

Staff Recruitment Policy

This policy (and the procedure outlined within) applies across all partner schools in the Stephen Sutton Multi-Academy Trust (SSMAT). It is available on the SSMAT website and is accessible from our schools' websites.

POLICY APPROVAL and REVIEW

Review date: **Mar '19**

Approval needed by: **Trust Board**

Adopted: **June '17**

Next review date: **July '22**



1. Introduction / Overview

1.1 Stephen Sutton Multi-Academy Trust (SSMAT) is committed to recruiting the best possible team of staff across the Trust, who work hard to make a positive difference to students' lives and provide support for each other. Furthermore, SSMAT recognises its duty to ensure that there are rigorous, fair processes in place to minimise the risk of appointing persons who could pose a risk of harm to young people.

1.2 The policy applies to the recruitment of all school-based staff and the Core Team, including those on temporary and fixed-term contracts, staff appointed on a 'casual' basis, volunteers, governors and Trust directors.

2. Aims

2.1 The aims of this policy are to ensure that:

- the most suitable people are appointed, on merit, for any position that becomes available;
- all applications are treated equitably, through consistently applied procedures and in relation to clear and transparent criteria;
- no applicant is treated less favourably on any prohibited grounds, including race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or religious belief, gender or sexual orientation, marital or civil partnership, gender reassignment status, disability or age;
- the Trust meets its commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people by carrying out all necessary pre-employment checks and ensuring compliance with all relevant recommendations and guidance included in the recommendations of the Department for Education (DfE) in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' ('13), 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' ('14) and the code of practice published by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

3. Responsibilities

3.1 SSMAT is the legal employer of all staff who work in the Trust's partner school and those who are employed as the Trust's Core Team. The responsibilities with regard to the recruitment of staff are outlined in the Trust's Scheme of Delegation.



- 3.2 The Trust Board is responsible for the recruitment of the Executive Director and, assisted by the Executive Director, the recruitment of the Core Team. The Board will also be involved in the appointment of Headteachers of partner schools and will approve any such appointments. The Executive Director is also involved in the appointment of staff to senior leader positions in partner schools.
- 3.3 A school's Local Governing Body (LGB), assisted by the Headteacher, is responsible for all other school-based appointments. LGBs are also responsible for ensuring that their schools' staffing arrangements support their ongoing improvement and the broader strategy of the Trust. Headteachers ensure that staff and governors involved in recruitment and selection have the necessary skills and knowledge to do so effectively and that policy and procedures are followed.
- 3.4 The Executive Director, Trust Business Manager and the Trusts's HR provider are collectively responsible for providing sound advice to Headteachers and other senior staff on all aspects of recruitment, including safer recruitment practice.

4. Recruitment procedure

- 4.1 When a post becomes vacant, Headteachers consider the school's staffing structure, financial position and potential future changes before advertising the vacancy. Furthermore, redeployment opportunities across the Trust are considered, as appropriate to the circumstances.
- 4.2 Prior to advertising a vacancy, the job description and person specification for the job are compiled or reviewed. The job description and person specification make explicit reference to the postholder's responsibilities for safeguarding young people and the skills and attitudes required.
- 4.3 Vacancies are advertised in publications, and on websites, that are appropriate for the role.
- 4.4 Advertisements include the following statement:
- (partner school) and Stephen Sutton Multi-Academy Trust are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Offers of employment are subject to Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks and other relevant employment checks.*
- 4.5 All applicants receive (or are able to access) a job description and person specification for the role advertised and are required to complete a standard SSMAT application form (Appendix 1). The information provided also includes the salary and working hours / weeks, together with details of the recruitment and selection process (deadline for receipt of applications, interview dates etc., as appropriate).



4.6 Curriculum Vitae (CVs) are not acceptable as replacements for a completed application form. Where application forms are incomplete, applicants may be contacted to request the missing information.

4.7 At least two people (of appropriate seniority) are involved in the shortlisting process. Applications are assessed (scored) against the criteria identified in the person specification on the standard shortlisting matrix form (Appendix 3). Where, for a shortlisted applicant, there are any employment gaps, or other issues that need more clarification, these are annotated on the application form, as a reminder to follow these up at the selection stage.

