



**The EDGE ACADEMY  
AP FREE SCHOOL**

**RECRUITMENT &  
VETTING POLICY**

April 2015

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- The Edge Academy believes that the better educated and more highly-skilled people are, the better their life chances and the more likely they are to succeed in today's globalised world.
- Delivering high quality teaching and learning opportunities to pupils depends on the caliber of the people The Edge Academy employs. Establishing and retaining a highly effective and motivated workforce, recruiting employees with a desire for excellence, a willingness to take individual responsibility and to be flexible are the key drivers for the overall success of The Edge Academy

## **2. AIM OF POLICY**

- The overall aim of this recruitment and selection policy is to ensure that there is a consistent, fair, safe and cost effective approach to recruiting and selecting the best people.

## **3. DIVERSITY AND EQUALITY**

- Diversity, tolerance and equality are at the heart of every activity in The Edge Academy, where young people of all races, faiths and cultures learn together. Attracting and retaining people from different backgrounds brings fresh ideas and perspectives which will enhance teaching and working practices. The Edge Academy is committed to encouraging diversity amongst the workforce and recognizes that everyone is unique and that people have different abilities to contribute to overall performance. The Edge Academy is committed to ensuring that all employees have the opportunity to maximise their potential and enhance their self-development and their contribution to the Academy. The Edge Academy is committed to developing an open workplace culture in which everyone feels valued and can add value and aims to nurture creativity and innovation and thereby to tap hidden capacity for growth and improve overall performance.

## **4. SAFEGUARDING AND SAFER RECRUITMENT**

- Ensuring that The Edge Academy fully complies with DfE guidance on 'Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education' is a prerequisite for promoting a culture where safeguarding is given the highest priority within the academy.

## **5. THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS**

- The recruitment processes are geared to identify the key skills, knowledge, motivation and attitude required in the successful candidate. When a need to recruit is identified, the recruiting manager should review the requirements of the role ensuring that the job description and person specification are up to date, clear and concise.

- Assigning responsibilities and setting aside sufficient time for the work needed at each stage so that safeguards are not skimmed or overlooked is vital. At least one of the selection panel must have attended appropriate training particularly in relation to safer recruitment. In relation to the timescales, for example, time needs to be allowed for obtaining references on short listed candidates before interview.
- The job description is a key document in the recruitment process and the recruiting manager should review it, seeking guidance as necessary from the academy HR adviser and Principal or her nominee.
- The job description should clearly state the main duties and responsibilities of the role, the academy's commitment to diversity, equality and safeguarding and the individual's own responsibility.
- The person specification is of equal importance to the job description and informs the selection decision. The person specification details the skills, experience abilities and expertise that are required to do the job. It should be specific, related to the job and not unnecessarily restrictive. The inclusion of criteria that cannot be justified as essential for the performance of the role may be deemed discriminatory under discrimination law if they impact disproportionately to the disadvantage of specific groups.
- As a minimum the person specification should include:
  - the qualifications and experience and any other requirements needed to perform the role;
  - the competences and qualities that the successful candidate should be able to demonstrate and explain how these requirements will be tested and assessed during the selection process;
  - Explain how all employees have a responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of pupils;
  - the extent of the relationship/contact that the potholder will have with pupils and the degree of responsibility for pupils;
  - the fact that references will be taken up for short listed applicants prior to interview and that any relevant issues arising from these will be taken up at interview.
- How and where roles are advertised along with whether external support will be sought from specialist providers are key decisions in the recruitment process. All roles should be advertised internally as a minimum and any external advertising should be professional and portray the desired academy image
- All advertising must be fair in relation to gender, ethnic origin, disability, sexual orientation, religion, religious or philosophical belief.
- Adverts should be clear, concise honest and open and geared to attract only those who fill the essential person specification.

