Plymouth CAST Model Safer Recruitment and Selection Policy

Latest Version: November 2019

Document Control

Changes History

Version	Date	Amended by	Recipients	Purpose
1.0	December 2019	Matthew Barnes Deputy Director of Education and Standards	All Plymouth CAST staff	Updated Legislation

Approvals

This policy requires the following approvals:

Board	Chair	CEO	Date Approved	Version	Date for Review
✔			13th December 2019	1.0	December 2021

National/Local Policy

☐ This policy must be localised by schools

☒ This policy must not be changed,

Position with the Unions

Does the policy require consultation with the National Unions under our recognition agreement? ☐ Yes ☒ No If yes, the policy status is: ☐ Consulted and Approved ☐ Consulted and Not Approved ☐ Awaiting Consultation

Distribution

This document has been distributed to:

Position	Date	Version
All Plymouth CAST employees		1.0
Local Governing Boards		1.0
Plymouth CAST Directors and SEL		1.0

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The Mission of the Catholic Church and Safeguarding

"The Catholic Church and its individual members will undertake appropriate steps to maintain a safe environment for all and to practise fully and positively Christ's Ministry towards children, young people and adults at risk and to respond sensitively and compassionately to their needs in order to help keep them safe from harm. This is demonstrated by the provision of carefully planned activities for children, young people and adults, caring for those hurt by abuse and ministering to and robustly managing those who have caused harm." *[Source: National Catholic Safeguarding Commission - Policy Statement February 2016*

Introduction

Plymouth CAST is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. We require all employees and volunteers to share and demonstrate this commitment in every aspect of their work. This policy reflects the requirements expected of safer recruitment practice.

Plymouth CAST believes that our people are at the heart of everything that we do and are a key component to our success. A consistent and fair approach to recruitment processes ensures that we attract, appoint and retain those who possess the necessary skills and attributes to fulfil our aims and support our values. This policy details the key principles to be followed in relation to recruitment and selection and the responsibilities in all of those involved.

Plymouth CAST recognises its responsibilities to provide job opportunities to internal and external candidates in a fair, consistent and equitable basis. All appointments to the school will be made on merit and the recruitment and selection process is designed to ensure that the best person for the job is appointed.

Failure to apply this policy may leave us vulnerable to challenge.

Any significant deviation or variations in practice must be discussed with HR to ensure that actions comply with the relevant legislation, to minimise any potential risk to Plymouth CAST.

Advice and support is available from HR at all stages of the recruitment and selection process.

Purpose

This policy is designed to clarify the expectations for safer recruitment and selection with Plymouth CAST schools. It outlines our recruitment procedure and is in line with 'Keeping Children Safe in Education', the DfE statutory guidance on safeguarding and must be read in conjunction with the Trust's Safeguarding policy. Through this policy, the trust aims to embed safer recruitment practices and procedures to ensure a robust safeguarding culture within the Trust.

All those involved in any stage of recruitment and selection should be aware of and adhere to this policy. Any external consultants, recruitment agencies or external experts who assist in recruitment and selection are required to act in accordance with this policy.

If an employee involved in the recruitment and selection process has a close personal or family relationship with an applicant, they must declare this as soon as they are aware of the candidate's application. It would then be appropriate for the employee to have no further involvement in the recruitment process. Failure to declare this could put the recruitment process at risk and may result in disciplinary action.

Equality of Opportunity

Advertisements for vacancies will not include wording that stereotypes in any way or discourages groups of people from applying. Advertisements will be placed where they can reach as wide and diverse a pool of potential candidates as possible. **The exception to this will be for the recruitment to "protected posts" such as head teacher, deputy head and assistant head, where there is a requirement to be a practising catholic.**

1. Duties of the Trustees

1.1. The Trustees in consultation with the Chief Executive Officer, will:

- ensure that there are effective policies and procedures in place to enable the trust to recruit in-line with Department for Education guidance and legal requirements
- ensure that at least one person on the recruitment panel receives and completes safer recruitment training
- ensure that the Safer Recruitment Policy, as written, is disseminated to all schools within Plymouth CAST
- hold the Chief Executive Officer to account for the implementation of the Safer Recruitment Policy across Plymouth CAST
- periodically assess the effectiveness of the Safer Recruitment Policy and ensure any necessary changes are made and communicated throughout the trust.