4.8 Invitations to interview should:

- provide applicants with clear, unambiguous details of arrangements, including date and time, selection activities, panel members and any specific preparatory work that applicants are asked to undertake (e.g. preparing a demonstration lesson or a presentation);
- remind applicants that the interview process will assess their suitability to work with children;
- ask applicants to bring with them: proof of qualifications (some discretion can be applied, depending on the age and role of the applicant – see below); proof of right to work (as appropriate), proof of identity (current driving licence, passport or full birth certificate); documentation confirming their National Insurance number (e.g. P45 or P60); and proof of address (two utilities bills or statements, within the past three months, showing both name and address).

4.9 Where qualifications are listed in the person specification as essential to the particular role (e.g. QTS, for a teaching position), where appointed, a copy of candidates' original certificates is taken, placed in their personal file and attached to the Single Central Record (SCR).

4.10 Where a job requires a professional registration with a regulatory body (as indicated in the person specification), an applicant is asked to produce evidence that they meet this requirement. Again, if appointed, a copy of the evidence is placed in the colleague's personal file and attached to the SCR. Prior to appointment, the school's Business / Office Manager (or other person with delegated authority) checks registration with the DFE / other agency employer database. This is done in order to ensure that the applicant:

- is not prohibited from the profession;
- has not previously failed induction, or probation;



- is not subject to any sanctions (e.g., as imposed by the GTC, prior to its abolition in 2012).

5. References

- 5.1 References are requested prior to interview and are available to the chair of the interview panel on the day of the interview. References must be obtained for both external and internal applicants. References are requested using the SSMAT Reference Request Form. All offers of employment are subject to two satisfactory references. Open references, or references provided by the candidate, are not accepted.
- 5.2 One of the referees must be the applicant's current, or most recent employer. Furthermore, this referee must hold a post with an appropriately high level of seniority, such that they would hold all relevant HR-related information (including information relating to safeguarding) about the applicant. [In schools, this is the Headteacher]. Where such a referee is not listed on the application form, the school must contact the applicant to seek the necessary details of the more appropriate referee. If the reference related to the current, or most recent, period of employment does not involve working with children, then the second referee (where possible) should be from the employer with whom the applicant has worked with children. [Where an applicant has never worked with children and is appointed to a position in an SSMAT partner school, then their work with children is monitored more closely during the induction stage of their employment]. Referees should not be a relative, or someone who is known to the applicant solely as a friend.
- 5.3 Referees are provided with a copy of the job description and job specification for the relevant job and are asked whether, or not, they believe that the applicant is suitable for the job for which they have applied and whether, or not, they have any reason to believe that the applicant is unsuitable to work with children or young people. Where the referee is a current, or previous, employer, they will also be asked to provide details of:
- the applicant's dates of employment, salary, job title/duties and reason for leaving;
 - the referee's relationship to the applicant and for how long they have known them in that capacity;
 - the applicant's performance, conduct and relevant personal qualities;
 - any formal disciplinary procedures, in which a sanction (e.g. written warning) is current;



- any disciplinary procedures that the applicant has been subject to that involve the safety / welfare of children and young people, including those where the sanction has expired;
- any formal capability procedures put in place within the past two years;
- any substantiated allegations, or concerns, raised about the applicant, that relate to the safety / welfare of children or young people or their behaviour towards children or young people.

5.4 References should be kept confidential and should only be seen by the selection panel and the person delegated to obtain the references. A comparison is undertaken of the factual information in references compared with the information provided on the completed application form. Any discrepancies or inconsistencies are assessed for importance and taken up with the applicant, as appropriate, prior to any appointment being made.

