



# Wootton Academy Trust

## Policy and Procedures for the Appointment of Staff

- a) This policy applies to all Trusts managed by Wootton Academy Trust
- b) This policy was adopted by Wootton Academy Trust in December 2012
- c) This policy was reviewed by Wootton Academy Trust in March 2017

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## **1. PREAMBLE**

This document has been produced in order to give clear guidelines for the appointment of all staff employed by Wootton Academy Trust.

The aims of this document are:

- to provide detailed and structured procedures for the appointment of staff
- to encourage good practice
- to provide interview panel members with appropriate guidance to help them meet their responsibilities in the recruitment of staff
- to ensure that interviews are conducted consistently in a planned and systematic manner

The appointment of staff is one of the most important functions in which any of us become involved. Selecting staff is a skill and like most skills can be developed and improved upon through experience and thought. In thinking about a post prior to selection, we are not only matching the right person to the right job in relation to qualities and skills, but, also to be borne in mind are relationships within the team. The value of making the right appointments cannot be over-emphasised; a mistake made at this point can have adverse effects for years to come. In drawing up this policy, reference has been made to the Keeping Children Safe in Education document.

## **2. POLICY**

The Trust's policy on recruitment is to appoint the best person for the job based on sound fair and legitimate selection procedures. There should be no discrimination (either positive or negative) against candidates on grounds of age, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, marital status or disability. Recruitment, as with all aspects of school life, must adhere to current legislation.

The recruitment of staff of the highest calibre must be a paramount objective for the Directors and their senior management teams in the Trust's schools, for ultimately the success of these schools is dependent on the qualities of the people working in it.

If a suitable candidate is not forthcoming at the first round of interviews, the position will be re-advertised until a suitable candidate emerges.

## **3. PRINCIPLES**



The Trust will take steps to ensure:

- The best possible staff are recruited on the basis of their merits, abilities and suitability for the position;
- that all job applicants are considered equally and consistently;
- that no job applicant is treated unfairly on any grounds including race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or religious belief, sex or sexual orientation, marital or civil partner status, disability or age;
- compliance with all relevant legislation, recommendations and guidance including the statutory guidance published by the Department for Education (DfE), Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) and any guidance or code of practice published by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS);
- that the Trust meets its commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people by carrying out all necessary pre-employment checks.

#### **4. VACANCIES**

Vacancies may arise as a result of members of staff leaving the employment of the Trust, having an internal promotion which leaves another vacancy to be filled, or as a result of a new post being offered. When vacancies arise as a result of the first two scenarios, it is good practice to make this an opportunity to review whether the post needs to be filled and if so whether the job description and responsibilities need to be amended.

#### **5. PROCEDURES FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF TEACHING STAFF**

The administrative arrangements involved in the recruiting process shall be the responsibility of the Principal of the school.

##### **Advertisements**

Vacancies will be advertised in the local and/or national press and/or their web equivalents) where appropriate and on the websites of Wootton Academy Trust schools. Advertisements will indicate title, grading, salary, date for return of application, and the name and address to be contacted for details. Where applicable minimum qualifications and / or experience required should be stated.

A vacancy for a Principal or Vice Principal should be advertised nationally.



The following information is made available on the websites of Wootton Academy Trust schools or following contact with the school: application forms, post and departmental descriptions, person specification, Safeguarding Policy and any other information specific to the post.

The following will be included on the application form and/or further particulars for each post:

*An offer of employment is conditional upon the Trust receiving an Enhanced Disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) which the Trust considers to be satisfactory. The Trust applies for an Enhanced Check for Regulated Activity from the DBS (which includes a check of the Children's Barred List) in respect of all positions at the Trust which amount to regulated activity. It is unlawful for the Trust to employ anyone who is barred from working with children. It is a criminal offence for any person who is barred from working with children to attempt to apply for a position at the Trust or at any of its schools. If you are successful in your application, you will be required to complete a DBS Disclosure Application Form. Any information disclosed will be handled in accordance with any guidance and / or code of practice published by the DBS.*

