

Safe and Fair Recruitment and Appointment Policy and Guidance

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This is a Trust wide policy that applies to all staff and workers

Contents

Title	Page
What is the Policy for?	3
Who is the policy for?	3
Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion commitment –recruitment and selection	3
Roles and Responsibilities	4
Delegation of Appointments and Selection Panels	4
The Recruitment Procedure	
A. Advertising	5
B. Recruitment of staff from overseas	6
C. Shortlisting	6
D. References	6
E. Interview and selection	8
F. Pre-employment checks	8
G. Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)	10
H. Disqualification under the Childcare Act	11
Record Retention/Data Protection	12
The Single Central Record (SCR)	12
Probationary period	13
Induction	13
Adults on site who are not directly employed by the Trust	13
Further Information	14
Appendix 1: Avoiding bias in the selection decision making	15

Safe and Fair Recruitment and Appointment Policy

Bright Futures Educational Trust's (the Trust) Strategy underpins all aspects of this policy and the way in which it will be applied. These elements are:

- Our vision, the best **for** everyone and the best **from** everyone;
- Two of our values; Integrity: We do the right things for the right reasons and Passion: We take responsibility, work hard and have high aspirations;
- Six of our commitments: Collaboration and strong relationships; supportive, challenging and fair; strong governance and accountability, united behind decisions: effective communication and equality, diversity and inclusion.

What is the Policy for?

The over-arching purpose of this Policy is to:

- To create and maintain a culture of safer recruitment
- Promote equality, diversity and inclusion in our recruitment and selection practices, including enabling the rigorous and unbiased appointment of staff
- To ensure that recruitment and selection policies are legally compliant and follow best practice in terms of employment, safeguarding and equal opportunities
- To provide systems and procedures for safe practice in recruitment, in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of all, and particularly children and young people
- To ensure the best staff available are appointed and deployed in the most effective way to the benefit of our students, staff and communities

Who is the Policy for?

The policy applies to all staff employed by Bright Futures Educational Trust (The Trust), as well as Members, Board Trustees and academy local governors.

Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion commitment –recruitment and selection

Bright Futures is committed to providing equal opportunity in recruitment and employment to all individuals. We will consider candidates without regard to race, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation and identity, national origin, age, military or veteran status, disability or any other legally protected status; and without discrimination based on socioeconomic, marital, parental or caregiving status, or any of the previously listed characteristics or statuses.

We value the diversity of our staff and reject any form of harassment, discrimination or victimisation. Our vision is: 'the best for everyone, the best from everyone'. To achieve this, we create and maintain a work environment and culture where people from different backgrounds, and with varying lifestyles, interests, opinions and responsibilities, treat each other with dignity and respect. It is a climate in which our staff feel safe and are inspired and motivated to be their best.

Our trust is dedicated to sustaining and promoting diversity with respect to recruitment, promotion, training and general treatment during employment. We are actively seeking to extend the diversity of our staff.

We aim to ensure that our recruitment processes set up all candidates for success. At interview our aim is to provide a positive experience. We don't want to catch anyone out, but rather to provide the opportunity for all candidates to be themselves and show us what they are capable of.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Principals/Heads of School and other senior leaders involved in recruitment will:

- Ensure that each academy operates safe, fair recruitment and selection procedures which are regularly reviewed and up-dated to reflect any changes in Trust policy, legislation and statutory guidance;
- Ensure that all appropriate checks are carried out on staff and volunteers in the academy;
- Monitor the compliance of any contractors and agencies used by the academy;
- Promote the safety and wellbeing of children and young people at every stage of this process.
- Ensure the appropriate staff have completed the safer recruitment training and that the training is updated every two years.

Bright Futures Educational Trust will:

- Ensure that the relevant policies and procedures are up to date, support best practice and promote equality, diversity and inclusion
- Through various audit and review procedures, ensure that all academies within the Trust follow the guidance set out in this policy;
- Ensure the safe and fair recruitment and selection of all leadership positions equivalent to assistant vice principal and above.

