

Safer Recruitment Policy 2024-25

Date approved:	Oct 2024
Approved by:	HR Policy Committee
Date adopted by the MAT (i.e. effective date):	September 2024
This policy is scheduled for review on:	Annually

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Policy Statement

This policy outlines Manor Multi Academy Trust's ('we' / 'our' / 'us') expectations of our employees' ('you') in relation to safer recruitment. The safe recruitment of staff in schools is the first step to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in education. We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all pupils in our care. As an employer, we expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

We are committed to equality and value diversity. As such we are committed to fulfilling our Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Duty) obligations and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

This policy should also be applied in accordance with our Staff Code of Conduct, Dignity at Work, Safeguarding and Child Protection, Confidential Employment References and ICT Acceptable Use policies and Procedures. Copies of all policies and procedures can be accessed via the **All MAT Staff** area on Teams.

The Equality Duty requires us to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.
- Advance equality of opportunity.
- Foster good relations between people who share protected characteristics, such as age, gender, race and faith, and people who do not share them.

If you consider that any of our practices, policies or procedures may be indirectly discriminatory, you should report your concerns and the basis for them to your line manager, who will take appropriate action and ensure that you receive a written response in respect of the concerns that you have raised.

This policy does not form part of your contract of employment. We reserve the right to amend or withdraw this policy at any time.

We are responsible for ensuring the effective implementation of this policy. As part of equality monitoring we will review and monitor the operation and impact of the policy on a regular basis and in accordance with the policy review date. As part of this monitoring and review this policy will be equality impact assessed.

Scope

This policy applies to employees, workers, agency workers, consultants, casual workers, contractors and volunteers, whether during working hours or otherwise.

This Policy provides information which underpins our Staff Code of Conduct, and Disciplinary Policy and Procedures. Copies of these policies and procedures can be accessed via the **All MAT Staff** area on Teams.

Aims & Principles

The aims of our Safer Recruitment policy are 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 Safer 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, 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 (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)
- to ensure that we meet our commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people by carrying out all necessary pre-employment checks

Where you are involved in the recruitment and selection of staff, you are responsible for familiarising yourself with and complying with the provisions of this policy.

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

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 and Prevent Duty Guidance).

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

We aim 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 our MAT schools.

Roles and Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of our Directors to:

- ensure we have effective policies and procedures in place for recruitment of all staff and volunteers in accordance with DfE guidance and legal requirements
- monitor our compliance with them

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher of each of our schools' (and in the case of central MAT appointments, the CEO/CEA), Business/Office Manager and other SLT members involved in recruitment to:

- ensure that we operate safe recruitment procedures and make sure all appropriate checks are carried out on all staff and volunteers who work at our Trust
- monitor contractors' and agencies' compliance with this document
- promote welfare of children at every stage of the procedure

The Directors have delegated responsibility to the CEO/CEA (central MAT staff), the relevant Headteacher/Head of School (teaching staff and classroom support staff) and Business/Office Manager (back office support staff) to lead in all appointments. Directors may be involved in staff appointments but the final decision will rest with the appointing staff member as appropriate.

Definition of Regulated Activity and Frequency

Any position undertaken at, or on behalf of our Trust 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

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.

We are not permitted to check the Children's Barred List unless an individual will be engaging in "regulated activity". We are required to carry out an enhanced DBS check for all staff, supply staff, Directors and local governance representatives who will be engaging in regulated

activity. However, we 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.

Recruitment and Selection Procedure

Advertising

To ensure equality of opportunity, we will advertise all vacant posts to encourage as wide a field of applicants as possible; normally this entails an external advertisement, however in some circumstances, this may solely be within the School/Trust.

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

All documentation relating to applicants will be treated confidentially in accordance with the Data Protection Act (DPA).

Application Forms

We use our 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. CVs will not be accepted.

It is unlawful for us 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 our Trust. 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 shortlisted applicants will be sent for immediately after shortlisting. 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, if successful.