2. Duties of the Chief Executive Officer

2.1. The Chief Executive Officer will:

- work with the Board of Trustees and the Local Governing Boards to ensure that they meet their statutory responsibilities with regards to recruitment, including the development, dissemination and implementation of the Safer Recruitment Policy
- use the trust structure to maximise the procurement of strategic resources and expertise, such as training, for onward deployment across the trust
- ensure appropriate checks, including disqualification checks, have been carried out on staff, volunteers, contractors and agencies working for the trust
- intervene where it is apparent that a school is not implementing the Safer Recruitment Policy effectively, or where there are clear breaches of the policy that could reflect poorly on the reputation of the trust
- develop and promote improvement strategies to raise recruitment standards throughout Plymouth CAST
- ensure that recruitment reporting accountabilities are clearly defined and communicated.

3. Duties of the Headteacher

3.1. The Headteacher will:

- ensure that the requisite training on the Safer Recruitment Policy, including during inductions, is promptly delivered to all staff members.
- ensure that appropriate supervision of employees/volunteers is organised where necessary, and for promoting the safety and wellbeing of pupils generally and throughout this process

Recruitment Preparation

The recruitment and selection process should not commence until the Headteacher in consultation with
The school hub business manager has carried out a full evaluation of the needs of the post against their staffing structure, improvement plans and budget. A Staff Appointment Authorisation Form must be submitted and approval to
recruit must be confirmed before commencement of any recruitment action.

Job Descriptions and Person Specifications should be reviewed to ensure that they are accurate and fit for purpose. Please seek HR advice if a job description or person specification is not readily available.

Shortlisting and interview dates should all be determined before the post is advertised.

Sourcing Candidates

As a minimum, all vacancies will normally be advertised across Plymouth CAST using the website. This will maximise

equality of opportunity and provide employees with potential career development. Only in extenuating circumstances, the and following guidance from HR may a decision be made to waive the need to advertise. This is likely to happen where positions may provide suitable alternative employment for existing employees whose post has been identified as at risk of redundancy.

Positions should be advertised using the most appropriate and cost effective means to maximise the number of suitably qualified candidates.

All job advertisements will be written in Plain English based on details contained within the job description and person specification. Template job adverts are available from the Plymouth CAST Recruitment Toolkit.

All applicants will be treated with respect and provided with sufficient information to make informed decisions regarding their suitability for the post.

All advertisements will include a clear statement about safeguarding checks and our commitment to equal opportunities.

6. Information for candidates

6.1. Information for candidates will generally be provided in the form of an information pack. This could include:

- a copy of the advertisement
- a job description
- a person specification
- a brief outline of the school, its values and aims
- an application form – to assist with fair comparisons between applicants. This will also include a section for references to be recorded, one of which should be the candidate's most recent employer.

8. Shortlisting

All recruitment will be based on an agreed job description and person specification. Recruitment and selection must be an evidence-based process and candidates should be assessed against agreed criteria, based on relevant knowledge, skills, competencies, experience and qualification to perform the post as outlined in the person specification.

No additional criteria will be introduced at the shortlisting stage. The shortlisting process must be undertaken in a fair and consistent basis. No-one should be shortlisted who does not, as a minimum, meet the defined essential criteria within the person specification. Applicants must not be de-selected for interview based on where they are living nor assumptions made about their willingness to attend for interview or accept an offer to take up the post.

All decisions must be recorded by the panel. A shortlisting matrix template is available from the Plymouth CAST Recruitment Toolkit.

A standard Application Form is available for use to avoid any possibility of discrimination. All applicants must complete the application form in full. CVs will **not** be accepted. If returned electronically without a signature, this must be obtained at the point of interview. The Equal Opportunities Monitoring form and Declaration of Offences (Self Disclosure) form must be removed prior to any shortlisting activity taking place. It is discriminatory to use any self-disclosed information for shortlisting. Once shortlisting has taken place, the disclosed information may then be considered.

Application Forms must be anonymised before shortlisting which will be undertaken ideally by all members of the recruiting panel who are involved with the interview process. At least 2 members must undertake shortlisting.

