

Viking Academy Trust



Safer Recruitment Policy Statement

The VIKING ACADEMY TRUST 'Safer Recruitment Policy Statement' has been written following DfE guidance.

Approved by the Trust: Term 5 2017

Reviewed biennially: Term 1

Last review date: Term 1 2018

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Roby', is placed over a light grey rectangular background.

Chair of Trust

Safer Recruitment Policy Statement

The Viking Academy Trust

Schools in the Viking Academy Trust (VAT)

These are:

Chilton Primary School
Ramsgate Arts Primary School
Upton Junior School

This 'Safer Recruitment Policy Statement' is for the aforementioned schools.

Safer Recruitment Policy Statement

The safe recruitment of staff in schools is the first step to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the children in education. The Viking Academy Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. It is recognised that this can only be achieved through sound procedures, good inter-agency cooperation and the recruitment and retention of competent, motivated employees who are suited to, and fulfilled in the roles they undertake.

This Trust recognises the value of, and seeks to achieve a diverse workforce which includes people from different backgrounds with different skills and abilities. The Viking Academy Trust is committed to ensuring that the recruitment and selection of all who work within the Viking Academy Trust is conducted in a manner that is systematic, efficient, effective and promotes equality of opportunity. The Viking Academy Trust will uphold its obligations under law and national collective agreements to not discriminate against applicants for employment on the grounds of age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, religion or creed.

This document provides a good practice framework to comply with the principles set down in the Trust's Single Equality Scheme.

All posts within the Trust are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and therefore all 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.

The Viking Academy Trust is committed to ensuring people who have been convicted are treated fairly and given every opportunity to establish their suitability for positions. Having a criminal record will not necessarily be a bar to obtaining a position.

Safer Recruitment Training

The Viking Academy Trust will:

- ensure that appropriate staff who undertake recruitment have received safe recruitment training
- work towards every appointment panel to include one member who has received safe recruitment training
- implement robust recruitment procedures and checks for appointing staff and volunteers to ensure that reasonable steps are taken not to appoint a person who is unsuitable to work with children, or who is disqualified from working with children, or does not have the suitable skills and experience for the intended role.
- ensure that the Prevent Strategy is taken into due consideration and staff all have an understanding of the implications involved
- keep and maintain a single central record of recruitment and vetting checks in line with DfE requirements
- ensure that the terms of any contract with a contractor or agency requires them to adopt and implement measures described in this procedure. The Trust will monitor the compliance with these measures.
- require staff who are convicted or cautioned for any criminal offence during their employment with the school to notify the school, in writing of the offence and the penalty.
- require staff to complete a disqualification disclaimer form which includes notifying the trust of any disqualification by association/

The following pre-employment checks will be undertaken:

- Receipt of at least two satisfactory references, one of which will be from the former or most recent employer

- Verification of the candidate's identity in line with the requirements of The Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006
- A check against the enhanced ISA Children's BAR list
- A satisfactory DBS clearance
- Verification of the candidate's medical fitness (clearance from Occupational Health where applicable)
- Verification of qualifications
- Verification of professional registration as required by law for teachers
- Verification of successful completion of induction period (for those who obtained QTS after 7 May 1999)

Roles and responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the Board of Trustees to:

- Ensure the school has effective policies and procedures in place for the recruitment of all staff and volunteers in accordance with DfE guidance and legal requirements
- Monitor the Viking Academy Trust school's compliance with them

It is the responsibility of the Executive Headteacher and other school leaders involved in recruitment to:

- Ensure that Viking schools operate safe recruitment procedures and makes sure all appropriate checks are carried out on all staff and volunteers who work in each school
- To monitor contractors' and agencies' compliance with this document
- Promote welfare of children and young people at every stage of the Procedure

It is the responsibility of all potential and existing workers, including volunteers to comply with this document.

It is the responsibility of all contractors and agencies to comply with safe recruitment pre-employment checks.

It is the responsibility of the Trust's HR provider (KCC School's Personnel Service -SPS 'Silver Package') to:

Deal with the administration of the disclosure system for the school. In accordance with the Viking Academy Trust Staffing Regulations, the Board of Trustees have delegated responsibility to the Executive Headteacher to lead in all appointments. Senior Leadership appointments (appointments on LPR) will involve Local Governors / Trustees.

Members of Viking Governance (Trustees and/or Local governors) may be involved in staff appointments, but the final decision will rest with the Executive Headteacher. The Executive Headteacher may delegate the selection process of staff outside of the leadership group to other leaders across the Viking Academy Trust, but remains responsible for the decision to appoint.

