Castle Phoenix Trust

Recruitment and Selection Policy

Trust Level Policy

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September 2024	**No changes**

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION POLICY
(INCORPORATING SAFER RECRUITMENT IN ACCORDANCE WITH DFE GUIDANCE INCLUDING KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE IN EDUCTION (KCSIE))

1 Summary

1.1 This Recruitment and Selection Policy has been produced in line with DfE guidance and aims to ensure both safe and fair recruitment and selection is conducted at all times. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people is fundamental in recruitment and selection and is vital to create safe environments for children and young people.

2 Recruitment and Selection Policy Statement

2.1 Castle Phoenix Trust is committed to safeguarding, promoting the welfare of children and young people and creating a culture of vigilance and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment and vigilance.

2.2 Castle Phoenix Trust aims to attract, recruit and retain the most suitable individual(s) available who will successfully and positively contribute to providing a valuable service. A motivated and committed workforce, with the appropriate knowledge, skills and experience, is key to the Trust's performance and quality of service.

2.3 Castle Phoenix Trust is committed to fairness, equality and confidentiality in its processes whereby all equal opportunities and data protection/UK GDPR legislation is adhered to.

2.4 The Safer Recruitment Policy Statement is attached to the back of this policy.

3 Scope

3.1 This policy applies to the recruitment and selection of all staff at Castle Phoenix Trust ('the Trust') (which includes Hill Farm Primary School ('the school'), Caludon Castle School ('the school'), Charter Primary School ('the school'), Foxford Community School ('the school'), Richard Lee Primary School ('the school') and Kingsbury School ('the school') and it applies to all employees and governors responsible for recruitment and selection. Where a headteacher is being appointed the governing body will consult with the DfE where appropriate about the recruitment process.

3.2 The overall responsibility for recruitment and selection lies with the governing body. The governing body has delegated the responsibility to the headteacher for appointing staff other than those to the senior leadership team. The headteacher ensures that recruitment and selection decisions are made effectively and fairly with or through the People Team when appropriate.

4 Aims and Objectives

4.1 To ensure that the safeguarding and welfare of children and young people takes place at each stage of the process.

4.2 To ensure a consistent, equitable and effective approach to the appointment of all Trust staff.

4.3 To ensure all relevant equal opportunities legislation is adhered to and that appointees are not discriminated against on the grounds of ethnic origin, nationality, gender, religion, age, disability, marital status or sexual orientation.

4.4 To ensure documentation relating to applicants is treated with utmost confidentiality in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.

4.5 To ensure the most cost effective use is made of resources in the recruitment and selection process.

4.6 To be vigilant in protecting students from the threat of radicalisation through the consistent reference and adherence to safeguarding in all recruitment documentation and processes.

5 Pre-Recruitment Process

5.1 **Objective**

Once it has been confirmed that a 'real' vacancy exists, the objective of the recruitment process is to attract, select and retain staff who will successfully and positively contribute to the future development of the Trust. The first experience an individual has is important, therefore the experience should be positive and all those responsible for recruitment will:

- Plan the recruitment exercise at the outset
- Provide a positive image of the Trust with all applicants including unsuccessful candidates
- Have a clear understanding of the requirements of the role and communicate this to the successful candidate
- Reduce the risk of a bad selection decision, which can be expensive, by following through Trust procedures and its commitment to safeguard children and young people.

5.2 **Advertising the Post**

The statement "*The School* is committed to safeguarding, promoting the welfare of children and creating a culture of vigilance and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment and vigilance" will be included in an advert when a vacancy is advertised. The advert will also include the requirement for the completion of an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check as well as the usual details about the post, salary etc and will reference the importance of safeguarding children in the advertised role.

5.3 **Job Description**

An accurate job description is an essential tool and will be used throughout the process. The job description will clearly state the main duties and responsibilities of the post and the individual's responsibility for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children and young people that they are responsible for/come into contact with (the extent of which will vary according to the nature of the post).

5.4 **Person Specification**

The person specification is a profile of the necessary requirements for the post and will be used throughout the process. The person specification will include the qualifications and experience and any other requirements needed to perform the role in relation to working with children and young people (including safeguarding checks). It will describe the competencies and qualities that the successful candidate should be able to demonstrate and explain how these requirements will be tested and assessed during the selection process, including following up any issues arising from references during the interview.

5.5 **Information Packs/Covering Letters**

The Trust's commitment and responsibility to safeguarding, promoting the welfare of children and young people and creating a culture of vigilance will be included in information packs/covering letters sent to candidates as well as relevant information about the school and the Trust.

