

Recruitment Policy

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1. Introduction

The Parallel Learning Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the Welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to Share this commitment. It follows Department for Education statutory guidance published in Keeping Children Safe in Education.

This guidance covers the main stages of the recruitment and selection process such as reviewing the vacancy, job description and employee specification, advertising, shortlisting, assessment and selection, conducting pre-employment checks, appointment and Induction.

It is the policy of the Trust to recruit the most suitable candidate in accordance with the Equality Act (2010), regardless of sex, age, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, belief, religion, disability or any other protected characteristic and regardless of membership of a professional association or trade union

Recruitment involves attracting and selecting individuals into a job role. Recruiting the right individuals is crucial to The Trust's Academies performance. Any staff involved in recruitment activities must have the appropriate knowledge and skills required to make effective and fair recruitment decisions.

It is therefore essential that employees follow this guidance to ensure effective and consistent recruitment and selection practices for The Trust and its Academies.

2. Vacancy

If a vacancy has arisen following the resignation of an existing employee, wherever possible an exit interview should be conducted to identify and address any issues that may have led to their resignation. This should take place prior to any further recruitment exercise, unless there are extenuating circumstances, which prevent this.

There are a number of points to consider before deciding how and if the vacancy should be filled:

- is the post required to achieve the objectives of The Trust/Academy and does it fit The Trust/Academies development plan?
- can the duties of the post be redistributed within the section or performed in another way as part of employee development? (Any such arrangements should be undertaken in consultation with the relevant employees)
- is the post graded at the appropriate level, taking account of any changes made to the role and responsibilities? (Any grading review must be undertaken in consultation with HR – this is only applicable to non-teaching roles).

If it is considered that the post needs to be filled, advertising can proceed. The post will be advertised internally and/or externally unless otherwise agreed by The Trust/Academy.

3. Job Descriptions

Every job role within The Trust and its Academies must have a job description. In many cases, a job description will already exist, but it is important for this to be reviewed.

The manager recruiting to the role will be expected to ensure that the job description and person specification are designed or updated to accurately reflect the role advertised and to attract the best possible candidates for the role. The job description should describe how the role fits into The Trust/Academy as well as the main purposes and tasks of the role.

The job description should:

- Clarify the pay grade, job title, reporting and supervisory arrangements and working hours/weeks.
- Identify and list the tasks that are to be carried out by the postholder.
- Set out the purpose of the role, the key responsibilities, accountabilities and wider expectations of the role in the job description (examples of wider responsibilities would be an expectation that all staff take part in regular continuing professional development or that all staff have a responsibility for their own health and safety and that of others); and
- Include a statement about safeguarding responsibilities. This should be included in all job descriptions and should also refer to the postholders responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children with whom the post holder has contact or for whom they are responsible.

It is important to consider factors such as language and accessibility requirements for example, the job description should be written in gender neutral terms to avoid any impression that one sex is more likely to be suitable. Physical stamina requirements must be just and appropriate to the duties of the post.

4. Person Specifications

The specification should be a concise profile of the person who would best match the job, detailing attributes which are essential, and desirable. This should help candidates assess whether to apply for the role. It will also provide a benchmark for the manager to assess applicants.

The criteria in the person specification should be based on relevant knowledge, skills, attitudes and aptitudes and should be objective and measurable. The criteria should not be discriminatory. Managers are advised to seek advice from HR.

In preparing the person specification it is important to consider the following elements:

- **Essential qualifications** – those which are essential for the post to be performed to satisfactory standards.
- **Desirable qualifications** – those which are desired for the post.

It is important that the criteria set out in the Job Description/Person Specification relate precisely to the needs of the job. Setting unnecessary standards can cause unfair discrimination.

5. Job Adverts

The aim of advertising a job is to attract the best candidates with the necessary skills and attributes for the job. The job advert should include unique features of The Trust/Academy and the benefits of working for The Trust and its Academies. The job title and main aspects of the role including pay, location and type of contract (e.g. permanent or fixed term) should be stated in the advert. The advert can also include the key skills and knowledge essential for the job as well as details of any checks/conditions that the post is subject to.