The Procedure

Advertising

To ensure equality of opportunity, the Viking Academy Trust will advertise all vacant posts to encourage as wide a field of candidates as possible, normally this will entail an external advertisement.

However, where there is a reasonable expectation that there are sufficient qualified internal candidates or where staff are at risk of redundancy, an internal advertisement may be considered appropriate.

Applications

The form - The Viking Academy Trust uses a standard application form (Kent-Teach template). CVs will only be accepted as part of wider additional documents submitted by the applicant.

The Viking Academy Trust requires candidates to account for any gaps or discrepancies in employment history on this application form. Where an applicant is shortlisted, these gaps will be discussed at interview.

Applicants should be 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.

References

References for shortlisted candidates will be sent for immediately after shortlisting and BEFORE interview. The only exception to this is where candidates have indicated on their application forms that they do not wish their current employer to be contacted. In such cases, this reference will be

taken up immediately after interview and prior to any offer of employment being made. One reference will always be sought prior to interview wherever possible.

References must be in writing and be specific to the job for which the candidate has applied - open references or testimonials are not acceptable. The school will not accept references from relatives or people writing solely in the capacity as a friend. Only references from a trusted authoritative source will be acceptable.

Reference requests will specifically ask:

- About the referee's relationship with the candidate
- Whether the referee is completely satisfied that the candidate is suitable to work with children and, if not, for specific details of the concerns and the reasons why the referee believes that the person might be unsuitable.

Referees will also be asked to confirm details of:

- The applicant's current post, salary and attendance record (where appropriate)
- Performance history and conduct (if known)
- Any disciplinary procedures in which the sanction is current
- Any disciplinary procedures involving issues related to the safety and welfare of children, including any in which the sanction has expired and the outcome of those
- Details of any allegations or concerns that have been raised that relate to the safety and welfare of children or behaviour towards children and the outcome of these concerns
- The Viking Academy Trust uses a standard Reference Request Form (see appendices 1 & 2) to ensure the details outline above are included. References will be compared to ensure that the information provided is consistent. Any discrepancies will be taken up with the applicant at interview.

Any information about past disciplinary action or allegations will be considered in the circumstances of the individual case. Cases in which an issue was satisfactorily resolved some time ago, or an allegation was determined to be unfounded or did not require formal disciplinary sanctions, and which no further issues have been raised, are not likely to cause concern. More serious or recent concerns or issues are more likely to cause concern. A history of repeated concerns or allegations over time is also likely to give cause for concern.

Self-declaration of convictions by job applicants

The Viking Academy Trust's policy requires shortlisted applicants for all posts (including volunteers) to declare all criminal convictions whether "spent" or "unspent" and include any cautions and pending prosecution. This includes disqualification by association.

Such declarations will be made on an appropriate form and should be submitted in a sealed envelope, marked strictly private and confidential to the Executive Headteacher (or nominated senior leader)

prior to the interview. The Executive Headteacher will discuss relevant, positive declarations confidentially with the applicant at interview.

The disclosure of convictions, cautions or pending cases will not necessarily prevent employment but will be considered in the same way as positive DBS disclosures.

Interviews

The selection process will include the following:

- Face to face professional interview including a question related to safeguarding children (in line with Safer Recruitment Training)
- Young people panel / activity with children where appropriate to post applied for.

Proof of Identity and Right to Work in the UK & Verification of Qualifications and/or Professional Status.

Shortlisted applicants for all posts will be required to provide proof of identity by producing documents on the day of interview in line with those set out in The Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006. Similar information is also required to undertake a Criminal Records Bureau check on the preferred candidate.

Short-listed candidates will also be required to provide proof of their qualifications and professional status by producing documentation at interview. (This is stated in the invite to interview letter). The school will verify that candidates have actually obtained any qualifications legally required or deemed essential for the job and claimed in their application by asking to see the relevant certificate, or a letter of confirmation from the awarding body / institution. If the original documents are not available, the school will require sight of a properly certified copy. Where candidates have obtained qualifications abroad, a certified comparability check by NARIC will also be required. Proof of identity and other documentation will be verified by the Executive Headteacher /chair of the panel.

Commencement of Employment prior to DBS check being received

In unusual circumstances it is permitted to commence employment prior to receiving an enhanced DBS check. However, a check against the enhanced ISA Children's BAR list will be carried out and a medical check.

Employment Offer

It may be possible to negotiate a provisional start date with the preferred candidate, however, with the exception of DBS disclosures, the checks detailed above must all be completed BEFORE a person's appointment is confirmed. In the case of DBS disclosures, the certificate must be obtained before or as soon as practicable after appointment. Conditional offers are made at this point.

