

**RECRUITMENT & SELECTION PROCEDURE & GUIDANCE**

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## **Inclusion & Safeguarding statement**

The Synaptic Trust are committed to creating futures for all in a welcoming and supportive learning environment, in which all pupils feel valued and challenged to be resilient thinkers, active learners with transferable skills and have an appetite for world learning.

In the Synaptic Trust all pupils are valued, inspired and respected within our happy, welcoming family.

We set high expectations for all our pupils. Practitioners give every pupil the opportunity to experience success in their learning, by providing a relevant and challenging curriculum with an emphasis on personalised learning.

All children have unique experiences to share. Across the trust we celebrate this diversity by valuing the contribution of all pupils and providing a learning environment that encourages interdependence.

Our trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting welfare of children and expects staff to share this commitment.

Relevant Managers must meet all their responsibilities and timescales as set out in the recruitment process below.

### **Step 1: Vacancy authorisation**

Authorisation is required for initiating all recruitment activity, whether permanent, fixed term or for secondments. When a vacancy arises, it is the Recruiting Manager's responsibility to ensure that all possible alternatives to filling the post have been considered. They should carefully review the requirements of the post and ensure that the job description and person specification is updated (see Step 3) and job evaluated as appropriate (see Step 5).

Hiring managers may only advertise posts that are fully funded from the School's budget.

Before any vacancy is advertised, internally or externally, it will be made available to the School's redeployees for 7 calendar days, in order for them to apply and be considered for, before wider advertisement.

### **Step 2: Identify who will be carrying out the selection/recruitment process**

No part of the selection process should be undertaken by one individual on their own, unless this responsibility is specifically delegated under the School's terms of governance etc. and is objectively justifiable.

Panels should be as representative and diverse as possible, and at least one member of the recruitment panel must have undergone training in Safer Recruitment Practices.

### **Step 3: Draw up Job Description and Person Specification**(collectively known as the Role Profile)

A clear **job description and person specification** (that has been job evaluated in the case of non-teaching posts) for the vacancy should be created by the relevant manager to ensure focus on: the job purpose, safeguarding responsibilities (where applicable), key outcomes and deliverable objectives, minimum qualifications and expertise and values that are relevant and necessary. The Role Profile should include a statement about the expectation that all staff take the safeguarding of children seriously, for example “This organisation is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.”

The Job Description is a description of the role and responsibilities.

The Person Specification is a description of the personal qualities, knowledge, skills, aptitudes, qualifications, experience and other special requirements that the postholder must possess. All criteria in the Person Specification should be justifiable and **essential** and therefore you must avoid including “desirable” qualities.

Before writing a person specification it is important that the panel are be clear about the criteria. For example:

- whether or not the successful applicant must have the ability/knowledge required to fulfil a criterion, or must have the experience of having done something.
- the level of any qualifications that are required and, where a qualification is required, should specify that qualification, adding the wording “or equivalent. ”, in case there is a qualification of the same status that can be obtained abroad etc.
- when identifying “experience” criteria, it is important to focus on the quality of the experience rather than the length of the experience. As a result, the panel should try to avoid citing a number of years of experience (e.g. 5 years’ experience, as this could, in effect, be 1 years’ experience repeated 5 times) It is better to say something like “substantial” or “varied” experience and be clear what the panel consider to be meant by those words.

- Identify whether it is a customer facing role for which the Code of Practice for English Language Requirements for Public Sector Workers will apply. As teachers already have a language requirement, the code does not apply to them. For roles where the code applies, include a criteria in the person specification to this effect, for example “the ability to communicate fluently in English to fulfil the requirements of the post.”

#### **Step 4: Identify how each criterion from the Person Specification will be assessed** (Assessment methods)

This is how the school will quantify and measure how well candidates meet the criteria. Methods of assessment may be Application Form, Interview, Task, or some combination of these.

Tasks should be designed to assess criteria from the person specification and below are some examples (although the list is not exhaustive) of types of tasks:

- An in-tray exercise
- A letter writing exercise
- A finance task
- A presentation
- A round table discussion
- A classroom exercise

#### **Step 5: Establish grade /salary range for the post**

For new Support Staff posts it may be necessary to have the post job evaluated by your HR service provider, using the Greater London Provincial Council Scheme (or the School’s job evaluation scheme). Consideration should be given to the National Minimum Wage, the National Living Wage, and the London Living Wage.

Teacher posts are not subject to job evaluation but salaries must be consistent with the schools pay structure and staff pay policy.

