

## SAFER RECRUITMENT POLICY 2024

### INTRODUCTION

The safe recruitment of staff is the first step to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in education. E.Quality Training Limited [EQT] is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all pupils in its care. As an employer, the school expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

### AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aims of the Safer Recruitment policy is to help deter, reject or identify people who might abuse pupils or are otherwise unsuited to working with them by having appropriate procedures for appointing staff.

The aims of the recruitment policy are as follows:

- to ensure that the best possible staff are recruited on the basis of their merits, abilities and suitability for the position;
- to ensure that all job applicants are considered equally and consistently;
- to ensure 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, gender, marital or civil partner status, disability or age;
- to ensure compliance with all relevant legislation, recommendations and guidance including the statutory guidance published by the Department for Education (**DfE**), Keeping Children Safe in Education - September 2022 (**KCSIE**), the Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales 2015 (the **Prevent Duty Guidance**) and any guidance or code of practice published by the Disclosure and Barring Service (**DBS**); and
- to ensure that EQT meets its commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people by carrying out all necessary pre-employment checks.

Employees involved in the recruitment and selection of staff are responsible for familiarising themselves with and complying with the provisions of this policy.

The company has a principle of open competition in its approach to recruitment and will seek to recruit the best applicant for the job. The recruitment and selection process should ensure the identification of the person best suited to the job based on the applicant's abilities, qualification, experience and merit as measured against the job description and person specification.

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The recruitment and selection of staff will be conducted in a professional, timely and responsive manner and in compliance with current employment legislation, and relevant safeguarding legislation and statutory guidance (including KCSIE 2024 and Prevent Duty Guidance).

If a member of staff involved in the recruitment process has a close personal or familial relationship with an applicant they must declare it as soon as they are aware of the individual's application and avoid any involvement in the recruitment and selection decision-making process.

The company aims to operate this procedure consistently and thoroughly while obtaining, collating, analysing and evaluating information from and about applicants applying for job vacancies at any of the centres.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

It is the responsibility of the Directors to:

- Ensure that effective policies and procedures are in place for recruitment of all staff and volunteers in accordance with DfE guidance and legal requirements.
- Monitor the company's compliance with them.

It is the responsibility of the Directors and other Managers involved in recruitment to:

- Ensure that the company operates safe recruitment procedures and makes sure all appropriate checks are carried out on all staff and volunteers.
- To monitor contractors' and agencies' compliance with this document.
- Promote welfare of children and young people at every stage of the procedure.

## **Definition of Regulated Activity and Frequency**

Any position undertaken at, or on behalf of the company will amount to "regulated activity" if it is carried out:

- frequently, meaning once a week or more; or
- overnight, meaning between 2.00 am and 6.00 am; or
- satisfies the "period condition", meaning four times or more in a 30 day period; and
- provides the opportunity for contact with children and young people.

Roles which are carried out on an unpaid / voluntary basis will only amount to regulated activity if, in addition to the above, they are carried out on an unsupervised basis.

The company is not permitted to check the Children's Barred List unless an individual will be engaging in "regulated activity". The company is required to carry out an enhanced DBS check for all staff, supply staff and others who will be engaging in regulated activity. However, the company can also carry out an enhanced DBS check on a person who would be carrying out regulated activity but for the fact that they do not carry out their duties frequently enough i.e. roles which would amount to regulated activity if carried out more frequently

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### **Advertising**

To ensure equality of opportunity, the company will advertise all vacant posts to encourage as wide a field of applicant as possible, normally this entails an external advertisement.

Any advertisement will make clear the commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

All documentation relating to applicants will be treated confidentially in accordance with the GDPR.

EQT uses its own application form and all applicants for employment will be required to complete an application form containing questions about their academic and full employment history and their suitability for the role (in addition all applicants are required to account for any gaps or discrepancies in employment history). Incomplete application forms will not be shortlisted.

The application form will include the applicant's declaration regarding convictions and working with children, and will make it clear that the post is exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. CV's will not be accepted.

It is unlawful 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 apply for a position at EQT. All applicants will be made aware that providing false information is an offence and could result in the application being rejected or summary dismissal if the applicant has been selected, and referral to the police and/or the DBS.

### **Job Descriptions and Person Specifications**

A job description is a key document in the recruitment process, and must be finalised prior to taking any other steps in the recruitment process. It will clearly and accurately set out the duties and responsibilities of the job role.

The person specification is of equal importance and informs the selection decision. It details the skills, experience, abilities and expertise that are required to do the job. The person specification will include a specific reference to suitability to work with children.

