



Safer Recruitment Policy

The Tarka Learning Partnership, has an absolute commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children

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Author/owner: Board of Trustees
Review: Annual

NB. 'Trustees' means the Directors referred to in the Trust's Articles of Association

History of most recent policy changes

Version	Date	Page	Change	Origin of Change e.g. TU request, Change in legislation
V1.0	November 2020		New policy introduced for the Tarka Learning Partnership Central Trust Team and Schools within the Trust	Requirement for central policy to strengthen and harmonise safer recruitment practices
V2.0	October 2021	4 5	Reference to trainees. References to other TLP policies Other changes in line with KCSIE 2021	
V3.0	September 2022		Policy changed in line with change in Governance within the TLP. Change regarding shortlisting and cross checking shortlisted candidates. Other changes in line with KCSIE 2022	
V4.0	September 2023		General policy review. KCSIE 2023 has no new safer recruitment guidance.	

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1.0 Policy Statement

1.1 Safeguarding

All schools within the Tarka Learning Partnership are required to implement robust and consistent safer recruitment and selection practices, to ensure that individuals who are not suitable to work with our pupils are denied the opportunity to do so. Trustees and every Trust school share a commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, and it is recognised that every individual is responsible for realising this commitment.

Each school's Safer Recruitment and selection practices are reviewed by the Trust alongside the School's Designated Safeguarding Lead, and any actions required are reported to the Trust. All staff involved in recruitment and selection processes are fully trained to fulfil their responsibilities.

1.2 Equality

Alongside our commitment to safeguarding we are committed to equality of opportunity, and value diversity and the different contributions that the people who are part of our staff team are able to make. All staff will be selected on the basis of their knowledge, experience, skills, abilities and potential, and will be chosen because they will successfully and positively add value, raise standards and bring the Tarka Learning Partnership's values to life.

Our safer recruitment and selection practices will be fair and implemented with due regard to the Equality Duty; they will contribute to engaging a staff team that reflects the diversity of the communities we serve.

2.0 Purpose and Aims

The purpose of this policy is to safeguard children and young people within the Tarka Learning Partnership by ensuring that our safer recruitment and selection practices deter, identify and reject people who are unsuitable to work with children and young people.

This policy will help to ensure that the best possible individuals are attracted, recruited and retained.

The policy provides people who wish to work for us, an overview of the safer recruitment and selection processes that they can expect.

To support managers and guide them through the recruitment and selection of staff.

3.0 Scope

This policy concerns the recruitment and selection of employees (including apprentices), trainees, casual workers, volunteers, agency and third party staff.

4.0 Responsibility and Accountability

The Trust's HR Leader is responsible for the development and update of policies relating to recruitment

and selection ensuring they are compliant, fair and safe.

The Head Teacher or appropriate line manager is responsible for the implementation of these policies and procedures and the appointment of staff within their school or department.

5.0 Links to other policies

Other policies with links to this Policy include the Trust's:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and Associated Checks Policy and Procedure (including suitability and the employment of ex-offenders)
- Volunteers in Schools Policy and Procedure
- Contractor Policy and Safeguarding Guidelines
- Equality & Diversity and Equal Opportunities policy
- Whistleblowing policy
- Data Protection Policy

This policy, and those listed above, are compliant with the statutory Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance, The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, the Disclosure and Barring Service Code of Practice, The Equality Act 2010 and the Equality Duty.

6.0 Delegation of responsibilities

6.1 Appointment of Head Teacher

The Chief Executive Officer of the Tarka Learning Partnership, is responsible for the appointment the Head Teacher. The panel may include a Trustee and Chair or Representative of the Academy/School Community Board also include an external representative, as well as other central Trust team staff as appropriate.

6.2 Appointment to posts on the Senior Leadership Team

The Head Teacher will lead the process in consultation with the Central Trust team and the Academy/School Community Board.

6.3 Appointment of Teaching staff, including Teaching and Learning Responsibilities/Special Education Needs posts

The Head Teacher will lead the process in consultation with the Leadership Team and central Trust team staff if applicable.

6.4 Appointment of all other staff

The Head Teacher will lead in determining all staff appointments outside of the leadership group but may delegate the recruitment of support staff to another member of the Senior Leadership or Middle Leaders Team. Line managers for the category of staff will be expected to participate in the selection process

6.5 Supply Staff

The Head Teacher will meet with all prospective supply teachers before engaging them to work within the academy. Supply teachers will not be engaged until the following checks have been satisfactorily undertaken:- Identity, qualifications, right to work in the UK, enhanced DBS including barred list check and references.