The advert should state how applicants should apply including a contact name, phone number and/or email address for the prospective candidates, as well as the closing date. Adverts must be non-discriminatory.

The Trust and its Academies safeguarding statement as well as our commitment to equal opportunities must be included in all adverts. Job adverts should include reference to the need for the successful applicant to undertake an Enhanced Disclosure via the Disclosure and Barring Service where appropriate.

If jobs are advertised internally and externally, this will encourage the appointment of the best candidates available from a wider pool of skills and experience. Over time this process will also help redress the possible imbalance of under-represented groups within The Trust/Academy. Both internal and external candidates should receive the same information in relation to the advert.

Vacancies will be open to all candidates with the exception of roles that have a recognised requirement for a specific gender.

The level of information to be sent to potential applicants in the candidates' information pack will depend on the level of the post. A copy of The Academies/Trust's Child Protection Statement should always be included in the information pack, as well as the application form, job description and person specification. The information should also set out clearly the extent of the relationships and contact with children and the degree of responsibility for children that the person will have within the position to be filled. The information will stress that the identity of the candidate, if successful, will need to be checked thoroughly and will refer to the need for a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.

6. Application Forms

The Trust/Academy application forms should be used for all appointments whether paper based or on-line. The candidate should be invited to provide a personal statement. CV's must not be used as part of the recruitment process.

Application forms should be available in alternative formats at the start of the recruitment process (e.g. large print) so that this can be given to any applicants who request these.

All applications should be treated confidentially and circulated only to those individuals involved in the recruitment process for that particular role.

7. Criminal Record Self-Disclosure

Criminal record self-disclosure forms should only be reviewed after the shortlisting process has taken place but prior to interview. This allows the recruiter to be able to discuss any declarations with candidates at interview. Forms should only be reviewed after shortlisting, to avoid any suggestion of bias/discrimination.

Although an applicant may have made a disclosure, this does not remove the need to still carry out the relevant DBS checks.

8. Shortlisting

Depending on the role, the Headteacher/Recruiting Manager will be responsible for deciding on the composition of the shortlisting/interview panel and for convening the panel. At least two people, will be involved at the shortlisting stage of the selection procedure. Where possible the same individuals will participate on the interview panel. At least one member of the panel should be safer recruitment trained.

All shortlisting and interviewing panellists will be required to make a clear record of their reasons for selecting or rejecting each candidate at all stages of their involvement in the recruitment process. In making such a record, panellists will have particular regard to the attributes set out in the selection criteria. The number of those shortlisted for final interview should be manageable, normally not more than six candidates.

Matters discussed by shortlisting and interview panels are confidential at all stages of the recruitment and selection process. Participants should not discuss any aspects particularly the attributes of candidates, other than with panel members or when seeking advice during the process.

If specific qualifications are essential requirements of the job, the invitation to interview letter must reference that a check will be made of the required qualifications.

Copies of the successful applicant's application form should be sent to HR for qualification checks to be carried out.

Shortlisting panels are reminded that positive discrimination (i.e. giving preferential treatment to applicants from under-represented or disadvantaged groups regardless of their ability to do the job) is unlawful.

Reasons for not inviting people to interview must be recorded so that feedback can be provided to the applicant if requested at a later date. This paperwork must be kept for a minimum of 6 months, along with the application forms.

At the shortlisting stage, the selection methods for interview should be decided, questions set and who will ask which questions agreed. The person specification should directly inform your interview questions, and these should be agreed in advance of the interview.

The purpose of shortlisting is to arrive at an initial list of candidates for further consideration at interview. Care should be taken to ensure the list is both fair and objective.