### **References**

References for short listed applicants will be sent for immediately after short listing. The only exception is where an applicant has indicated on their application form that they do not wish their current employer to be contacted at that stage. In such cases, this reference will be taken up immediately after interview.

All offers of employment will be subject to the receipt of a minimum of two references which are considered satisfactory by EQT. One of the references must be from the applicant's current or most recent employer. If the current / most recent employment does / did not involve work with children, then the second reference should be from the employer with whom the applicant most recently worked with children. The referee should not be a relative. References will always be sought and obtained directly from the referee and their purpose is to provide objective and factual information to support appointment decisions. All referees will be asked whether they believe the applicant is suitable for the job for which they have applied and whether they have any reason to believe that the applicant is unsuitable to work with children.

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Referees will also be asked to confirm that the applicant has not been radicalised so that they do not support terrorism or any form of "extremism". Any discrepancies or anomalies will be followed up. Direct contact by phone will be undertaken with each referee to verify the reference.

The company does not accept open references, testimonials or references from relatives.

### Interviews

There will be a face-to-face interview and a minimum of two interviewers will see the applicants for the vacant position. The interview process will explore the applicant's ability to carry out the job description and meet the person specification. It will enable the panel to explore any anomalies or gaps have been identified in order to satisfy themselves that the chosen applicant can meet the safeguarding criteria (in line with Safer Recruitment Training).

Any information in regard to past disciplinary action or allegations, cautions or convictions will be discussed and considered in the circumstance of the individual case during the interview process, if it has been disclosed on the application form.

At least one member of any interviewing panel will have undertaken safer recruitment training or refresher training as applicable.

All applicants who are invited to an interview will be required to bring evidence of their identity, address and qualifications. Original documents will only be accepted and photocopies will be taken. Unsuccessful applicant documents will be destroyed 6 months after the recruitment programme.

## OFFER OF APPOINTMENT AND NEW EMPLOYEE PROCESS

In accordance with the recommendations set out in KCSIE the company carries out a number of pre-employment checks in respect of all prospective employees.

If it is decided to make an offer of employment following the **formal interview**, any such offer will be conditional on the following:

- the agreement of a mutually acceptable start date and the signing of a contract incorporating the company's standard terms and conditions of employment;
- 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 company considers to be satisfactory;

for positions which involve "teaching work":

1. being satisfied that the applicant is not, and has never been, the subject of a sanction, restriction or prohibition issued by the National College for Teaching and Leadership, or any predecessor or successor body, or by a regulator of the teaching profession in any other European Economic Area country which prevents the applicant working at the company or which, in the company's opinion, renders the applicant unsuitable to work at EQT; and
  2. being satisfied that the applicant is not, and has never been, the subject of any proceedings before a professional conduct panel or equivalent body in the UK or any other country for any reason which prevents the applicant working at EQT or which, in the company's opinion, renders the applicant unsuitable to work at EQT;
- where the position amounts to "regulated activity the receipt of an enhanced disclosure from

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the DBS which the company considers to be satisfactory;

- where the position amounts to "regulated activity" confirmation that the applicant is not named on the Children's Barred List\*;
- confirmation that the applicant is not subject to a direction under section 142 of the Education Act 2002 which prohibits, disqualifies or restricts them from providing education at a school, taking part in the management of a school or working in a position which involves regular contact with children;
- confirmation that the applicant is not subject to a direction under section 128 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 which prohibits, disqualifies or restricts them from being involved in the management of an independent school;
- verification of the applicant's medical fitness for the role;
- 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; and
- verification of professional qualifications which EQT deems a requirement for the post, or which the applicant otherwise cites in support of their application (where they have not been previously verified).

\*The company is not permitted to check the Children's Barred List unless an individual will be engaging in "regulated activity". The company is required to carry out an enhanced DBS check for all staff, supply staff and others who will be engaging in regulated activity. However, the company can also carry out an enhanced DBS check on a person who would be carrying out regulated activity but for the fact that they do not carry out their duties frequently enough i.e. roles which would amount to regulated activity if carried out more frequently.

Whether a position amounts to "regulated activity" must therefore be considered by the company in order to decide which checks are appropriate. It is however likely that in nearly all cases the company will be able to carry out an enhanced DBS check and a Children's Barred List check.

A personal file checklist will be used to track and audit paperwork obtained in accordance with Safer Recruitment Training. The checklist will be retained on personal files.