6.6 Students and Volunteers

The Head Teacher has responsibility for managing students and volunteers under the TLP Volunteers in School Policy and Procedure.

7.0 Planning the Recruitment and Selection Process

7.1 Planning and timescales

Planning is critical to running a safe and successful process. The timescales and resources required to run each part of the process are planned in advance, with care taken to ensure that all safeguarding activities can be rigorously implemented. This includes planning who will be involved in the process and when, dates on which communications will be sent and activities will take place and how candidates will be assessed. On determining the recruitment and selection panel, it will be identified that at least one member has undertaken Safer Recruitment training.

7.2 Recruitment Process and Documentation

Before the role becomes a live vacancy the requirements of the school will be reviewed in the context of the School Improvement Plan, staffing requirements and budgetary constraints. When a vacancy is identified the following parts of the process are prepared:

Job Description and Person Specification

Where a vacancy is identified, the job description and person specification will be written or reviewed to ensure that they reflect the requirements for the role. For non-teaching roles, if necessary a job evaluation will be carried out to determine the appropriate rate of pay.

A job description summarises the main duties and responsibilities of a role, whilst the person specification details the attributes and behaviours needed to be able to successfully perform them. The five key categories of attributes in the person specification are Qualifications and Experience, Professional Knowledge and Skills, Professional Attributes, Attitudes and Other Requirements. The specification will state whether the attributes are essential or desirable, and how it is intended to measure during the selection process e.g. application, interview, task, observation etc.

Job descriptions and person specifications will always state the relevant duties, responsibilities and attributes in relation to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. Care will also be taken to ensure that attributes stated on the person specification are objective, do not inadvertently discriminate and enable potential applicants to assess whether they may be suitable for the role.

A job description for a vacant position will specify the safeguarding requirements i.e. to what extent the role will involve contact with children and will they be engaging in regulated activity relevant to children.

Advertising

Each school will determine where it wishes to advertise vacancies with due regard to equality of opportunity, managing and developing the talent within the existing staff team and utilising advertising mediums efficiently and effectively with a view to attracting the best possible pool of applicants to select from. As a Trust we welcome applications from people who have disabilities and will make all reasonable adjustments to help support them through a recruitment and selection process. All vacancies will be advertised on the Tarka Learning Partnership website.

All adverts will include the Trust's stated commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. The advert will also explain that the Trust does not accept CVs and that all successful applicants will be required to undergo an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. The salary range for the role, the number of working hours and weeks, the closing date for applications and key aspects of the person specification will also be stated.

Application Information

Application information is made available on the Tarka Learning Partnership website, hard copies of the job description and person specification are also available on request. The information available to applicants will always include:

- Information about the Trust, the school and the role
- Job description and person specification
- Application form
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Disclosure and Barring Service and Associated Checks Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Safer Recruitment Policy

To ensure that the Trust's expectations of applicants are clear and that the required checks can be carried out, the Trust's application forms set out key information in relation to safeguarding and in particular notifies applicants of/requests the following:

- **Providing false information** – this will result in the application being disqualified, a withdrawal of any offer of employment or summary dismissal if the candidate is in post. This could lead to referral to the Police. Checks will be carried out to verify the content of the application form. CVs will not be accepted.
- **Full chronological history** – a full history is required of each applicant in date order, most recent first, since leaving secondary education, including periods of any post-secondary education or training, part-time work and voluntary work as well as full-time employment. Start and end dates must be given, reasons for leaving employment and explanations for periods not in employment, education or training.
- **References** – candidates are required to give details of two people whom the Trust can obtain a reference from. The first referee will normally be the candidate's present or most recent Head Teacher/Principal, or where not working in a school or academy the equivalent person. If the candidate is not currently working with children they will be required to give a referee from their most recent employment with children. Candidates are required to give referees from two different employers/organisations wherever possible, unless the candidate has not worked for or volunteered with more than one.
- **Convictions/investigations** – in the application, candidates will be asked whether they have ever been subject to a conviction, caution, bind-over or if they are subject to a police investigation or have criminal proceedings pending against them. This applies to current and spent convictions and cautions.

A disclosure will not disqualify a candidate from consideration for a post.

However if a candidate has a conviction for an offence relating to children this would make them unsuitable to undertake a "regulated position", under the Criminal Justice Services Act 2000. It would be an offence for a person with said conviction to knowingly apply for, accept or work in a "regulated position". If this did occur a referral would be made to the Police.