- Adverts must include the following statement **‘The Edge Academy is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of its pupils and expects all employees and volunteers to share this commitment’**
- Reference also needs to be made to the need for the successful applicant to undertake an enhanced criminal record check via the DBS as well as the usual details of the post and salary, qualification required etc.
- The Edge Academy recognises the value of, and seeks to achieve a diverse workforce, which includes people from different backgrounds, with different skills and abilities. Consideration should be given on where to place adverts for the different types of vacancies to encourage applications from under-represented groups. When deciding on the wording of the advert it is important to ensure the content cannot be considered discriminatory either directly or indirectly.
- If relevant, any details regarding job share, or any flexible working arrangements that are available should be included and if it is a short-term contract, when the funding ends.
- The application form is an essential tool in the selection process and providing false information is an offence and could result in the application being rejected or more seriously, the applicant facing summary dismissal if they have started their employment and possible referral to the police.
- All applications are to 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 applications that are significantly incomplete should not be accepted or shortlisted. Any anomalies, discrepancies or gaps in employment identified by the scrutiny should be noted so that they can be taken up as part of the consideration of whether to short list 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 candidates are to be assessed equally against the criteria contained in the person specification without exception or variation. As part of The Edge Academy’s commitment to employing people with disabilities, any disabled applicants who meet the minimum short listing criteria should be invited to interview.
- The purpose of seeking references is to obtain objective and factual information to support appointment decisions. They are always to be sought and obtained directly from the referee and must not rely on references or testimonials provided by the candidate, or on open references and testimonials, i.e. “To Whom it May Concern”. There have been instances of candidates forging references.

- References should be obtained prior to interview so any queries can be raised with the candidate. Two references will be sought; of which one will be from the applicant's current or most recent employer.
- By asking specific questions in the reference request, objective verifiable information should be received and not subjective opinion.
- It is best practice, as a minimum, to ask for the following with every reference request:
  - Ask about the referee's relationship with the candidate, e.g. did they have a working relationship: if so what; how long has the referee known the candidate and in what capacity;
  - Ask whether the referee is satisfied that the person has the ability and is suitable to undertake the job in question and for specific comments about the applicant's suitability for the post and how s/he meets the person specification;
  - Ask whether the referee is completely satisfied that the candidate is suitable to work with children, and, if not for specific details of the referee's concerns and the reasons why the referee believes the person might be unsuitable.
- It is also useful to remind the referee that they have a responsibility to ensure that the reference is accurate and does not contain any material misstatement or omission and that the reference may be discussed with the candidate.
- Employment references are usually shared with the potential employee upon request, unless the referee provides a compelling reason as to why it should be edited or not released at all.
- When contacting a referee the following should also be asked:
  - Confirmation of details of the applicant's current post, salary and sick record;
  - Specific verifiable comments about the applicant's performance history and conduct;
  - Details of any disciplinary procedures to include any sanctions that are current;
  - Details of any disciplinary action involving issues related to the safety and welfare of pupils, including any in which the sanction has expired and the outcome of those; and
  - Details of any allegations or concerns that have raised about the applicant that relate to the safety and welfare of pupils or behaviour towards pupils and the outcome of those concerns e.g. whether the allegations or concern was investigated, the conclusion reached, and how the matter was resolved.
- For internal candidates, the academy may accept one reference, which would normally be from their current line manager. However if their current line manager is on the interview panel, an alternative referee should be supplied.

- If the candidate has not recently worked with children, then a reference must be sought from the last employer where they worked with children.
- If a short-listed applicant claims to have some specific qualification or previous experience that is particularly relevant to the post for which s/he is applying that will not be verified by a reference, it is good practice to verify the facts before the interview, as part of the ID checking process so that any discrepancy can be explored at interview. The qualification or experience can usually be verified quickly by telephoning the relevant previous employer and asking for written confirmation of the facts.
- Any information about past disciplinary action or allegations should be considered in the circumstances of the individual case. Cases in which an issue was satisfactorily resolved some time ago or an allegation that was determined to be unfounded or did not require formal disciplinary sanctions and where no further issues have been raised are less likely to cause concern than more serious or recent concerns or issues that were not satisfactorily resolved. A history of repeated concerns or allegations over time is also likely to give cause for concern.
- As part of the selection process a number of selection methods may be used to assess the candidates' suitability for the post. All selection tests/exercises should be properly validated and only marked by trained staff. Selection methods may consist of: presentations, group discussion/decision-making, group discussion with pupils, in-tray exercise, aptitude (numerical/verbal) test, ICT based test, written exercises and psychometric tests.
- Involving pupils and employees in the recruitment and selection process in some way, or observing short listed candidates' interaction with them is common, and teach a lesson and will generally be shown round the Academy by pupils or a senior member of staff, and/or meet with pupils and staff.
- The interview should assess the merits of each candidate against the job requirements as outlined in the job description and person specification and explore their suitability to work with pupils. The selection process for people who will work with pupils is always to include a face-to-face interview even if there is only one candidate.
- In addition to the arrangements for interviews, time and place, directions to the venue, opportunity for the candidate to inform the academy of any special requirements, and membership of the interview panel, the invitation is to remind candidates about how the interview will be conducted and the areas it will explore including suitability to work with pupils. Enclosing a copy of the person specification can usefully draw attention to the relevant information.
- The invitation is also to stress that the identity of the successful candidate will need to be checked thoroughly to ensure the person is who he or she claims to be, and that the person will be required to complete an application for an Enhanced DBS Disclosure straight away. All candidates are to be instructed

