

Guidance for Maintained Schools and Academies

Recruitment and Selection

Document Number: 01

Date: June 2018

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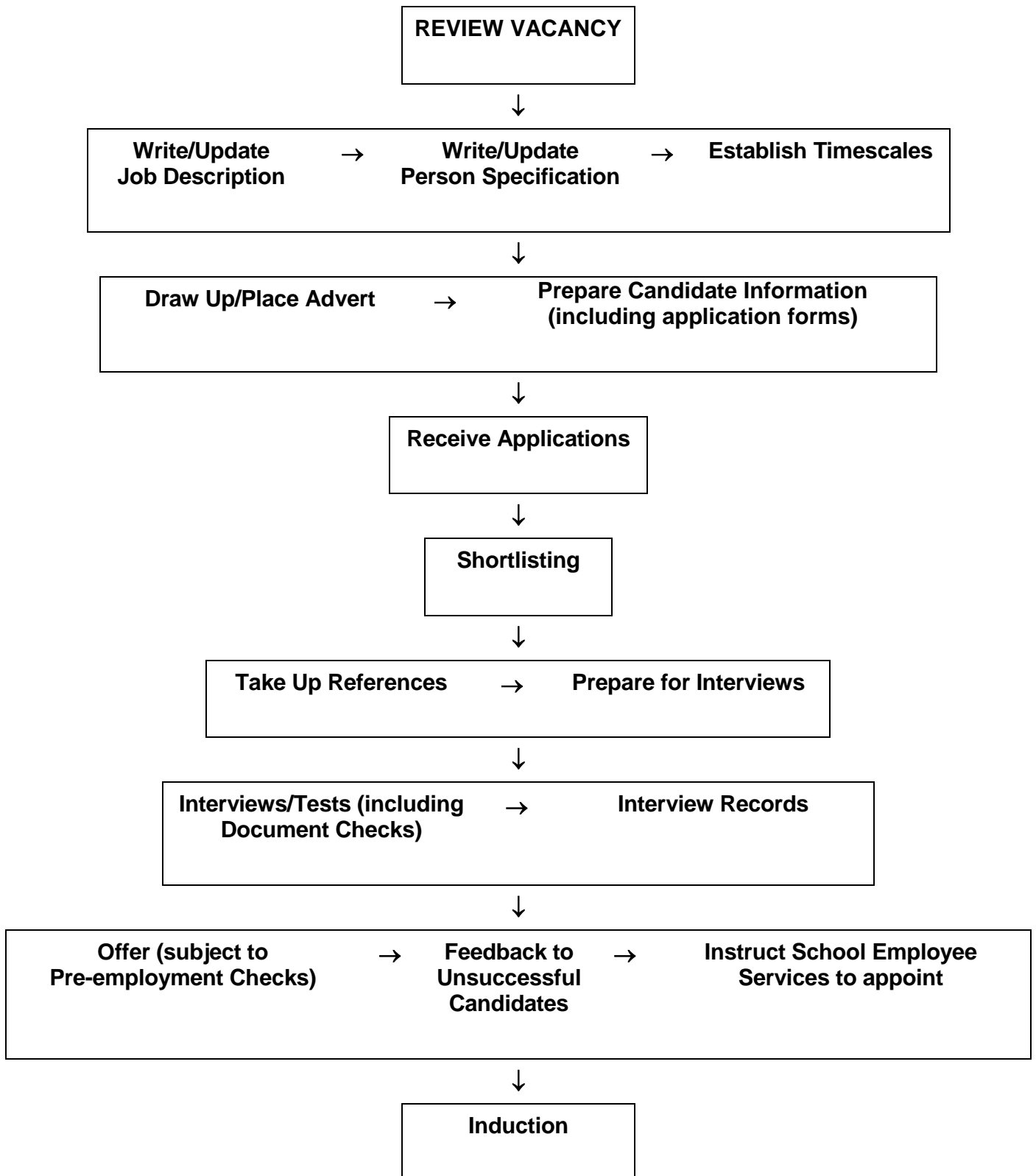
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Recruitment and Selection Activity Flowchart



1. Introduction and scope

This document provides guidance on recruitment and selection and applies to the appointment of all staff (including Headteachers) to maintained schools and academies in Worcestershire. Governing Bodies of voluntary aided schools which have adopted the relevant Diocesan Schools Commission or National Society guidance documents should use those documents. Support and advice is available from HR Consultancy for Schools in this case, as well as from The Diocesan Schools Commission for Catholic schools and the Diocesan Board of Education for Church of England schools.

2. Safeguarding and Safer Recruitment

Worcestershire County Council is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all school employees and volunteers to share this commitment.

The safeguarding of children and young people must be central to every stage of the recruitment and selection process.

A Safer Recruitment process

Those responsible for recruitment need to ensure that:

- time is set aside for planning the process;
- there are clear Job Descriptions and Person Specifications for every post within the school, which state the boundaries and expectations of the role and include a statement of the post holder's responsibility for safeguarding;
- clear messages about safeguarding are sent to candidates from the outset. All recruitment documentation, starting with the job advert, **must** include an explicit statement confirming the school's commitment to the safeguarding of children and young people, as well as the requirement for successful applicants to undertake a Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) check. The following example may be used:

The school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. The successful applicant will be required to undertake an Enhanced Disclosure via the Disclosure & Barring Service.

- only application forms are used, not CVs;
- references are obtained, before interview wherever possible, which include specific enquiries about the applicant's background in relation to safeguarding, and ensure that references are given proper weight and consideration in the selection process;
- as a minimum, the selection process involves a face-to-face interview and where possible another appropriate method (role-play, presentation, teaching a lesson, participating in activities with children under observation, etc.);

- probing questions are asked at interview to assess candidates' motives, attitudes and behaviours, as well as skills and experience, including questions that cover safeguarding issues;
- there is an ongoing culture of vigilance in the school through effective induction and regular discussion;
- ensure that panel members are familiar with the principles of Safer Recruitment. For maintained schools it remains a **statutory requirement** that at least one member of the panel has undertaken Safer Recruitment training, and is recommended for academies. Some schools use the NSPCC and there are a number of other providers.

3. Equal opportunities and avoiding discrimination

You should ensure that every applicant, whether internal or external, is treated fairly throughout the recruitment process and that they are assessed against selection criteria which relate **only** to the requirements of the job. Selection criteria must comply with the Equality Act 2010 and relevant codes of practice, and should not be unnecessarily restrictive in terms of other factors, e.g. qualifications.

The Equality Act 2010 prohibits:

- direct discrimination
- indirect discrimination
- harassment
- victimisation.

A robust and clear recruitment and selection process will give all applicants a fair opportunity to be considered for the post, irrespective of his/her age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex or sexual orientation. These are known as 'protected characteristics'.

If you include photographs or images in your advert or recruitment literature, review them to ensure that they could not be considered discriminatory.

Age

Care must be taken to avoid terminology which implies that you are looking for candidates who fit a particular age profile, for example 'young', 'mature' or 'energetic', which may be discriminatory.

You should describe the particular experience you are seeking, (e.g. must have experience as a middle leader) rather than the number of years.

Gender

Very occasionally you may see job adverts which specify that the post holder must be male or female (for example, to provide personal care to a service user). Such instances are very rare and unlikely to arise in a school setting. If you believe that one of the protected characteristics is central to a particular job, please seek advice from the HR Consultancy for Schools team at an early stage.

Part-time/Full-time

Where advertising on a full-time basis, consideration should be given to other possibilities such as part-time or job-sharing arrangements.

Declaration of interests

Any members of the **Governing Body and/or staff** who are personally related to or have a close connection with any job applicant **must formally declare this and remove themselves from the recruitment process or any elements of the process where the conflict might arise**. It is important that schools protect themselves from allegations of nepotism and an unfair recruitment process.

Disability

It is discriminatory to reject applicants solely because of a disability. Consideration must be given to making 'reasonable adjustments' to the workplace and working practices to enable a person with a disability to take up employment. Under the Equality Act 2010, with limited exceptions, employers are prevented from asking applicants (including questions on reference request forms) about their health **before** making a job offer.

The exceptions are as follows:

- to find out whether an applicant is able to participate in an assessment to test their suitability for the role;
- to establish whether there is a duty to make reasonable adjustments to enable an applicant to take part in the recruitment process;
- to establish whether the applicant will be able to carry out a function that is intrinsic to the work concerned;
- to monitor the diversity of applicants;
- to take positive action in supporting employment for disabled people (for example under the Jobcentre Plus '2 Ticks' initiative which aims, amongst other things, to ensure that all applicants with a disability who meet the minimum criteria for a job vacancy are interviewed and considered for the post);
- to establish that a person has a disability where this is an occupational requirement.

Other relevant legislation

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 states that a conviction is said to be 'spent' if it did not carry a sentence excluded from the Act and there are no further convictions during a specified period. In most situations, a person is not required to reveal spent convictions. However, posts in schools are exempt from the Act and a statement explaining this is included in the job application forms.

Reference requests must include the following statement: "As the work of this post involves working with children, other vulnerable groups or in a position of trust it is therefore exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. To the best of your knowledge, does the applicant have any unspent or unfiltered* spent criminal convictions, cautions, reprimands or formal warnings?"

(*Please see: www.gov.uk/government/publications/filtering-rules-for-criminal-record-check-certificates for information regarding filtering of convictions.)

If you have any questions about anything covered in this section, please contact the HR Consultancy for Schools team.

4. Recruitment Process – key steps

- Identify who will be on the appointment panel. This will depend on the post, but should involve the direct line manager of the post and may involve one or more Governors. For maintained schools, the staffing regulations require that Governors must be involved in the appointment of a Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher but can delegate the recruitment of other staff to the Headteacher. It is often useful for Governors to be part of the appointment process where there are internal applicants.
- Establish a timetable for the appointment process, bearing in mind notice periods and set resignation dates for teachers and Headteachers.
- Contact your School Improvement Adviser (in relation to Head and Deputy posts) the Diocesan Schools Commission/Diocesan Board of Education if appropriate.
- Check that the post is still required and the implications for the school budget.
- Draw up a Job Description, or review the existing one.
- Draw up a Person Specification, or review the existing one.
- Check that the application form will elicit the information needed.
- Advertise.
- Shortlist.
- Request references for shortlisted candidates.
- Carry out pre-employment checks.

- Arrange for short-listed candidates to visit the school, if applicable to the post.
- Where appropriate for teaching posts, arrange to observe candidates teach in their current schools.
- Invite to interview.
- Hold interviews and make selection decision.
- Make offer of employment to the selected candidate.

The **essential steps** in terms of pre-employment checks are summarised in the checklist at Appendix 4.

4.1 Reviewing the vacancy

Any vacancy or new post provides the opportunity to review the role and the way it fits in to the overall staffing structure of the school. When someone resigns, you should review the role to decide whether a 'like for like' replacement is necessary. If it is, the Job Description should be reviewed to ensure that it accurately reflects the key purpose and responsibilities of the role.

If you are considering a fixed-term or variable hours contract, please refer to the guidance document 'Fixed-Term and Variable Hours Contracts In Schools' [Maintained Schools click here](#) / [Academies click here](#). You may wish to discuss the implications of such an appointment with a member of the HR Consultancy for Schools team.

4.2 Job Description

As a minimum, the Job Description should include the following information:

- Job title.
- Title of post to which this post reports.
- Title and number of any posts directly supervised.
- The main purpose of the job.
- The main duties and responsibilities of the post.
- The individual's responsibility for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children and young people he/she is responsible for, or comes into contact with. (The extent of the responsibility or contact will vary depending on the specific role.)
- Date the Job Description was produced and a note showing who prepared/reviewed and approved it.

As most jobs tend to develop over time, it is advisable to include a section headed "Other Duties", which may include the following:

"The post holder may be required:

- to undertake such other duties and training and/or hours of work as may be reasonably required to be consistent with their general level of responsibility;
- to maintain personal and professional development to meet the changing demands of the job, participate in appropriate training activities and encourage and support staff in their development and training."

It is also advisable to include a statement that "the Governing Body reserves the right to vary the content of the Job Description, after consultation, to reflect changes to the job without changing the general character of the post or level of responsibility".

Job Descriptions for all teaching posts, including leadership roles, should be based on the Teachers Standards and the relevant sections of the School Teachers' Pay & Conditions Document currently in force.

Guidance is available from the HR Consultancy for Schools team in relation to the grading of new or changed posts.

Grading of Administrative Staff

[Maintained Schools click here](#) / [Academies click here](#)

Grading of Caretakers, Site Managers, Cleaners, etc.

[Maintained Schools click here](#) / [Academies click here](#)

Grading of Science Technicians and Design & Technology Technicians

[Maintained Schools click here](#) / [Academies click here](#)

Teaching Assistants Career Structure

[Maintained Schools click here](#) / [Academies click here](#)

Higher Level Teaching Assistants / Cover Supervisors Career Structure

[Maintained Schools click here](#) / [Academies click here](#)

4.3 Person Specification

The Person Specification describes the skills, experience and qualifications which the post holder must have in order to carry out the job effectively. The Person Specification must include:

- the qualifications and experience, and any other requirements needed to perform the role in relation to working with children and young people;
- the competences and qualities that the successful candidate should be able to demonstrate;
- a clear explanation of how these requirements will be tested and assessed during the selection process.

The Person Specification should distinguish between the essential requirements and any criteria which are viewed as desirable, that is, those skills, experience or qualifications which would enhance job performance. Desirable criteria can be used during the shortlisting stage if you need to distinguish between a number of candidates who meet the essential criteria.

On 21st November 2016 the Code of Practice on the **English Language Requirement for Public Sector Workers** (part 7 of the Immigration Act 2016) came into force.

This places a duty on public authorities (including all state-funded schools) to ensure that individuals in customer-facing roles have the necessary level of fluency in English as appropriate for their role. This duty covers both existing and potential post holders.

Fluency relates to the ability to speak with confidence and accuracy but **does not** relate to regional or international accents, dialects, speech impediments or the tone of the conversations.

The code refers to Teaching Assistants as an example of a customer facing role in schools but this would extend to all roles within schools which require regular interaction with pupils, parents and/or other members of the public as an integral part of their role. It also specifically refers to the Teachers Standards which already ensures that the fluency duty is being assessed and fulfilled for teachers:

- Teachers must "demonstrate an understanding of and take responsibility for promoting high standards of literacy, articulacy and the correct use of standard English, whatever the teacher's specialist subject".

You will not need to change your practices to meet this duty **provided that**:

- Person Specifications relate to the standard of fluency in English required, e.g. "the ability to support pupils/respond to parents through fluent and accurately spoken English";
- all individuals are subject to a face to face interview to assess their fluency in English, panel members are aware of the duty and the assessment is recorded on your interview assessment form;
- capability procedures are used to address situations where it is found that an employee does not meet the necessary standard.

The grading guidance documents referred to in Section 4.2 above all contain model Person Specifications which have been updated to include the sample clause above for customer-facing roles.

4.4 Application forms

A standard application form should be used so that you can obtain a common set of core data from all applicants, and should include a declaration by applicants that the information they have submitted on the form is true and accurate. CVs and letters of application must not be accepted because these will only contain the information the applicant wishes to present and may omit relevant details.

Standard application forms are available for schools and academies to use. They are available on ConnectEd: for the teaching form [Maintained Schools click here](#) / [Academies click here](#), for the support staff form [Maintained Schools click here](#) / [Academies click here](#).

Schools and academies may choose to use their own forms, or, in the case of Voluntary Aided schools, those available from the Diocesan Schools Commission or the Diocesan Board of Education, as appropriate.

5. Attracting candidates

5.1 Advertising

Advertisements should be clear and state briefly:

- the job title;
- grade and salary;
- for teaching posts, the salary range;
- the number of hours and/or full-time equivalent;
- job requirement, if not explicit in the job title;
- essential criteria for job applicants;
- a brief description of the school;
- nature of the contract (e.g. permanent, fixed-term: include duration);
- how to apply, i.e. clear instructions on what the applicant must do to apply for the job;
- closing date;
- a named person at the school with a telephone number and/or email/website address for applicants to contact if they need further information or clarification;
- details of the school's website address.

Occasionally a situation may arise where a vacancy needs to be filled at short notice, for example when a pupil with a Statement of Special Educational Needs joins the school mid-term. You may feel that you have existing temporary or part-time staff within school who could fulfil the role well. In such circumstances, you may advertise the vacancy within the school, rather than externally. Volunteers and helpers in school should normally be excluded from applying, and applications only accepted from substantive staff, except where the vacancy is for a short term period, i.e. to cover sickness/leave or in order to cover whilst a formal recruitment process is undertaken. In such circumstances necessary clearances are still required.

If you are unsure whether a post should be advertised externally, please contact the HR Consultancy for Schools team.

School Employee Services can arrange to place adverts for vacancies in school and academies on www.eteach.com for teaching posts and the West Midlands Portal at www.wmjobs.co.uk for support staff posts.

Adverts should be sent to:
WCCschooladverts@liberata.com

5.2 Information for candidates

It is important to ensure that potential applicants find the application process straightforward and positive. You can help by providing concise, clear and relevant information so that people can make an informed decision about whether to apply for your post or not.

The pack should include a copy of:

- the application form and explanatory notes about completing the form;
- clear instructions on electronic or online applications if appropriate;
- the Job Description, and Person Specification;
- information about the school – location, ethos, context, development plan, etc. and a link to the school's website;
- a summary of the recruitment process;
- the school's Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy Statement;
- a summary of the key terms and conditions relating to the post, including hours of work.

Any information made available to job applicants needs to be accurate and clear, and contribute towards encouraging suitable individuals to apply to work at your school, and deterring unsuitable people.

6. Application forms and shortlisting

At least **two** people should be involved in shortlisting. This should include the Headteacher/manager responsible for the post and other(s) taking part in the selection process. All candidates should be assessed equally against the criteria contained in the Person Specification without exception or variation. An example shortlisting form is included at Appendix 1.

All applications should be scrutinised to ensure that they are fully and properly completed, that the information provided is consistent and does not contain any discrepancies, and to identify any gaps in employment. Any such issues, should be noted so that they can be taken up as part of the consideration of whether to shortlist the applicant.

As well as reasons for obvious gaps in employment, the reasons for a history of repeated changes of employment without any clear career or salary progression, or a mid-career move from a permanent post to supply teaching or temporary work, also need to be explored and verified.

All shortlisted candidates **must** satisfy the essential requirements of the Person Specification. This can usually be established by looking at the application form. Desirable requirements can then be used as an additional filter to arrive at a manageable shortlist.

There is no minimum or maximum number for a shortlist but 5 or 6 candidates represents a manageable shortlist. However, if only one suitable person applies for the post they can be interviewed and if found suitable for the post they can be appointed. If your shortlist does not produce anyone suitable to appoint, you can re-advertise.

You must record and retain the reasons for rejecting and shortlisting candidates, along with the application forms and interview records. These details **must** be kept for at least 8 months so that if anyone challenges your shortlisting decision on the grounds of unlawful discrimination you will have a written record of your reasons. An individual has three months after being rejected for the post in which to lodge a complaint of unlawful discrimination.

7. References

More detailed guidance is contained in the HR document 'Employment References Guidance' [Maintained Schools click here](#) / [Academies click here](#).

Key points:

- Obtaining references for everyone seeking work in a school, including on a voluntary basis, is an essential part of a robust Safer Recruitment process.
- References should be obtained before the interview for all shortlisted candidates including internal ones.
- A request by an applicant to delay seeking references until it is known whether he or she is to be offered the post should only be agreed in exceptional circumstances.
- If an applicant has worked with children previously, whether on a paid or voluntary basis, at least one reference should be obtained from the person or organisation that employed the applicant to work with children, even if that is not the applicant's current or most recent employer. This may mean requesting an extra reference where the person is not currently employed with children.

- If a verbal reference is obtained it should be followed up in writing.
- Open references or testimonials should not be accepted as you cannot be certain that they come from the specified referee.
- References should be carefully scrutinised to check the referee has answered all the questions and followed up if there are any vague or ambiguous statements. What a reference doesn't say can be as important as what it does say.
- Any discrepancies between the information supplied by the candidate about him/herself and his/her experience and background and the contents of the reference should be followed up with the referee.
- **Any offer of employment should be conditional upon receipt of satisfactory references, which should be received before the start of employment.**

It is recommended that schools use the example a pro-forma template for referees to complete. See the guidance document 'Employment References Guidance' [Maintained Schools click here](#) / [Academies click here](#).

If you feel that the main reference is inadequate you should not employ the individual: please seek advice from the HR Consultancy for Schools team if you have concerns about the content of any references you receive.

Teachers subject to Capability Procedures

Since 1st September 2012 there has been a requirement under the School Staffing Regulations (2009) for maintained schools, if asked, to confirm whether or not a teacher has been subject to capability procedures within the preceding two years and, if so, to provide written details of the concerns which gave rise to this, the duration of the proceedings and the outcome.^[1] Schools are only required to do so, if asked by the school or academy to which the teacher has applied. This requirement is also included in funding agreements for Academies which converted after 1st April 2013.

Please see the model reference request form for teachers contained in the guidance document 'Employment References Guidance' [Maintained Schools click here](#) / [Academies click here](#).

8. Pre-employment checks

8.1 DBS checks

Enhanced DBS checks, in most cases with a Children's Barred List Check, are required for all posts in schools.

^[1] The School Staffing (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012

A summary of the requirements for DBS checks relating to different posts in schools and academies can be found by clicking [here](#) for Maintained Schools and [here](#) for Academies.

If you have specific questions about DBS checks please contact the WCC DBS team: DBS@worcestershire.gov.uk or (01905) 846529.

8.2 Disqualification by Association

Please note that all shortlisted candidates for posts in relevant settings should be asked to complete a Disqualification by Association (DBA) declaration form [Maintained Schools click here](#) / [Academies click here](#) and their DBS certificates checked against the list of relevant offences. Further guidance can be found [here](#) for Maintained Schools and [here](#) for Academies.

8.3 Right to work in the UK

Under Sections 15–25 of the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006 it is a criminal offence to employ a person who is not entitled to live and work in the United Kingdom. Headteachers/managers must carry out basic document checks before taking on a new employee, even if the individual has a local government continuous service date or has been employed by a Worcestershire school or academy. Where employees have restrictions on their entitlement to be in the UK, basic document checks will need to be repeated at least once every 12 months.

During any recruitment exercise all employers are **required to carry out checks on all prospective employees before they start working for you** to ensure that you avoid discrimination. You will need to **make a copy of any document(s)** submitted by a job applicant as acceptable evidence of his/her right to work in the UK. This applies to all schools, including academies.

Before or after the interview, as the Headteacher/recruiting manager you must:

- see **either** one original document from List 1 **or** alternatively an acceptable combination of two original documents from List 2 - see Checklist on ConnectEd [Maintained Schools click here](#) / [Academies click here](#);
- satisfy yourself that the document(s) is/are genuine and that the applicant is the rightful holder;
- ensure that photocopies are taken of the document(s) and, **for the successful applicant only**, that they are stored so that they are available inspection by UK Visas and Immigration if required.

To satisfy yourself that a document is genuine, you must carry out the following 'reasonable steps' as set out by the Home Office:

Check that:

- any photographs are consistent with the appearance of the applicant;
- any dates of birth listed are consistent with the appearance of the applicant and are consistent across the documents;

- the expiry dates have not been passed;
- any United Kingdom Government stamps or endorsements to see if the applicant is able to do the type of work you are offering;
- satisfy yourself that the documents have not been tampered with and that they belong to the holder.

If the applicant gives you two documents from List 2 which have different names, you should ask them for a further document to explain the reason for this. The further document could be a marriage certificate, divorce document, deed poll, adoption certificate or statutory declaration.

Copies must be taken of each document and attached to the individual's employment application form, in a format which cannot later be altered, e.g. a photocopy or scan. For each document, a copy should be taken of the front cover and any pages that give the applicant's personal details, including the photograph and their signature. Any page containing a UK Government stamp or endorsement allowing the applicant to do the type of work applied for must also be copied. If an applicant submits a Biometric Residence Permit, ensure that both sides are copied.

UK Visas and Immigration recommends that you **write on all copies the date on which the copy was made**. If you have taken copies of documents for all applicants, then you must ensure that you destroy those provided by the unsuccessful applicants.

For further information, see the Home Office guidance:

www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/304793/full-guide-illegal-working.pdf

9. Single Central Record

The school **must** keep a Single Central Record, referred to in the School Staffing (England) Regulations 2009 as "the register". The Single Central Record must cover all staff who work or volunteer at the school. Confirmation that these checks have been carried out along with the date the check was undertaken/ obtained must be logged on this record for all employees of the school.

The Single Central Record **must** cover the following people:

- all staff (including supply staff, and teacher trainees on salaried routes) who work at the school; and
- for independent schools (including academies and free schools) all members of the proprietor body.

The information that must be recorded in respect of staff members (including teacher trainees on salaried routes) is whether the following checks have been carried out or certificates obtained, and the date on which each check was completed/certificate obtained:

- an identity check;
- a Barred List check;
- an Enhanced DBS check/certificate;
- a prohibition from teaching check;
- a Section 128 check (for management positions for independent schools, including academies and free schools);
- further checks on people who have lived or worked outside the UK;
- a check of professional qualifications; and
- a check to establish the person's right to work in the United Kingdom;
- DBA check for relevant posts in relevant settings.

For supply staff, schools should also log (on the Single Central Record) whether written confirmation has been received that the employment business supplying the member of supply staff has carried out the mandatory checks, including a barred list check if required.

10. Interviewing and selection

10.1 Preparation for the interview

The purpose of the interview is to gain information from candidates on which to base sound and fair appointment decisions, i.e. assessing each candidate against the objective selection criteria.

The interview also allows you to check for gaps in the employment record and explore any discrepancies between information given by the candidate on the application form and the references.

In addition to assessing the candidates' ability to perform the duties of the post, the interview will also need to explore issues relating to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children including:

- motivation to work with children and young people;
- ability to form and maintain appropriate relationships and personal boundaries with children and young people;
- emotional resilience in working with challenging behaviours and attitudes to use of authority and maintaining discipline;
- any relevant issues arising from his/her application form or references.

Before the interview the panel members must ensure that:

- they are familiar with the Job Description and Person Specification;
- that they have read the application forms of shortlisted candidates, noting any areas of concern and/or particular questions to follow up on anything stated in the application form;
- they have any other documents which may be needed during the selection process, e.g. interview assessment sheet, summary score sheets, information on salary and other terms and conditions of employment if relevant;
- someone at school has clear responsibility for greeting candidates, ensuring that refreshments are available and that there is a suitable waiting area for candidates;
- an appropriate room has been set aside for the interviews, of sufficient size to be comfortable, suitably furnished and free from interruptions;
- the timetable for the day allows time for candidates to move between activities without feeling rushed (breaks for the panel should also be taken into account);
- candidates are given details of their programme for the day, including timings.

10.2 Interview questions

The interviewing panel will need to meet in advance to agree questions, the role of each interviewer and the sequence of the questions. **These questions must be asked of every candidate, but interviewers may, and indeed should, ask supplementary questions of any candidate if that is necessary to elicit clear information.**

Questions should be clear and use language appropriate to the job role.

Open questions, using what? who?, how?, why?, where?, when?, which? - for example, "how do you promote effective home – school liaison?" will require a fuller answer:

- Tell me about..., Please describe...
- What if...?
- What do you think are the qualities of a good School Administrator...?
- Give some examples which you think reflect these qualities...
- What attracted you to the role of Site Manager in a school...?
- Give examples of situations where you have had to...
- How have you managed a situation where...?

Specific questions must be asked to establish each candidate's awareness of and attitudes to safeguarding of children and young people. The following may be used, according to the role, e.g.:

- Please tell us about a time when you took action to protect a child.
- Describe the procedures that should be in place to protect children.
- Please tell us about a time when you had safeguarding concerns about a child.
- Please give an example of where you have had to deal with bullying behaviour.
- Can you tell us how you have managed poor pupil behaviour?
- What do you think makes a school safe and supportive?

Questioning styles

These include:

Open Questions

Open questions should form a significant part of the interview, e.g. "How did you deal with that behaviour issue?" Open questions are usually prefaced by 'what, where, how, who, why, when?' This questioning style encourages the candidate to talk and should help to elicit the information you are seeking.

Closed Questions

These encourage short responses, like yes/no answers or short factual responses. For example, "Have you worked as a cleaner before?" Such questions can be used to elicit and verify factual information, or as an opening question, following on with an open question (see below) such as "Can you tell us more about that?" or "What were your duties?"

Multiple Questions

Generally, you should avoid this questioning style, although it may be acceptable to ask multi-part questions, e.g. "Please tell us about a time when an intervention was not successful. What did you learn from the experience, and what would you do differently in the future?" In this example, which has three elements, you should either repeat the question after the candidate has responded to the first part, or, better still, ask the initial question, then follow up with a supplementary question.

Leading Questions

These questions should be avoided as the question usually suggests the anticipated answer, e.g. "You are reliable, aren't you?"

10.3 Selection tests

Selection tests may be used in conjunction with a formal selection interview but must not be used in isolation as a selection method. You will need to consider the following:

- Which essential selection criteria will be measured using the test?
- Are the criteria more appropriately assessed by other selection methods?
- What will the results of the tests add to the decision-making criteria?

Please note that candidates must be notified in advance that tests will be used as part of the selection process.

As a matter of courtesy, feedback and advice on test results should be given to all candidates who undergo them. Time for this activity should be built in to the recruitment process.

Presentations

Presentations should only be used as a selection tool where presentation skills are relevant to the role.

Where presentations are used as a selection method, ensure that all candidates are given clear instructions of what is required, sufficient time for preparation (normally this will be in advance) and access to appropriate equipment, e.g. laptop and multi-media projector.

Psychometric tests/personality profiling

Any psychometric tests used in the selection process must have been professionally validated, administered and interpreted by persons who have had appropriate formal training and all results must be held on fully confidential files.

In-tray exercises

In-tray exercises are a helpful way of assessing a number of criteria, for example, organisational skills, the ability to prioritise and decision-making skills. They are often used as part of the selection process for administrative or support posts.

Observing candidates teach

This is standard practice when appointing teaching staff and is recommended safer recruitment practice. Teachers can be observed in their current school (if practicable) or in the recruiting school.

10.4 Making an offer

Schools must adhere to the requirements from pages 27 and 28 of the statutory guidance document 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (September 2016) www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/550511/Keeping_children_safe_in_education.pdf

In addition, please refer to the detailed guidance in Section 8 above.

Any offer of appointment made to a successful candidate, including one who has lived or worked abroad, must be conditional on satisfactory completion of the following pre-employment checks, i.e **before** the individual starts work:

- DBS
- two satisfactory references
- medical fitness.

Schools and academies have a duty to ensure that a relevant activity is only carried out by a person if he/she has the health and physical capacity to carry out that activity.

Employers can make an offer of employment conditional on obtaining satisfactory answers to medical enquiries without being in breach of the provisions in the Equality Act 2010 (see Section 3 above).

10.5 Medical clearance process

The initial MRF1 form [Maintained Schools click here](#) / [Academies click here](#) is issued and checked by the school. If nothing is declared on this form, the applicant is cleared to start work. If there is a declaration, then you must inform School Employee Services who will issue the more detailed MRF2 form to the applicant to complete and for Occupational Health to review. **You should not allow the applicant to start work until SES confirm to you that medical clearance has been received from Occupational Health.**

10.6 Feedback to unsuccessful candidates

Be prepared to give the unsuccessful candidates feedback if they ask for it: You may wish to offer feedback as a matter of course, allowing candidates to opt out. Feedback should relate to the requirements of the job and be based on the Person Specification.

Many people value feedback as it can help them address any aspects of their interview performance in readiness for future interviews. Make sure that feedback relates specifically to the job and the person, and try to be specific about areas of weakness or where development is needed.

10.7 Record-keeping

Records must be kept of applicants, shortlists and appointed candidates to enable a response to be made to any claims of unlawful discrimination. The selection panel must be able to demonstrate why candidates were or were not shortlisted or appointed by reference to the Job Description/Person Specification, notes taken during the selection process and interview record forms (see model at Appendix 2). All records should be kept for 8 months.

11. Employment documentation

11.1 Offer letters and contracts of employment

Once you have made a verbal offer to the successful candidate you may confirm the offer in writing. The letter should reiterate that the offer of appointment is subject to satisfactory completion of the pre-employment checks described in Section 9 above. A suggested format is available at Appendix 3.

School Employee Services (or your provider) will process the appointment and issue the appropriate contract of employment. You will need to provide the following information:

- start date
- hours of work
- pay scale
- end date (if the contract is for a fixed-term)
- reason for fixed-term/temporary contract
- a copy of the original application form
- DBS application form
- Probation period (support staff).

Please use the pro-forma Notification of Appointment (Teachers/Support as appropriate): Teaching Form [Maintained Schools click here](#) / [Academies click here](#)
Support Staff Form [Maintained Schools click here](#) / [Academies click here](#).

Note: A verbal offer is still an offer of employment and needs to be subject to the pre-employment checks detailed in Section 8.

12. Induction

A well-planned and thorough induction programme is a crucial aspect of any recruitment and selection process, and should be treated as part of the process. Effective induction should reinforce the messages given to a new employee before and during the selection process and provide him or her with a positive start to working as part of your school team. In addition to highlighting procedures, policies and factual information, induction discussions provide a good opportunity to confirm the conduct expected of staff within the school, share and promote the school ethos and, vision and values. The employee should be encouraged to raise any concerns he/she has about the new role, including highlighting training and developments needs (which may have been covered at interview).

The precise elements may vary, depending on the role and whether the post holder has worked in a school before. Nevertheless, there are a number of key areas which need to be covered by the Headteacher (or Governors in the case of a new Headteacher) or relevant manager:

- policies and procedures in relation to safeguarding, child protection, anti-bullying, anti-racism, physical intervention/restraint, intimate care, internet/social media safety and any other local safeguarding procedures;

- issue the employee with the leaflet on Safe Working Practice [Maintained Schools click here](#) / [Academies click here](#) and explain how any concerns in relation to safeguarding should be raised, and with whom (ensure the employee knows who the Designated Person in school is). Ensure that he/she is included in safeguarding training appropriate to his/her role;
- copies of (or information on how to access) key school policy documents, e.g. SEND; Behaviour Policy;
- information on key employment policies and procedures such as disciplinary, grievance, capability/performance and sickness absence (e.g. reporting sickness absence).

The school staff handbook is a useful way of capturing this information. Advice is available from the HR Consultancy for Schools team if you wish to update or develop a new staff handbook.

Support staff joining maintained schools and academies in Worcestershire are subject to a 6 month probation period (except staff joining from another Worcestershire maintained school or Worcestershire County Council). The Probation Policy & Procedure is available on ConnectEd [Maintained Schools click here](#) / [Academies click here](#)

12.1 NQT induction

Guidance is available on ConnectEd [Maintained Schools click here](#) / [Academies click here](#).

13. Volunteers

DBS checks should be carried out on all volunteers in schools and academies, and satisfactory references must be obtained before an individual starts voluntary work. An example reference request form for volunteers is included in the HR document 'Employment References Guidance' [Maintained Schools click here](#) / [Academies click here](#).

14. Appointing a new Headteacher

All of the above guidance is good practice in all recruitment situations, including appointing a new Headteacher. However, it is worth bearing in mind some important aspects for Headteacher recruitment, including:

- An acting Headteacher must be appointed if the outgoing Head leaves before a substantive replacement is in post.
- However, Governing Bodies must recruit a new Headteacher as soon as is reasonably practicable so as not to prolong acting arrangements longer than is absolutely necessary.
- Serving Headteachers are subject to a longer notice period than other teachers (3 months in Autumn and Spring; 4 months in the Summer).

- It is a requirement that Governors are involved in the Headteacher selection process and the appointment decision, made by a committee of the Governing Body, must be ratified by the full Governing Body.
- The National Professional Qualification for Headteachers is no longer mandatory; however, it remains a worthwhile qualification and Governing Bodies may choose to make it an essential requirement.
- LA maintained schools must notify the LA when the Headteacher resigns. The LA has a right to attend headship interviews in an advisory capacity. Governing Bodies of LA maintained schools are also required to notify the LA of candidates shortlisted for interview.
- It is good practice for schools of a religious character to invite the relevant Diocese/ Archdiocese to provide advice during the appointments process.

The School Staffing (England) Regulations 2009 relaxed the requirement for a national advert, stating that **"The Governing Body must advertise any such vacancy or post (Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher) in such a manner as it considers appropriate unless it has good reason not to"**. (Note: the Staffing Regulations do not apply to academies.)

Any decision not to advertise *'should only be taken if the Governing Body can demonstrate there is good reason not to and that it does not leave them open to challenge. All decisions should be documented fully, as the Governing Body will need to demonstrate that it has acted reasonably if challenged'*. Governing Bodies should discuss this with the school's School Improvement Adviser, a Human Resources Adviser and, for Church schools, the relevant Diocesan education adviser.

Your SIA will be available to support the recruitment and selection of Headteachers and Deputy Headteacher. For maintained schools, this includes attendance at Headteacher interviews in an advisory capacity (also available to academies at an additional charge).

The HR Consultancy for Schools Team can give advice on leadership team structures and pay.

We recommend that you read the 'Guide to Recruiting and Selecting a New Headteacher' produced by the DfE and the National Governance Association (NGA) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/recruiting-a-headteacher>.

In addition, the NGA website contains a number of useful documents relating to the leadership recruitment process, including sample job descriptions and person specifications <https://www.nga.org.uk/Guidance/Finance-and-Staffing/Executive-and-Senior-leadership/Headteacher-Recruitment-Toolkit.aspx>.

(You will need to be a member of the NGA to access these resources.)

Example Offer Letter

Private & Confidential

Dear **NAME**

Appointment of POST

Following your recent interview, I am pleased to confirm the offer of the above post, subject to satisfactory references and other relevant pre-employment checks including a Disclosure and Barring Service check and medical clearance.

The offer is made on the following terms and conditions:

Anticipated start date:	START DATE
School:	WORK BASE
Type of contract:	PERMANENT, TEMPORARY FOR HOW LONG OR FIXED-TERM END DATE (if temporary/fixed-term include reason)
Grade:	GRADE
Starting salary:	£SALARY
Hours per week:	HOURS PER WEEK
Weeks per year:	WEEKS PER YEAR

Further details will be contained in the Contract of Employment which will be sent to you shortly.

May I take this opportunity to congratulate you on your appointment and welcome you to our school. If you have any queries in relation to the contents of this letter, please contact me on the above telephone number.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher.

Appointment Checklist

Action	Date completed	Requirement to keep copies of document(s)?	Notes
References for shortlisted candidates received and scrutinised		Yes	
DBA declaration form given to shortlisted candidates if relevant		Yes	
MRF1 given to preferred candidate			
ID check		Yes	
Enhanced DBS check			No requirement to keep a copy but a copy may be kept by the school for a maximum of 6 months
Barred list check			
Right to work in the UK verified		Yes	
Further checks if preferred candidate has lived or worked outside the UK		Yes	
Qualifications checked		Yes	
QTS		Yes	Teachers
S128 direction check			For management posts in independent schools, including academies and free schools
Prohibition order check			Teachers