#### **Step 6: Identify any necessary pre-employment checks**

This includes (but is not exclusively) a check on relevant qualifications, registration of relevant professional body (where applicable), prohibition checks for teachers (via the Employers Portal on the NCTL website at <https://teacherservices.education.gov.uk/>), eligibility to work in the UK, identity check, medical clearance, DBS check and prohibition from management checks. Some roles will require an assessment as to whether disqualification under the childcare act applies, and if so, appropriate checks will be needed.

**Important Note:** Schools are classed, for DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) purposes, as a “Specified Place” and therefore **all posts in school are subject to an Enhanced DBS check**, and some may also require checking against the relevant Barred Lists, dependent upon whether or not the post falls under the definition of “Regulated Activity”.

### **Frequency of DBS checking**

The Trust policy requires employees to undertake a new Disclosure every 3 years. The Trust will accept status checks via the DBS Update Service.

### **Step 7: Decide on best way to advertise the post**

There is no general duty for an employer to advertise job vacancies. However, there is a general duty for employers not to discriminate against employees or potential employees and the absence of advertising a vacancy could, in certain circumstances, constitute discrimination.

All forms of job advertisement, including e-mails, direct mail, signs in shop windows and on company notice boards, as well as advertising to the general public in newspapers, on the radio, TV and internet should not discriminate against anyone on the basis of any of the protected grounds unless there is objective evidence that the discrimination is lawful.

There is no comprehensive list of what constitutes discrimination. The test is whether an ‘ordinary, reasonable person with no special knowledge’ would think the advertisement discriminatory.

Employers must be careful that their advertisements are also not indirectly discriminatory. Indirect Discrimination can occur when an employer has a condition in its advertisement that applies to everyone but particularly disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic, e.g. race, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, religious belief etc.

### **Recruiting managers must consider:**

- **The appropriate place(s) for the advert to appear.**

When recruiting externally, a variety of advertising mediums may be utilised, depending on the nature of the post and the ability to attract suitable candidates.

Is the advert to appear in a national professional publication, on a professional website, in local press, on the school’s website/intranet etc?

- **The appropriate time for the advert to appear**

When is the best timing for the advert to appear in order to attract the optimum number of appropriate applicants?

- **The amount of time the advert will appear for**

Is one week sufficient? Is there any benefit to advertising for more than one week? If the advert is appearing online, could it appear until the closing date?

- **When applications need to be submitted by**

The panel will need to identify a close time/date for submission of completed applications and, if hard copies are being used, to whom they should be sent.

- **Whether to advertise internally or externally**

It is up to the School to determine whether or not a post is advertised internally or externally.

However, in certain circumstances it may be unacceptable to advertise a vacancy externally i.e. in situations where existing staff have been issued with a formal notification that they are at risk of redundancy and the school are seeking to mitigate the consequences of redundancy.

Internal vacancies will be posted through the school's normal communication channels.

### **Step 8: Draft the advert**

Consider the content and appearance of the advert. Do you want to include pictures or photographs in the advert?

All advertisements must carry, reference, or have a link to the Safer Recruitment Policy and the School's Equality and Diversity Policy.

All advertisements must include reference to the School's values.

The advertisement must be clear and specific about;

- a) The job title;
- b) The Salary/grade (pro rata, if less than full time);
- c) The number of hours per week
- d) Whether the post is term time only or all year round
- e) The date the post is tenable from;
- f) which safer recruitment checks are required;
- g) any qualification requirements;
- h) any requirement to be able to drive a car and hold a full and valid driving licence (if applicable);

- i) any need to have and provide, for work, their own car and evidence of the relevant business insurance (if applicable);
- j) any other requirements (also see Step 10h. below).
- k) the closing time/date for applications

Include the following statement: “We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.”

### **Step 9: Identify how candidates can apply**

All applicants (internal and external) are required to apply by completing an application form and Equalities Monitoring Form, either online or hard copy. Applicants with a disability will be offered support to submit their application.

The school should make it clear the deadline by which completed applications should be submitted and to whom should they be sent in the case of hard copies.

Applicants should let the school know if they have a disability or believe that the school may need to make reasonable adjustments to the recruitment arrangements for them.

### **Step 10: Decide on content of Application Pack**

The following (many of which may be contained in the School’s Prospectus) should be included in Application Pack to candidates:

#### **a. Details about the school and its situation**

- Name, address, telephone number. Name of head teacher or contact person
- Location - transport facilities
- Site and buildings - distinctive features; age and style of buildings (e.g. split site, open plan, etc.); facilities (e.g. nursery, community room, swimming pool, playing field, etc.); future plans
- School catchment area - urban/rural; socio-economic and socio-cultural background (e.g. type of housing, extent of cultural diversity); population trends
- Community use of premises

#### **b. Aims of the school**

- A statement/s about the aims of the school should be included in this section

#### **c. The Governing Body/Management Committee/Board**

- A statement regarding its involvement with the school
- Committee structure

#### **d. Organisation**

- Age range of pupils - class structure (by age or mixed age)
- Size of form entry, number of pupils currently on roll and class sizes

- Any arrangements for collaboration with neighbouring schools
- Support from outside agencies, e.g. special educational needs, ESL.