*The Trust is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and therefore all convictions, cautions, reprimands and final warnings (including those which would normally be considered "spent" under the Act) must be declared. You are not required to disclose a caution or conviction for an offence committed in the United Kingdom if it has been filtered in accordance with the DBS filtering rules. If you have a criminal record this will not automatically debar you from employment. Instead, each case will be assessed fairly by reference to the Trust's objective assessment procedure set out in this document.*

### **Application Form**

All applicants for employment will be required to complete an application form containing questions about their academic and employment history and their suitability for the role. Incomplete application forms will be returned to the applicant where the deadline for completed application forms has not passed. Should there be any gaps in academic or employment history, an explanation must be provided. Curriculum vitae will not be accepted in place of the completed application form.

### **Shortlisting**



Shortlisting (except for Principal and Vice Principal) will be carried out by the Principal, Line Manager for the department and, where appropriate, the Head of Department. Candidates will be shortlisted using the criteria set out on the Person Specification.

### **References**

All references for teaching posts will be requested prior to interview.

Requests for references will be specific to the post and be structured to elicit information of relevance to the appointment. They will be accompanied by a copy of the job description and job details and request the referee to relate his/her comments to these. It will be made clear to the referees by which date references are required. Referees will be asked to comment on the candidate's suitability for the post as well as being asked to mention any disciplinary, performance, safeguarding or conduct issues. No questions will be asked about health or medical fitness prior to any offer of employment being made.

All candidates will be asked to give the names of at least two referees of whom one should be their present employer (or last employer, if currently unemployed). The Trust will only accept references obtained directly from the referee and it will not rely on references or testimonials provided by the applicant or on open references or testimonials. The Trust will compare all references with any information given on the application form. Any discrepancies or inconsistencies in the information will be taken up with the applicant and the relevant referee before any appointment is confirmed

### **Interview**

The applicant may then be invited to attend a formal interview at which his/her relevant skills and experience will be discussed in more detail.

The interview panel will usually comprise the Principal or Vice Principal acting as chairperson, the Line Manager for the department, the Head of the relevant department and a Governor or a Director where appropriate and possible. One of the above must have had recent safer recruitment training. If necessary, an expert in a specialist subject may attend to advise the panel. The Principal will provide a set of sample/suggested questions for the panel to use with all applicants.

## **6 APPOINTMENT OF PRINCIPAL**



The procedures for the appointment of teaching staff apply except as set out below:

### **Shortlisting**

Shortlisting will be carried out by the selection panel appointed by the Board of Directors. An education personnel expert may be called in to assist. The Panel will also decide the assessment methods and other selection tests to be used.

### **The Interview Panel(s)**

The Interview Panel(s) shall consist of a minimum of three directors. An education personnel expert may be present for the purpose of advising the panel.

## **7. APPOINTMENT OF VICE AND ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL(S)**

The procedures for the appointment of teaching staff apply except as set out below.

### **Shortlisting**

Shortlisting will be carried out by the selection panel appointed by the Board of Directors and this would include the Principal. The Principal will advise the panel on the assessment methods to be used and other selection tests. The Principal will also provide the Interview Panel(s) with sample/suggested questions to use with all applicants.

### **The Interview Panel(s)**

The interview panel(s) shall consist of the Principal and two or more directors. An education personnel expert may be present for the purpose of advising the panel.

## **8. APPOINTMENT OF SUPPORT STAFF**

The procedures for the appointment of teaching staff apply except as set out below.

### **References**

All candidates will be asked to give the names of at least two referees of whom one should be their present employer (or last employer, if currently unemployed). The application form for support staff gives them the opportunity to indicate whether the school may approach referees prior to an offer of a post being made. Wootton Academy Trust will respect their wishes and references for support staff posts will be taken up according to the preference of the applicant.



Requests for references should be specific to the post and be structured to elicit information of relevance to the appointment. They should be accompanied by a copy of the job description and person specification and request the referee to relate his/her comments to these. It should be made clear to the referees by which date references are required.

