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OUTSTANDING IN ALL AREAS

CHERRY TREE SCHOOL SAFER RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION POLICY

DATE AGREED / REVIEWED: SEPTEMBER 2017, SEPTEMBER 2018,
SEPTEMBER 2019, SEPTEMBER 2020, SEPTEMBER 2021, SEPTEMBER
2022, SEPTEMBER 2023, SEPTEMBER 2024, SEPTEMBER 2025

DATE OF NEXT REVIEW: SEPTEMBER 2026

HEADTEACHER SIGNATURE:

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE CHAIR SIGNATURE:

ALL STAFF MUST HAVE ACCESS TO THIS POLICY, AND SIGN TO
CONFIRM THAT THEY HAVE READ, UNDERSTOOD AND WILL
ADHERE TO ITS CONTENTS.

Cherry Tree Safer Recruitment and Selection Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework for the recruitment and selection of staff which promotes best practice and facilitates the selection, attraction and retention of the best possible people through a fair and merit-based process and meets 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' statutory guidance.

The policy aims to provide clear guidance to managers in relation to both the selection and appointment of staff. This policy promotes and supports good practice for those with responsibility for recruitment and aims to ensure the process is free from bias and discrimination.

General Principles

- This policy is designed to assist with the recruitment and selection of the best candidate for a vacancy.
- Normally appointments must be made in accordance with this policy and must, therefore, be subject to advertisement and interview.
- Cherry Tree will seek to recruit the best candidate for the job based on merit. The recruitment and selection process should ensure the identification of the person best suited to the job and the organisation.
- Cherry Tree will ensure that the recruitment and selection of staff is conducted in a professional, timely and responsive manner and in compliance with current employment and other appropriate legislation.
- Appropriate training, development and support will be available to those involved in recruitment and selection activities. Any member of staff involved in the selection of staff should satisfy him or herself that he/she is appropriately trained and can comply with the requirements of this policy and procedure.
- Those involved in interviewing must be trained in Safer Recruitment procedures.
- All candidates will be treated fairly, equitably, equally and with respect. The candidate experience should be positive, irrespective of the outcome.
- Cherry Tree promote best practice in recruitment and selection and aim to ensure the process is cost effective.
- All documentation relating to applicants will be treated and processed confidentially in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

New Vacancies

- The occurrence of a vacancy (whether it is a new vacancy or a replacement for a leaver) is an opportunity to review the necessity for the post and its duties, responsibilities and level. The job should be analysed in order to determine the business requirements.

Job Description (details of the role)

- A job description and ideally a person specification must be produced or updated for any vacant post that is to be filled.
- The job description should accurately reflect the elements of the post, to include the purpose of the job, duties and responsibilities, accountability and such like.
- The person specification should state both the essential and desirable criteria in terms of skills, aptitudes, knowledge and experience for the job, all of which should be directly related to the job and applied equally to all applicants. Care should be taken when writing the person specification to ensure that criteria used do not indirectly discriminate against certain groups of applicants.
- The job description and person specification together should provide a full picture of what the job entails. Further particulars for the job should also be made available for prospective employees through links to the Company website and so forth.

Advertising

- Advertisements will be gender neutral (save where gender is a genuine occupational qualification for the position). All adverts should make it clear that the Company is an Equal Opportunity Employer and will not discriminate on the grounds of disability, sex, sexual orientation, race, religion, religious belief, caste, maternity, pregnancy or age.
- Where practicable, all vacancies should be advertised internally on notice-boards as well as externally, and on the Cherry Tree website. This will help maximise equality of opportunity and provide staff with opportunities for career development, thus maintaining the skills and expertise of existing staff. In exceptional circumstances the need to advertise may be waived, for example for specialist positions or in the case of internal promotions.
- Advertisements should contain a safeguarding statement as per below, as well as basic information such as job title etc.
- All candidates will be required to complete the Cherry Tree application form (ensuring a consistent approach can be applied to short-listing).
- The application form is gender and race neutral. Appropriate applicants may be asked if they suffer from a disability, in which case consideration should

be given to the disability in considering whether any steps may be taken or adjustments made to the interview process or to the job functions of the position that is vacant. Candidates will be required to provide a full employment history since leaving education, including accounting for any gaps in employment. If they have worked with children or vulnerable adults in the past, their reasons for leaving previous posts and employment dates will also be verified where practicable.

- Applicants should be provided with sufficient information to make an informed decision regarding their suitability for the role - this would normally include access to the job description and person specification, and also to further particulars for the role and wider Company information.
- Staff who have been in an acting position that subsequently becomes vacant will have to apply for the position when it is advertised, but in such cases the position may be advertised on an internal basis only.