All offers of employment will be subject to the receipt of a minimum of two references, which are considered satisfactory by the School/Trust. 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 (where relevant). 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. Referees will also be asked to confirm that the applicant has not, in their opinion, been radicalised so that they do not support terrorism or any form of "extremism".

Please note that no questions will be asked about health or medical fitness prior to any offer of employment being made.

Any discrepancies or anomalies will be followed up. Direct contact by phone will be undertaken with each referee to verify the reference.

We do not accept open references, testimonials or references from relatives.

Interviews

There will be a face-to-face interview wherever possible, 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 which may 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 not 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. We will only accept the original document and photocopies will be taken. Unsuccessful applicant documents will be destroyed six months after the recruitment programme.

Offer of Appointment and New Employee Process

In accordance with the recommendations set out in KCSIE, we carry 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:

- in the agreement of a mutually acceptable start date and the signing of a contract incorporating our 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, where applicable) which we consider to be satisfactory
- for positions which involve "teaching work":
 - i. us 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 School/Trust or which, in our opinion, renders the applicant unsuitable to work at the School/Trust; and
 - ii. us 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 the School/Trust or which, in our opinion, renders the applicant unsuitable to work at the School/Trust
- where the position amounts to "regulated activity" the receipt of an enhanced disclosure from the DBS which we consider 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, the management of, or working in a position which involves regular contact with children
- An online/social media check in accordance with KCSIE
- 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
- verification of professional qualifications which we deem a requirement for the post, or which the applicant otherwise cites in support of their application (where they have not been previously verified)

*we are not permitted to check the Children's Barred List unless an individual will be engaging in "regulated activity".

We are required to carry out an enhanced DBS check for all staff, supply staff, Directors and local governance representatives who will be engaging in regulated activity. However, we 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 us in order to decide which checks are appropriate. It is, however, likely that in nearly all cases we will be able to carry out an enhanced DBS check and a Children's Barred List check.

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

ALL PAPERWORK MUST BE RECEIVED PRIOR TO ANYONE STARTING IN ANY ROLE.

Recruitment Checklist

All personnel files should hold the following documentation:

- A fully completed and signed application form
- Two references
- DBS clearance number
- Medical Clearance
- Copies of relevant qualifications
- Proof of Right to work in the UK – either a passport, or Full birth certificate and NI number
- New starter form
- Appointment notification form

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 any of our Schools and/or within our Trust.

DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) Certificate (formerly known as CRB Disclosure)

DBS Policy

We apply 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 in our 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.

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

It is our policy to re-check employees' DBS Certificates every five years.

Members of staff at any of our schools (or central Trust) are aware of their obligation to inform the Business/Office Manager/Headteacher (or CEO/CEA) of any cautions or convictions that arise between these checks taking place. Annually, all staff will complete a disqualification by declaration form indicating if there have been any changes to their DBS status since it was issued.

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.

Copies of DBS Checks

The DBS no longer issue Disclosure Certificates to employers; therefore, employees/applicants should bring their Certificate to the School Office (central MAT applicants go to Manor Primary School office). Copies will not be retained, but details (number etc.) will be logged on the relevant School's Single Central Record.

Dealing with convictions

We operate a formal risk assessment 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 Headteacher (or CEO/CEA for central MAT appointments). 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 Headteacher (or CEO/CEA as applicable), with HR advice, 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, we may, where practicable and solely at our 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 at our Trust 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. We do 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.

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

We are legally required to verify the medical fitness of anyone to be appointed to a teaching post at our Trust, but also follow this same practice for all staff. However, this will only be done 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/OH 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.

We are aware of our 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.

Overseas checks

Applicants who have lived/travelled abroad for more than 3 months will need to obtain a criminal records check from the relevant country. The applicant will not be permitted to commence work until the overseas information has been received and is considered satisfactory by us.