- **Online Profiles** – shortlisted candidates are requested to give details of their public online profiles. These profiles of candidates are scrutinised to identify any incidents or issues that have happened which the school might want to explore with the applicant at interview. The purpose is to establish if there is

any safeguarding concern and to determine their suitability to work with children.

- **Applicant declaration** – candidates are required to certify that the information they give is true and accurate.

If submitted electronically, the applicant must sign the application when attending for interview.

8.0 Selection Process and Documentation

8.1 Shortlisting applications

Once a vacancy has been advertised and applications received, shortlisting packs are prepared and distributed to the people with responsibility for shortlisting and interviewing. A minimum of two people must be on the shortlisting and interview panel, one of which will always have been trained in Safer Recruitment and one will always be the Senior Leader with designated responsibility.

Sensitive information relating to the candidate will be removed before shortlisting in order that the process is unbiased, transparent and fair. The panel will assess candidates based on information given by candidates concerning their qualifications, experience, professional knowledge and skills, professional attributes and attitudes.

8.2 Invitation to interview and assessment

Depending on timescales between shortlisting and a planned interview date, a shortlisted applicant may be contacted by telephone in the first instance. All shortlisted candidates who have supplied an email address on their application form will be contacted by email. Where an applicant does not have access to email, a letter will be sent to their home address.

Interview invites will always contain the following:

- Date, time/s and venue for interview and assessment
- Directions to the venue
- The names and positions of the panel members / assessors
- An outline of what to expect and details of any preparatory work that may need to be undertaken
- A request that a named person is notified within a specified timescale if the candidate requires any reasonable adjustments to be made, to enable them to attend and fully participate in the interview and assessment process
- A request that the following documentation be brought to interview:
 - o Original copies of qualifications declared as part of the application
 - o Two of the following: Birth Certificate, valid passport or driving licence; and
 - o A recent utilities bill or other form of verification of current address

8.3 Pre Interview safeguarding checks

- 8.3.1 Prior to interview, shortlisted candidates will be given a Shortlisted Candidates Declaration form to complete which requires candidates to state any criminal convictions or cautions they have along with any information which would make them unsuitable to work with children. This form must be signed by candidates on the day of the interview and witnessed by a member of staff.

- 8.3.2 All shortlisted candidates will be subject to a search to identify any incidents or issues that have happened, or are publicly available, on-line. Checks will not be carried out by the appointing officer. Only relevant information relating to safeguarding or reputational concerns will be highlighted to the appointing officer. This search is to help establish a candidate's suitability for the role and assess any transferable risk.
- 8.3.3 The appointing person in the Trust school will send the names of the shortlisted applicants to the Trust's HR Leader, prior to the appointment process, to check against any known risks or concerns about personnel which might need to be discussed at interview with that shortlisted applicant.

8.4 References

References are requested using the Trust's reference proforma and are thoroughly scrutinised. Where timescales allow references will always be requested prior to interview to enable where areas of concern are explored. The job description and person specification for the role are sent with the reference request, and referees informed that the Trust and its schools are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people.

The trust will never accept an open reference or testimonial addressed "to whom it may concern".

The teaching and support staff reference proforma include the following questions:

Please give details, including dates, of any allegations or concerns that have been raised about the applicant that relate to the safety and welfare of children or behaviour towards children, and the outcome of those concerns e.g. whether the allegation or concerns were investigated, the conclusion reached and how the matter was resolved.

Please give details, including any dates, of any disciplinary procedures the applicant has been subject to in which the disciplinary sanction is current, this should include any issues related to the safety and welfare of children/young people, including any in which the disciplinary sanction has expired and the outcome.

Referees are required to sign the reference and are reminded that:

- They have a responsibility to ensure that the reference provided is accurate and does not contain any incorrect information or omissions.
- The relevant factual content of the reference may be discussed with the applicant

References will not be accepted from relatives or from people writing solely in the capacity of friends.

Further references may be sought if deemed necessary by the Tarka Learning Partnership.

A telephone call will be made to the referee to confirm their identity and that they are authorised to give a reference.

References received must be satisfactory to the Trust.

8.5 Interview

At interview, photocopies of identify documents and qualifications will be taken and the completed Disclosure of Criminal Record form examined. Any disclosures stated on the Shortlisted Candidate Declaration form, will be managed and discussed with the candidate in accordance with the Tarka Learning Partnership's Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and Associated Checks Policy and Procedure. Following interview the completed forms and photocopies of documents belonging to the successful candidate/s will be retained; all other copies will be immediately and securely destroyed.

Any information revealed in the online search about the candidate will be discussed with the applicant and a risk assessment completed.