- The panel should be familiar with the job description and person specification prior to shortlisting.
- All application forms should be carefully scrutinised to ensure that they are fully and properly completed, and that the information is consistent without discrepancies.
- Any discrepancies or gaps in employment should be noted so they can be clarified at interview.
- All candidates should be assessed equally, fairly and consistently against the criteria contained in the person specification.
- Evidence provided in the application form should be carefully scrutinised by the panel to assess which candidates best meet the experience, attributes and skills required for the post.
- Look for practical examples of how the candidate fulfils the criteria - is there actual evidence, rather than an unsupported statement?
- If the applicant is an internal candidate, only information provided within the application form should be considered as part of the shortlisting process.
- Formal educational qualifications alone may not be an accurate indicator of capability.
- Consider skills and experience gained outside of the traditional work environment - for example, voluntary work and life experience.
- Use of a shortlisting matrix is recommended in order to justify shortlisting decisions, and to enable comments to be recorded for each candidate against the person specification. Such notes should assist in providing candidate feedback if required.

- A scoring system may be useful to objectively identify the relative merits of each candidate.
- Consider inviting a larger number of candidates to an initial selection activity and then selecting the strongest of these for interview.
- Plan the questions and tasks in advance of the interview day and decide who will ask each question.

The Asylum and Immigration Act requires the authority to ensure that certain checks regarding eligibility to work in the United Kingdom are also made.

Once the shortlisting process is completed, the Headteacher/Recruiting Manager will write to candidates, inviting them for interview.

The letter will include the time of the interview, the expected duration and any papers/presentation the panel will wish to see.

For those posts which are subject to a Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) check, this must be clearly stated in the letter that the appointment will be conditional upon receipt of a satisfactory DBS (stating which level of disclosure is required) and the method for obtaining the disclosure.

Candidates will be invited to disclose whether they have any additional needs which require adaptations/special arrangements for the interview. If any information is declared, the panel should make reasonable adjustments to ensure the individual is not disadvantaged. Examples of this are but not limited to; changing the time or venue of the interview, rearranging seating in the interview room to allow a lip-reader to see the interviewer better.

The Headteacher/Manager will keep the shortlisting forms for at least 6 months from the date of completion of that record.

As per KCSIE, we will also undertake online searches for all shortlisted candidates. The purpose of this activity is to ensure there is no public information on candidates that could put their professional status and integrity into question or pose a risk to students. The online search checklist will be shared with the panel ahead of the interview when it is completed.

The online search checklist will be kept on the successful candidates personal file for reference.

9. Candidates with Disabilities

Person specifications must not discriminate against candidates with disabilities, either directly or indirectly, by the inclusion of criteria, which are not justifiable by reference to the requirements of the post. The panel will consider what support or adaptations would be needed by any candidates with disabilities to enable them to carry out the duties of the post. Decisions as to who is the best person for the job should be taken on the basis of the criteria in the person specification alone. Once the panel has selected the best candidate(s) for the post they should consider the effect of the disability and determine whether it can be overcome by adaptation of the working environment at a reasonable cost. Adaptations may include adjustments to the working arrangements of the existing team where appropriate.

10. References

Headteachers/Recruiting Managers should always ask for written references. It is advisable to request references after short-listing but prior to interview for posts which require an

enhanced DBS check as this allows an opportunity for any concerns to be explored during the interview.

A minimum of two satisfactory references should be obtained, one of which must be from the candidate's current or last employer. Where a candidate is not currently employed, verification of their most recent period of employment and reasons for leaving should be obtained from the school, college, local authority or organisation at which they were employed

References for staff working in an education setting will be sought from the Headteacher and, in other settings, it would be appropriate to seek a reference from the line manager of the applicant.

Where a candidate is not currently working in a school or childcare setting but has done so in the past, one reference should be from their most recent children's workforce employer in line with Safer Recruitment guidelines.

All references should be requested directly from the referee. A copy of the job description and person specification should be enclosed with the request.

References or testimonials provided by the candidate and open references addressed "To whom it may concern" must not be relied upon.

Where electronic references are received, Headteachers/Recruiting Managers should ensure they originate from a legitimate source and have been sent from a business email account.

The application form should seek the consent of the applicant to request references prior to interview. If consent has not been given, further information should be sought from the applicant with the aim of obtaining consent.

The Trust/Academy reserves the right to request that the applicant provides alternative referees where the initial referees are deemed inappropriate for our purposes e.g. where the current or most recent employer is not provided.

On receipt, references should be checked to ensure all specific questions have been answered satisfactorily. The referee should be contacted to provide further clarification as appropriate, for example, if the answers are vague or if insufficient information is provided. They should also be compared for consistency with the information provided by the candidate on their application form. Any discrepancies should be taken up with the candidate.