#### **e. Staffing**

- Brief description of curriculum organisation
- Staffing structure
  - Senior Management Team - a brief outline of its structure and respective areas of responsibility
  - Pastoral and academic (e.g. Department/Faculty) responsibilities
  - Arrangements for staff development

#### **f. Curriculum**

- Brief description of curriculum organisation
- Teaching styles, e.g. team teaching
- Pupil groupings for learning, e.g. children with special educational needs
- Public examinations taken/exam performance
- Special provisions, e.g. for gifted pupils, music, etc.

#### **g. Links with Parents/Carers/Community**

- "PTA" or "Friends of School" Association
- Arrangements for meeting with parents/carers individually and in groups
- Links with local employers
- Any other community links

#### **h. For Posts with Access to Children / Vulnerable Adults**

Safer Recruitment - For vacancies working with children, young people and vulnerable adults, the advert and job application pack must demonstrate the School's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of vulnerable groups. This means including the following sentences in the covering letter of application packs:

*"The School recognises that some people are vulnerable and at risk through potential misuse of power by service providers. It is determined to ensure that all its customers enjoy a safe and positive experience of its services. Therefore, the successful candidate appointed to this post will be required to complete a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) application form and employment will be subject to an Enhanced Disclosure provided by the DBS.*

*The rigorous staff recruitment and selection procedure employed by the School contributes to an overall commitment to protect children/vulnerable adults from abuse through the delivery of safer environments."*

In addition, the school must provide candidates with any relevant safeguarding policies/documents

Please note that there should also be a statement telling applicants what else will also be required. For example:

- Evidence of Identity
- Employers asked about allegations, disciplinary investigations and their outcomes
- Exploration of gaps or inconsistencies in employment records
- Demonstration of suitability for access to children/vulnerable adults

*Candidates are not exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act and should be directed to supply details of any cautions, warnings, reprimands or convictions by completing a Self Disclosure Form and returning it in a sealed envelope (or separate file if provided electronically). This envelope /file should not be opened until after the panel have carried out their shortlisting of candidates. \*See step 13 below.*

### **Step 11: Selection - Shortlisting**

The Selection Panel should independently assess each candidate against the person specification criteria that has been identified as a shortlisting criterion (i.e. any criterion that is wholly or partly assessed from the Application Form) and should complete a shortlisting grid. It is inevitable that each panel members may pick up on different information contained in application forms and supporting statements, or interpret it differently and therefore it is not unusual for panel members to have differing assessments. This is why panel members should then meet to discuss their individual assessments and reach a consensus on their overall rating for each candidate against each of shortlisting criteria. Please note that all members of a selection panel must be present for such meetings, otherwise they will not be deemed to be quorate, and cannot make any decisions.

Each candidate should be considered against each criterion and awarded an assessment of:

M+ (“Met Plus”)	=	More than meets the criterion
M (“Met”)	=	Meets the criterion fully
P (“Partly Met”)	=	Partially or partly meets the criterion
U (“Unclear”)	=	Information is unclear or omitted

**Please note:** failure to mention something is not a failure and should be classified as “Unclear”.

F (“Fail”)	=	Candidate provides incorrect or wrong information.
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## Step 12: Request “pre-employment” references

References should be sought for all shortlisted candidates, using [a pre-employment reference request letter/form](#) and should ideally be obtained **prior to interview**, in order to allow any potential safeguarding concerns to be investigated at the interview. One reference must be from the current or most recent employer.

## Step 13: Selection – Questions and Tasks

Having completed the shortlisting process, the panel must consider the most appropriate selection methods to assess candidate’s ability to perform the role.

A consistent selection methodology must be applied to both external and internal candidates.

*\*At this point any envelope/file containing the Self Form should be opened. The panel must ensure that they identify questions to ask the candidate about anything disclosed and make a written record the answers provided.*

All tasks and questions must relate to person specification criteria but should also be used to assess candidates’ suitability to perform work with vulnerable groups. In particular, the panel should establish tasks and questions that will assess a candidate’s values, motives and attitudes in relation to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of vulnerable groups, which focuses on ‘how’ and ‘why’ they make choices in work and seeks to explore reasons for their behaviour.