#### **(a) Support staff except Cleaning Assistants**

##### **The Interview Panel**

The interview panel will be comprised of a minimum of 3 persons where possible - the Principal acting as Chairman (or the Vice Principal), a Governor/Director where possible and appropriate and relevant member(s) of staff appointed by the Principal.

##### **Shortlisting**

Shortlisting will be undertaken by the Principal and the immediate Line Manager.

#### **(b) Appointment of Cleaning Staff**

The appointment of the Site Agents shall be the responsibility of the Estates Manager assisted by members of the Leadership team. A Director/Governor will attend if requested.

The appointment of cleaning assistants shall be the responsibility of the Estates Manager assisted by the Site Agent.

##### **Note**

When a practical skill, e.g. word processing is a requirement of the position candidates will be required to undertake a proficiency test. All candidates should be allowed the same amount of time and given identical tests.

## **9. THE JOB DESCRIPTION**

The job description is a key element in the appointment process for both teaching and support staff. It should convey a sense of the overall purpose as well as the detailed responsibilities of the post; should establish the context within which the postholder will be operating; and should indicate to whom and for whom he/she will be responsible. It should also indicate any future planned changes in the duties of the postholder.



For teaching posts, job descriptions should conform to the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions document and the advice given by the Trust's legal/HR/personnel advisors.

Support staff job descriptions should be accompanied by job details which give full and relevant information about the post. These will normally include (dependent upon the position) a statement about the locality, a description of the establishment, a summary of the organisation, and/or financial information, and possibly an indication of future developments.

The job description should be specific to the post and be revised whenever the post falls vacant.

It should be made clear to potential applicants that the job description may be subject to review from time to time.

Associated with the job description should be a person specification.

## **10. THE PERSON SPECIFICATION**

The person specification should indicate the qualifications and experience which are sought and any personal qualities and skills which will be required of the candidate. The job description should form the draft on which to base the person specification. It should be possible to focus on the "essential" aspects of the job, that is to say, the areas of work where it is essential that any appointee will possess certain skills, specialist knowledge or particular attitudes if he/she is to succeed in the post and to tackle the essential aspects in an effective manner. Similarly it will be possible to draw up a list of "desirable" characteristics where it is advantageous but not essential the candidate possesses such attributes.

It should then be possible to produce a definitive person specification detailing essential and desirable characteristics for the satisfactory performance of the job.

## **11. CONDITIONAL OFFER**

Confirmation of the appointment will be conditional on receipt of:

- verification of the applicant's identity (where that has not previously been verified);
- the receipt of two references (one of which must be from the applicant's most recent employer) which the Trust at its absolute discretion considers to be satisfactory;



- for teaching positions, confirmation from the National College for Teaching and Leadership that the applicant is not subject to a prohibition order;
- where the position amounts to “regulated activity” the receipt of an enhanced disclosure from the DBS which the Trust considers to be satisfactory;
- verification of the applicant’s right to work in the UK;
- any further checks which are necessary as a result of the applicant having lived or worked outside of the UK;
- where the position amounts to "regulated activity" confirmation that the applicant is not named on the Children's Barred List.
- verification of the applicant's medical fitness for the role
- verification of professional qualifications which the Trust deems a requirement for the post, or which the applicant otherwise cites in support of their application (where they have not been previously verified).

## **12. VERIFICATION OF IDENTITY AND ADDRESS**

All applicants who are invited to interview will be required to bring with them evidence of identity, right to work in the UK and address as set out in the document ‘WAT DBS Guidance for Applicants’.

Where an applicant claims to have changed his/her name by deed poll or any other mean, he/she will be required to provide documentary evidence of the change.

The Trust asks for the date of birth for all applicants. Proof of date of birth is necessary so that the Trust may verify identity of, and check for any unexplained discrepancies in the employment and education history of all applicants.

## **13. MEDICAL FITNESS**

The Trust is required to verify the medical fitness of anyone to be appointed to a post at the Trust after an offer has been made but before the appointment can be confirmed.