6 Application Form

6.1 A standard application form will be used to obtain a common set of core data from all applicants. The form records that successful applicants for posts that are exempted from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, and amendments to the Exceptions Order 1975, 2013 and 2020, will require DBS check at the appropriate level and that such checks will be taken into account only when a conviction is relevant to the post applied for. The application form states that it would be an offence for the applicant to provide false information and could result in an application being rejected or dismissal if the applicant has been selected.

6.2 Applications will be carefully scrutinised upon receipt in order to identify any anomalies, gaps in employment or areas of concern which need to be noted during shortlisting or followed up at interview. CVs will not be accepted in place of an application form.

6.3 The application will obtain:

- Full identifying details of the applicant including current and former names, date of birth, current address and NI number;
- A statement of any academic and/or vocational qualifications the applicant has obtained that are relevant to the position for which he/she is applying with details of the awarding body.
- A full history, since leaving secondary education, including periods of any post-secondary training/education, part time and voluntary work as well as full time education/training with start and end dates, explanations for periods not in employment or education/training and reasons for leaving employment;
- A declaration of any family relationship to staff or governors at the school;
- Details of two referees one of which should be the current or most recent employer. Where an applicant for a teaching post is not currently working with children and has done so in the post, the Trust will endeavour to obtain a reference from the employer by whom the person was most recently employed in work with children (the application form makes it explicit that family members may not be used as referees;
- A statement of the personal qualities and experience that the applicant believes are relevant to his/her suitability for the post advertised and how he/she meets the requirements of the person specification.

6.4 The form stipulates that it is an offence to apply for any role in school if the applicant is barred from engaging in regulated activity relevant to children.

7 Short-Listing

All applications will be assessed against the criteria within the person specification and they will be scrutinised to ensure they are fully completed with no discrepancies or areas for concern such as a history of repeated changes of employment without any clear career or salary progression, or a mid career move from a permanent post to supply teaching or temporary work. Short listed candidates will be asked to complete a self-declaration of their criminal record or information that would make them unsuitable to work with children. As part of the due diligence for short listed candidates, and In line with KCSIE 2024, online checks will be carried out on short listed candidates.

8 References

8.1 The purpose of seeking references is to obtain objective and factual information to support appointment decisions. References will be sought directly from the referee using the school's pro forma request forms.

8.2 References will be sought on all short listed candidates. As References form an essential part of the Trust's safeguarding and pre-employment process, the Trust will usually seek references prior to the shortlisting process. The Trust adopts this approach so that normally references are obtained before interview in order that references don't hold up proceedings and any concerns can be explored further with the referee and taken up with the candidate at interview (this will be explained on the person specification). It is up to the person conducting the recruitment to consider a candidate's request to approach his/her employer only if she/he is the preferred candidate after the interview. Where a reference has not been obtained on the preferred candidate before interview, the interviewing panel/headteacher will ensure that a suitable reference is received and any offer will be subject to the receipt of the reference being satisfactory. The Trust will not use open references and if an open reference is received it will seek alternative references.

8.3 A copy of the job description and person specification will be included with all reference requests and specific questions will ask:

- About the referee's relationship with the candidate, e.g. did they have a working relationship and if so what and how long has the referee known the candidate and in what capacity;
- Whether the referee is satisfied that the person has the ability and is suitable to undertake the job in question and for specific comments about the applicant's suitability for the post;
- Whether the referee is completely satisfied that the candidate is suitable to work with children and, if not, for specific details of the referee's concerns and the reasons why the referee believes the person might be unsuitable;
- That the reference information provided is accurate and complete and for consent to the referee being contacted should further clarity on the reference be required;
- Confirmation of details of the applicant's current post and salary;
- Details of any disciplinary procedures the applicant has been subject to in which the disciplinary sanction is current;
- Details of any disciplinary procedures the applicant has been subject to involving issues related to the safety and welfare of children or young people, including any in which the disciplinary sanction has expired and the outcome of those; and,
- Details of any allegations or concerns that have been raised about the applicant that relate to the safety and welfare of children or behaviour towards children and the outcome of those concerns e.g. whether the allegations or concern was investigated, the conclusion reached and how the matter was resolved.
- If a reference is provided by a school, it should be requested of the headteacher whereby all information in connection with disciplinary records can be verified.

8.4 On receipt, references will be checked to ensure that all specific questions have been answered satisfactorily. If all questions have not been answered or the reference is vague or unspecific, the referee will be telephoned and asked to provide written answers or amplification as appropriate. The information given will also be compared with 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 form. Any discrepancy in the information will be taken up with the applicant. Any information about past disciplinary action or allegations will be considered in the circumstances of the individual case. Cases in which an issue was satisfactorily resolved some time ago or an allegation was determined to be unfounded or did not require formal disciplinary sanctions and in which no further issues have been raised, are less likely to cause concern than more serious or recent concerns, or issues that were not resolved satisfactorily. A history of repeated concerns or allegations over time is also likely to give cause for concern.