to bring with them documentary evidence of their identity that will satisfy DBS requirements, i.e. either a current photo driving licence or passport, or a full birth certificate, plus a document such as a utility bill or financial statement that shows the candidate's current name and address, and where appropriate change of name documentation.

- Candidates are also to be asked to bring documents confirming any educational and professional qualifications that are necessary or relevant for the post, e.g. the original or a certified copy of a certificate, or diploma, or a letter of confirmation from the awarding body. If the successful candidate cannot produce original documents or certified copies written confirmation of his or her relevant qualifications must be obtained from the awarding body. A copy of the documents used to verify the successful candidate's identity and qualifications are to be kept for the personnel file.
- A panel of at least two people allows one member to observe and assess the candidate, and make notes, while the candidate is talking to the other. It also reduces the possibility of any dispute about what was said or asked during the interview.
- The members of the panel are to:
  - have the necessary authority to make decisions about appointments;
  - be appropriately trained, (at least one member of the interview panel is to have undertaken the on-line training on Safer Recruitment.
  - meet before the interviews to: reach a consensus about the required standard for the job to which they are appointing; and to consider the issues to be explored with each candidate and who on the panel will ask about each of those relating to the requirements of the post, which should be transposed on an interview sheet.
- All interview questions will be objective, non-discriminatory and relate directly to the knowledge, skills and experience required by the post holder in line with the person specification. The panel can also agree the issues they will explore with each candidate based on the information provided in the candidates' application and references (if available). A candidate's response to a question about an issue will determine whether and how that is followed up. Where possible, hypothetical questions are to be avoided as they allow theoretical answers. It is better to ask competence based questions that ask a candidate to relate how s/he has responded to, or dealt with, an actual situation, or questions that test a candidate's attitudes and understanding of issues.
- In addition to assessing and evaluating the applicant's suitability for the particular post, the interview panel are also to explore:
  - the candidate's attitudes toward pupils and young people;
  - his or her ability to support the academy's agenda for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of pupils;
  - gaps in the candidate's employment history; and

- any concerns or discrepancies arising from the information provided by the candidate and/or referee
  - issues arising from any disclosure of a criminal record by the applicant.
- If for any reason references are not obtained before the interview, the candidate is to be asked at interview if there is anything s/he wishes to declare or discuss in light of the questions that have been (or will be) put to his or her referees. References are to be obtained and scrutinised before a person's appointment is confirmed and before s/he starts work.
- Once each candidate has been interviewed, interview summary sheets must be completed by the panel. At the end of the interview process, these sheets must incorporate the results of any additional selection tests/exercises undertaken. The sheets must clearly state the outcome and provide objective, clear reasons as to whether the candidate is suitable for appointment or not, directly relating to the job description and person specification.
- Following the interview process all papers including notes taken during the interview process and test results if undertaken, should be retained by the Chair of the Panel. Following conclusion of the selection process all papers should be retained for six months. Where the decision is in dispute (following applications to the employment tribunal) no records should be destroyed until the case is concluded.
- The Academy has a legal requirement to carry out a series of pre-employment checks before confirming an offer of appointment. From 12 October 2009 under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, it is a criminal offence for an employer to knowingly employ a barred person. It is important that all pre-employment checks are completed before the successful applicant commences employment and time should be factored into the recruitment timetable to allow for these checks. A Single Central Record (SCR) must be kept to show that the certain checks have been undertaken for all completed or the relevant certificate obtained and show who carried out the check.
- The following checks must be recorded in the SCR and dated when the check was evidenced.
  - **Identity** – verifying the successful applicant's identity by reference to original documents. Candidates interviewed should be asked to bring with them the necessary documents to verify their identity that will satisfy the requirements of the DBS disclosure application.
  - **Qualifications** – the successful applicant should be asked to provide original certificates or diplomas for all the academic or vocational qualifications legally required for the post. The documents should be checked that they refer to the applicant and verified by the awarding body.
  - **Eligibility to work in the UK** – it is an offence to employ someone who is not eligible to work in the UK.