The **local governing body** of each academy will:

- Through reporting received from the senior leadership team and occasional audits, monitor the academy's compliance with this policy.

Delegation of Appointments and Selection Panels

The Trust's Delegation Framework gives authority to the Principal/Head of School to offer employment for all posts in the academy below Assistant Vice Principal (AVP). The Principal/Head will therefore have the authority to advertise, select and appoint to all positions within their academy below the post of AVP.

Positions within the academy of AVP or above will be Trust appointments and the Trust's Director of HR and Strategy and/or Director of Education will work in conjunction with the Principal and the **local governing body** to advertise, select and appoint in to such posts.

Selection panels will comprise a minimum of two people. In accordance with the statutory requirement, every selection panel will have at least one member who has undertaken Safer Recruitment Training. It is expected that safer recruitment training will be refreshed every two years.

The Recruitment Procedure

A. Advertising

1. Before an advertisement is placed, all relevant documentation i.e. job description, person specification will be in place. These should be reviewed before an advert is placed to ensure that the content and requirements are valid, non-discriminatory and up to date.
2. All advertisements of any position, wherever they are published will include the following safeguarding statement:

“Bright Futures Educational Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and we expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. This post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974; pre-employment checks will be carried out and references will be sought for shortlisted candidates and successful candidates will be subject to an enhanced DBS check and other relevant checks with statutory bodies.”

3. Place a positive statement about flexible working in the advert and or information pack, for example “Flexible working will be considered, please ask at interview”.
4. In addition, all relevant documentation, including the job description and person specification will make specific reference to the statement at point 2 and 3.
5. To ensure equality of opportunity, each academy will advertise all vacant positions to encourage as wide a field of candidates as possible; normally this will entail an external advertisement. However, where there is a reasonable expectation that there are sufficient qualified internal candidates or where staff are at risk of redundancy, an internal advertisement will be considered. In addition, where a temporary post and or temporary TLR opportunity is being made permanent and the original temporary position was advertised, it may be appropriate to appoint the temporary post holder.
6. Posts will be advertised on the academy website, the Trust website, the government’s teaching vacancies website where appropriate (associate staff posts can also be advertised on this site): [Gov Teaching Vacancies](#) and in other relevant publications/bulletins as deemed appropriate. In determining where to advertise, the academy will choose publications/websites that offer the most opportunity to be seen by a diverse pool of applicants. It is Trust policy to avoid using recruitment agencies wherever possible.
7. Prospective applicants will be supplied, as a minimum, with the following:
 - A job description and person specification;
 - An application form or access to an online platform to apply;
 - Information about Bright Futures Educational Trust;
 - Information about the academy which has a vacancy.
8. All prospective applicants must complete, in full, and return a signed application form or use the on-line application platform provided. Candidates submitting an application form on line will be asked to sign the application form if called for an interview or complete a formal online verification of their submitted application.
9. Curriculum vitae cannot be accepted in place of a completed application form.

10. An additional range of questions regarding convictions and working with children, will be asked of all candidates and will make it clear that the post is exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (exemptions 1975) 2013 and 2020 updates. Candidates will be required to complete a declaration to this effect. This information is only shared with the recruiting panel for shortlisted candidates.

It is a requirement for employers to direct candidates to guidance on what declarations they should and should not make. There have been changes in some youth charges/reprimands that no longer need to be disclosed. Therefore the following information is now contained in our application process:

There are two national charities that can provide advice for job applicants on disclosing criminal records:

Nacro: <https://www.nacro.org.uk/criminal-record-support-service/support-for-individuals/disclosing-criminal-records/%20disclosing-criminal-records-employers/>.

By email: helpline@nacro.org.uk, or by phone 0300 123 1999

Unlock: <https://www.unlock.org.uk/>. Or phone 01634 247350, or text 07824 113848

11. The application form will also state that providing false information is an offence and could result in the application being rejected or summary dismissal if the applicant has been selected. The matter may also be referred to the police and other professional regulatory bodies.