When asked to provide references schools should ensure the information confirms whether they are satisfied with the applicant's suitability to work with children and provide the facts (not opinions) of any substantiated safeguarding allegations but should not include information about allegations which are unsubstantiated, unfounded, false, or malicious. References are an important part of the recruitment process and should be provided in a timely manner and not hold up proceedings.

If a candidate for a teaching post is not currently employed as a teacher, the Trust will request a reference from the school, college or local authority at which they were most recently employed, to confirm details of their employment and their reasons for leaving.

9 Interviews

The interview will asses the merits of each candidate against the job requirements and will explore their suitability to work with children. The selection process for people who will work with children will always include a face-to-face interview even if there is only one candidate.

Shortlisted candidates for a teaching post will be observed teaching at least part of a lesson and may be shown round the school by students/pupils with a governor or other member of staff where

applicable. Shortlisted candidates may also meet with other staff and may be interviewed by a student/pupil panel.

10 Invitation to Interview

10.1 In addition to the arrangements for interview, the invitation will normally also include a copy of the person specification to remind candidates about the areas that will be explored at interview including suitability to work with children.

10.2 All candidates will be requested to bring with them original documentary evidence to confirm their identity, legal entitlement to work in the UK and their possession of qualifications as stated in their application. Copies of the documents will be held on their personnel file in line with Trust's retention schedule.

11 Interview Panel

11.1 A minimum of two interviewers will normally form the interviewing panel. In some cases a larger panel may be more appropriate. Members of the panel will:

- Have the necessary authority to make decisions about appointments;
- Be appropriately trained including in safer recruitment
- Meet before interviews to
    - Reach a consensus about the required standard for the job to which they are appointing
    - Agree a set of questions in relation to the requirements of the post, consider the issues to be explored with each candidate and agree who on the panel will ask about each of those
    - Agree their assessment criteria in accordance with the person specification.

11.2 Where a candidate is known personally to a member of the selection panel, it will be declared before short-listing takes place. It may then be necessary to change the selection panel to ensure that there is no conflict of interest and that equal opportunities principles are adhered to.

12 Scope of the Interview

12.1 In addition to assessing and evaluating the applicant's suitability for the particular post, the interview panel will also explore:

- the candidate's attitude toward children and young people; including what attracted them to apply and their motivation and suitability for working with children
- their ability to support the Trust's agenda for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children including the preventing radicalisation agenda;
- gaps in the candidate's employment history and where the candidate has changed employment or location frequently and the reasons for this;
- concerns or discrepancies arising from the information provided by the candidate and/or a referee; and,
- that the successful applicant has the health and physical capacity for the job where appropriate.

12.2 If, for whatever reason, references are not obtained before the interview, the candidate will also be asked at interview if there is anything they wish to declare/discuss in light of the questions that have been (or will be) put to their referees.

13 Conditional Offer of Appointment: Pre-Appointment Checks

13.1 An offer of appointment to the successful candidate will be conditional upon:

- the receipt of at least two references that are satisfactory to the Trust
- verification of the candidate's identity (in the event that a candidate does not posses photographic identification through a passport or photo driving licence, the Trust will require a current passport size photograph, authenticated and signed by an independent person (not including family and friends).
- verification of eligibility to work in the UK including EU nationals
- verification of the candidate's mental and physical fitness*

- verification of qualifications (verified by the Teacher Regulation Agency (TRA) where appropriate)
- verification of professional status where required e.g. QTS status (unless properly exempted), NPQH;
- a barred list check and a satisfactory enhanced DBS Disclosure (for all staff as they are considered to be in 'regulated activity' in all roles. This will include the school having sight of the original DBS disclosure;
- (for teaching posts) verification of successful completion of statutory induction period (applies to those who obtained QTS after 7 May 1999) verified by the Teacher Regulation Agency (TRA) where appropriate); and,
- satisfactory completion of the probationary period
- anyone employed in teaching work is not subject to a prohibition order issued by the Secretary of State
- confirmation that checks against teachers sanctioned in other EEA member states list are acceptable to the Trust
- confirmation that the candidate is not disqualified from working (providing childcare) under the 2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations (in applicable settings for relevant staff)
- for staff that have lived abroad, the receipt of certificate of good conduct from the relevant embassy or police force and/or as advised by gov.uk and KCSIE
- confirmation that a candidate for a management position is not the subject of a section 128 direction made by the secretary of state prohibiting or restricting them from taking part in the management of an independent school, academy or free school.