The interview will assess the candidates against the criteria stated on the person specification, and relevant questions will be asked in relation to safeguarding in order to assess candidate's suitability to work with children and young people. This will include seeking explanations in respect of any gaps or inconsistencies identified during the shortlisting process, and where all references have been received prior to interview, discussing any matters arising.

Candidates can expect the interview to be fair and consistent. The same question framework will be used for each candidate and notes will be taken of the responses provided. Supplementary, individual questions will be asked of each candidate depending on information given in their application and their responses to the original generic framework question. In line with Keeping Children Safe in Education legislation, candidates might be asked about their mental and/or physical fitness to undertake the role for which they have applied as well as questions regarding their relationships with children and motivation for working with them.

At every interview candidates will have the opportunity to ask questions of the interview panel.

8.6 Assessment

Any assessment activities will be relevant to the requirements for the role and candidates will be informed of what to expect when they are invited to attend. Whenever possible, activities will include elements directly relevant to assessing suitability to work with children and young people.

8.7 Document Retention

Application forms, interview notes and assessment outcomes for candidates who are not appointed will be retained on file for a period of six months and then securely destroyed.

All documentation from the recruitment and selection process, relating to the successful candidate will be placed on the appointee's personnel file.

9.0 Conditional offers of employment/engagement and pre-employment checks

The checks that will be undertaken

All offers of employment/engagement are conditional and subject to:

- Verification of identify using photo ID and proof of address
- Verification of right to work in the UK
- Overseas check where required

As a minimum overseas checks will be undertaken in respect of any person that has been in a country outside of the UK for a period of 3 months or more during the last five years, and additional checks required at the Trust's discretion.

- Verification of mental and physical fitness to carry out the role

This is ascertained via the completion of a confidential Occupational Health questionnaire, and where required a medical examination carried out by the Trust's Occupational Health provider.

- The receipt of at least two references which are satisfactory to the Trust.

The trust reserves the right to request further or alternative references from applicants in order to verify their suitability of employment.

- Verification of qualifications including Qualified Teacher Status and completion of statutory induction where required
- Barred List and Enhanced DBS Clearance

Once received by the applicant, the original DBS certificate must be shown to one of the designated persons at the relevant school. In the event that a DBS certificate contains information, this will be managed in accordance with the Trust's Suitability Policy and Disclosure and Barring Service and associated checks Policy, and a Positive DBS Disclosure Decision form (risk assessment) carried out using the Trust's proforma.

Where required for the role:

- A disqualification check
- A prohibition from teaching check including EEA sanctions
- A Section 128 check

Any failure to meet the conditions specified will result in an offer of employment / engagement being withdrawn.

If any candidate is found to be prohibited or disqualified from working with children or young people, to have provided false information or where serious concerns arise, the Trust will comply with its obligations to report these matters to the Policy and DBS as required.

Information regarding pre-employment check will be recorded on the relevant school's Single Central Record, and copies of documents retained on the individual's personnel file in accordance with the requirements of Keeping Children Safe in Education, and as stated in the Trust's policy on the secure handling of information provided by the DBS and Data Protection Policy.

Delays in obtaining Criminal Record Disclosure or overseas checks

In wholly exceptional circumstances as determined by the Head Teacher, a prospective employee or worker may be allowed to commence work prior to satisfactory Criminal Record Disclosure having been received and/or where relevant overseas checks have not been received.

No prospective employee or worker will be allowed to commence work before **all** other employment checks have been completed, and where it is identified that a prospective employee or worker will commence work prior to the above:

- A risk assessment must be undertaken using the Trust's Risk Assessment for staff starting work pending a DBS disclosure form. The form must be fully completed and signed by the Head Teacher and responsible line manager; and
- The prospective employee or worker must be appropriately supervised at all times.

(The risk assessment will be held on the employee's file to evidence that this was undertaken prior to the receipt of the DBS certificate).

10.0 Induction and Probation

On-going vigilance and training is critical to establishing a robust safeguarding culture. There is an induction programme for all teaching and support staff appointed to the Tarka Learning Partnership regardless of previous experience, which includes child protection and safeguarding training. The purpose of the induction is to:

- Provide training and information about the Trust's policies and procedures including those in relation to the safeguarding of children and young people
- Establish clear expectations regarding the standards of conduct, behaviour and performance required
- Ensure staff know when and how to raise any safeguarding concerns
- Facilitate the identification of any concerns regarding conduct, behaviour or performance and enable support to be provided to achieve the standards required
- Provide opportunities for staff to discuss any issues or concerns they may have regarding their role or responsibilities.