### **The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974**

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 does not apply to positions which involve working with, or having access to pupils. Therefore, any convictions and cautions that would normally be considered 'SPENT' **must be** declared when applying for any position at EQT.

### **DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) Check** (formerly known as CRB Disclosure)

The company 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 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. It is the company policy that the DBS disclosure **must be** obtained before the commencement of employment of **any** new employee.

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It is the company's policy to re-check employee's DBS Certificates every three years and staff are made aware of their obligation to inform the Directors of any cautions or convictions that arise between these checks taking place. DBS checks will still be requested for applicants with recent periods of overseas residence and those with little or no previous UK residence.

### **Portability of DBS Certificates Checks**

Staff may wish to join the DBS Update Service if they are likely to require another check in the future. Applicants may sign up to the Service if their check was issued after 17 June 2013, for a fee of £13 per annum, which is payable by the applicant.

### **DBS Certificate**

The DBS no longer issue Disclosure Certificates to employers, therefore employees/applicants should bring their original Certificate to interviews.

### **Dealing with convictions**

The company operates a formal procedure if a DBS Certificate is returned with details of convictions. Consideration will be given to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and also:

- the nature, seriousness and relevance of the offence;
- how long ago the offence occurred;
- one-off or history of offences;
- changes in circumstances,
- decriminalisation and remorse.

A formal meeting will take place face-to-face to establish the facts with the Directors. A decision will be made following this meeting. 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 Directors will evaluate all of the risk factors above before a position is offered or confirmed.

If an applicant wishes to dispute any information contained in a disclosure, they may do so by contacting the DBS. In cases where the applicant would otherwise be offered a position were it not for the disputed information, the company may, 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.

### **Proof of identity, Right to Work in the UK & Verification of Qualifications and/or professional status.**

All applicants invited to attend an interview will be required to bring their identification documentation such as passport, birth certificate, driving licence etc. with them as proof of identity/eligibility to work in UK in accordance with those set out in the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006 and DBS identity checking guidelines. The company does not discriminate on the grounds of age.

Where an applicant claims to have changed their name by deed poll or any other means (e.g. marriage, adoption, statutory declaration) they will be required to provide documentary evidence of the change.

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In addition, applicants must be able to demonstrate that they have actually obtained any academic or vocational qualification legally required for the position and claimed in their application form.

### **Medical Fitness**

The company is legally required to verify the medical fitness of anyone to be appointed to a post at the EQT, **after** an offer of employment has been made but **before** the appointment can be confirmed.

All applicants are requested to complete a medical questionnaire and where appropriate a doctor's medical report may be required. This information will be reviewed against the Job Description and the Person Specification for the particular role, together with details of any other physical or mental requirements of the role

The company 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 and considering reasonable adjustments.

### **Induction Programme**

All new employees will be given an induction programme which will clearly identify the company policies and procedures, including the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, the Code of Conduct, and Part One of KCSIE, and make clear the expectations which will govern how staff carry out their roles and responsibilities.

### **Single Centralised Register of Members of Staff**

In addition to the various staff records kept on individual personnel files, a single centralised record of recruitment and vetting checks is kept in accordance with the Safeguarding and Ofsted requirements. This is kept up-to-date and retained by the Directors

The Single Centralised Register will contain details of the following:-

- All employees who are employed to work at the school;
- all employees who are employed as supply staff to the school whether employed directly or through an agency;
- all others who have been chosen by the school to work in regular contact with children. This will cover volunteers, governors, peripatetic staff and people brought into the school to provide additional teaching or instruction for pupils but who are not staff members eg: sports coaches etc.

A designated Director will be responsible for auditing the Single Centralised Register and reporting his/her findings to the SMT annually.

### **Record Retention / Data Protection**

The company is legally required to undertake the above pre-employment checks. Therefore, if an applicant is successful in their application, the company will retain on their personnel file any relevant information provided as part of the application process. This will include copies of documents used to verify identity, right to work in the UK, medical fitness and qualifications. Medical information may be used to help the company to discharge its obligations as an employer e.g. so that the company may consider reasonable adjustments if an employee suffers from a disability or to assist with any other workplace issue.

This documentation will be retained for the duration of the successful applicant's employment. All information retained on employees is kept centrally in a locked and secure cabinet.

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The same policy applies to any suitability information obtained about volunteers.

The company will retain all interview notes on all unsuccessful applicants for a period of 6 months, after which time the notes will be confidentially destroyed (ie: shredded). The 6 month retention period is in accordance with the GDPR 2018.