Shortlisting should be against agreed criteria from the person specification advertised for the post.

All interviews for the same post must be conducted by the same panel.

9. Interviews

Face to face interviews will be the primary means of recruitment to all vacancies. A range of other selection methods and processes may also be considered in relation to each vacancy. When adopting selection tools, care must be taken to ensure that they are relevant to the person specification and able to be objectively assessed as part of the selection criteria.

Candidates will be informed of:

- the date, time, location and approximate length of the interview
- details of any other selection methods which will be used in addition to interview
- the person to be contacted for any further information on recruitment arrangements.

Permission will be asked to contact the candidate's referees prior to interview.

All candidates invited for interview will be asked to indicate if they require any specific facilities or assistance and will have to provide:

a) proof of identity
b) original certificates of qualifications
c) eligibility to live and work in the UK

Assessments from application form, interview, all tests and/or other exercises used within the selection process, will be properly documented and recorded against each individual candidate. Details will be placed within the recruitment file for all candidates which should be retained for six months, after which they should be confidentially destroyed.

In addition to assessing and evaluating the candidate's suitability for the post, the interview panel should also explore:

- the applicant's attitude towards children and young people
- their ability to support the school's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children
- gaps in the applicant's employment history
- concerns or discrepancies arising from information provided by the applicant and/or referee

The panel should also ask the candidate if they wish to declare anything in light of the requirement for an enhanced DBS disclosure.

During the interview process, care should be taken to avoid any questions which could be interpreted as discriminatory. The focus should always be on job-related criteria and any questions related to gender, ethnic origin, marital status, sex, age, family circumstances or sexual orientation etc. must be avoided

10. References

Where possible references will be taken up before the interview. A template reference letter is available from the Plymouth CAST Recruitment Toolkit. Ensure references are given proper consideration in the recruitment process. Where references have been provided prior to interview and there are questions or areas to clarify, these may be asked during the interview and responses noted accordingly. Please speak with HR in the event of information of concern arising from references for a preferred candidate, which arrives after the interview. References **must be taken up**

without exception before the candidate starts in employment. References are just as important for volunteer posts to assist in background checks.

References are sought directly from the referee. References or testimonials provided by the candidate are never accepted instead of a signed reference from a referee. Referees can be contacted by telephone or e-mail prior to receiving a written, signed reference.

References from previous employers will gather information on the candidate's suitability for working with children and young people; any disciplinary warnings, including time-expired warnings that relate to the safeguarding of children; the candidate's suitability for the post. Employees are entitled to see and receive, if requested, copies of their employment references.

11. Digital footprints – we will need to offer specific guidance if we are to adopt this.

11.1. At Plymouth CAST, we are committed to ensuring that safeguarding is a top priority.

11.2. In light of this commitment, where appropriate, potential candidates' social media presence or other online activity will be checked prior to interview, and records made of any offensive or inappropriate material.

11.3. This process may include a search for the candidate via:

- Google
- Facebook
- LinkedIn
- Twitter
- YouTube

12. Selection process

12.1. During interviews, candidates will be asked standard form questions and their responses recorded for ease of comparison. A number of checks will also be made before confirming an offer of employment with the candidate. They include:

- verifying a candidate's identity
- obtaining an enhanced DBS certificate (including barred list information, for those who will be engaging in regulated activity)
- obtaining a separate barred list check if an individual will start work in regulated activity before the DBS certificate is available;
- verifying the candidate's fitness to carry out their work responsibilities. A job applicant can be asked relevant questions about disability and health in order to establish whether they have the physical and mental capacity for the specific role;
- verifying the person's right to work in the UK. If there is uncertainty about whether an individual needs permission to work in the UK, then prospective employers, or volunteer managers, should follow advice on the GOV.UK website;
- if the person has lived or worked outside the UK, making any further checks the school or college consider appropriate; and
- verifying professional qualifications, as appropriate. The Teacher Services' system should be used to verify any award of qualified teacher status (QTS), and the completion of teacher induction or probation.

12.2. Any concerns raised through contact with referees will be put to the candidate. Records of these conversations will be made.

