




# **Safer Recruitment Policy and Guidance**

*This document applies to all schools and operations of the St Teresa of Calcutta Multi-Academy Company*

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Signed by CSEL CEO: 

Signed by Chair of MAC Board : 

## Introduction

St Teresa of Calcutta Multi-Academy Company (MAC) is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. It follows Department for Education statutory guidance published in [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) (KCSIE).

This guidance sets out the recruitment process and checks that are, or may be, required for an individual working in or visiting a school, in any capacity. It also explains other aspects of the MAC's recruitment procedures.

## Key Points in the Recruitment Process

It is the policy of the MAC to recruit the most suitable candidate in accordance with the Equality Act (2010), regardless of sex, age, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, belief, religion, spent convictions, disability or any other protected characteristic and regardless of membership of a professional association or trade union. Schools of a religious character are permitted, where recruiting for teaching posts, to give preference to applicants who are Catholic and for certain leadership positions (e.g. Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and Head of Religious Education) there is a requirement that the position be filled by a practising Catholic in order to maintain the Catholic ethos of the school. This is in line with the Equality Act (2010).

Posts that are open to external candidates will always be appropriately advertised. Applications for externally advertised posts are also encouraged from internal candidates. Equal consideration is given to internal candidates during shortlisting for roles advertised externally.

Vacancies will not be advertised externally in cases of redundancy, ill health, disability, redeployment or maternity.

All adverts posted by the school must have a safeguarding paragraph, detailing the MAC's commitment to safer recruitment. This statement will also inform candidates that we will undertake online searches on shortlisted candidates and social media checks for the successful candidate. An example of this is below

*We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. This post is subject to an enhanced DBS check. As per KCSIE we will also undertake online searches for all shortlisted candidates. We will also undertake a social media check for the successful candidate. If you have any questions regarding this process please email [XXXXX](#)*

A copy of the successful applicant's job advert and supporting compliance and application documents must go into their personnel file. This includes but is not limited to: job description, interview notes and, where appropriate, person specification.

**An employee who is Safer Recruitment trained must be involved at all key stages of the recruitment process including shortlisting, reviewing references and interviewing.**

Each school must comply with the requirements of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 to have due regard for the need to prevent people being drawn into terrorism and will act in accordance with its Prevent duty guidance.

## Pre-Interview: Employment History, References and Online Searches including Social Media

Candidates who have been shortlisted will be contacted and invited for interview and, where appropriate, selection tasks. The email of invitation will detail the format of the selection tasks and interview, and any documentation the candidate will be required to bring with them on the day or any prior research or preparation work required.

Candidates that have not been shortlisted for an interview will be notified after shortlisting. Individual schools will decide if they are able to supply bespoke feedback on applications that haven't been shortlisted.

All applicants for a post are required to complete a Catholic Education Service (CES) application form, giving their contact details, previous employment history, confirmation of their right to work status, reference contact details and, where appropriate, QTS status. This information must be carefully checked to ensure that it is not contradictory, incomplete and contains a full work history as well as an explanation of any employment gaps and reason for leaving their previous and current employer. Copies of CES application forms are available from the CES website: <https://www.catholiceducation.org.uk/recruitment-process/item/1000042-model-application-forms>

The purpose of seeking references is to obtain objective and factual information to support appointment decisions. References must always be obtained, scrutinised and any concerns resolved satisfactorily, before the appointment is confirmed. Schools must only accept references sought directly by themselves. Open references, for example in the form of '*to whom it may concern*' testimonials, are not acceptable.

A referee who is a current or former employer should have full access to the candidate's personal records, to the extent that this is achievable in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation. Schools of a religious character are permitted, where recruiting for teaching posts, to give preference to applicants who are Catholic. If the applicant is a practising Catholic, they should nominate, as one of their referees, their parish priest / the priest of the parish where they regularly worship.

If they are Catholic but do not consider themselves to be "practising", they may (as an alternative to nominating their parish priest as a referee), provide a copy of their baptism certificate, or the name and address of the parish where they were baptised and the date of their baptism.

In requesting a priest's reference or baptismal information, it is not the MAC's/school's intention to deter applications and non-Catholics are welcome to apply. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that all named referees, including parish priests, where applicable, have consented to providing a reference. As part of the application process, candidates are required to complete and return the consent to obtain references form.

In accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education, references should be obtained and scrutinised prior to interview. On receipt, references should be checked to ensure that all specific questions have been answered satisfactorily. The referee should be contacted to provide further clarification as appropriate, for example, if the answers are vague or if insufficient information is provided. If references are delayed and cannot be obtained prior to interview, interviews may proceed (Headteacher permission required) with the candidate informed that any employment offer is subject to a review of references where the candidate may be asked to attend if the selection panel have questions relating to references; this may be an online meeting. If interviews take place without references obtained, references will then become part of the pre-employment checks. If references are not received and reviewed as part of the initial selection process, the selection panel must meet again (option of on-line) to review the successful candidate's references.

For the successful candidate, at least one referee or organisation providing a reference will be contacted. This is to verify that the reference has been provided by them, that the reference has been written for the successful candidate and the post being recruited for.

References must also be compared for consistency with the information provided by the candidate on their application form. Any discrepancies must be addressed with the candidate. This includes any information about past disciplinary action or allegations, which will be considered carefully when assessing the candidate's suitability for the post.

All references from a school must confirm there are no safeguarding issues and they are not aware of any reason why they would be unsuitable to work with young people. The reference must also be from, or counter signed, by the Headteacher or Principal.

The panel member who is Safer Recruitment trained must be responsible for checking the application form for safeguarding concerns, scrutinising for gaps in employment and reviewing references to prevent risks.

In accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education , schools must undertake online searches for all shortlisted candidates. The purpose of this activity is to ensure there is no public information on candidates that could put their professional status and integrity in to question or pose a risk to pupils.

In addition to online searches for all shortlisted candidates, the MAC advises schools to undertake a social media check as part of the pre-employment check for the successful candidate. Undertaking a social media check supports the safeguarding of pupils and reduces the risk of employing staff whose behaviour could cause reputational risk. A recommended provider for social media checks is Social Media Check (<https://socialmediacheck.com/>). The contact details are Nic Whelan, nic.whelan@socialmediacheck.com.

## **Selection Process - Interview**

The purpose of the interview is to assess the candidate's suitability for the vacancy and to give both the panel and the candidate an opportunity to gain further information before making an appointment decision.

The interview will also assess the candidate's suitability to work with children in an educational setting and will include questions relating to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. A written record of the outcome will be kept and placed in the successful candidate's personnel file.

The selection process and interview questions are structured around the job description, person specification as well as safeguarding and the candidate's commitment to working in a Catholic school. All interview panels will consist of a minimum of three panel member; this is for all posts, both teaching and non-teaching. If there are more than three panel members, it is recommended that there is always an odd number of panel members.

An employee who is safer recruitment trained and recruitment best practice trained must be on the interview panel. All interviews must contain two safeguarding questions relating to Keeping Children Safe in Education and hypothetical questions should be avoided.

For all teaching vacancies, at least one member of the senior leadership team must be involved in the selection process. Recruitment panel members, at the earliest opportunity, must declare any conflicts of interest and should not be family members, cohabitants or engaged in commercial activity with candidates. There should be at least one governor or Board Director on the recruitment panel.

## **Post Interview**

Employment must not commence until the school is satisfied that all checks have been completed.

Candidates that are unsuccessful at interview will also be informed via telephone and given the option of feedback on the selection process. Candidates that are unsuccessful at interview will also be asked if they wish to join our MAC talent pool or to be notified of similar vacancies that may arise.

## Pre-appointment Checklist

An offer of appointment to a successful candidate must be conditional upon satisfactory completion of pre-employment checks.

When appointing new employees, each school must ensure they complete the following checks:

- **Verify a candidate's identity:** With photographic ID, such as a passport or photo driving licence
- **Verify a candidate's current address:** Such as a recent bank or credit card statement or a utility bill (not for a mobile phone) from the last three months, a mortgage statement or council tax bill from the last 12 months. If downloaded from the internet, statements and bills should be PDFs- not screenshots. Once the school has the DBS check back they will remove this document from the personnel file.
- **Enhanced DBS check with a barred list information:** Gain certificate for every new employee and volunteers who are involved in a regulated activity.
- **Verified Employment reference:** From last two employers, if the reference is from a school this must be completed by or counter signed by the Headteacher
- **Prohibition Order Check:** For all employees involved in teaching (including Cover Supervisors and TA's), issued by the Secretary of State, using the Department for Education online service.
- **Health Questionnaire:** Verify the candidate's mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities. To this end, an applicant for a teaching job will be asked relevant questions about disability and health in order to establish whether they have the physical and mental capacity for the specific role and if any reasonable adjustments may be required or need to be discussed in order to facilitate such.
- **Right to work in the UK:** Verify the person's right to work in the UK. If the person has lived or worked outside the UK, the MAC will make any further checks that are felt to be appropriate. More detailed information is available on the UK Border Agency website [www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk)
- **Professional Qualifications verification.** Verify through DfE site and presentation of documents.
- **Online Search check taken place:** Online check undertaken on candidates in line with KCSIE and social media check.