B. Recruitment of staff from overseas

Following the UK leaving the European Economic Area (EEA), the legal requirements for recruiting outside of the UK have changed. In order to recruit overseas applicants, Bright Futures must hold a sponsor licence from the Home Office. There are particular requirements regarding holding a sponsor license, which posts an employer can fill with overseas workers and how employers access pre-employment checks. Please contact the Director of HR & Strategy for more information.

C. Short Listing

Applicants will be shortlisted against the Job Description, Person Specification and advertisement for the post. The criteria for selection will be consistently applied to all applicants and a record kept of the outcomes for each candidate against this criterion.

If the field of applicants is felt to be weak, the post may be re-advertised.

D. References

The purpose of seeking references is to obtain objective and factual information to support appointment decisions. References should be scrutinised and any concerns resolved satisfactorily before any appointment is confirmed. On receipt, references should be checked to ensure that all specific questions have been answered satisfactorily. The referee should be contacted to provide further clarification as appropriate and the answers should be compared for consistency with the application form.

1. Where possible, references will be taken up after shortlisting and before the selection stage so that any discrepancies can be probed during the selection stage.

2. References will be sought directly from the referee. The referee provided should be a senior person in the organisation and not a peer colleague. Open references will not be accepted. References provided by the candidate will not be accepted.
3. A minimum of two references will be obtained, one of which should always come from the most recent or current employer. Current employment referees will only be approached when the candidate consents.
4. Where a candidate is not currently employed, verification of their most recent period of employment and the reason for leaving should be obtained from the employer.
5. Referees will always be asked specific questions about:
 - employment dates, post held and reason for leaving
 - the candidate's suitability for working with children and young people;
 - any disciplinary warnings, including time-expired warnings, that relate to the safeguarding of children;
 - the candidate's suitability for the post
6. Any information about past disciplinary action or allegations should be considered carefully when assessing the applicant's suitability for the post.
7. Where necessary, previous employers who have not been named as referees will be contacted in order to clarify any anomalies or discrepancies. A detailed written note will be kept of any such exchanges.
8. Where two referees are provided from the same employment, previous employers should be contacted instead, where a previous employment was within five years.
9. If an applicant is not currently employed in a post working with children, an additional reference will be sought from the most recent employment in which the applicant has worked with children to confirm details of the applicant's employment and his/her reasons for leaving.
10. Where the individual has not had two employers, suitable alternatives need to be sought as an alternative for the second reference where it is practical to do so. For example, for a recently trained teacher, the training provider may be approached. It is important, wherever possible, that all references are supplied in a professional capacity. Where the information supplied on a reference is limited, for example, just provides confirmation of employment dates; then additional information should be sought from a further referee.
11. All employees are entitled to see and receive, if requested, copies of their references, unless they have been provided in strictest confidence. In these instances, the candidate should be referred to the reference provider to request a copy. Any queries regarding this should be referred to the Trust's Data Protection Officer by emailing: dataprotection@bfet.uk
12. Where a reference is received by email, it should be checked to ensure it's from a legitimate source. The covering email along with its electronic signature should be retained with the reference as evidence of its authenticity.