6. Selection procedure

- 6.1 For most school-based appointments, the selection process will be designed by the Headteacher (or other nominated senior leader). For senior leadership appointments, it is appropriate to involve the Executive Director and Local Governing Body in determining the format.
- 6.2 Applicants should be given the opportunity to find out more about the school, and the job, prior to the interview stage. This can be done through extending an offer of a visit (tour / meeting) prior to the interview day(s) or, on the day, through a briefing and school tour.
- 6.3 Where the process will involve a number of selection activities, there should be a clear plan prior to the start of the process that indicates: how criteria will be assessed; how scores will be applied to each aspect of the process; and how scores will be weighted (as appropriate) and aggregated to determine the selection decision.
- 6.4 The selection process may involve several activities but, in all cases, will involve a face-to-face interview. Prior to the interview, a list of questions will be determined and these will be asked of all candidates involved at this stage. Despite this standardisation of approach, there is flexibility to ask supplementary questions and, in particular, to check through and probe in relation to the contents of applicants' application forms.
- 6.5 Interview panels should comprise at least two panel members, of appropriate seniority / role, Where possible, panels comprise both male and female panel members, in order to help to ensure a fair interview process.



- 6.6 Prior to the interviews, the panel members determine the structure of the interview – who takes which role and asks which questions and how the time available is to be managed. For each individual candidate, panel members record responses and score against criteria on a form that has been designed specifically for the purpose.
- 6.7 Interviews, and other aspects of the selection process, should assess applicants’ merits in relation to the requirements in the job description and, in particular, the person specification. In interviews, no questions must be asked that could discriminate (directly, or indirectly) on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, religious or political belief or affiliation, trade union membership, age, gender, gender reassignment, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, socio-economic background or other inappropriate distinction.
- 6.8 In relation to the Trust’s (and the school’s) safeguarding duty, interviews, and other aspects of the selection process, should be designed to enable an assessment to be made of candidates’ suitability to work with children and young people. In particular, the following should be examined:
- attitudes towards children (through probing applicants’ values, ethics and beliefs);
 - motivation to work with children (through examining, with them, their career profile and the reasons for the choices made);
 - ability to form appropriate relationships and respect professional boundaries (through focused questions and observed behaviours, especially their contact with children);
 - emotional resilience when faced with challenging behaviour (asking them to draw on past experience – how they coped with difficult situations);
 - understanding of the safeguarding agenda and child protection policies and procedures (with a level of detail and confidence that is proportionate to the nature and degree of seniority of the post);
 - gaps in employment history and repeated changes of career, or employer (or concerns, or discrepancies, arising from comparison of the information provided by referees with what is detailed on the application form);
 - any criminal convictions, reprimands and/or warnings that have been declared (the background / reasons for these); and
 - (where, for whatever reason, references have not been provided prior to the interview) any information that the applicant may wish to declare / discuss anything that might come to light on receipt of references.



6.9 Score sheets and notes taken, together with any other documentation used in the assessment process, are part of the formal record of the decision-making process in relation to the appointment in question. These records should be stored securely by the school for a period of six months, after which they should be destroyed. Confidentiality is maintained in relation to the information obtained during the process.

7. Offer of appointment

7.1 Offers of employment can only be made subject to satisfactory completion of all relevant pre-employment checks, unless the full range of checks have been undertaken by the time the offer is made. Applicants must be informed of this, explicitly, when offered a position, either verbally or in writing.

7.2 Offers of employment are binding, subject to:

- receipt of two satisfactory references;
- verification of identity;
- right to work in the UK (see the UK Border agency website for more detail);
- Enhanced DBS check (where the colleague will undertake a 'regulated' activity);
- medical clearance, completed through the Trust's Occupational Health Service provider;
- (for qualified teaching posts) successful completion of the statutory induction year, for a Newly Qualified Teacher (NQT), or verification of completion of the statutory induction period, where required, for experienced teachers. [Evidence of Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) is required, in the form of a certificate];
- viewing the original certificates, showing academic and professional / vocational qualifications, and taking copies for retention;
- (where a colleague is required to drive on school business) evidence of a valid driving licence and insurance for business-related journeys; and
- evidence of professional membership, or registration, as appropriate.



8. Pre-employment checks

8.1 The school, in conjunction with the Trust Business Manager, must undertake specific pre-employment checks on every person that they intend to engage or employ.

8.2 The Trust Business Manager / Core Team complete the following pre-employment checks, on request from, and on behalf of, the school:

- teacher prohibition check;
- barred list check; and
- health questionnaire.

8.3 The school completes the following pre-employment checks:

- childcare disqualification;
- evidence of relevant qualifications;
- proof of right to work in the UK; and
- DBS certificate.

8.4 All efforts must be made to complete all pre-employment checks prior to the commencement of employment (especially in relation to DBS checks and references). Appointments should generally be delayed until these checks have been done, and satisfactory clearance has been established. In some circumstances, it may be possible to make arrangements for supervision to be put in place for a temporary period, whilst waiting on this information. Where this is being considered, the Executive Director should be consulted.

8.5 In the event that a DBS check indicates a record that is not clear, the individual concerned should be given the opportunity to explain the circumstances. A balanced decision on whether, or not to appoint should be based on:

- whether, or not, they are barred from appointment;
- the extent to which the conviction is relevant to the position;
- the circumstances surrounding the offence and the explanation provided by the applicant;
- the seriousness of the offence;



- the length of time since the offence occurred;
- whether, or not, there is a pattern of offending behaviour;
- the extent to which the applicants circumstances have changed;
- what level of supervision the post-holder will receive;
- (as relevant) whether the post involves responsibility for finance, of items of value; and
- whether, or not, the nature of the role allows the applicant the opportunity to re-offend.

8.6 All positive disclosures must be checked with the Trust's HR provider. Where a decision to appoint is taken, notes of the discussion are recorded in the employee's file.

8.7 A personal file is set up, by the school, for each new employee and evidence of pre-employment checks is stored in the file. This information is also stored on the Single Central Record.

8.8 It is a criminal offence for a person on the barred list to apply for a role working with children and it is also an offence for an employer (both the Trust and the school) to employ a person who is on the barred list.

9 Health and disability

9.1 (Other than in specific, very limited circumstances) the Equalities Act 2010 prohibits all of those involved in the recruitment process from:

- asking referees to comment on an applicant's health, attendance record and/or disability;
- asking applicants questions about their health, attendance record and/or disability;
- asking an applicant to complete a pre-employment medical questionnaire, prior to having been made a conditional offer of employment.

9.2 Once an applicant has been made a conditional offer of employment, a school must ensure that they complete a health questionnaire that will be assessed by the Trust's Occupational Health Service provider.



9.3 Where an applicant had a disability, the Headteacher must consider whether, or not, there are any reasonable adjustments that could be made to enable the applicant to perform the role to a suitable standard, within reasonable resourcing constraints.

9.4 No applicant may start work until medical clearance has been received. In the event of any requirement being made in a medical report, advice should be sought from the Trust's HR provider and any relevant risk assessments put in place before employment commences.

10 Childcare disqualification

10.1 A person who is deemed to be disqualified, under the relevant regulations, may not provide relevant childcare provision, or be directly involved in the management of such provision ('Disqualification, under the Childcare Act', 2006). All schools are prohibited from employing such a person and to do so knowingly is to commit a criminal offence.

10.2 Staff included in the 'Disqualification under the Childcare Act', 2006 are those who:

- are employed to, and /or provide, early years childcare (from birth up to 1 September, following children's fifth birthday), i.e. up to and including Reception age in a nursery or school setting [including breakfast clubs, lunchtime supervision and after-school care]; and those who
- are employed to, and /or provide, later years (Reception age to seven year olds, inclusive) childcare in a school setting [not including education or supervised activity for children above Reception age]

10.3 Where a prospective employee declares anything of potential concern, advice must be sought from the Trust's HR provider before an offer of employment can be confirmed. In some cases, it is necessary to apply to Ofsted for a waiver to be applied, in order that employment can commence.

10.4 Further details can be found in 'Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006' (Feb. 2015) at www.gov.uk.

11 Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks

11.1 The DBS disclosure process checks a person's criminal record – convictions, cautions, reprimands and warnings. Online DBS applications, or update checks, must be completed by/for all successful applicants. Employers can check an individual's DBS certificate, free of charge. With an applicant's written consent (a signed form), an online check (on www.gov.uk/db) can take place, to establish whether, or not, any new information has come to light since its issue.