The Panel should utilise a range of competency based questions and tasks. Every candidate for the same vacancy should undergo the same tasks and should be asked a consistent set of questions, based on the person specification.

In addition to asking all candidates a consistent set of questions relating to the person specification and the requirements of the post (as stated above) each candidate should be asked questions relating to the information provided on their application form (and references, which should be obtained **prior** to interview). This is to ensure that all information provided by the candidate and referees has been fully scrutinised and cross checked for any gaps in employment history or inconsistencies in the information being provided.

The panel should agree who will ask which questions throughout the interview process.

If the references, or any information gathered during or after shortlisting identify safeguarding concerns, these must form part of the questions at the interview of the individual concerned.

## Step 14: Selection - Interviews

All interviews for a particular post should be conducted by the **same panel** throughout. Failure to do so could result in the school being open to challenge.

Each member of the Panel should make objective written notes of each candidate's performance against the specific requirements for the post. Those notes should be placed in the Recruitment File at the end of the interview process, and retained in case of challenge etc.

### **Step 15: Selection – Agreement on overall assessment of candidates**

Just as with shortlisting, having considered the performance of each candidate in all of the selection processes (application, tasks, and interview) the Panel members should independently assess each candidate, but this time against **all** of the person specification criteria, and should complete an Interview Grid. Panel members should then discuss their individual assessments and reach a consensus on their overall rating for each candidate against each of shortlisting criteria.

### **Step 16: Selection – Deciding who to offer the post to**

**In reaching a decision the Panel will need to decide the following:**

- **Are any of the candidates are appointable?**

If only one is appointable then the panel will need to consider what starting salary (within the advertised salary range/grade) should be offered to the successful candidate.

- **Is more than one candidate appointable?**

If more than one candidate is appointable then the panel will need to decide which is the best person for the post, and should therefore be offered the job. The panel will also need to consider what starting salary (within the advertised salary range/grade) should be offered to the successful candidate. They will also need to consider whether or not the second candidate should be a reserve appointee in the event that the first choice declines to accept the job and what starting salary they should be offered, if necessary.

Shortlisting and selection decisions must be documented and all documentation retained for the period of time as follows:

- a) For successful candidate – for duration of employment
- b) For unsuccessful candidates – for 1 year.

It is considered good practice to give unsuccessful internal candidates feedback in order assist with the development. External candidates will normally only be given feedback if they request it. The hiring manager (or designated member of the panel) is responsible for giving feedback if requested by candidates.

### **Step 17: Offer of employment**

Hiring managers should not offer or infer to a candidate the outcome of the selection process.

Upon selection of a suitable candidate the hiring manager will make a conditional verbal offer and then the school may issue a [conditional offer letter](#). At this point a further, [post-employment offer, sickness reference request](#) should be sought for the candidate.

Following the conditional offer letter, the School will issue a contract and written statement of terms and conditions of employment, along with related new employee forms that need to be completed.

The hiring manager can only offer salaries that conform to the School's Pay Policy, and deviation from the School's Pay Policy requires specific prior approval of the Chief Executive Officer. Evidence of a candidate's existing salary and a business case may be requested if it is proposed to offer outside the School's Pay Policy.

All offers are conditional and subject to references (one of which **must** be from the **current or most recent employer**) which the School deem to be satisfactory references, together with other pre-employment checks. This includes (but is not exclusively) a check on relevant qualifications, registration of relevant professional body (where applicable), prohibition checks for teachers, eligibility to work in the UK, identity check, DBS check and medical clearance.

To confirm an applicant's right to work and to verify their identity, a designated member of school staff **must** ensure that they physically see the appropriate **original** documentation. This same person must update the school's Single Central Record accordingly and place copies of documentation into the employee's personal file.

Hiring Managers will process the completion of all relevant checks and should seek telephone verification of references from the reference providers, seeking confirmation that the person had provided the reference and that they were the appropriate person to do so. This verification should be recorded in the personal file. Employment offers may be withdrawn if any of the above checks are unsatisfactory.

Candidates should not start work without all satisfactory pre-employment checks being carried out; with the exception of DBS checks. If a candidate is due to start before the DBS clearance has been obtained, then the appropriate risk assessment must be carried out and approval sought from the Principal.

### **Step 18: Induction/Probation**

Not all new staff are subject to a probationary period but all new staff should have an Induction Programme. It is the hiring manager's responsibility to support the new starter's attendance at all Induction Programme events.

Hiring managers should ensure that objectives are set and performance reviewed in order to assess a new starter's performance during the probationary period/initial period of employment in order that any performance issues can be addressed in a timely manner.

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