E. Interview and Selection

1. Candidates will be provided, in advance, with an overview of the selection activities to be used throughout. In addition, candidates should also be provided with further detail of the selection activities on the day of the selection, to give candidates, where appropriate, time to prepare.
2. Selection activities are likely to include a range of assessment situations which are deemed to be relevant, for example:
 - Appointments to teaching posts will include a lesson undertaken by the applicant and observed;
 - Leadership appointments may include the applicant observing a lesson and then providing feedback to the teacher;
 - Candidates for school-based roles will have the opportunity to tour the academy or see their normal work areas and facilities;
 - Pupil/Student panels will usually be incorporated into the interview process for school leadership posts.
 - Practical tasks relevant to the vacancy may be incorporated into the selection processes for all posts. For example, teaching a lesson, handling a difficult phone call or classroom situation, analysing financial data, a maintenance/facilities task, chairing a team meeting or administration task.
3. The questions asked by the panel will be aimed at obtaining evidence of how each applicant meets the requirements of the Job Description and the Person Specification. The same areas of questioning will be covered for each applicant and no questions which would discriminate directly or indirectly on protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 will be asked. Appendix 1 contains some helpful tips for all panel members on avoiding bias in the selection process. It is recommended that the chair of the selection panel shares this with the panel ahead of the selection commencing.
4. Candidates will be required to:
 - Explain any gaps in employment;
 - Explain satisfactorily any anomalies or discrepancies in the information available to the panel;
 - Declare any information that is likely to appear on the DBS disclosure.
5. In addition, all interviews will explore issues relating to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people including:
 - Motivation to work with children and young people;
 - Ability to form and maintain appropriate relationships and personal and professional boundaries with children and young people;
 - Emotional resilience in working with challenging behaviour/situations;
 - Attitudes and approaches to maintaining discipline.

F. Pre-employment Checks

1. An offer of appointment to a successful candidate will be conditional upon the successful completion of pre-employment checks. When appointing new staff, the people leading the appointment process will:

- Have obtained two references, which are deemed to be satisfactory. Please remember to determine if they are satisfactory. Considerations should include content such as previous disciplinary record, any allegations made, the standard of performance in post, confirmation of employment dates etc;
- Verify a candidate's identity, preferably from current photographic identification and proof of address. It is recommended that this check is carried out as part of the selection process. More information can be found on the government's website:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-identity-checking-guidelines/id-checking-guidelines-for-dbs-check-applications-from-3-september-2018>;

- Obtain an enhanced DBS disclosure certificate with a barred list information where the candidate will be engaging in a regulated activity, which is likely to be all employed posts. See DBS checks for further detail on page 10;

In exceptional circumstances, with agreement from the Principal/CEO/COO, an academy or central team may allow a candidate to start prior to receipt of a full DBS if they obtain a separate barred list check and if, after carrying out a risk assessment, an individual is judged as suitable to start work in a regulated activity before the DBS certificate is available. In these circumstances the candidate will be appropriately supervised until DBS clearance is received.

- Require the candidate to provide proof of professional status and actual certificates of qualifications as appropriate for the post, for verification. If the original documentation is not available, the academy/central operations team will require sight of a properly certified copy. It is recommended that this check is carried out as part of the selection process;
- Verify the candidate's evidence of the right to work in the UK, in accordance with government guidance. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/right-to-work-checks-employers-guide>. On this webpage there is a link to a detailed employer guide on right to work checks: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/946589/An_employers_guide_to_right_to_work_checks.pdf.

For British citizens this evidence will usually be a passport, or birth certificate and national insurance card. For other applicants they will need to provide evidence from the Home Office such as a biometric residence permit, or they could share with you an online 'share' code provided by the Home Office, along with their date of birth and the academy can do an on line check. Full details are in the above link. The link to the online service is:
<https://www.gov.uk/view-right-to-work>

This identification then has to be held as a copy of the staff file of the candidate appointed. The copy should be signed and dated by the person who saw the original document;

- Verify that a candidate to be employed as a teacher is not subject to a Prohibition Order by the Secretary of State using the Secure Access Portal via the DfE web page:
<https://sa.education.gov.uk/existing-user>
- For leadership and management posts, including TLR responsibilities, ensure that the 'Prohibition from management' (Section 128) check is completed, using the same DfE Portal. This check will therefore be needed for some internal promotions, as it may not have been necessary at the initial appointment stage.