Any information about past disciplinary action or allegations that are disclosed in a reference, including any information obtained from the Teacher Services checks should be considered carefully when assessing the applicant's suitability for the post.

Both references should be received before the start date.

Any offer of employment should be made subject to satisfactory references and other employment checks

11. Interview and Selection

Candidates should be given as much information as possible prior to interview, to allow them to prepare and to minimise the risk of job offers being rejected.

Shortlisted candidates should be invited to interview in writing. The letter of invitation should give an outline of the interview format and details of any other selection activities which candidates will be required to undertake.

Candidates should be advised that their suitability to work with children will be explored at interview and that they will be required to bring original documentary evidence of their:

- Identity - passport, driving license, full birth certificate
- Entitlement to work in the UK - passport, birth certificate or other documentation taken from the approved border agency list
- Educational and professional qualifications

A member of staff should be available to greet candidates and to take copies of all requested information for the panel. Copies of all relevant documentation should be taken at interview and must be signed and dated by the person with the responsibility for checking the documents.

Interview Questions

Interview questions should be planned in advance of the interviews and should cover each key area of the role seeking to provide evidence that the candidate can meet the person specification. A range of questioning techniques should be used to explore experience, skills and competencies as well as attitudes and understanding. The panel should take the opportunity to remind candidates of the requirement for an enhanced DBS check and ask whether there is anything they would like to declare.

Other key points are:

- Ensure the panel is familiar with the job description/person specification and requirements of the post.
- Ensure the interview questions mirror the job description and person specification.
- Ensure the panel is familiar with the candidate's application and identify areas which need further exploration or clarification.
- Ensure at least one member of the panel has attended accredited safer recruitment training and that safer recruitment questions are incorporated within the interview plan.
- Beware of any questions that could be perceived as discriminatory and avoid basing question on bias and stereotypes.
- The questions should be 'open-ended' so they cannot be answered 'yes' or 'no'. They should usually begin with 'what', 'why', 'when' or 'how'.
- Ensure enough time is set aside for each interview, allowing time for deliberation/reflection after each candidate and at the close of the process.
- Plan the structure of the interview so questions 'flow' in a logical order and there is a clear opening, middle and end.
- Try to anticipate any questions the candidate might ask and, where possible, have the answers to hand.
- Allow the candidates the opportunity to ask questions.
- Ensure the venue is properly organised - welcome arrangements, room layout, refreshments, etc.
- Ensure the panel is aware of any additional requirements candidates may have e.g. any necessary reasonable adjustments - It is best practice to ask all candidates whether they have any additional requirements regardless of whether they have disclosed this on their application.
- Ensure there are no interruptions/distractions.

Think about what 'first impressions' you want to give to the candidates

12. Additional Selection Methods

Additional selection methods may be used to complement the interview process, but these must be proportionate, appropriate and related to the person specification. Examples include: an in-tray exercise, a written task, a presentation, a meeting with the student council or a teaching task.

Selection activities must be objectively assessed/scored and be relevant to the requirements of the job.

Candidates should be made aware of additional selection tasks when they are invited to interview and given notice of presentation titles, available equipment (e.g. laptop, projector, etc.).

13. Right to Work in the UK

Before any applicants are appointed at the Academy, a thorough check must be carried out to see whether the applicant is entitled to work in the UK and to ensure all necessary and relevant paperwork is correct and up to date.

The UK Visas and Immigration Service can require an employer to show them evidence at any time of an individual's right to work in the UK. If you fail to produce this and the employee is found to be working illegally, the Academy will be fined up to £20,000 in each case. There is a further penalty of imprisonment that could be imposed where an employer is knowingly employing someone illegally.

To avoid discrimination, employers should be consistent in their checking and not simply check recruits they assume would not be eligible. British citizens, citizens of the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man and the Republic of Ireland are currently entitled to work in the UK. As the UK is no longer part of the EU, those countries within the EEA (EU, EEA and Swiss Citizens) are now required to provide proof of their right to work as outlined within the Home Office Guide to Right to Work checks. This is effective from 18 October 2023 - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/right-to-work-checks-employers-guide>

The documents that are considered acceptable for demonstrating right to work in the UK are set out by the Home Office in their Right to Work checklist.

When carrying out these checks, you must check that:

- the documents are genuine, original and unchanged and belong to the person who has given them to you with the applicant present
- the dates for the applicant's right to work in the UK have not expired
- photos are the same across all documents and look like the applicant
- dates of birth are the same across all documents
- the applicant has permission to do the type of work you're offering (including any limit on the number of hours they can work) - for students you need to see evidence of their study and vacation times
- if 2 documents give different names, the applicant has supporting documents showing why they're different, such as a marriage certificate or divorce decree

Retain a copy of these documents on file. In particular you should copy any pages that provide details of nationality, their photograph, date of birth, signature, date of expiry of biometric details, and any page containing Government endorsements.

Date and sign copies as evidence as to when the check was carried out, and by whom.

14. Overseas Trained Teachers (OTT)

Teachers who qualified in Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the United States of America should apply for QTS before they can work as a qualified teacher in England

Teachers from overseas may also be required to satisfy UK Visa and Immigration requirements.

OTTs may teach in state-maintained schools and non-maintained special schools in England as unqualified teachers for four calendar years. This is known as the four-year rule and it applies to teachers who qualified in countries outside of the EEA and Switzerland except for teachers who qualified in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States of America (USA).

It is illegal for overseas qualified teachers to continue working as a teacher in a maintained school or non-maintained special school in England for longer than 4 years without QTS.

The 4-year rule applies to overseas teachers who meet all of the following conditions:

- they have qualified as a teacher in a country outside of the UK
- they have completed a course of teacher training which is recognised by the competent authority of that country
- they are employed in maintained schools and non-maintained special schools

Overseas teachers cannot teach in the following settings, for any period of time, unless they are doing employment-based teacher training leading to QTS:

- pupil referral units (PRUs)
- alternative provision Academies
- alternative provision free schools

15. Individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK

Individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK must undergo the same checks as all other staff in the Academy. In addition, the Academy must make any further checks they think appropriate so that any relevant events that occurred outside the UK can be considered. The Home Office guidance on criminal records checks for overseas applicants can be found on GOV.UK. These further checks should include a check for information about any teacher sanction or restriction that an EEA professional regulating authority has imposed, using the Teacher Regulation Agency (TRA) Teacher Services' system.

16. List of Prohibited Teachers

All teachers being employed at the Academy must be checked against the list of prohibited teachers and record the result on the Single Central Record. This check is in addition to the normal barred list check which is part of the DBS checking process.

The barred list check must be carried out on applicants who will be working in a regulated activity with children

The DBS cannot provide barred list information on any person, including volunteers, who are not in or seeking to enter in regulated activity.

The TRA self-service portal provides information relating to an individual's employment details, initial teacher training qualifications and induction history. Employers, and potential employers, can view the record of any teacher with Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) or any

employee carrying out teaching work with an active restriction (including any teacher with QTLS to whom this applies) and allows access to the following lists:

- Those carrying out 'Teaching Work' who have been prohibited from teaching.
- Teachers who may be the subject of a suspension or conditional order imposed by the GTCE (prior to its abolition) that is still current; and
- Teachers who have failed to successfully complete their induction or probation period.

17. DBS checks

A Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check is required for all staff directly employed by Schools and Academies in paid positions who will be engaging in regulated activity.

An enhanced DBS check will be required where the individual will be engaging in regulated activity i.e. if they are involved in the following at The Trust/Academy.

- will be responsible, on a regular basis for teaching, training instructing, caring for or supervising children; or
- will carry out paid, or unsupervised unpaid work regularly where that work provides an opportunity for contact with children; or
- engage in intimate or personal care, or overnight activity, even if this happens only once.

For all other staff who have an opportunity for regular contact with children who are not engaging in regulated activity, an enhanced DBS certificate, which does not include a barred list check.

Only in exceptional circumstances should individuals start work before a satisfactory check has been received.