12.3. Where there are potential concerns about an element of an application, this will also be discussed with the candidate during the interview process. For example, any unexplained breaks in service will be explored at this stage. Where appropriate evidence and explanations are given, this will be recorded in writing. Discussing areas of

concern will not be limiting to the selection of a candidate unless the evidence provided does not provide appropriate reassurance. Where this is the case, a candidate will no longer be considered.

13. Employment checks and DBS checks (including "regulated activity")

13.1. For the purpose of this policy, and in accordance with the Keeping Children Safe in Education Guidance, "regulated activity" constitutes work where the employee will:

- be responsible for the care or supervision of children on a regular basis
- regularly work in the school while children are on the premises (whether or not the person is directly employed by the school, is a contractor or a volunteer)
- come into contact with children under 18 on a regular basis.

13.2. Regulated activity includes:

- teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervising children if the person is unsupervised, or providing advice or guidance on wellbeing, or driving a vehicle only for children
- work for a limited range of establishments (known as 'specified places', which include schools and colleges), with the opportunity for contact with children, but not including work done by supervised volunteers

13.3. The above work is regulated activity only if done regularly. Some activities are always regulated activities, regardless of their frequency or whether they are supervised or not. This includes:

- relevant personal care, or health care provided by or provided under the supervision of a health care professional:
  - personal care includes helping a child with eating and drinking for reasons of illness or disability or in connection with toileting, washing, bathing and dressing for reasons of age, illness of disability;
  - health care means care for children provided by, or under the direction or supervision of, a regulated health care professional.

13.4. The level of DBS check, including whether a barred list or prohibition check is required, will depend on the applicant's role. For most appointments, i.e. those in 'regulated activity', an enhanced DBS check with barred list information is sufficient.

13.5. **General recruitment**

13.5.1. Plymouth CAST will take care to ensure that:

- a candidate's identity is verified, from a current photographic ID and proof of address except where, for exceptional reasons, none is available
- appropriate DBS checks are obtained for all candidates, including barred list information where the person is engaged in regulated activity
- where a candidate is employed to a teaching or leadership post, a prohibition, sanction and restriction check will be made through the Secure Access DfE sign-in portal (https://teacherservices.education.gov.uk/)
- where an individual is successful in their application, and begins work in a regulated activity before a DBS certificate is available, a separate barred list check will be obtained and a risk assessment completed
- where applicants have subscribed to the DBS Update Service, and give permission for this to be accessed, this service will be used instead
- successful candidates for teaching positions are not subject to a prohibition order issued by the Secretary of State. This will be done using the Employer Access Online service
- the successful candidate has a right to work in the UK
- where a candidate has worked overseas, the appropriate checks are carried out per this policy
- all trustees will be checked to ensure they do not have a section 128 prohibition that would not allow them to hold a governance role.

NOTE: There is **no requirement** to obtain an enhanced DBS check if, in the three months prior to beginning work in their new appointment, the applicant has worked:

- in a school in England in a post which brought them into regular contact with children or in any post in a school since 12 May 2006; or
- in a college in England in a position which involved the provision of education and regularly caring for, training, supervising or being in sole charge of children or young people under the age of 18.

However, a school or college **may** request an enhanced DBS check with barred list information should there be concerns and bearing in mind the duty schools and colleges are under not to allow a barred person to work in regulated activity.

NOTE: A school or college **may not** request an enhanced DBS check with barred list check for anyone working in the school or college who is not in regulated activity, but may request an enhanced DBS check **without** a barred list check.

13.6. **Volunteers**

13.6.1. Plymouth CAST will take care to ensure that:

- where a volunteer is recruited to engage in work which is not considered 'regulated activity', an enhanced DBS certificate will be obtained
- volunteers recruited to take part in regulated activity must obtain an enhanced DBS certificate with a barred list check
- under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not provided a DBS certificate be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

13.7. **Individuals who have lived outside the UK**

13.7.1. Plymouth CAST will take care to ensure that:

- no exceptions will be made for candidates who have lived outside of the UK, all mandatory checks outlined in this policy will be carried out, along with additional checks where necessary
- the DfE guidance on the employment of overseas-trained teachers will be consulted should an overseas candidate apply for a teaching position.

13.8. **Agency and third party staff**

13.8.1. Plymouth CAST will take care to ensure that:

- in the case of any employee working in a CAST school sourced from an agency or third-party organisation, confirmation must be obtained from the organisation, in writing, that all necessary DBS checks have been completed
- confirmation must also be obtained that the individual who presents for work is the same person on whom all checks have been completed. A copy of photographic identification is generally appropriate.

13.9. **Trainee/student teachers**

13.9.1. Plymouth CAST will take care to ensure that:

- enhanced DBS certificates and barred list checks are obtained on all 'salaried' applicants for initial teacher training
- where trainee teachers are fee-funded, the initial teacher training provider carries out the necessary checks.

14. Decision making

14.1. At Plymouth CAST, we are committed to ensuring the best individuals are recruited to work in our schools. Applicants will therefore be carefully checked against the selection criteria and all essential criteria from the person specification must be met before any offers of employment are made.

14.2. In line with our safeguarding obligations, we will carefully consider all information about past disciplinary action or allegations.

The Offer of Employment and the Employment Contract

A conditional offer letter must be issued to the successful candidate within a reasonable timescale outlining;

- the job title and grade of the job
- the date of commencement of employment (if confirmed)
- salary
- payment arrangements
- the term of the employment (whether temporary/fixed term/ permanent contract)
- reference requirements, if not already complete
- medical clearance, if required
- Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service Check
- Overseas check, if relevant
- whether the employment is subject to a trial or probationary period and if so, the terms which will apply to this
- any particular or special benefits which might apply
- the notice periods for termination

In the event of a delay of the return of a DBS by the Disclosure and Barring Service, an appointment *may* be made subject to checks with the Children Barred Lists, risk assessment and appropriate safeguards being put in place. If there is any doubt, a delay to the start date should be put in place and where appropriate advice sought from HR. All other referencing and pre-employment checks must be complete.

Advice from HR should be sought if there are any issues or concerns regarding the suitability/standard of pre-employment checks, before taking any action.

Once the conditions of the offer of employment are met, the contract of employment should be issued. Contracts of employment should be issued within 8 weeks of the start of employment. This is a legal requirement.

Review and Monitoring of Appointments

Applicants for all jobs will be invited to provide specific information by completing the monitoring documents issued with the application form. This information is confidential and will not be seen or used by the panel in selection in any way. The information may be used for monitoring purposes.

The aim of recruitment monitoring is to enable Plymouth CAST to identify the numbers and relative proportion of various groups participating in the selection process at application, shortlisting and appointment stages. This information will also help to assess progress in implementing the trust's Equal Opportunities Policy, and identify actions which might improve the fairness of its recruitment and selection procedures.

Induction

All newly appointed employees will, either prior to or at the point of taking up the post, undergo a programme of induction appropriate for their post. The induction will specifically address issues concerning the safeguarding of

children and young people and safe working practices as well as matters directly related to the effective performance of their post.

15. Single central record

15.1. As per legal requirements, Plymouth CAST Schools will maintain and regularly update their single central records. All new employees will be added to the record, which will include:

- all staff who work at the school
- all others who work in regular contact with children in the school, including volunteers.

15.2. For each individual, the single central record will outline whether or not the following checks have been carried out/certificates obtained, along with the date of the check:

- An identity check
- A barred list check
- An enhanced DBS check
- A prohibition from teaching check
- Further checks on people living or working outside the UK
- A check of professional qualifications
- A check to establish the person's right to work in the UK

Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

All posts within Plymouth CAST are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Applicants will be required to declare spent and unspent convictions, cautions and bind-overs, including those regarded as spent and have an Enhanced Criminal Records Disclosure.

Record Keeping

Documentation relating to applicants should be treated with strict confidence and in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act. Under this legislation applicants will have the right to request feedback and to access any documentation held on them, in relation to the recruitment and selection process.

Proper documentation and records will be kept relating to all aspects of the recruitment process, including information on the assessment of individual candidates. Information required to review and monitor implementation of Plymouth CAST's policies on safer recruitment, and equal opportunities must also be kept. The confidential nature of information gathered on individual candidates will be respected at all times. However, there are occasions when Plymouth CAST may be required to provide such information under an FOI or subject data access request.

Annex 1: Flowchart of Disclosure and Barring Service criminal record checks and barred list checks. (DfE, p. 30)

