 'private' interactions and physical contact.

It is not always the case that the abuser chooses or targets a particular child who they find physically attractive. Often, the availability of the child in terms of susceptibility to manipulation and 'receptiveness' to personal contact will be the most important features in targeting for sexual abuse.

However, most abusers will have preferences in terms of gender and stage of development of the children they target for abuse. Generally speaking, an abuser who targets both male and female children is likely to target a pre-pubertal age group rather than children who have reached puberty or adolescents.

In the early stages of grooming, the abuser often tests out each child's boundaries in 'minor' ways so that if the child complains to another adult then the abuser can explain the incident away. (Although allegations of inappropriate behaviour of this kind don't usually lead to a criminal conviction, a history of complaints of such behaviour is one of the warning signs that may be picked up through a candidate's references).

If the child is susceptible to the abuser's grooming, then the abuser can, over time, continue to push the boundaries and develop the relationship until they can commit a sexual assault. It should be noted that some sexual abusers prefer to abuse more covertly and opportunistically, e.g. through voyeuristic behaviour, surreptitious or 'accidentally on purpose' touching.

SAFER RECRUITMENT GUIDANCE

Module 2 Inviting Applications

Advertising for teaching, support or any other kind of staff.

In order to deter unsuitable applications from people who may represent a threat to children, we see how a statement of the school's policy towards child protection should feature prominently in the job advertisement and applicant's information pack.

We describe the key features and benefits of a coherent recruitment policy for schools and stress the value of recruitment planning.

The details contained within the applicant's information pack are fully explained as are the criteria for obtaining references.

Objectives

By the end of this module you will be able to:

- explain the value of planned recruitment advertising
- describe best practice in recruitment policy and procedures
- describe the composition and activities of recruiting staff
- describe the components of the application pack
- explain the value of a child protection policy statement
- describe the selection process in full
- explain the importance of an application form over other forms of application
- describe best practice for obtaining references

Filling a vacancy

When a staff vacancy arises, it is important to be clear about what mix of qualities, qualifications and experience a successful candidate will need to demonstrate. Of equal importance is the wording of the advertising to prevent unwanted applications.

By ensuring at the outset that you have a clear framework of the duties, responsibilities, expectations and necessary attributes demanded of the role, you are more likely to get appropriate applicants

Careful planning will also ensure the process meets the requirements of Equal Opportunities legislation while reflecting best practice in recruitment and selection of staff.

It is also important that any adverts do not unwittingly contravene Sexual Discrimination, Human Rights and Race Relations legislation.

Advertising do's and don't's

You should tailor the advert to the role, depending on whether you are seeking full time or part time staff, teachers, supply, support or ancillary staff. You will also need to consider:

- where to place the advert
- the audience you wish to reach
- the cost implications

- your timescale
- the job's start date, etc

Seek advice from the Human Resources service that supports your school. You may already have an agreed advertising strategy.

All adverts should carry a statement on the school's policy towards safeguarding children and the requirement for CRB checks.

You should not :

- use catch-all adverts, job descriptions, person specifications
- assume candidates will know about the school or the advertised role without details being included in the advert

It is good practice to have a clear recruitment policy and procedures. This will require you to:

- maintain a file of skeleton documents (model job descriptions and person specifications) ready for modification as well as regularly reviewing application packages, e.g. information about school and LEA, policy summaries)
- communicate the statutory responsibilities of those whose roles include the welfare and safety of children and young people
- make an assessment of each post (and potential vacancy) that includes details of the post's responsibilities, the degree of (un)supervised access to children and the key skills required

Recruitment Policy headings

Recruiting staff

Skeleton documents

Application Packs

Statutory Responsibilities

Potential Vacancies

Adopting a structured recruitment process will:

- minimise the risk of appointing someone unsuitable
- ensure the capabilities and conduct of new staff
- enable the school can 'track' a process and ensure all relevant steps are taken
- ensure written records of procedures are available for future reference if required

As a result, it will help avoid making common errors in recruitment practice, such as:

- making assumptions about an individual's suitability without written evidence

- using a variety of recruitment procedures or a piecemeal approach depending on the post or individual. A well defined process can be applied consistently
- over reliance on personal judgements. Good recruitment practice is not a solitary activity. It always benefits from the support and advice of those professionals available to you in the event of any uncertainty

Common recruitment errors

Common recruitment errors include:

- focusing solely on academic qualifications/practical skills. This approach will fail to identify unsuitable behaviours
- being swayed by surface personality - ('He seems like a nice chap')
- appointing the 'best of a bad lot' (though this may be difficult to avoid when the field of applicants is poor)
- appointing 'because there is no one else'

Planning the recruitment exercise

It is essential to plan the recruitment exercise carefully. This will mean identifying who should be involved, assigning responsibilities, agreeing the key stages of the recruitment process and setting aside sufficient time for the work needed at each key stage.

We recognise that schools often experience difficulty recruiting teaching staff.

The inflexibility of teacher resignation dates may make recruitment procedures desperate when resignations are made at short notice. By preparing for predictably busy times of year (e.g. after May 31st), the school will:

- help avoid panic and rushed procedures
- ensure a fair and equitable recruitment process
- utilise experience/skills of those available
- protect against future claims of unlawful discrimination

Establishing recruitment procedures will ensure that the selection process will be sufficiently rigorous to:

- have as complete a picture of the candidate as possible
- identify and eliminate most unsuitable applicants

Once best practice procedures have been agreed and implemented, they should be strictly adhered to.

Not to do so can be used as evidence of negligence in the event of any abuse taking place later.

It is important to develop and review recruitment procedures on a regular basis.

These tasks may be delegated to staff within the school, depending upon their circumstances and needs. During the recruitment process, those making recruitment decisions should remain unchanged, as far as possible.

In the majority of cases, recruitment decisions concerning teaching staff will be taken by the head and another senior teacher, (one of whom could be specifically designated for child protection matters), plus one another member of staff.

Members of the support staff may be brought in as required for a particular post, e.g. SENCo for Learning Support Staff, bursar for office staff. LEA Advisers are often used to assess professional competence.

A school governor can often contribute particular expertise to a recruitment exercise.

Seek support or assistance from HR Service if necessary to ensure that all individuals concerned are fully aware of all of the legalities of the process.

Candidate's information pack

The candidate's information pack must highlight the school's commitment to safeguarding children.

The information pack sent out to prospective applicants must provide a clear image of the school and prominently set out its commitment to safeguarding children.

Focused preparation at this stage should aim at:

- encouraging applications from those suitable for the post
- deterring unsuitable individuals from applying

For most non teaching positions, it may not be necessary to include the same level of detail on results, Ofsted, etc. that would be necessary for teaching posts.

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job description and person specification

The prospective candidate must be provided with a clear description of the job's responsibilities and the school's commitment to safeguarding children.

The job description should clearly state:

- the main duties and responsibilities of the post
- the post-holder responsibility for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of pupils at the school
- details of the post including the hours worked, job title and a breakdown of any supervisory and/or budgetary responsibilities

The person specification of the post to be advertised will need careful thought and drafting, and you must take care to avoid unintentional contravention of the laws concerning:

- human rights, race relations, sexual discrimination, sexual orientation

JOB APPLICATION

Application Form

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

VPS Child Protection Policy statement

In the job advertisement

In addition to specifying the usual details of the post, all job advertisements should include a statement about the employer's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. This statement should make it clear that, where appropriate, the successful applicant will be required to undertake a criminal record check via the CRB.

In the applicant's information pack

The application pack should contain a more detailed statement about the employer's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children than was stated in the job advertisement, eg it may refer to the school's policies and procedures for child protection and security and that the interview will include questions about safeguarding children.

In this way, a school can present an unequivocal message leaving no room for misinterpretation. In emphasising the school's commitment to safeguarding children, these statements should serve as a deterrent to would-be abusers.

SCHOOL INFORMATION

Information about the school and catchment, an overview of Ofsted results, SEN, EAL, FSM, attendance, pastoral and curriculum organisation and support, summary of expected conduct of staff

LA

Standard LA information

INTERVIEW PROCEDURE

Shortlisting and interview procedure-only those fulfilling the job specification will be shortlisted

References of shortlisted candidates will be obtained prior to interview

There will be a panel of interviewers

REQUIREMENTS FOR REFERENCES

Referees will be contacted by phone and asked to supply written references
At least one of the referees will be the last employer/contact working with children

Interview will include a personal section, where suitability for working with children will be explored including exploration of previous experiences

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Terms and conditions of post

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES STATEMENT

VPS Equality Statement

Reviewing the interview process

The documents to be included in the candidate's information pack should be scrutinised before every recruitment exercise to check that all generic materials are up to date. This will ensure that :

- unmodified generic or potentially misleading materials are not sent to applicants
- the person specification and job descriptions accurately suit the post and are current

- the ethos of the school and the expectations required of the post are clearly spelled out
- the school's recruitment process and child protection policy of the school are clearly communicated

A description of the selection process will emphasise that only those who meet the criteria fully will see their applications taken forward. It will also cover the following:

Criteria - The description should separate essential and desirable criteria. It will stress that the essential criteria of the person specification must be met in full. These will include qualifications, experience and any other requirements needed to perform the role in relation to working with children and young people.