- **Enhanced DBS disclosure** – completion of an application for a DBS and production of the supporting documents required. This will include verification against the ISA barred lists from 12th October 2009, which replaces the POCA and List 99 checks. This would also apply to overseas applicants. See section 16 for more information. This may not always be sufficient as DBS disclosures will not generally show offences committed by individuals who have lived abroad so an additional check can be made by obtaining certificates of good conduct from relevant embassies or police forces.
- **Independent Safeguarding Authority Registration-** From July 2010 this will be a requirement when recruiting someone new to the academy.
- **Status** – it is a requirement for some posts that the applicant is licensed or registered with a professional body. A teacher must have been awarded Qualified Teachers Status (QTS) and be registered with the General Teaching Council (GTC).
- When offering employment to the successful candidate, all offers of appointment are provisional upon the evidence required above as part of the SCR and the following:
  - **Verification of medical fitness-** it is a statutory requirement that anyone appointed to a post involving regular contact with children or young people must be medically fit
  - **Health and sickness record** – this is normally checked as part of the reference request. However, E-ACT would expect all academy employees to complete an Occupational Health Questionnaire (see above), stating whether the applicant has any medical conditions or disabilities that would affect their performance or has any disability that might require the employer to make reasonable adjustments to the working environment or to the person's terms and conditions.
  - **Two references** – These should have been taken up prior to interview to provide the panel with the opportunity to ask questions if they have any concerns with the content of the references.
  - **Induction** - the appointment is also conditional upon the person completing a satisfactory probation period. If a response from the DBS is outstanding and all other pre-employment checks are satisfactory, and with the prior approval of the Academy's Principal, a person may commence work provided they are appropriately supervised. The supervision should reflect what is known about the person concerned, their experience, and the nature of their duties and the level of responsibility they will carry. For those with limited experience and where references have provided limited information the level of supervision required may be high. For those with more experience and where the references are detailed and provide strong evidence of good

conduct in previous relevant work a lower level of supervision may be appropriate. For all staff without completed DBS Disclosures it should be made clear that they are subject to this additional supervision. The nature of the supervision should be specified and the roles of staff in undertaking the supervision should be spelt out. The arrangements should be reviewed regularly, at least every two weeks until the DBS disclosure is received.

- Overseas candidates and people who have lived outside the United Kingdom must undergo the same checks as for all other staff. This includes a DBS Disclosure and ISA Check
- In addition, employers should make such further checks in respect of those candidates because DBS Disclosures will not generally show offences committed by individuals whilst living abroad.
- For overseas candidates who have not previously lived in the UK, and UK candidates who have lived abroad for significant periods, organisations should make an additional check by obtaining a certificate of good conduct from the relevant embassy or police force where that is available as well as obtaining an enhanced DBS Disclosure. The DBS website gives information about the availability and coverage of these certificates. The level of information contained in these certificates varies from country to country. Some are complete extracts from the criminal record; others are partial.
- Where an applicant is from or has lived in a country where criminal record checks cannot be made for child protection purposes, or is a refugee with leave to remain in the UK, and has no means of obtaining relevant information, employers must take extra care in taking up references and carrying out other background checks. For example, additional references should be sought, and references followed up by phone as well as letter.

## **6. EMPLOYING AGENCY STAFF**

- If the academy uses agency staff written confirmation should be obtained from the staffing agency that the appropriate checks have been carried out and are satisfactory. The academy must ensure that the contract or arrangement with the staffing agency imposes an obligation on the staffing agency to carry out the same checks as E-ACT does for its own staff. The academy must also ask if the DBS Disclosure contains any relevant information concerning any convictions or cautions as outlined above.
- The written confirmation should be held in the central records.