Should it not be possible to obtain satisfactory clearance before a candidate takes up their post, the Headteacher/Line Manager should put in place any necessary precautions, i.e. restricting one to one contact between new staff and children until a satisfactory clearance has been received.

Headteachers/Line Managers should try to allow sufficient time for all vetting checks to be carried out when agreeing a start date with new staff.

18. Section 128 Prohibition from Management Check

A section 128 prohibition check must be carried out where appointing into a management position at Trust / Academy. Such roles will include trustee, governor, Headteacher, any teaching positions on the senior leadership team, and any teaching positions which carry a department headship. Teachers with additional responsibilities could be prohibited from 'taking part in management' depending on the facts of each case

19. Overseas Checks

Individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK must undergo the same checks as all other staff within The Trust/ Academy.

Applicants are responsible for obtaining certificates of good character. The application process for criminal records checks or 'Certificates of Good Character' for someone from overseas varies from country to country.

For those applicants on a Tier 2 Visa they must provide a criminal record certificate from any country where they have lived for 12 months or more in the last 10 years, while aged 18 or over.

For all other overseas checks for those who have worked or lived abroad, it is for the Academy to consider what is appropriate based on the circumstances of each individual case. As a general rule, it is advisable to request for all applicants who have lived overseas for a period of 6 months or more in the last 5 years to provide an overseas check. A DBS can only check records within the UK, so it is an important step of the pre-employment checks to obtain this.

20. Offer of Employment

All offers of appointment should be conditional until satisfactory completion of the mandatory pre-employment checks. All schools must:

- Verify a candidate's identity, it is important to be sure that the person is who they claim to be, this includes being aware of the potential for individuals changing their name. Best practice is checking the name on their birth certificate, where this is available. Further identification checking guidelines can be found on the GOV.UK website

Offers of employment may be made verbally but should always be confirmed in writing.

Verbal offers are legally binding, so care should be taken to ensure the terms offered are correct and accurate. Care should be also taken when discussing terms at interview since any offers made or implied could be regarded as binding.

All written and verbal offers must be made conditional upon the receipt of:

- Two satisfactory references.
- Proof of satisfactory outcome of a Disclosure and Barring Service check (DBS).
- Subscription to the annual DBS update Service.
- Appropriate qualifications.
- Authority under the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006 to work in the United Kingdom (e.g. passport)
- Satisfactory pre-employment health clearance

In addition, employees are required to confirm their date of birth and national insurance number.

Any verbal or written offer should clearly state that if these checks are unsatisfactory the offer of employment may be withdrawn. If the individual has commenced work, employment may be terminated with the minimum statutory notice given however advice should always be sought from your HR Consultant before taking any action.

21. Unsuccessful Candidates

Unsuccessful candidates should be notified in writing of the outcome of the selection process. It is good practice for candidates to be offered the opportunity to request feedback. Feedback should be constructive and evidence-based and should reference the person specification criteria.

At the end of the appointment process all copied identity documentation (passport/birth certificate etc.) relating to unsuccessful candidates should be securely destroyed however, copies of application forms, interview notes and references should be retained for six months from the date that the post is offered and accepted. All personal data will be stored and destroyed in line with GDPR.

22. Induction

All new starters should be taken through an induction program which should cover the training required by the new starter to carry out their role and to maintain safe working practices. The induction should set the Academies expectations and boundaries of the role Informing the individual of the Academies commitment to maintaining a safeguarding culture. The induction may include:

- Health and safety training
- Manual handling
- Child protection/safeguarding training
- Code of conduct
- Behaviour policies and how to report concerns
- Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Whistleblowing
- Prevent
- GDPR

An effective induction helps the new starter to understand their role and how they fit into the academy/department, become fully effective in their role in the shortest possible time and establish effective working relationships leading to improved performance and effectiveness.

A checklist of basic information should be given to all new starters together with details of where they can access all Trust/Academy policies and procedures, who is available to support them in their new role, the expectations of The Trust/Academy and how to raise issues and concerns between reviews.

Probation review dates or induction review dates should be included in the initial induction plan to ensure that line managers and staff have clear expectations of when they will meet.