Testing - The description should explain how the candidate's fulfilment of the requirements will be tested and assessed during the selection process, and that the process will include an assessment of the person's suitability to work with children.

Anomalies - The description should explain that if the applicant is short-listed, any discrepancies or anomalies in the information provided or issues arising from references will be taken up at interview.

Verification - The description should state that current or previous employers will be contacted as part of the verification process pre-appointment checks if the applicant is short listed. Where appropriate, a criminal record check via the CRB will also be required.

Application forms

The main advantage of application forms is that they present a common set of verifiable core data from each candidate. In addition, they ensure that all applicants have a fair opportunity to provide relevant information and they facilitate the identification and investigation of gaps and / or anomalies. It is not good practice to accept other forms of information i.e. letter of application and CV because these will only contain the information the applicant wishes to present and may omit relevant details. It is also inadvisable to accept incomplete forms.

To ensure consistency and equal opportunities, candidates cannot be compared without standardised information. By accepting different types of application, a school risks conducting an unfair recruitment process. Hence, identical procedures should be followed for internal as well as external candidates.

A statement confirming that the application form must be completed in full before it can be considered should also be included. This may state that an incomplete application form or form containing gaps in the information provided may be returned for completion before it can be considered.

While a school may have different application forms for teaching and support staff, standard guidance notes for candidates on how to complete the form and who to contact if they have queries should be included in the applicant's information pack.

Candidates with certain disabilities may be unable to complete an application form. Schools must therefore retain flexibility in recognition of this access issue. In such cases, CVs can be accepted provided they demonstrate how the

candidate meets the person specification and provide the information required of other candidates.

The form should request:

- full identifying details of the applicant including current and former names, date of birth, current address
- teacher reference number for teaching staff
- details of any disability or long term illness (physical or mental)
- a statement of any academic and/or vocational qualifications the applicant has obtained with details of the awarding body and date of award
- a full history in chronological order (including post secondary education, part-time and voluntary work, as well as full time employment) with commencement and end dates, explanations for periods not in employment and reasons for leaving employment
- more detailed information re teaching experience (and for experienced teaching assistants, e.g. age range, subjects, posts held etc)
- **The Lambeth form has been amended**

The application form should also request:

- details of interests/hobbies
- details of special areas of teaching interest
- details of relevant training undertaken recently (e.g. teaching courses, First Aid, IT skills etc)
- a statement as to why the applicant is applying for post and what attributes they would contribute
- a declaration of criminal convictions
- a declaration of any family or close relationship to existing employees or employers (including councillors and governors)
- details of referees

The application form must require candidates to sign a declaration about their past criminal record, if any, and about whether they are disqualified from working with children and/or included on the DCFS List 99. The form should require candidates to sign a specific statement that they have no previous convictions, cautions, or bind-overs, no cases are outstanding, and they are not currently disqualified from working with children or on DCFS List 99, OR to include details of their past record, any outstanding cases, or disqualification etc with the application in a separate sealed envelope marked "confidential".

The information provided to candidates should explain that the post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and the effect of that in terms of having to disclose information along with a statement of the employer's policy on the employment of ex-offenders in line with the Criminal Records Bureau code of practice.

Investigating discrepancies

Any unexplained gaps in the information provided in this part of the application form must be diligently followed up. It is appropriate to go back to the candidate if you require clarification or further information on something in the application

form before you shortlist, though you must be able to qualify any explanation or clarification you request.

In this way candidates have an opportunity to provide all relevant information at the start of the application process.

CRB Disclosure

Following the Bichard inquiry recommendations, the successful applicant will, where appropriate, be required to provide a CRB disclosure at the appropriate level for the post.

This is already standard within recruitment and selection procedures in schools and is an important step as it not only reinforces the school's commitment to safeguarding children, it acts as a further deterrent to those who may be unsuitable candidates.

Providing false information is an offence and could result in:

- the application being rejected, or
- summary dismissal if the applicant has been selected
- possible referral to the Teachers' Misconduct team or the Police, if appropriate

Referral is important if the school is to be seen to continue to work within the safeguarding legislation, and not to do so may possibly be a liability.