It is the practice that all applicants to whom an offer of employment is made must complete the Trusts Health Questionnaire. The Trust will arrange for the information contained in the



questionnaire to be reviewed by the Occupational Health provider. The Trust is aware of its duties under the Equality Act 2010. No job offer will be withdrawn without first consulting with the applicant, obtaining medical evidence, considering reasonable adjustments and suitable alternative employment.

#### **14. CRIMINAL RECORDS DISCLOSURE**

Due to the nature of the work, the Trust applies for an enhanced disclosure from the DBS in respect of all prospective staff members, governors and volunteers working in its schools.

Prior to 29 May 2013 an enhanced disclosure contained details of all convictions on record (including those which are defined as "spent" under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974) together with details of any cautions, reprimands or warnings held on the Police National Computer. It could also contain non-conviction information from local police records which a chief police officer considered relevant to the role applied for at the School.

As of 29 May 2013 the DBS commenced the filtering and removal of certain specified information relating to old and minor criminal offences from all criminal records disclosures. The DBS and the Home Office have developed a set of filtering rules relating to spent convictions which work as follows:

##### **For those aged 18 or over at the time of an offence**

An adult conviction for an offence committed in the United Kingdom will be removed from a DBS disclosure if:

- 11 years have elapsed since the date of conviction;
- it is the person's only offence, and
- it did not result in a custodial sentence

It will not be removed under any circumstances if it appears on a list of "specified offences" which must always be disclosed. If a person has more than one offence on their criminal record, then details of all their convictions will always be included.

A caution received when a person was aged 18 or over for an offence committed in the United Kingdom will not be disclosed if six years have elapsed since the date it was issued and if it does not appear on the list of "specified offences".

##### **For those aged under 18 at the time of an offence**



A conviction for an offence committed in the United Kingdom will be removed from a DBS disclosure if:

- five and a half years have elapsed since the date of conviction; and
- it is the person's only offence, and
- it did not result in a custodial sentence.

Again, the conviction will not be removed under any circumstances if it appears on the list of "specified offences", or if a person has more than one offence on their criminal record.

A caution received when a person was aged under 18 for an offence committed in the United Kingdom will not be disclosed if two years have elapsed since the date it was issued, and if it does not appear on the list of "specified offences".

The list of "specified offences" which must always be disclosed

This contains a large number of offences, which includes certain sexual, violent and other offences that are considered so serious they will always be disclosed, regardless of when they took place or of the person's previous or subsequent criminal record. The list of "specified offences" can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-list-of-offences-that-will-never-be-filtered-from-a-criminal-record-check>

The Trust applies for an enhanced disclosure from the DBS and a check of the Children's Barred List (now known as an Enhanced Check for Regulated Activity) in respect of all positions within the Trust which amount to "regulated activity" as defined in the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (as amended). The purpose of carrying out an Enhanced Check for Regulated Activity is to identify whether an applicant is barred from working with children by inclusion on the Children's Barred List and to obtain other relevant suitability information. Any position undertaken at, or on behalf of, the Trust (whether paid or unpaid), will amount to "regulated activity" if it is carried out:

- on an unsupervised basis;
- frequently, meaning once a week or more; or
- overnight, meaning between 2am and 6am; or
- satisfies the "period condition", meaning four times or more in a 30 day period; and
- provides the opportunity for contact with children.



It is for the Trust to decide whether a role amounts to 'regulated activity' taking into account all the relevant circumstances. However, nearly all posts at its Schools amount to regulated activity. It is the School's policy to carry out both an enhanced DBS check and a check of the Children's Barred List on all applicants who are appointed to work in regulated activity. Limited exceptions could include an administrative post undertaken on a temporary basis in a School office outside of term time.

The DBS now issues a DBS disclosure certificate to the subject of the check only, rather than to the Trust. It is a condition of employment with the Trust that the original disclosure certificate is provided to the Trust.