### **Ongoing Employment**

E.Quality Training Limited recognises that safer recruitment and selection is not just about the start of employment, but should be part of a larger policy framework for all staff. The company will therefore provide ongoing training and support for all staff, as identified through the Annual Performance Review/appraisal procedure.

Despite the best efforts to recruit safely there will be occasions when allegations of serious misconduct or abuse against children and young people are raised. This policy is primarily concerned with the promotion of safer recruitment and details the pre-employment checks that will be undertaken prior to employment being confirmed. Whilst these are pre-employment checks the company also has a legal duty to make a referral to the DBS in circumstances where an individual:

- has applied for a position despite being barred from working with children; or
- has been removed from working in regulated activity (whether paid or unpaid), or has resigned prior to being removed, because they have harmed, or pose a risk of harm to, a child.

### **Contractors and agency staff**

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

Agencies who supply staff must also complete the pre-employment checks which the company would otherwise complete for its staff. Again, EQT requires confirmation that these checks have been completed before an individual can commence work.

EQT will independently verify the identity of staff supplied by contractors or an agency in and will require the provision of the original DBS certificate before contractors or agency staff can commence work.

### **Visiting Speakers (and Prevent Duty)**

The Prevent Duty Guidance requires that we have clear protocols for ensuring that any visiting speakers, whether invited by staff or by pupils, are suitable and appropriately supervised.

The company is not permitted to obtain a DBS disclosure or Children's Barred List information on any visiting speaker who does not engage in regulated activity at the School or perform any other regular duties.

All visiting speakers will be subject to the usual visitor's signing in protocol. [Security on Site Policy] This will include signing in and out at Reception, the wearing of a visitors badge at all times and being escorted by a fully vetted member of staff between appointments.

EQT will also obtain such formal or informal background information about a visiting speaker as is reasonable in the circumstances to decide whether to invite and/or permit a speaker to attend a centre. In doing so the EQT will always have regard to the [Visitors and Security Policy], the Prevent Duty Guidance and the definition of "extremism" set out in KCSIE which states:

*""Extremism" is vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also include in our definition*



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*of extremism calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas. Terrorist groups very often draw on extremist ideas developed by extremist organisations."*

In fulfilling its Prevent Duty obligations the company does not discriminate on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or religious belief, gender, sex or sexual orientation, marital or civil partner status, disability or age.

### **Volunteers**

EQT will request an enhanced DBS disclosure and Children's Barred List information on all volunteers undertaking regulated activity with pupils (the definition of regulated activity set out above will be applied to all volunteers).

Under no circumstances will the company permit an unchecked volunteer to have unsupervised contact with pupils.

It is the company's policy that a new DBS certificate is required for volunteers who will engage in regulated activity but who have not been involved in any activities with the School for three consecutive months or more. Those volunteers who are likely to be involved in activities with a centre on a regular basis may be required to sign up to the DBS update service as this permits the

company to obtain up to date criminal records information without delay prior to each new activity in which a volunteer participates.

In addition the company will seek to obtain such further suitability information about a volunteer as it considers appropriate in the circumstances. This may include (but is not limited to the following):

- formal or informal information provided by staff, parents and other volunteers;
- character references from the volunteer's place of work or any other relevant source; and
- an informal safer recruitment interview.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The Business and Finance Director will be responsible for ensuring that this policy is monitored and evaluated annually. This will be undertaken through formal audits of job vacancies and a yearly Safer Recruitment Evaluation audit (See appendix one)

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### Checklist

Policy and Procedure	In Place	In Progress
Safer Recruitment Policy updated and monitored on a regular basis	✓	
Consistency in recruitment procedures applied to all categories of employment	✓	
Use of application Form	✓	
Use of Job Description & Person Specification	✓	
Referees asked to specifically comment on suitability of applicant	✓	
Two written references taken up	✓	
One member of panel to examine references prior to interview	✓	
References followed up by a telephone reference	✓	
References to be obtained for volunteers/supply/agency staff	✓	
Questions asked on applicants child protection awareness	✓	
Explanation of gaps in employment	✓	
Proof of identity sought – originals not copies	✓	
Academic qualification checked – originals not copies	✓	
Medical clearance prior to employment	✓	
No employment until DBS Certificate has been completed and original disclosure received	✓	
Above checks applied as appropriate to Overseas staff, supply/agency staff/gap/volunteers	✓	
Panel interviews undertaken	✓	✓
Formal induction programme undertaken	✓	
Safeguarding/Child Protection training / issue of Child Protection policy, Code of Conduct and Part One of KCSIE to new employee	✓	

M. Locks

09/09/2024