Schools have a duty to inform LAs and other schools where necessary to prevent unsuitable persons from working with children. They also have a statutory duty to make reports to the DfES Teacher Misconduct Team in certain circumstances under the Education Act 2002.

Obtaining references

The candidate's information pack should include a detailed description of the procedure that will be adopted for obtaining references.

Normally two referees should be sufficient, provided one is the current or most recent employer. However, if the applicant is not currently working with children but has done so in the past, an additional reference should be obtained from the employer by whom the person was most recently employed in work with children. Relatives and friends should be precluded as referees as they are unlikely to be objective and there is no way of verifying the accuracy of such information.

Approaching referees

The prospective employer will approach current and previous employers for references after short listing, but before interview.

This emphasis on obtaining references prior to interview signifies the important function references play in the recruitment process. It gives the recruitment team more opportunity to identify gaps in the application or to highlight concerns that can be followed up by questioning at the interview stage if the candidate is short listed.

In view of the time required for writing, posting and evaluating references, the inclusion in the applicant's information pack of a clear description of how references are obtained optimises the notice that can be given to prospective referees. This is particularly important for candidates applying from overseas.

Information required

If the applicant is currently working with children, on either a paid or voluntary basis, his/her current employer 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)
- whether the applicant has been the subject of any child protection concerns
- the outcome of any enquiry or disciplinary procedure

If the applicant is not currently working with children but has done so in the past, his/her previous employer with children will be asked about those issues.

References should enable the school to obtain a clear picture of the applicant's attitudes and motivation. It is important that the kind of information requested from referees is also made clear to the applicants themselves.

Obtaining and evaluating references

When obtaining and evaluating references, be mindful of the best practice to be followed and the pitfalls to be avoided.

Best practice

- Approach referees for all short-listed candidates, including internal applicants
- Always seek and obtain references directly from the referee in writing
- Referees should be sent the job description and person specification for the post

Pitfalls to avoid

In light of the lessons learned from the Soham case, do not:

- rely on references or testimonials provided by the candidate or on open references and testimonials, i.e. "To Whom It May Concern"
- accept photocopied references
- rely on oral references
- let a 'glowing reference' go unchallenged
- ignore gaps in the points covered in the reference

It should be noted that there is no legal requirement to provide a reference unless so stated in the individual's contract of employment. In the event that a referee refuses to write a reference, find out why and seek an alternative referee.

The reference proforma

To ensure that the referee provides comprehensive information, references should be submitted on a standard reference pro forma that will cover all aspects of the information required by the interviewing panel, covering any essential information the referee may otherwise inadvertently omit.

The use of such pro formas reduces the temptation to make assumptions about statements that are vague or unclear and saves the time otherwise spent requesting clarification. However, the referee may be contacted subsequently for clarification of any part of the reference.

Questions asked by the reference pro forma

The reference pro forma will ask:

- for comment on the candidate's performance history and conduct, including performance management issues, disciplinary investigations and any proven disciplinary offences, whether time expired or not

- about any specific concerns that the referee might have or be aware of in regard to the person's suitability to work with children
- about suitability to the post
- for details of behaviour management expertise

Advice for referees

The information sent to referees will advise:

- about the referee's legal liability for references and that the reference should contain no material misstatement or omission; and,
- that the content of the reference may be discussed with the applicant at interview
- that they may be contacted subsequently for clarification of any part of the reference

Evaluating references

Upon receipt, references should be checked against the application form to ensure that the information provided about the candidate and his/her previous employment by the referee is consistent with the information provided by the applicant on the application form.

It is good practice to verify that the applicant has any previous experience that s/he claims is particularly relevant to the post. That can usually be verified quickly by telephoning the relevant previous employer with a request for written confirmation. The applicant will already have been informed (as part of the applicant's information pack) that relevant previous and present employers will be contacted in this way.

Discrepancies or other concerns can be checked before interview with the candidate and may form part of the short listing process itself. Any other discrepancies should be noted and explored at interview.

Safer Recruitment Training and Development

Date	Training / role	Status
October 2007	Safer Recruitment NCSL Shirley Wilson - Headteacher	Certificated
August 2009	Safer Recruitment NCSL John Acland Hood – GB	On line training in progress
7 th October 2009	Safer Recruitment NCSL Sonia Moore – GB	Booked

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Reviewed by Shirley Wilson 28/9/09

Copied to M. Dunkley, Edison David, Marta Correia, Leigh Schoombie, and Governing Body for reading and ratification by Achievement and Learning Committee and full Governing Body

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