SUTTON VALENCE SCHOOL
SINCE 1576

Recruitment Policy

(Prep School and Senior School)

Author: Mrs Deborah van Leeuwen
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This Policy applies to Sutton Valence School (including as the context requires, the Nursery, the Prep School and Senior School).

General

Sutton Valence School ("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. Therefore, the School aims to recruit staff that understand this commitment.

The School aims to ensure that no job applicant is treated unfairly by reason of a protected characteristic as defined within the Equality Act 2010.

All queries on the School's application form and recruitment process must be directed to the Assistant Bursar.

Scope of this Policy

The Recruitment Policy, which also includes selection and Disclosures Policy and Procedure herewith refers and applies to staff directly recruited and employed by the School. In the Education (Independent Schools Standards) (England) Regulations 2014, staff are defined as:

Any person working at the School whether under a contract of employment, under a contract for services or otherwise than under a contract, but does not include supply staff or a volunteer.

In the case of agency or contract workers, the School shall obtain written confirmation from the agency or company that it has carried out the appropriate checks. The School conducts identity checks on agency and contract workers on arrival in School and, in the case of agency workers which includes supply staff, the School must be provided with a copy of the DBS check for such staff.

Any staff who TUPE transfer into the School's staff, will be asked to undertake the statutory requirements with regard to safer recruitment checks.

Application Form

The School will only accept applications from candidates completing the relevant application form in full. CVs will not be accepted in substitution for completed application forms.

The School will make candidates aware that all posts in the School involve some degree of responsibility for safeguarding children, although the extent of that responsibility will vary according to the nature of the post. Candidates for employed posts will receive a job description.

As the position for which candidates are applying involves substantial opportunity for access to children, it is important that applicants provide the School with legally accurate answers.

The School's applications forms state '*It is an offence to apply for this post if you are barred from engaging in regulated activity relevant to children'*. The application form also informs applicants that as part of the School's commitment to Keeping Children Safe in Education, an online search will be carried out on of shortlisted candidates.

This online search consists of a Google search of the applicant's name, as well as a check of social media channels to include Instagram, X (Twitter), Facebook and TikTok. Applicants are asked to provide the details of their names/handles for any of these social media platforms for which they have an account.

Applicants are informed that any adverse findings that School believes makes them unsuitable to work with children and/or will bring the School into disrepute will be explored with them at interview or, in certain cases, the School will withdraw their application from the recruitment process.

Any information found on the applicant's social media platforms (namely but not limited to – age, ethnicity, sexual orientation and religion) will not be used to discriminate against them.

Upfront disclosure of a criminal record may not debar a candidate from appointment as the School shall consider the nature of the offence, how long ago, at what age it was committed and any other relevant factors. Information should be submitted in confidence enclosing details in a separate sealed envelope which will be seen by the Headmaster or Bursar as appropriate. If candidates would like to discuss this beforehand, they are asked to telephone in confidence the Headmaster, Bursar or Assistant Bursar as appropriate for advice.

Any unspent convictions, cautions, reprimands or warnings must be disclosed to the School. However, amendments to the Exceptions Order 1975 (2013) provide that certain spent convictions and cautions are 'protected' and are not subject to disclosure to employers, and cannot be taken into account. Guidance and criteria on the filtering of these cautions and convictions can be found at the Disclosure and Barring Service website.

The successful applicant will be required to complete a disclosure form from the Disclosure and Barring Service ("DBS") for the position. Additionally, successful applicants should be aware that they are required to notify the School immediately if they are any reasons why they should not be working with children.

The statutory guidance "Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 (July 2018)" applies to those providing early years childcare or later years' childcare, including before school and after school clubs, to children who have not attained the age of 8 and to those who are directly concerned in the management of that childcare.

The School takes its responsibility to safeguard children very seriously and any staff member and/or successful candidate who is aware of anything that may affect their suitability to work with children must notify the Headmaster or Bursar immediately. This will include notification of any convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands or warnings they may receive.

Staff and/or successful candidates who are disqualified from childcare or registration, may apply to Ofsted for a waiver of disqualification. Such individuals may not be employed in the areas from which

they are disqualified, or involved in the management of those settings, unless and until such waiver is confirmed. Please speak to the Headmaster or Bursar for more details.

Failure to declare any convictions (that are not subject to DBS filtering) may disqualify a candidate for appointment or result in summary dismissal if the discrepancy comes to light subsequently.