The contract of employment makes reference to 'protection of children', the requirement for the Trust to be in receipt of a satisfactory DBS check, the requirement on the employee to inform the Trust immediately if they are the subject of a police investigation or receive any conviction or caution, if they are barred from working with children or vulnerable adults, if they are the subject of a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service or any successor body; or if there is a formal child protection investigation of the employee or any member of their household.

* The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 do not prescribe any particular methodology for determining medical fitness of staff. The Trust requires staff to complete a signed self-declaration pre-employment medical form and refers any medical declarations for review by the Trust's occupational health provider in order that confirmed fitness for post and or advice and guidance can be provided as appropriate.

13.2 The Trust's DBS Umbrella organisation will liaise with the Trust in order to follow relevant DBS guidance if a Disclosure reveals information that a candidate has not disclosed in the course of the selection process.

It will be important for the Trust not to rely solely on the DBS check to screen out unsuitable applicants. Such checks are an essential safeguard but they will only pick up the small percentage of abusers who have been convicted, come to the attention of the policy or have been listed. The majority of individuals who are unsuited to working with children will not have any previous convictions and will not appear on the children's barred list. It is crucial that everyone working in school is aware of these issues and the need to adopt ways of working and appropriate practice to help reduce allegations. It is equally important that everyone is able to raise concerns about what may be poor or unsafe practice by colleagues and that those concerns and concerns expressed by children, parents and others are listened to and taken seriously.

13.3 Pre-appointment checks will be:
- confirmed in writing;

- documented and retained on the personnel file
- recorded on the school's single central record as necessary; and,
- followed up where they are unsatisfactory or there are discrepancies in the information provided
- acquired in accordance with the relevant risk assessment.

The single central record will record checks for all staff (including trainees on salaried routes), members of the proprietor body and volunteers, agency and third party supply staff.

13.4 The Trust has a legal duty to refer to the DBS anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a child, or if there is reason to believe the member of staff has committed one of a number of listed offences, and who has been removed from working (paid or unpaid) in regulated activity.

The Trust will investigate and seek advice from the DBS if:

- the candidate is found to be on the children's barred list, or the DBS check shows s/he has been disqualified from working with children by a Court; or,
- an applicant has provided false information in, or in support of, his/her application; or,
- there are serious concerns about an applicant's suitability to work with children in line with KCSIE.

The Trust will consider whether it is appropriate to refer a teacher to the Teaching Regulation Agency in accordance with its statutory duty under the Education Act 2002 (as amended).

13.5 Staff working with nursery, reception and year 1 pupils or at before and after school clubs attended by children under eight years of age are required to confirm that they are not disqualified from working in those settings

Staff are made aware of the relevant legislation through induction and must advise the Headteacher if they are concerned that they may be disqualified.

13.6 Castle Phoenix Trust makes good use of its volunteers who undertake a range of tasks on a regular basis. Sometimes those tasks are supervised and on other occasions they are not. To ensure that the Trust complies with statutory safeguarding guidance at all times, the Trust treats all volunteers as unsupervised, as defined by Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021 and as such all volunteers undertake an enhanced DBS with barred list check. The only exception to this would be when a volunteer would be on placement for a week or less, in a supervised capacity for the duration of this very short term placement. The Trust uses a risk assessment process when considering the appropriate course of action in connection with DBS applications.

All governors must undergo an enhanced DBS check with an outcome that is satisfactory to the Trust. Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been appropriately checked be left unsupervised or be allowed to engage in regulated activity.

14 Appointment of Supply Staff

The school at which supply staff are to be based receives confirmation from the relevant supply agency that the required checks have been carried out, to the extent relevant to that person; identity, qualifications, enhanced disclosure, right to work in the UK, barred list check, not subject to a prohibition order issued by the Secretary of State, overseas check, receipt of satisfactory references, confirmation of medical fitness for the role and a check of employment history. A single central record will show that the checks have been carried out to the extent relevant and that the school has undertaken its own identity check and seen the original relevant disclosure.

15 Contractors and Third Party Staff

Third party staff who are working at the Trust on a long term basis eg PFI staff will be subject to the same checks as staff at the Trust and written confirmation that such checks have been undertaken will be supplied to the school at which third party staff are based.

The school at which contractors are based will ensure that any contractor, or any employee of the contractor, who is to work at the school has been subject to the appropriate level of DBS check, which may include checking with the Trust if the Trust made the contractor appointment.

Contractors engaging in regulated activity will require an enhanced DBS certificate (including barred list information) prior to commencement. For all other contractors who are not engaging in regulated activity, but whose work provides them with an opportunity for regular contact with children, an enhanced DBS check (not including barred list information) will be required.

Under no circumstances will the school at which contractors are based allow a contractor in respect of whom no checks have been obtained to work unsupervised, or engage in regulated activity.

The schools at which the contractor is based will always check the identity of contractors and their staff on arrival at the school or college.

Note for all Agency, Contractors or Third Party Staff: Where the agency or organisation has obtained an enhanced DBS certificate before the person is due to begin work at the Trust which has disclosed any matter or information, or any information was provided to the employment business, the 'agency' must provide a copy of the DBS to the Trust.

16 Induction

All members of staff will be given the school's Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy, the staff code of conduct, a copy of part one of KCSIE, a briefing on obligations relating to disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 (where applicable) and an induction programme. The programme will clearly identify school policies and procedures, including child protection, preventing radicalisation, the identification of the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) (and an understanding of what their role entails), behaviour and whistleblowing policies and provide support in a way that is appropriate for the role for which the staff member has been engaged, confirming the conduct expected within the school (see the school's Induction Information Pack and Policy). The programme will give the opportunity to provide discussion of any relevant issues and staff will be made aware of the channels for raising any concerns, in order that staff feel that the school culture embraces safeguarding and communicates a clear framework to employees, parents and pupils. The induction process will also enable the person's line manager or mentor to recognise any concerns or issues about the person's ability or suitability as early as possible and address them immediately. Schools in the Trust will undertake questionnaires/on line quizzes as applicable to ensure staff understand and discharge their role and responsibilities in connection with safeguarding. Staff will be guidance on appropriate use of IT at all times at the outset of employment and will be made aware of the monitoring of IT and internet use.

17 Ongoing Employment

The Trust recognises that safer recruitment and selection is not just about the start of employment, but that it is part of on-going training and support from staff, regular briefing and discussion of relevant issues. Training needs will be identified through performance management/performance development reviews, so that staff understand about, and are confident in, carrying out their roles and responsibilities. Staff will receive 'refresher' training (following induction training) in safeguarding at least annually. The DSL will receive specific training for their role every two years and their knowledge and skills will be updated at least annually to keep up with any developments relevant to their role.

In order that future recruitment procedures are better informed, monitoring of the recruitment and induction processes will take place and will include:

- Staff turnover and reasons for leaving
- Exit interviews
- Attendance of new recruits at appropriate child protection/safeguarding training, as part of new staff induction.

SAFER RECRUITMENT POLICY STATEMENT

Everyone within Castle Phoenix Trust has a responsibility for, and is committed to, safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and for ensuring that they are protected from harm.

We believe that safer recruitment practices help us to ensure our workforce is safe and suitable to work with children.

Our Safer Recruitment Practice includes these elements:

Preparation

We will always consider the vacancy that has arisen within the context of safeguarding children within the requirements of the role.

We will always consider carefully the knowledge, skills and experience required to safeguard children and include these within a person specification.

Advertising

We will endeavor to advertise our vacancies in a manner that is likely to attract a wide range of applicants.

The advertisement will always include a statement about our commitment to safeguarding children and our expectation that all applications will share that commitment.

The advertisement will state that the post is subject to an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check.

Candidates will usually be encouraged to visit the school for a supervised tour prior to interview.

Applications

We will ensure that our application form enables us to gather information about the candidates' suitability to work.

We will scrutinise all completed application forms, which may include online searches of shortlisted candidates.

We will not accept CVs.

References

We will seek references directly from the referee using the school's pro forma request forms.

We will ask for the names of at least two references.

We will normally take up references prior to interview and ask specific questions about the candidate's previous employment or experience of working with children.

We will follow up any vague or ambiguous statements.

Interviews

We will always conduct a face to face interview even where there is only one candidate.

Candidates may be asked to complete a number of assessment tasks.

Our interview panel will always contain at least one member trained in safer recruitment practice.

Our interview questions will seek to ensure we understand the candidate's values and beliefs that relate to children.

All candidates will be asked to bring original documents which confirm their identity, qualifications and right to work.

Appointments

Our offer of appointment will be conditional on all requested checks having being returned as satisfactory.

We will refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a child, or if there is reason to believe the member of staff has committed one of a number of listed offences, and who has been removed from working (paid or unpaid) in regulated activity, or would have been removed had they not left.

Continuing Professional Development

We will ensure that all staff receive regular training in Child Protection.

Allegations

We will always follow our locally agreed procedures for the management of allegations against staff.

Dismissal

We will always refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service any member of staff who is dismissed because of proven misconduct relating to a child.

People Team July 2024