If there is a delay in receiving a DBS disclosure the Principal has discretion to allow an individual to begin work pending receipt of the disclosure. This will only be allowed if all other checks, including a clear check of the Children's Barred List (where the position amounts to regulated activity), have been completed and once appropriate supervision has been put in place.

DBS checks will still be requested for applicants with recent periods of overseas residence and those with little or no previous UK residence. These applicants may also be asked to provide further information, including a criminal records check from the relevant jurisdiction(s).

## **15. CONTRACTORS AND AGENCY STAFF**

Contractors engaged by the Trust must complete the same checks for their employees that the Trust is required to complete for its staff. The Trust requires confirmation that these checks have been completed before employees of the contractor can commence work at the Trust.

Agencies who supply staff to the Trust must also complete the necessary pre-employment checks. Again, the Trust requires confirmation that these checks have been completed before an individual can commence work at the Trust.

The Trust will independently verify the identity of staff supplied by contractors or an agency.

## **16 POLICY ON THE RECRUITMENT OF EX-OFFENDERS**

The Trust will not unfairly discriminate against any applicant for employment on the basis of conviction or other details revealed. The Trust makes appointment decisions on the basis of merit and ability. If an applicant has a criminal record this will not automatically bar him / her



from employment. Instead, each case will be decided on its merits in accordance with the objective assessment criteria.

All positions within the Trust are exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. All applicants must therefore declare all previous convictions and cautions, including those which would normally be considered "spent". However, applicants are not required to disclose a caution or conviction for an offence committed in the United Kingdom if it has been filtered in accordance with the DBS filtering rules

A failure to disclose a previous conviction (which should be declared) may lead to an application being rejected or, if the failure to disclose is discovered after employment has started, may lead to summary dismissal on the grounds of gross misconduct. A failure to disclose a previous conviction may also amount to a criminal offence.

It is unlawful for the Trust to employ anyone who is barred from working with children. It is a criminal offence for any person who is barred from working with children to attempt to apply for a position at the Trust. The Trust will make a report to the Police and / or the DBS if:

- it receives an application from a barred person;
- it is provided with false information in, or in support of an applicant's application; or
- it has serious concerns about an applicant's suitability to work with children.

#### **Assessment criteria**

In the event that relevant information (whether in relation to previous convictions or otherwise) is volunteered by an applicant during the recruitment process or obtained through a disclosure check, the Trust will consider the following factors before reaching a recruitment decision:

- whether the conviction or other matter revealed is relevant to the position in question;
- the seriousness of any offence or other matter revealed;
- the length of time since the offence or other matter occurred;
- whether the applicant has a pattern of offending behaviour or other relevant matters;
- whether the applicant's circumstances have changed since the offending behaviour or other relevant matters; and
- the circumstances surrounding the offence and the explanation(s) offered by the convicted person.



If the post involves regular contact with children, it is the Trust's policy to consider it a high risk to employ anyone who has been convicted at any time of any the following offences:

- murder, manslaughter, rape, other serious sexual offences, grievous bodily harm or other serious acts of violence; or
- serious class A drug related offences, robbery, burglary, theft, deception or fraud.

If the post involves access to money or budget responsibility, it is the Trust's normal policy to consider it a high risk to employ anyone who has been convicted at any time of robbery, burglary, theft, deception or fraud.

If the post involves some driving responsibilities, it is the Trust's normal policy to consider it a high risk to employ anyone who has been convicted of drink driving within the last ten years.

### **Assessment procedure**

In the event that relevant information (whether in relation to previous convictions or otherwise) is volunteered by an applicant during the recruitment process or obtained through a disclosure check, the Trust will carry out a risk assessment by reference to the criteria set out above. The assessment form must be signed by the Principal before a position is offered or confirmed. If an applicant wishes to dispute any information contained in a disclosure, he / she can do so by contacting the DBS direct. In cases where the applicant would otherwise be offered a position were it not for the disputed information, the Trust will, where practicable and at its discretion, defer a final decision about the appointment until the applicant has had a reasonable opportunity to challenge the disclosure information.