Processing Applications and Short-listing

- After the closing date or at regular intervals short-listing can commence. The recruiting manager should arrange an interview panel to assist with both the short-listing and the subsequent interviews. Applications can then be assessed to determine who is to be called for interview. Where possible, two members of the interview panel should undertake the task of short-listing. Short-listing decisions should be based on evidence that the applicant has met the requirements of the job description and person specification. Care should be taken to avoid dismissing applicants who appear to be over-qualified. Assumptions should not be made about their reasons for applying for the post as this may eliminate an otherwise exemplary candidate.
- The original applications for all applicants, together with a written note of reasons for short-listing or rejecting applicants must be retained for a minimum of 6 months from the date that a decision is made in case of complaint to an Employment Tribunal.
- The confidentiality of applications must be respected by all of those involved in the selection process. All data must be treated confidentially and in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

Interviewing and Assessment

- Interviews should normally be carried out by a minimum of two people. For most positions a panel interview is recommended. All interviews for one post should be conducted by the same panel to ensure a consistent and fair approach. Interviewers should familiarise themselves with applications prior to the interviews. All interviewers should have undertaken Safer Recruitment

training. Selection is a two-way process: candidates are assessing the role and the organisation. Those involved in recruitment should consider how best to convey a positive image.

- It is recommended that a range of selection methods, that are suitable for assessing both the essential and desirable criteria in the person specification, are used as this will enhance objective decision making which is difficult through interview alone.
- Interview questions and the structure of the interview should be consistently applied to all candidates and should be based on the job description and person specification and used to assess the candidate's suitability to work with in the school. Supplementary questions should be used to probe for further information or clarification where answers are incomplete or ambiguous. Care must be taken to avoid questions that could be construed as discriminatory. Familiarity with the vacancy and preparation for the interview is key to successful interviewing.
- Once the format for assessment has been agreed, candidates should be contacted, allowing as much notice as possible for them to attend. Care must be taken when initiating contacts with applicants that all are treated in the same way, for example with regard to invitations to interview, informal meetings to discuss the vacancy, and provision of information. When contacting short-listed candidates, letters, phone calls or e-mails should include:
 - date, time and place of the interview
 - instructions on how and where to find the interview venue
 - a request that they contact the author of the letter/message if they have any particular requirements or to discuss the interview facilities (related to access to the venue or any other need related to a disability in accordance with the Equality Act 2010)
 - if appropriate, details of any test or presentation they will be required to take or anything they should bring with them (e.g., examples of work, a group exercise)
 - a request that they bring at least 3 forms of ID with them to complete a DBS check and to demonstrate their right to work in the UK (see below)
- The Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006 makes it an offence to employ anyone who does not have permission to be in, or work in, the UK. To avoid making assumptions about such permission, it is the interviewing Manager's responsibility to ask all appointees if they have the right to work in the UK and to advise them that if offered a position, they will be required

to produce evidence of their eligibility to work in the UK. It is unlawful racial discrimination to carry out checks only on potential employees who by their appearance or accent seem to be other than British. It is therefore a requirement to ask all candidates to produce evidence of their right to work in the UK (for example, a British passport). In order to make the recruitment process as efficient as possible, candidates will also be asked to bring at least 3 forms of ID to interview so that they can complete a DBS check.

- Notes recording the salient points of the interview should be taken, ideally by the interviewers, so that they can refer back to these when assessing candidates against the person specification and making decisions. Notes of the interview and any other notes on the candidate taken during the recruitment and selection process should be kept for a minimum of 12 months following the selection process. An interview assessment form should be completed for each candidate.
- In the event that a candidate requests feedback about their performance in the selection process this should be arranged by the interviewing manager.
- It is best practice to write to candidates who have not been shortlisted and advise them that they have not been successful on this occasion, but if this is not possible due to limited resources, the job advertisement should make clear that after a certain period, if they have not heard from Cherry Tree, applicants should consider themselves not to have been shortlisted.