Induction Programme

All new employees will be given an induction programme, which will clearly identify our policies and procedures, including our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Staff 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 Central Record

In addition to the various staff records kept in School (or within the Trust) and on individual personnel files, a single central record of recruitment and vetting checks is kept in each school in accordance with statutory requirements. This is kept up-to-date and retained by the School Office in each of our schools. The Single Central Record 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, Directors, local governance representatives, peripatetic staff and people brought into the School to provide additional teaching or instruction for pupils but who are not staff members e.g. sports coaches etc.
- Central MAT staff as appropriate to the School.

The Headteacher will be responsible for ensuring the Single Central Record is always up to date and will quality-assure this on a termly basis. The Central MAT team is responsible for auditing the Single Central Record and reporting their findings to Progress Board during the Summer Term meeting each year.

Record Retention / Data Protection

The Trust is legally required to undertake the above pre-employment checks. Therefore, if an applicant is successful in their application, the relevant School or Trust 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 us to discharge our obligations as an employer e.g. so that we may consider reasonable adjustments if an employee suffers from a disability or to assist with any other workplace issue.

This documentation will be retained by us for the duration of the successful applicant's employment with our Trust. All information retained on employees is kept centrally in the relevant School Office in a locked and secure cabinet.

The same policy applies to any suitability information obtained about volunteers involved with Trust activities.

Each of our Schools will retain all interview notes on all unsuccessful applicants for a period of 6 months, after which time the notes will be confidentially destroyed (i.e. shredded). The 6-month retention period is in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Ongoing Employment

Manor MAT 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. We will therefore provide ongoing training and support for all staff, as identified through the Annual Review/appraisal procedure and the schools' and Trust's wider training/CPD programmes.

Leaving Employment at any of our Schools or within the Trust

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, we also have a legal duty to make a referral to the DBS in circumstances where an individual:

- Has applied for a position at our Trust despite being barred from working with children

- has been removed by one of our schools 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

If the individual referred to the DBS is a teacher, the relevant School may also decide to make a referral to the National College for Teaching and Leadership.

Contractors and agency staff

Contractors engaged by us must complete the same checks for their employees that we are required to complete for our staff. We require written confirmation from a contractor - on headed paper - that these checks have been completed before employees of the contractor can commence work at our Trust.

Agencies who supply staff to any of our schools must also complete the pre-employment checks which the School would otherwise complete for its staff. Again, we require confirmation that these checks have been completed before an individual can commence work at our Trust.

We will independently verify the identity of staff supplied by contractors or an agency, when they arrive on site. We also require sight of the original DBS certificate before contractors or agency staff can commence work at our Trust.

Visiting Speakers (and Prevent Duty)

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

We are 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(s) or perform any other regular duties for or on behalf of the School(s).

All visiting speakers will be subject to the relevant School's usual visitors signing-in protocol. 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.

We 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 the School(s). In doing so we will always have regard to 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 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 our Prevent Duty obligations, we do not discriminate on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or religious belief, sex or sexual orientation, marital or civil partner status, disability or age.

Volunteers

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

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

It is our 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 relevant School for three consecutive months or more. Those volunteers who are likely to be involved in activities with the School on a regular basis may be required to sign up to the DBS update service as this permits the School to obtain up to date criminal records information without delay prior to each new activity in which a volunteer participates.

In addition, we will seek to obtain such further suitability information about a volunteer as we consider 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
- an informal safer recruitment interview

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Headteacher of each of our schools will be responsible for ensuring that this policy is monitored and evaluated throughout their School. The CEO/CEA will be responsible for ensuring this at Trust level. This will be undertaken through the HR Lead and MAT Central Team monitoring individual schools' systems and processes on a termly basis. Any significant issues will be presented to the Directors via the Chief Executives' Report.

Breach of Policy

Any breaches of this Policy will be managed under the Trust's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure, which can be located in the **All MAT Staff** area on Teams.