11.2 An Enhanced DBS check is needed for any staff who are employed to regularly undertake 'regulated activity'. 'Regular' (in this context) is defined as: once a week (or more often), or on four or more days in a 30 day period. 'Regulated activity' (involving children or young people) covers:

- unsupervised activity (teaching, instructing, looking after children; providing advice and guidance; and driving a vehicle for children);
- working for a range of 'specified places', such as schools, childcare settings, children's homes etc., where there is the opportunity for contact; and
- (even if done once) relevant personal care, e.g. washing / dressing; or health care (including where supervised by a professional).

11.3 Newly appointed staff who have lived outside the UK must be subject to the same checks as others (including DBS). Applicants who have lived or worked outside the UK for six months or more in the past five years will also need Criminal Convictions Clearance from the country, or countries, where they were resident. The applicant must contact the relevant embassy to obtain a disclosure, which should not be dated more than six months ago, at the time of receipt.

Further details can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-records-checks-for-overseasapplicants>.

11.4 A basic level DBS check should also be obtained for all members of the Local Governing Body and for Trust Directors. Where Governors / Directors will have more common / unsupervised contact with children or young people, an Enhanced DBS check should be done.

11.5 Volunteers in school are not automatically subject to DBS checks. When determining whether, or not, (with their permission) to apply for an Enhanced DBS check, a Headteacher (or other nominated senior leader) should consider whether, or not the volunteer will regularly be undertaking regulated activity on an unsupervised basis. The risk assessment process (ensuring that appropriate controls and supervision are in place) should be employed to enable volunteers to make an effective contribution for a 'one off' activity.

11.6 Where a school engages supply teachers directly, the school is responsible for ensuring that all pre-employment checks (including DBS check) are in place. Where a supply teacher does no supply work for a period of three months, a new DBS check is needed.

11.7 Where a supply agency is used, the agency itself is responsible for making DBS checks on its staff. Schools must obtain written confirmation from the supply agencies that they use of the checks that have been completed for the individual staff who work in the school. The results of the checks must be disclosed (clear, or not clear). Where a disclosure is not clear, details should be obtained from the agency and the individual regarding the reasons for any convictions, reprimands or warnings. Where a person



refuses to produce their DBS certificate and provide an explanation, they should not be used for supply work in the school. In circumstances where a supply teacher, previously employed through an agency, is to be employed directly on a permanent basis, a repeat DBS check should be carried out by the school, as part of the appointment process.

- 11.8 Schools must ensure that all contractors, supply agencies and other organisations providing services to the school have robust vetting procedures, including overseas checks. Where possible, such procedures should be written into service level agreements / contracts.
- 11.9 Any supply staff and contractors working on site must only be granted access to the school where an appropriate level of DBS check has been done and an identity check has taken place. Any contractor arriving without clearance and/or proof identity must either be sent away or, in some circumstances, supervised closely (never left unsupervised).
- 11.10 For PGCE students, references and an application form are not required, but the school will require proof of Enhanced DBS clearance and Barred List check and will carry out an identity check when the students arrives on site. Student teachers working in an Early Years setting are also required to complete the Childcare Disqualification Declaration.
- 11.11 Students undertaking a work experience³ placement at the school will always be supervise, with appropriate risk assessments and controls in place.

12 Single Central Record (SCR) of recruitment vetting checks

12.1 It is essential that each partner school has a Single Central Record (SCR) of people who, through the business of the school, have contact with children and young people. [The SCR is examined as an important element of Ofsted's checking of safeguarding procedures]. A school's SCR is its record of:

- all staff who are employed to work at the school
- supply staff (whether employed directly, or through an agency); and
- other staff (such as volunteers and specialist instructors), who work in regular contact with children or young people.

12.2 The record must contain:

- name;
- address;



- date of birth;
- identification;
- details of eligibility to work in the UK (and the name of the person completing the check);
- overseas check, as appropriate;
- job title;
- the date that employment commenced;
- staff code / number;
- leaving date, as appropriate;
- required qualifications and evidence;
- who completed the pre-employment checks;
- the dates that the checks were completed;
- Barred List check date;
- DBS Reference Number;
- the date that written references were obtained;
- Disqualification check details, as applicable.

12.3 The list must be up-to-date at all times. Records are kept for seven years following cessation of employment.

Stuart Jones; Mar '19