Once all pre-employment checks have been satisfactorily completed / received, an offer of employment will be made and the contract of employment issued. The contract will be issued as soon as possible but in all circumstances within 8 weeks of employment commencing.

Record Retention / Data Protection

The Viking Academy Trust will retain all interview notes on all applicants for a 6 month period, after which time the notes will be destroyed (ie: shredded). The 6 month retention period will allow the Viking school to deal with any data access requests, recruitment complaints or to respond to any complaints made to the Employment tribunal.

Under the Data Protection Act 1998, applicants have a right to request access to notes written about them during the recruitment process. Applicants who wish to access their interview notes must make a subject access request in writing to the chair of the panel within 6 months of the interview date.

Personal file records

The Viking Academy Trust will retain the following information which will make up part of the personal file, for the successful candidate:

- Application form
- References
- Disclosure of convictions form
- Proof of identification
- Proof of academic qualifications
- Proof of registration with General Teaching Council (for teaching staff)
- Certificate of Good Conduct (where applicable)
- Evidence of medical clearance from Occupational Health (where applicable)
- Evidence of the DBS clearance (ie: the notification form from SPS or the DBS certificate reference number, NOT the actual DBS form or certificate)

Single Central Record of Recruitment Vetting Checks

In line with DfE requirements, the school will keep and maintain a single central record of recruitment and vetting checks. The central list will record all staff who are employed at the school, including casual staff, supply agency staff whether employed directly or through an agency, volunteers, governors who also work as volunteers, and those who provide additional teaching or instruction for pupils but who are not staff members, eg: specialist sports coach or artist.

The central record will indicate whether or not the following have been completed:

- Identity checks
- Qualification checks for any qualifications legally required for the job

- Additionally, for those applying for teaching posts, registration check with the GTC where appropriate
- Checks of right to work in the United Kingdom
- Check against the ISA Children's BAR list
- DBS Enhanced Disclosure
- Further overseas records where appropriate. It shall also indicate who undertook the check and the date on which the check was completed or the relevant certificate obtained.

In order to record supply staff provided through an agency on the record, the Viking Academy Trust will require written confirmation from the supply agency that it has satisfactorily completed the checks described above. The Viking Academy Trust does not need to carry out checks itself except where there is information contained within the disclosure. However, identity checks must be carried out by the school to check the person arriving is the person the agency intends to refer to them. Reference will be made to the Prevent Strategy.

Probation periods (Induction)

Every newly appointed member of staff who are new to the employment of the Viking Academy Trust will be subject to the Trust's Induction period (12 months). During this time, a 360 Staff Survey will be completed at 3, 6 & 12 months. These will involve seeking views of colleagues and a 1:1 meeting with the Line Manager.

Members of the Support staff team are on a six-month probation period as stated in their contract.

Newly Qualified Teachers will be on a fixed term twelve-month contract with the Trust which is separate to them successfully completing the NQT year.

Viking Academy Trust staff will be given a copy of the DfE guidance on 'Safe Working Practice' and asked to sign a declaration that they have read and understood the document and will follow the guidelines required to maintain professional boundaries at all time.

The Viking Academy Trust has a 'Staff Code of Conduct' which will be shared with staff as part of Induction paperwork. They will also be given a safeguarding pack.

The Trust has a specific safeguarding related whistle policy which has been disseminated to all staff and volunteers.

The Trust adopts a culture of vigilance where all concerns are listened to and taken seriously.

The Trust will follow DfE and Kent Safeguarding Children Board (KSCB) allegations procedures and refer any allegation for initial consultation with the Local Authority Designated Officer.

References Requests: If a VAT employee is named as a referee:

It is Viking policy to follow the guidance below to ensure safe recruitment practice is adhered to:

- If a Viking employer is named as a referee in a reference for either a current / or previous Viking employee or a colleague in another educational setting, then this request must be shared with Viking HR department under the COO. The COO will then determine whether this request meets 'professional' standard and whom within the Trust should complete the reference. The expectation for a school reference is it is completed and signed by the Head of School or EHT (they may seek information from colleagues to complete the reference)
- Viking staff are not permitted to complete a professional reference without following the guidance above. Personal references are entirely different and the school name and address must not be given, neither should the reference content refer to the individual in a professional capacity.
- The Viking Academy Trust holds reference templates for staff. These are usually completed and returned as VAT policy. The HR department will clarify this.
- Student references will also go via HR, with the Lead Mentor usually the most appropriate staff member to complete the reference.