The School has a legal duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. This is known as the Prevent duty. Schools are required to assess the risk of children being drawn into terrorism, including support for extremist ideas that are part of terrorist ideology. Accordingly, all references contain the question:

Are you completely satisfied that the candidate is not involved in "extremism" being 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? Extremism also includes calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas. If not, please give specific reasons for your concerns.

If the candidate is currently working with children, on either a paid or voluntary basis, the School will ask their current employer about disciplinary offences, including disciplinary offences relating to children or young persons (whether the disciplinary sanction is current or time expired), and whether the candidate has been the subject of any child protection allegations or concerns and if so the outcome of any enquiry or disciplinary procedure.

If the candidate is not currently working with children but has done so in the past, the School will ask the previous employer about those issues. Where neither the current nor previous employment has involved working with children, the School will still ask the current employer about the candidate's suitability to work with children. Where the candidate has no previous employment history, the School may request character references which may include references from the candidate's school or university.

All candidates should be aware that provision of false information is an offence and could result in the application being rejected or summary dismissal by the School if they have been appointed, and a possible referral to the police and/or DBS.

Invitation to Interview

The School will short list applicants according to the relevance and applicability of their professional attributes and personal qualities to the role. Short-listed applicants will then be invited to attend a formal interview at which his/her relevant skills and experience will be discussed in more detail.

All formal interviews will include an interview with at least one person who has undertaken safer recruitment training. The interview will be conducted in person and the areas which it will explore will include suitability to work with children.

The School requests that all candidates invited to interview also bring with them:

1. A current driving licence including a photograph, a passport and a birth certificate;
2. A utility bill or financial statement issued within the last three months showing the candidate's current name and address;
3. Where appropriate any documentation evidencing a change of name;
4. Proof of entitlement to work and reside in the UK.

Please note that originals of the above are necessary. Photocopies or certified copies are not sufficient.

Candidates with a disability who are invited to interview should inform the School of any necessary reasonable adjustments or arrangements to assist them in attending the interview.

Conditional Offer of Appointment: Pre-Appointment Checks

Any offer to a successful candidate will be conditional upon:

1. Receipt of at least two satisfactory references (if these have not already been received);
2. Verification of identity and qualifications including, where appropriate, evidence of the right to work in the UK;
3. A satisfactory enhanced DBS check and if appropriate, a check of the Barred List maintained by the DBS;
4. For a candidate to be employed as a teacher, a check that the candidate is not subject to a prohibition order issued by the Secretary of State. Teaching work is defined in The Teachers' Disciplinary (England) Regulations 2012 to encompass:

    - Planning and preparing lessons and courses for pupils;
    - Delivering and preparing lessons to pupils;
    - Assessing the development, progress and attainment of pupils;
    - Reporting on the development, progress and attainment of pupils.

5. Verification of professional qualifications, where appropriate;
6. Verification of successful completion of statutory induction period (for teaching posts - applies to those who obtained QTS after 7 May 1999);
7. Where the successful candidate has worked or been resident overseas such checks and confirmations as the School may consider appropriate so that any relevant events that occurred outside the UK can be considered;
8. Satisfactory medical fitness;
9. For all relevant posts confirmation from you at interview that you are not disqualified from providing childcare as set out in the statutory guidance “Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 (July 2018)”;
10. Where the successful candidate will be taking part in the management of the School, a check will be carried out under section 128 of the Independent Educational Provision in England (Prohibition on Participation in Management) Regulations 2014. This applies to all Governors, Senior Management Team and teaching Heads of Department;
11. No adverse finding following social media checks.

It is the School's practice that a successful candidate must complete a pre-employment health questionnaire, a signed declaration of fitness and may be required to undergo a medical carried out by the School’s Medical Advisor. The information provided will then be held by the School in strictest confidence.

The School is aware of its duties under the Equality Act 2010. No job offer will be withdrawn without first consulting with the applicant, considering medical evidence and considering reasonable adjustments.

References

The School will seek the references referred to in the section above for shortlisted candidates and may approach previous employers for information to verify particular experience or qualifications, before

interview. If the candidate does not wish the School to take up references in advance of the interview, they should notify the School at the time of applying.

The School will ask all referees if the candidate is suitable to work with children.

The School will compare any information provided by the referee with that provided by the candidate on the Application Form. Any inconsistencies will be discussed with the candidate.

Criminal Records Policy

The School will refer to the Department for Education ("DfE") document, 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' and any amended version in carrying out the necessary required DBS checks.