### **17 PROOF OF QUALIFICATIONS**

All appointments are conditional upon documentary proof of the applicant's qualifications (if applicable). This condition is clearly stated in the contract of employment and should be explicitly stated during the selection process.

The Principal should ask for sight of original documentation from the successful candidate.

### **18 PAY DECISIONS**

The Principal is responsible for deciding the salary level of the successful candidate. The pay decision will be made in line with the published pay policy, the experience and qualifications



of the successful candidate and the previously approved salary band agreed when the proposed position was authorised.

## **19 DISCRIMINATION**

Wootton Academy Trust will not discriminate against applicants for employment on grounds of ethnicity, sex, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, marital status or age. Very considerable care will be taken with respect to discrimination at all stages of the recruitment and selection process.

All applicants will be asked to complete an Equal Opportunities Monitoring form. The applicants' Equal Opportunities Monitoring forms must not be made available to those taking short-listing or selection decisions.

## **20 MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW**

Wootton Academy Trust will review this policy at least every two years and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the Wootton Academy Trust Schools..



## APPENDIX 1

### INTERVIEW GUIDELINES

The aims of the interview are:

- (a) to assess the candidates' skills, aptitudes, ability and suitability for the position - judged against lawful criteria and based on information obtained from the application form and at the interview
- (b) to allow opportunity for candidates to make further enquiries concerning the nature and conditions of employment.
- (c) to gain an insight into the applicant's personality.
- (d) to check and confirm the candidate's qualifications

#### Preparation

The interview programme should allow sufficient time to be thorough and cover the ground systematically. To avoid running late it is better to leave too much time between interviews than too little.

#### Strategy

It is important to familiarise yourself with the information that will have a bearing on the forthcoming interviews. A read through the job description and person specification together with a detailed study of the application forms should allow you to plan the interviews. It is helpful to note the questions you wish to raise, particularly with regard to vague statements made on the application form.

It is imperative that the interview panel complies with safeguarding practices and that any inconsistencies, error or gaps in a candidates chronological history are answered.

The panel will meet before the timing of the first interview and the panel chairman should arrange for the interview panel members to discuss:

- the format and structure of the interviews
- the conduct of the interviews
- the requirements of the job
- the skills and aptitudes required of the postholder

- the areas of questions by members to avoid repetition and the sequencing of questions.
- the seating arrangements.
- The types of questions generally raised at an interview fall into three categories.
- Job-centred questions, prompted by the special requirements of the job, to be asked of all candidates.
- Person centred questions, prompted by the application form e.g. points where the interviewer suspects a person may not be the right one for the job. These questions vary depending on the applicant's experience.
- Questions raised by the applicant.

### The Interview

- The panel chairman is responsible for the conduct of the interview.
- Interviews should always be conducted in a manner that will leave the candidate with a favourable impression.
- All panel members must ensure that they are able to be present throughout all the interviews.
- A selection interview should allow both parties, employer and candidate, to undertake a matching process - to see whether or not they will suit each other and not a means by which to interrogate the candidate!
- The importance of good preparation prior to an interview cannot be over-emphasised.
- One member of the interview panel must have undertaken safer recruitment training.

You must be clear before starting the interview on:

- (a) what job needs to be done (job description)
- (b) what skills and attributes are needed to do the job (person specification)
- (c) what questions you need to ask.
  - Within the preparation process do bear in mind that you will be part of a panel.
  - When a practical skill e.g. word processing is a requirement of the position candidates will be required to undertake a proficiency test. All candidates should be allowed the same amount of time and given identical tests. Information about the outcomes of this task will be fed to the Interview Panel as part of their decision-making process.

- Applicants for teaching posts will be expected to demonstrate their teaching skills in the classroom and the results should be given to the panel and be taken into consideration when the final assessment is made.
- Always be alert

□ **Think:**

- about the answers given
- whether you are getting the information you need to make the decision
- whether you need to follow up answers to get more information
- whether there are still any gaps into which you must delve

At the conclusion of the interview you should have sufficient information to form a complete appraisal of the candidate and their suitability for the position.