## **7. VOLUNTEERS**

- Volunteers are also seen by pupils as safe and trustworthy adults. The same kind of process should apply when an academy is recruiting volunteers. However as academies rely on volunteers in a variety of roles a common

sense approach should be taken. For example if a parent volunteer is one of a group helping out on a one-off occasion such as a day trip, a fete, a sports day or a school disco there is no need for a formal recruitment and selection process or for a DBS disclosure or ISA vetting. On the other hand if the volunteer is going to have an on-going role that involves regular contact with pupils, or means that the person will be on the premises when pupils are present regularly or frequently, a similar recruitment process should be adopted as would be used to recruit a paid member of staff. The process might be presented differently or adapted to be more informal, but the principal safeguards and features of the recruitment and selection process should be the same.

- In those cases the process should include:
  - Information about the organisation's commitment to safeguarding children
  - Completion of an application form
  - Obtaining references
  - A face to face interview
  - Pre-employment checks including a DBS disclosure and ISA registration.
- In relation to building contractors, pupils should not be allowed in areas where builders are working, for health and safety reasons, so these workers should have no contact with pupils. However Academies should ensure that arrangements are in place with contractors, via the contract where possible, to make sure that any of the contractors' staff that come into contact with pupils undergo appropriate checks.
- In relation to contractors who come on site only to carry out emergency repairs or service equipment and who would not be expected to be left unsupervised the guidance is that a DBS disclosure is not necessary (paragraph 4.23 of Safer Recruitment and Safeguarding Children in Education)
- PFI and other contract staff must be checked in the same way as academy employees. Written confirmation should be obtained from the contractor, confirming that the appropriate checks have been carried out and are satisfactory.
- Monitoring of both the recruitment process and induction arrangements will allow future recruitment practices to be better informed. It should cover:
  - monitoring of ethnicity, gender, disability, age and religion
  - staff turnover and reasons for leaving;
  - exit interviews; and
  - the attendance of new employees at Child Protection Training.
- The induction programme provides the new recruit or volunteer with vital information about the Academy and its expectations of its employees in

relation to professional conduct and working with pupils. All employees no matter how experienced should be provided with an induction programme to ensure he or she understands the ethos of the Academy when dealing with pupils and how to raise any issues of concern. The programme should be tailored to suit the requirements of the role.

- The purpose is to:
  - provide training and information about the academy's policies and procedures;
  - support individuals in a way that is appropriate for the role for which they have been engaged;
  - confirm the conduct expected of staff within the academy; and to provide opportunities for a new member of staff or volunteer to discuss any issues or concerns about their role or responsibilities;
  - enable the person's line manager or mentor to recognise any concerns or issues about the person's ability or suitability at the outset and address them immediately.
- The content and nature of the induction process will vary according to the role and previous experience of the new employee or volunteer, but as far as safeguarding and promoting the welfare of pupils is concerned, the induction programme should include information about, and written statements of:
  - policies and procedures in relation to safeguarding and promoting welfare e.g. child protection, anti-bullying, anti-racism, physical intervention or restraint, intimate care, internet safety and any local child protection and safeguarding procedures;
  - Safe practice and the standards of conduct and behaviour expected of employees and pupils;
  - How and with whom any concerns about those issues should be raised; and
  - Other relevant HR procedures e.g. disciplinary, capability and whistle-blowing.
- The programme should also to include attendance at child protection training appropriate to the person's role.
- It is important that all employees have appropriate training and induction so that they understand their roles and responsibilities and are confident about carrying them out. Employees, pupils and parents also need to feel confident that they can raise issues or concerns about the safety or welfare of pupils, and that they will be listened to and taken seriously. This can be achieved by maintaining an ethos of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of pupils and protecting employees, which is supported by:
  - Clear written statement of the standards of behaviour and the boundaries of appropriate behaviour expected of employees and pupils that is understood and endorsed by all;
  - appropriate induction and training;

- regular briefing and discussion of relevant issues;
- ensuring all employees are familiar with the good practice; and
- clear reporting systems if a pupil, employee or other person has concerns about the safety of pupils.

## **8. REVIEW**

- The policy will be regularly updated but also formally reviewed every 2 years. The review will involve consultation with stakeholders.

This Policy was reviewed on:

Ratified by Governors on:

Renewal Date: