



Nourishing the fitrah of each unique child

Recruitment and Selection Policy

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

“Every one of you is a shepherd and is responsible for his flock...”

(Sahih Muslim 1829)

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| Updated: January 2024 | Review date: January 2025 | Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Sanaa Arshad Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSDL): Nadia Abdul Khaliq |
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Adopted: January 2024

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Recruitment and Selection Policy

This recruitment and selection policy has been produced in line with the Department for Education (DfE)'s guidance on 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'.

Its purpose is to ensure the practice of safe recruitment of staff, ensuring the process is conducted in a fair, effective and economic manner and to ensure those that are responsible for each stage of the recruitment process demonstrate a professional approach by dealing honestly, efficiently and fairly with all applicants.

Aims

Unique Academy is committed to attracting, selecting and retaining the best possible employees who will successfully and positively contribute to providing excellent education and care for children.

A motivated and committed workforce with appropriate knowledge, skills, experience and ability to do the job is critical to the Unique Academy's performance and fundamental to the delivery of a high-quality service.

The recruitment and selection process will identify the person best suited to the job based on the applicant's abilities, qualifications, experience and merit, measured against the job description and person specification.

Equal Opportunities

We are committed to providing equal opportunities and ensuring that all stages of recruitment and selection are fair.

Any candidate with a disability will not be excluded unless the candidate is unable to perform a duty that is intrinsic to the role, having considered reasonable adjustments.

Reasonable adjustments to the recruitment process will be made to ensure that no applicant is disadvantaged because of his/her disability.

Roles and Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the trustees to ensure Unique Academy has effective policies and procedures in place for recruitment of all staff, contractors, volunteers and agency workers in accordance with legal requirements and guidance and to monitor compliance.

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher and Trustees to ensure that Unique Academy operates safer recruitment procedures and makes sure all appropriate checks are carried out on all staff, contractors who work at Unique Academy, agency workers and volunteers before the work or volunteering commences.

Responsibilities also include monitoring contractors' and agencies' compliance with this document and promoting the welfare of children and young people at every stage of the procedure.

All line managers should be aware that satisfactory enhanced DBS disclosures must be received for all new staff. The headteacher may authorise a new member of staff to start work prior to receipt of a satisfactory DBS disclosure providing that:

- the enhanced DBS disclosure has been applied for before the start date
- a satisfactory separate barred list check has been completed
- all other checks (including references) have been completed
- and a written risk assessment has been conducted, with satisfactory measures put in place to supervise the new member of staff. This risk assessment must be reviewed fortnightly until the satisfactory DBS disclosure is received.

Advertising And The Initial Process Of Recruiting

The following procedures and practices are in place to ensure the safe recruitment of staff and to ensure equality of opportunity.

Advertising

We will generally advertise vacant posts to encourage as wide a field of applicants as possible. Normally this entails internal and external advertisement in relevant publications or websites, including the Unique Academy's own website. Any advertisement will include a clear statement of the Unique Academy's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

Unique Academy also advertises for vacancies on recruitment platforms.

Job description

The job description outlines the general nature of the post including the main duties and responsibilities and it will identify the line manager for the post. It also incorporates the person specification (qualifications, attributes and skills required) and it is these criteria that are used as short-listing criteria by those scrutinising the applications. Other information included is a description of Unique Academy and/or department, background information to the post, further details such as closing date, salary etc.

Application pack

Candidates who email the school directly to enquire about a particular vacancy will be supplied with:

- a school application form
- a job description for the role they are considering applying for

Unique Academy uses its own school application form. All applicants for employment are required to complete this form before their application. This form contains questions about their academic achievements and full employment history. All applicants are required to account for any gaps or discrepancies in employment history and provide reasons for moving between posts. CVs will not be accepted.

The application form includes the applicant's declaration regarding convictions and working with children and will make it clear that the post is exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

All applicants will be made aware that providing false information is an offence and could result in the application being rejected or summary dismissal if the applicant has been selected and possible referral to the police and other professional regulatory bodies.

Candidates from recruitment platforms

Candidates who contact us through recruitment platforms are:

1. Shortlisted for an initial telephone interview, if they meet our criteria
2. Interviewed by 2 members of staff from the school team (With at least 1 having safer recruitment training)
3. If successful, they are provided with the application pack documentation and all other necessary vetting checks to complete

We follow this procedure with candidates from recruitment platforms because they have, at times, already completed vetting checks with the recruitment platform.

But in all cases, we ensure to conduct the same vetting checks for all candidates whether they apply via email, telephone call or via recruitment platforms.

Received Applications and Short-Listing

Handling applications

- Applications submitted will be reviewed by the Headteacher
- All those involved in the short-listing process (Headteacher/SLT) have a responsibility to scrutinise the application forms carefully.
- In addition to judging the application against the criteria for the post, anyone noticing an anomaly should make a written note to that effect. This scrutiny will form part of the specific questions regarding safeguarding during the formal interview process.
- Any applicant who has not completed the Unique Academy's application form in full will be asked to do so if they wish to have their application considered further.

References

References of applicants who meet the short-listing criteria will be taken up, where possible, before interview. Referees are sent the following:

- standard letter via email
- a copy of the job description
- Unique Academy 's standard reference template, which should be completed in addition to any written reference provided.

Referees must include the most recent employer as well as the most recent employer who has known the candidate working with children if relevant.

Open references or references that are solely character references from close family members or friends are not acceptable (except in highly exceptional circumstances where a candidate has limited work experience or other circumstances where a second reference has been actively sought after but cannot be obtained).

Where a reference appears inadequate or incomplete, invites further contact, or contains conflicting information, contact should be made by a designated member of staff by telephone, to probe further.

The referee's copy of the job description should not include the salary details where a precise figure or hourly rate is included (which is often the case in teaching support posts).

Shortlisting

The Headteacher and Trustees will scrutinise shortlisted applicants cross-referencing candidates against the criteria in the job description and the person specification.

In addition to judging the application form against the criteria for the post, anyone noticing an anomaly in the information provided will make a written note to that effect to be followed up at interview, if applicable.

Interview Process

All short-listed candidates are contacted by telephone, email, or on a recruitment platform, and invited to attend the second stage of the recruitment process, which is a formal interview. The candidate's availability is agreed with them.

Interview pack

The interview email should request the following documentation:

- 1 proof of identification (Passport, Driving licence or UK birth certificate)
- 2 proofs of address (Council tax bill, bank statement within 3 months, utility bill (not a telephone bill) within 3 months)
- Qualification certificate (GCSE's, A/AS Levels/Degree/Teaching qualification/Masters/PhD etc)
- CPD certificates (First Aid, Safeguarding training etc)
- Presentation or lesson observation details, as appropriate to the role (more information about this is explained below)

Details of how many interviewees there will be, their position within the school, the schools address should be included in the email and the duration of the meeting should be made known to the candidate.

Interview programme

The interview process will explore the applicant's ability to carry out the job description and meet the person specification.

The process includes:

- tour of school and where the candidate will work, if successful, will be conducted by a member of SLT
- the candidate teaching a lesson (for teaching posts, usually observed by the relevant SLT member)
- a test relevant to post (for admin staff)

Teaching a lesson is an essential aspect of the process for making a teaching appointment. Information will be supplied to the teaching candidate ahead of the interview day providing the context and content of the lesson to be taught. Candidates are given the opportunity to ask any questions they may have about this aspect of the interview process.

Each interview process must include at least one person who has successfully undergone Safer Recruitment training.

Core interview questions to be asked of all candidates, as set out in the 'interview record sheets' tailored for each relevant job post. Specific questions relating to an individual's application will be agreed by the interviewers.

During the interview

Candidates will always be required to:

- explain satisfactorily any gaps in employment or significant periods of time working or living abroad
- explain satisfactorily any anomalies or discrepancies in the information available to the interviewers
- declare any information that is likely to appear on an enhanced disclosure
- demonstrate their capacity to safeguard and protect the welfare of children and young people.

Notes are taken of responses and of any questions asked by the interviewee.

During the interview process relevant qualifications etc. will be scrutinised and checked by the school administrator. Copies taken will be dated and signed to show that originals have been seen.

Any information regarding past disciplinary action or allegations, cautions or convictions will be discussed and considered in the circumstances of the individual case during the interview process.

Candidate Selection

Final selection meeting

This is held as soon as possible after the interview candidates have departed. This meeting involves all those involved in the selection/interview process. A record of decision making to appoint (or not) an individual ahead of others must be noted in the interview record sheet (or online recruitment platform), to ensure that there is a record to provide clear honest feedback to the unsuccessful candidate/s if required.

Interviewers review any notes they have made with them (including lesson observations or lesson plans which have been sent from candidates); these are collected and filed into each candidate's application file.

All notes (including those of rejected candidates) are stored for a minimum of 6 months. Notes regarding the successful candidate are transferred to their personnel file.

Contacting referees by telephone

If there are any queries around information provided on a reference, a verbal contact must be gained from the referee, ensuring that we are speaking directly with the referee, questioning the areas on the reference that require further clarification and evaluating the response.

Accurate notes of the telephone call should be made (the written references should be annotated, dated and initialled).

Communicating the outcome

The Headteacher will email the successful candidate as soon as possible.

The job offer letter together with the contract of employment is drafted by the Headteacher.

The job letter states that it is a provisional/conditional offer, subject to the receipt of:

- Two satisfactory references (if both references not received prior to interview)
- DBS enhanced disclosure check
- Proof of identity document
- Proof of address documents
- Proof of right to work in the UK (if no British passport)
- Original copies of qualifications having been seen
- Completion of medical fitness for the post.

When the contract of employment has been signed and returned, rejects are informed that they have been unsuccessful, and the job advertisement is closed.

If the successful candidate declines the offer of the post, the selection committee reconvenes to reconsider the other applicants. If no suitable previous applicants are found, the post remains open and interviews continue.

New Employee Administration and Induction

A safer recruitment checklist will be used to track, and audit paperwork obtained in accordance with Safer Recruitment guidelines. This checklist will be retained on personal files.

Pre-employment vetting checks and commencing employment

A new appointee should not commence employment until all criteria have been met. The process of checking qualifications, verifying identity and prohibitions, suitability of a newly appointed member of staff must be logged carefully on the Single Central Register. Vetting checks will be determined by whether an individual will be involved in regulated activity.

All qualified teachers and SLT will be checked for the following:

- those that have been prohibited from teaching
- those that have failed to successfully complete their induction or probation period
- those that may be the subject of a suspension or conditional order imposed by the General Teaching Council for England (prior to abolition) that is still current.

The single central record

In addition to the various staff records kept at Unique Academy and on individual personnel files, a single central record of recruitment and vetting checks is kept in accordance with DfE requirements. This is kept up-to-date by the Headteacher.

The single central record contains details of the following:

- all employees who are employed to work at Unique Academy
- all employees who are employed as supply staff to Unique Academy whether employed directly or through an agency
- all others who have been chosen by Unique Academy to have regular contact with children. This will cover volunteers, trustees, peripatetic staff and people brought into Unique Academy to provide additional teaching or instruction for pupils but who are not staff members e.g. sports coaches etc.

Vetting checks

Identity checks and right to work

All applicants invited to attend an interview at Unique Academy will be required to bring their identification documentation such as: passport; UK birth certificate, driving licence etc. with them as proof of identity/eligibility to work in the UK in accordance with those set out in the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006 and the DBS Code of Practice Regulations. Copies of these original documents should be taken and our safer recruitment checklist will be dated and signed to verify that the documents have been seen and these should be retained on personnel files.

All employees of Unique Academy (unless otherwise agreed) are in regulated activity and therefore the Enhanced DBS Disclosure, including barred list check will be required.

If the candidate does not have a DBS in place at their current employment that can be used (three-month rule), the Headteacher will write directly in the job offer letter to the successful candidate regarding arrangements for an enhanced disclosure application from the Disclosure and Barring Service.

This is before any start date, and as soon as practicable after an appointment, but no earlier than three months before employment commences.

It is Unique Academy's policy to re-check employee's DBS certificates for any employee that takes leave for more than three months (e.g. career breaks etc.) before they return to work. Parallel entries of subsequent DBS checks will be recorded on the Single Central Register.

Members of staff at Unique Academy should be made aware of their obligation to inform the Headteacher of any cautions or convictions that arise between these checks taking place.

Barred list

A separate barred list check must be undertaken if an enhanced disclosure is not received in advance of a member of staff starting work in regulatory activity or where a 'portable' disclosure is used. It is illegal for schools to employ anyone who is on the barred list.

Medical fitness

There are certain questions Unique Academy may ask at an interview stage to determine whether applicants can undertake a function which is intrinsic to the job.

Anyone appointed to a post involving regular contact with children must possess the appropriate level of physical and mental fitness before any appointment offer is confirmed. All successful applicants are requested to complete a confidential medical questionnaire and where appropriate a doctor's medical report may be required.

Qualifications

New employees will be asked to present original documents or certificates of relevant registration, training or qualifications so that copies can be lodged on their personnel file.

Disqualification

Under the Childcare Act 2006 and the Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2009 staff can be disqualified from working in or being concerned in the management of childcare. Any employee likely to fall into this category completes a declaration form and is asked to keep Unique Academy informed of any changes in their personal circumstances.

Additional checks on those who have lived abroad

The application for an enhanced DBS check may be submitted whilst an applicant is overseas so long as identity documents have been checked from a reliable source. If the applicant has lived abroad for more than three months in the last five years they will be required to provide Unique Academy with evidence, such as an official certificate of good conduct, or police or criminal record check from their country of origin. Extra references may also be required.

Rehabilitation of offenders disclosure

Unique Academy is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and therefore all convictions, cautions and bind-overs, including those considered as 'spent', must be declared. If an applicant has a criminal record this will not automatically debar them from employment. Each case will be assessed fairly by the SLT.

Any employee who is convicted of, or cautioned for, any offence during their employment with Unique Academy must immediately notify in writing the Headteacher of the offence and penalty.

Induction

All new staff will be required to undertake induction. This will include:

Part 1

- Online training (Safeguarding in education, Prevent and FGM)

Part 2

- Internal Induction training (2 days voluntarily) onsite paperwork completion/ shadowing/observation/handover

Record retention/data protection

All interview notes on all applicants will be retained for a period of 6 months after which time the notes will be destroyed (i.e. shredded). The six-month retention period is in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and will also allow Unique Academy to deal with any data access requests, recruitment complaints or to respond to any complaints made to an employment tribunal.

Data protection

Unique Academy processes information about an individual's criminal convictions in accordance with its data protection policy on processing special categories of personal data. Data collected during recruitment is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of completing the recruitment process. Inappropriate access or disclosure of employee data constitutes a data breach and should be reported in accordance with Unique Academy's data protection policy immediately. It may also constitute a disciplinary offence, which will be dealt with under this disciplinary procedure.

Unique Academy is also committed to going through the proper DBS channels to establish whether an individual has a criminal record. Unique Academy will not require job applicants or existing employees to use their subject access rights under data protection provisions to provide criminal record details.

Ongoing employment

It is recognised that safer recruitment and selection is not just about the start of employment but should be part of a larger policy framework for all staff. Unique Academy will therefore provide ongoing training and support for all staff, as identified through the annual review/appraisal procedure.

Monitoring

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that this policy is monitored and evaluated throughout Unique Academy. This will be undertaken through a yearly safer recruitment evaluation audit which will be presented to the Headteacher to report to the trustees. The Headteacher has the responsibility for monitoring this policy and the single central register.

Use of contractors

Contractors that are used within Unique Academy should comply with the schools safeguarding and safer recruitment regulations. The identity of contractors will be checked on arrival by the School Administrator, they will be included in the risk assessment. Employees of contractors who work at Unique Academy on a long-term basis will be subject to the same checks as school employees.

Supply staff/agency workers

Written confirmation is requested from supply agencies that it has satisfactorily completed all relevant checks for that post, including an enhanced DBS disclosure, and confirming whether the DBS discloses any information and that it is not more than three months old (or three years old if they have been in continuous employment with that same agency).

The agency and worker must provide to Unique Academy the following documents ahead of commencement:

- supply agency letter confirming that all relevant recruitment paperwork is in place
- copy of the DBS certificate
- photographic identification.

A record of the checks for supply staff will be included in the single central register. Access to the check is only required where there is information contained in the enhanced DBS Disclosure. Any such information would be treated as confidential and a documented risk assessment conducted.

Identity checks will be carried out to confirm that an individual arriving at Unique Academy is the individual whom the agency has referred to and that any notes provided on the DBS of previous cautions or convictions noted are acceptable for the individual to be working within the school. This decision will be taken by the Headteacher.

Volunteers

Volunteers who are working within Unique Academy must gain the authorisation of the Headteacher or Head of Early Years. Volunteers are supervised and assessed to see whether they will be in regulated activity; if they are they will be asked to complete:

- Identity checks
- A reduced application form
- An enhanced disclosure from the DBS will be applied for
- 2 references will be obtained
- An informal interview will be completed

Where checks are carried out these will be recorded on the single central register.

One off volunteers for day outings etc. do not require vetting checks but must never be left unsupervised or undertake personal care and must be included in the risk assessment.

Regular volunteers receive a letter of agreement confirming that they will not be asked to take sole responsibility for any individual pupils or groups and that they should always expect to have the support of a member of staff and work under their supervision, support and guidance. This member of staff is identified in this letter.

All volunteers are asked to read the staff code of conduct and the safeguarding and child protection policy to acknowledge in writing that they have understood these and have no further questions.

Visiting speakers

As visiting speakers are not left alone with pupils they are not subject to safe recruitment vetting checks. However, it is Unique Academy's responsibility to ensure that visiting speakers are suitable and that they are appropriately supervised. Invitations to guest speakers must be agreed with the Headteacher before the invitation is confirmed.

Visiting professionals

The identity of visiting professionals should be checked on arrival. These include healthcare professionals, sports instructors, referees, consultants, trainee teachers etc. Appropriate checks should have been carried out by their employing organisation and confirmed to Unique Academy via email.

Trustees

Will be subject to the following checks:

- An enhanced DBS check
- Barred list (only if engaging in regulated activity)
- ID checks
- Overseas checks (if applicable)
- Right to work
- Disqualification checks would also be undertaken if they volunteer to work in relevant childcare on a regular basis or if they were to be directly involved in the day-to-day management of the school.

Signed by

Headteacher: *H. Mbombo*

Date: 01/01/2024