The School complies with the provisions of the DBS Code of Practice.

There are limited circumstances where the School will accept a check from another educational institution which are as follows:

Where the new member of staff ("M") has worked in:

(a) A school or a maintained school in England in a position which brought M regularly into contact with children or young persons;

(b) A maintained school in England in a position to which M was appointed on or after May 2006 and which did not bring M regularly into contact with children or young persons; or

(c) An institution within the further education sector in England or in a 16 to 19 Academy in a position which involved the provision of education or which brought M regularly into contact with children or young persons, during a period which ended not more than three months before M's appointment.

In these circumstances the School may apply for a disclosure but is not required to do so. A new, separate barred list check will be obtained.

DBS Update Service

Where an applicant subscribes to the DBS Update Service the applicant must give consent to the School to check there have not been any changes since the issue of a disclosure certificate. A barred list check will still be required.

If disclosure is delayed

A short period of work is allowed under controlled conditions, at the Headmaster's discretion. However, if an enhanced disclosure is delayed, the Headmaster may allow the member of staff to commence work:

- Without confirming the appointment;
- After a satisfactory check of the barred list if the person will be working in regulated activity and all other relevant checks (including any appropriate prohibition checks) having been completed satisfactorily;
- Provided that the DBS application has been made in advance;
- With appropriate safeguards taken (for example, loose supervision) and a risk assessment drawn up;
- Safeguards reviewed at least every two weeks by the Headmaster/Bursar and member of staff;

- The person in question is informed what these safeguards are; and
- It is recommended, but not a requirement that a note is added to the single central register and evidence kept of the measures put in place.

Retention and Security of Records

The School will comply with its obligations regarding the retention and security of records in accordance with the DBS Code of Practice and its obligations under its Data Protection Policy.

Appendix

Policy on the Recruitment of Ex-Offenders

The School will not unfairly discriminate against any candidate for employment on the basis of conviction or other details revealed. The School makes appointment decisions on the basis of merit and ability. If an individual has a criminal record this will not automatically bar them from employment within the School. Instead, each case will be decided on its merits in accordance with the objective assessment criteria set out below.

All candidates should be aware that provision of false information is an offence and could result in the application being rejected or summary dismissal if they have been appointed, and a possible referral to the police and/or DBS.

Under the relevant legislation, it is unlawful for the School to employ anyone who is included on the lists maintained by the DBS of individuals who are considered unsuitable to work with children. In addition, it will also be unlawful for the School to employ anyone who is the subject of a disqualifying order made on being convicted or charged with the following offences against children: murder, manslaughter, rape, other serious sexual offences, grievous bodily harm or other serious acts of violence. It is also unlawful for the School to knowingly employ someone who works in the relevant settings and is disqualified from providing childcare under the statutory guidance "Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 (July 2018)".

It is a criminal offence for any person who is disqualified from working with children to attempt to apply for a position within the School. The School will report the matter to the Police and/or the DBS if:

- the School receives an application from a disqualified person;
- is provided with false information in, or in support of an applicant's application; or the School has serious concerns about an applicant's suitability to work with children.

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 School will consider the following factors before reaching a recruitment decision:

- whether the conviction or other matter revealed is relevant to the position in question;
- the seriousness of any offence or other matter revealed;
- the length of time since the offence or other matter occurred;
- whether the applicant has a pattern of offending behaviour or other relevant matters;
- whether the applicant's circumstances have changed since the offending behaviour or other relevant matters;
- in the case of disqualification from providing childcare, whether the applicant has or is able to obtain an Ofsted waiver from disqualification; and
- the circumstances surrounding the offence and the explanation(s) offered by the convicted person.

If the post involves regular contact with children, it is the School's normal policy to consider it a high risk to employ anyone who has been convicted at any time of any the following offences: murder, manslaughter, rape, other serious sexual offences, grievous bodily harm or other serious acts of violence, serious class A drug related offences, robbery, burglary, theft, deception or fraud.

If the post involves access to money or budget responsibility, it is the School's normal policy to consider it a high risk to employ anyone who has been convicted at any time of robbery, burglary, theft, deception or fraud.

If the post involves some driving responsibilities, it is the School's normal policy to consider it a high risk to employ anyone who has been convicted of drink driving.

References:

ISI Handbook for the Inspection of Schools – Commentary on Regulatory Requirements. *DfE Statutory Guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education', September 2024*