

## Safer Recruitment Search Form Guidance Document

Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) (September 2022) introduced a new requirement to carry out an online search on shortlisted candidates.

New paragraph (221) states:

In addition, as part of the shortlisting process schools and colleges should consider carrying out an online search as part of their due diligence on the shortlisted candidates. This may help identify any incidents or issues that have happened, and are publicly available online, which the school or college might want to explore with the applicant at interview. See Part two - Legislation and the Law for information on data protection and UK GDPR.

### The Staffordshire Schools Multi Academy Trust's Approach and Rationale

The guidance states that schools 'should consider carrying out an online search'. The word 'should' is used in KCSiE when the advice set out should be followed unless there is good reason not to. Therefore, TSSMAT has decided to carry out online searches within specific parameters.

The Trust has concerns about the subjectivity of information that may be reported and identified online, including indirect discrimination against certain groups. We also wish to avoid unnecessary intrusion into the personal and private lives of shortlisted candidates.

TSSMAT has considered the other mechanisms in place for self-disclosure and pre-employment checking, and the information available via those processes. TSSMAT has considered the DBS filtering rules and information that would or would not be made known to us via that process.

The Trust is implementing the approach set out in this guide and will keep this under review pending further or revised guidance.

### Parameters of the Online Search

The Trust will only carry out online checks on external shortlisted candidates.

The Trust will carry out online checks on those candidates after they have been informed they have been shortlisted, and before the date of the interview.

The Trust will provide information on its online searches with the job advertisements.

The online search will focus on publicly reported information as follows:

- Publicly reported safeguarding matters or incidents that may render the candidate unsuitable for the role
- Reported matters, photos and/or videos displaying violent images, nudity or cruelty
- Extremism or hate speech as defined in the Prevent Agenda: vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs

TSSMAT has determined that incidents and issues will only be relevant if they may raise a safeguarding concern, cause reputational damage to the organisation or make the candidate unsuitable to work with children and young people or for the role they are applying for. Any information identified relating to a protected characteristic such as sexual orientation, disability, religion or belief, is not relevant for the purposes of this search and will not be taken into account or recorded.

The online search will not involve a review of the candidate's social media account/s unless publicly reported information identifies relevant information on such an account. In this case, candidates may be asked to supply their social media tags to the Trust.

The online search will be conducted via Google with the following parameters:

- Candidate's current full name and location
- Candidate's previous names and location
- Candidate's known as or shortened names and location
- Candidates full name and current employer name
- Candidate's full name and previous employer name
- Candidate's previous name and relevant employer name

Google search and Google news results will be reviewed for any reported incidents or issues.

The Trust has not specified a time period for relevant information and is taking the approach that the first 3 pages of results will be reviewed.

The Online Search will be conducted on external shortlisted candidates only. The Trust takes the view that there are sufficient mechanisms in place for relevant matters to be reported internally, either by the individual or external agencies.

#### Carrying out the Online Search

The online search will be carried out by the Trust or where delegated, the School Secretary in each school.

This employee must not form part of the recruitment process.

For Headteacher or Central Team appointments, the Business Operations Manager will carry out the online search.

A TSSMAT online search Form must be completed for each search and retained in accordance with the Privacy Policy for Job Applicants and the Data Protection Policy.

The successful candidate's online search form will be retained on their personnel file.

TSSMAT has taken the view that it would be sensible to record this online search on the Single Central Record for the successful candidate to demonstrate compliance with the guidance.

This may be reviewed in the future as it is not a statutory requirement.

#### Identifying a Potential Concern

Where the checker identifies relevant information, they must contact the Trust Business Operations Manager for advice which may be followed up with our HR provider.

If the information is determined as relevant, it will be raised with the candidate at interview to provide an opportunity for discussion.

If the candidate becomes the preferred choice for the role, the information discussed will be considered in determining suitability for the role.