This Section 128 prohibition check is also required for all members, trustees and governors;

- Receive a completed medical questionnaire from the candidate and agreement that the candidate will attend an occupational health appointment if necessary, in order to understand any recommended adjustments;
- Individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK must undergo the same checks as all other staff. This includes obtaining (via the applicant) an enhanced DBS certificate (including barred list information, for those who will be engaging in regulated activity) even if the individual has never been to the UK.

In addition, academies and central operations teams must make any further checks they think appropriate so that any relevant events that occurred outside the UK can be considered. Further details are available in section 172 (page 47) of Keeping Children Safe in Education the 2021.

Please refer to the Director of HR & Strategy for further information should this apply.

2. All checks will be:

- Confirmed in writing.
- Documented and retained on the individual's personnel file.
- Recorded on the appropriate systems within schools or the central operations team.
- Followed up if they are unsatisfactory, or if there are any discrepancies in the information received.

3. Employment will only commence once all the checks and procedures have been satisfactorily completed.

G. Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks

1. All staff, local governors, members and trustees and volunteers appointed will be required to undertake an Enhanced DBS check with barred list information, prior to commencing their employment/appointment. This applies to all those engaged in regulated activity and those with unsupervised access to children, which is likely to be all staff employed in an academy and the central trust teams.
2. Contractors and employees of contractors, who work on our premises, where their work allows them an opportunity for unsupervised contact with children, will be required to have an enhanced DBS check, ahead of commencing work. The onus is on the contractor to undertake this and provide evidence to the academy.
3. All information regarding the DBS and barred list including Name, Date, DBS number and person who checked the DBS must be recorded on the academy's, or central Trust's Single Central Record.
4. Where a DBS check identifies a concern, this should be referred to the Principal/Head or Director of HR for the central operations team. The Principal/Director of HR will risk assess the situation. If it is decided that the individual can have DBS clearance, he or she will email the person responsible for the Single Central Record (SCR) confirming that they have conducted a risk assessment and are satisfied to confirm employment. (No details of the content of the risk assessment will be sent to or held by the SCR holder). The SCR will hold a field confirming that the Principal has seen the outcomes of the DBS check.

5. As an organisation using the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to help assess the suitability of applicants for positions of trust, the Trust must comply fully with the Code of Practice regarding the correct handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of certificates and certificate information.
6. The government's guidance on DBS checks for existing staff is set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education revised guidance 2021 (The link is in the further information section on page 14). If a person moves from a post which is not regulated, to a regulated post, then a DBS check or a barred list check will be undertaken at this time.
7. Once in our employment, there is no requirement to undertake routine DBS checks on existing staff however it is important that 'active safeguarding' takes place and any observed concerns are reported to the Principal/Head or appropriate senior manager in the central teams and investigated and documented; annual safeguarding refresher training takes place and staff are vigilant at all times.
8. The DBS offers an update service; which individuals can join at the point of application for a new DBS check. This enables future status checks to be carried out to confirm that no new information has been added to the certificate since its issue. This allows portability of a certificate across employers. Academies can use this service with the consent of the applicant and once they have confirmed that the certificate matches the individual's identity. The certificate must be for the appropriate level of workforce and level of check i.e. enhanced including barred list information.
9. DBS certificates should **not** be retained on a staff file due to data privacy regulations. The letter of confirmation received from the electronic service should be retained on the file, with a note of the initials of the member of staff who verified the original certificate and the date it was seen.

H. Disqualification under the Childcare Act

1. These regulations apply to early years' provision within academy and include education and any supervised activity for a child from birth until the 1 September following their fifth birthday. It applies to all provision for children in that age range during and outside academy hours, including in academy nursery and reception classes. The relevant regulations also apply to later year's provision (i.e. children under age 8) in the more limited circumstances of childcare that is provided outside of academy hours including breakfast clubs and after academy care.
2. Recruiting staff need to be made aware of the document 'Disqualification under the Childcare Act July 2018 update – statutory guidance for schools' in order to understand its potential impact on the recruitment process and in particular within a primary academy setting.
3. In brief, academies may not employ people to work in these early or later years' settings or allow them to be directly concerned in their management, if they are "disqualified". The grounds for disqualification are not only that a person is barred from working with children (included on the children's barred list) but also include, in summary, that:
 - They have been cautioned for, convicted of or charged with certain violent and sexual criminal offences against children and adults, at home or abroad
 - Other orders have been made against them relating to their care of children.