Decisions to Appoint

- Following interviews and any other selection methods such as group exercises and such like, the panel should discuss and compare the ratings of all interviewed candidates and make a decision based on merit. A written reason for each decision should be made, and candidates should be notified of the outcome as soon as possible. Selection decisions will be retained for a minimum of 12 months after the decision date.
- Successful candidates should be made a verbal offer, ensuring that any offer is clearly conditional on the receipt of two satisfactory references (one of which must be from the current or previous employer) and an Enhanced Disclosures and Barring Service check, as well as evidence that the individual has the right to work in the UK, verification of employment history and where the role is conditional upon certain qualifications, the original certificates must be produced. Candidates who will be working directly with young persons will not be able to commence work until these are received.
- Verbal offers should be promptly followed up with a written offer, and DBS checks, references and verification of employment history should be requested as soon as possible after receiving verbal acceptance of the post. These often take a long time to be processed and can delay start dates.

Where possible, references will be requested prior to the interviews taking place, with suitable permission.

- If the role requires specific qualifications, evidence of these must also be sought prior to the candidate commencing employment, and a verified copy should be maintained on the individual's personal file.
- Where the successful candidate is disabled, reasonable adjustments may need to be considered depending on their disability in consultation with them. This should be done as soon as possible after appointment. Cherry Tree has a duty to consider what reasonable adjustments can be made to working practices, or premises, or to enable access to goods, facilities and services by disabled people. A risk assessment will be required under these circumstances.
- A full employment history should be obtained from each candidate. This should have been included in the application form, but if there are gaps this should be addressed directly with the individual, and an explanation should be placed on file. All dates should be cross checked against references and the application form, and any discrepancies should be addressed immediately.

References

- The purpose of seeking references is to obtain objective and factual information to support appointment decisions. They should always be sought and obtained directly from the referee. References will not be accepted from relatives except in exceptional circumstances. Appropriate referees are those who have direct experience of a candidate's work, education or training: preferably in a supervisory capacity. A reference must be obtained from the current or previous employer. If two employment references are not available, a personal reference should be obtained. References should be in writing on headed paper where possible and should be clearly verified by telephone using the appropriate verification form. If after requesting references in writing this is not forthcoming, a follow up telephone call should be made and on these occasions a telephone reference may be obtained. When verifying references, it is important to ask whether or not the referee would have any concerns with the candidate working with vulnerable young people. References are confidential and must be sought 'in confidence' and placed on the individual's personal file once individuals join the organisation.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks

- Cherry Tree require staff to have Enhanced DBS checks, due to the nature of the business, and for appointments in school and all those engaged in regulated activity, an enhanced DBS Certificate which includes barred list information. Applicants are required to disclose any 'unspent' and "spent"

criminal convictions as part of their application, in line with the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and 2023. This would also be verified at interview.

- Other checks and evidence made are:
 - Prohibition check (using Employer Access Online Service), reference requests, verification of identity, the candidate's mental and physical fitness to carry out their responsibilities, right to work in the UK and verification of professional qualifications.
 - In October 2014, the Department for Education issued an update to its Statutory Guidance 'Keeping Children Safe'.
 - This update requires schools which provide care for pupils under the age of 8, to ensure that staff and volunteers working in these settings are not disqualified from doing so under the Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2009.
 - Although Cherry Tree does not work with children under the age of 8 years old, there may be a time when we might work alongside another school who may have this age group present.
 - A person may be disqualified by:
 - Having certain orders or other restrictions placed upon them
 - Having committed certain offences
 - Living in the same household as someone who is disqualified by virtue of 1 and 2 above (this is known as disqualification by association)
 - All staff sign a disqualification declaration

Single Central Record

- All staff who work at the school; the proprietors, members of the management committee and volunteers, are included in the single central record which shows the date on which all checks were made, the person carrying out the check and their role.

Existing Staff

- If Cherry Tree has concerns about an existing staff member's suitability to work with children, the company should carry out all relevant checks as if the person were a new member of staff.
- If any member of staff has harmed or poses a risk of harm to a child and has been removed from working in regulated activity, they will be referred to the DBS who will consider whether to bar the person.
- If a teacher is dismissed or they have left after serious misconduct and would have been dismissed if they had stayed, this should be referred to the Secretary of State to investigate the case.

Induction and Probation

- All new staff will have a probationary period of 3 months, during which they will be closely supervised and supported in order to ensure that they are capable of performing their role properly.
- In cases where there is a problem during the probationary period, the staff member may not be subject to Staff policy and procedures. Rather, the process will be managed as described below.
- In cases where there is doubt about the capability and/or performance of the staff member, the probationary period may be extended. In these cases, the staff member will be made aware of the reasons for extending the probationary period and will receive any necessary training and support to assist them in achieving the required standard. In addition, if work performance is not up to the required standard, or the individual is considered to be generally unsuitable for the role, employment may be terminated at any time with appropriate notice.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher and or the Management Committee