- They have had their registration cancelled in relation to childcare or children's homes or have been disqualified from private fostering.
4. In line with the relevant regulation and as part of the pre-advertising preparation, the academy should determine if the role to be advertised falls under the remit of the updated regulations (See further Information below). Where the role is captured by the regulations a disclosure should be included in the application pack, for completion by all candidates.
 5. Members of staff should be informed that they are not required to disclose the spent cautions.
 6. All academies must keep a record of those appointments covered by the regulations, and the date disqualification checks were completed. This should be held on the Single Central Record.
 7. Personal information that is relevant to disqualification will be retained on the member of staff's personnel file.

Please note that the requirement to disclose information relating to those living in the same household, in an academy situation, has been removed in 2018. It still applies to a domestic premises offering childcare.

Record Retention/Data Protection

1. Each academy will retain the following information which will make up part of the personnel file, for the successful candidate:
 - Completed and signed Application Form
 - References
 - Copies of the proof of identity, right to work in the UK and academic qualifications
 - Verification of suitability (i.e. assessment outcomes)
 - Evidence of the DBS clearance (the DBS number, date of issue, not the actual DBS form or certificate)
 - Single Central Record of Recruitment Vetting checks-see below
2. Each academy/the central operations team will retain all interview /selection notes on all applicants for a six- month period, after which the notes will be shredded.
3. The six-month retention period allows the academy to deal with any data access request or recruitment complaint.
4. Under the Data Privacy Act 2018, applicants have a right to request access to notes written about them during the recruitment process. Applicants who wish to access their interview notes must make a subject access request in writing to the Principal within six months of the interview date.

Single Central Record (SCR)

1. In line with the DfE requirements, each academy and the Trust's central office will keep and maintain a single central record of recruitment and vetting checks. The list will record:
 - All staff, including salaried trainee teachers, who are employed at the Academy

- Any casual staff, supply agency staff whether employed directly or through an agency. The agency/employer of these staff is responsible for undertaking the relevant checks. The SCR should contain a note of the date that the agency confirmed that the checks has been completed, clearance obtained and the relevant DBS certificate seen.
- Volunteers
- Local Governors
- Those who provide additional instruction/support for the children/young people who require a DBS check as per regulated activity guidance
- The trust's central team's SCR will include staff employed in the central team, along with trustees and members

2. The Single Central Record will indicate whether or not the following have been completed:

- Identity checks
- Qualification checks
- Checks of right to work in the UK
- Evidence of enhanced DBS clearance
- Evidence of a barred list check where appropriate
- Any Disqualification by Association declaration where appropriate
- Prohibition from teaching check
- A section 128 check (for management positions).
- Further checks on people who have lived or worked outside of the UK, where appropriate
- Dates of all checks
- Person who completes the checks

Probationary Periods

All staff, support staff, leadership and teaching staff, who are new appointments to the Trust will be subject to a probationary period during which their performance, conduct and suitability for employment will be monitored. The Statement of Particulars provides the detail. This does not apply to internal transfers from one academy to another.

Induction

All staff will be invited to attend an induction to the Trust, these sessions are offered at the start of each term.

All staff and volunteers who are new to an academy as part of their local induction, will receive information on the academy's safeguarding policy and procedures and guidance on safe working practices as part of their induction training.

All successful candidates will have the opportunity to attend any appropriate training/CPD.

Adults on site who are not directly employed by the Trust

1. Supply Staff – Academies must check with the relevant supply agency that the required checks have been carried out to the extent relevant to that person: identity, enhanced disclosure, right to work in the UK, barred list, prohibition, qualifications, overseas checks. Written confirmation from the supply agency that all relevant checks have been satisfactorily completed must be obtained. The single central register must show that all these checks have been carried out to the extent relevant and, in

addition that the academy has carried out its own identity check when the supply staff member arrived at the academy.

2. Volunteers – Academies will carry out DBS and pre-start vetting checks appropriate to the particular post and require regular volunteers to provide details of two referees. References will be taken up as detailed in the policy above. Volunteers who help on an occasional basis (eg trips/PTA events) are supervised, in accordance with legislation.
3. Contractors – Academies will ensure that contractors, or any employee of a contractor, working at a academy has been subject to the appropriate level of DBS and identity checks relevant to the tasks they are undertaking and appropriate supervision will be put in place accordingly. Written confirmation from the contractor that all relevant checks have been satisfactorily completed must be obtained. The academy will check the identity of contractors and their staff on arrival at academy.

Full guidance on the presence of non-employees on academy sites can be obtained from the HR contact in academy.

Further Information

Safer Recruitment training. Details of current face to face training and on line training opportunities can be found on the website of The Safer Recruitment consortium. The NSPCC offer an on-line course:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-you-can-do/get-expert-training/safer-recruitment-training/>

Proof of right to work in the UK. Current and full details on the academy's responsibility for checking and holding the relevant documentation for appointees can be found on the government's website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/right-to-work-checks-employers-guide>

Disqualification under the Childcare Act July 2018 update. For full details on roles this applies to see the government website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/disqualification-under-the-childcare-act-2006/disqualification-under-the-childcare-act-2006>

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021. This guidance sets out safer recruitment responsibilities which form the basis of this Policy:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/954314/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2020_-_Update_-_January_2021.pdf

Appendix 1 –avoiding bias in the selection decision making

Panel members are subject to influences from their background, experiences and training and decision-making is not a mechanical process but based on judgment; therefore, we are all potentially susceptible to unconscious bias, distortion or stereotyping. The risk is that this could lead to decision-making that is potentially discriminatory. Below are some things to remember to help you avoid this and ensure your decision is an informed one:

- **The primacy and recency effects** - If you are interviewing several candidates then the first or the most recent will be clearer in your memory than those seen earlier in the day. This may magnify the good or bad points of the most recently seen at the expense (or benefit) of those seen earlier. Good notes and making sure you refer back to them can help to avoid this.
- **Accuracy of recall** - Similarly, your memory of who said what can become blurred and distorted as the day progresses. Again, your notes will help to ensure you counteract this effect.
- **The 'halo-horns' effect** - Sometimes one particular element, whether positive or negative, can influence your overall judgment of a candidate. Try to avoid this by checking the candidate's performance against the full range of your selection criteria.
- **The 'like me/us' syndrome** - It may often be tempting to favour people who seem similar to you or those already in the team. If this feeling is based on an objective judgement that the person best fits the selection criteria, then fine. But make sure that other factors are not influencing your decision and remember that the best teams have a range of people with different personalities and skills sets.
- **Personal liking bias** - Similarly you may find yourself feeling a preference for someone because they seemed the nicest person or someone you would have a lot in common with. Again, you need to focus on whether they are the person who best meets the selection criteria and will do the best job.
- **Interpreting information differently** - Different panel members may interpret the same information in different ways. This is why it's so important for the whole panel to have a full and detailed discussion about each candidate to identify and discuss any differences in interpretation.
- **Unconscious prejudices and stereotypes** - If you or other panel members have any generic concerns and feelings ("*gut feeling*", "*not sure they would fit in*" etc), try to identify the evidence this is based on and the selection criteria it relates to. If you can't then this may indicate that some element of unconscious bias or stereotyping is creeping into your judgment.
- **Avoid making assumptions** about people based on personal appearance, name, how long ago they were at school or university, family or caring responsibilities etc. – focus on assessing each candidate objectively on how well they meet your selection criteria based on the evidence they provide to you.