All employees in a school are in a regulated activity and will require an Enhanced DBS check. In addition to the DBS checks described, anyone who is appointed to carry out teaching work will require an additional check to ensure they are not prohibited from teaching. Such checks are detailed below.

### Secretary of State Prohibition Orders for Teachers & SLT

Prohibition orders prevent a person from carrying out teaching work in schools, Sixth Form colleges, 16 to 19 Academies. The MAC will not employ an individual to teach if such a prohibition order is in place. Checks must be sought for all Teaching posts and Section 128 barring direction checks must be completed for all SLT appointments.

### Trainee/student teachers

Where applicants for initial teacher training are salaried by any school, the school must ensure that all necessary pre-employment checks are carried out, including an enhanced DBS certificate and barred list check in the case of trainee teachers who undertake regulated activity. Where trainee teachers are fee-funded, the initial teacher training provider carries out the necessary checks and confirms these with the school in writing.

### Apprentices

As an education provider, the MAC are an advocate for employing and supporting apprentices. All apprentices are a fixed term contract and schools are unable to guarantee a permanent post at the end of any apprenticeships, however, schools will notify their apprentices about suitable permanent vacancies across the MAC at a suitable time during their apprenticeship.

For pupil facing apprenticeship, applicants must over the age of 21 within a secondary school setting and over the age of 18 in a primary school setting. This is due to the nature of these roles and the emotional demands of pupil facing roles.

### **Individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK**

Individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK must undergo the same checks as all other school staff. Similarly, checks must be sought from other countries in accordance with DBS, DfE and Home Office Guidelines to ensure suitability to work at the school.

Where an individual has lived or been overseas for 3 months or more in the last 5 years they will be need to provide us with an original police check from the country or countries where they have resided. The police check must be dated no more than 3 months prior to the date the individual left the country.

## **Non-Employee Pre-Commencement Checks**

### **Volunteers**

All volunteers who work within the school and therefore have access to children and who volunteer on more than one occasion must have an enhanced DBS check.

For volunteers in regulated activity who will regularly teach or look after children on an unsupervised basis or provide personal care on a one-off basis, the school must obtain an enhanced DBS certificate with a Childrens Barred List check. For existing volunteers who provide personal care, the school must have obtained an enhanced DBS certificate with barred list check. The school cannot carry out a DBS check on volunteers under the age of 16.

### **Local Governing Body Members and MAC Board Directors**

All governors and Board Directors must have an enhanced DBS check. It is each school's responsibility to ensure the enhanced DBS checks are completed for governors and it is the MAC's Central Team responsibility to ensure checks on Board Directors are completed. Information on governors should appear on the individual school's Single Central Record along with Board Directors.

### **Contractors and Self-Employed Staff**

The appropriate level of DBS check is required from any contractors, or any employee of the contractor, working at any school. Contractors and contractors' employees for whom a DBS check has not been undertaken by the contracting company must be supervised if they will have contact with children, and they must not be allowed to engage in regulated activity under any circumstances.

If a contractor working at any school is self-employed, the school will obtain the DBS check, as self-employed people are not able to make an application directly to the DBS on their own account, unless a DBS is presented dated within the last 3 months or the individual is on registered on the Update Service.

All visitors are required to sign in at the school reception and to follow the school's procedures for visitors.

### **Agency and third-party staff**

All schools must obtain written notification from any agency, or third-party organisation used, confirming that the organisation has carried out the checks on an individual who will be undertaking work at the school that the school would otherwise perform. This includes, as necessary, an enhanced DBS check prior to appointing that individual. The school also checks that the person presenting themselves for work is the same person on whom the checks have been made, by means of current photographic identification.

## Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS)

All new Employee appointments in to posts in regulated activity will require an enhanced DBS check with barred list information.

When the DBS has been completed, the school will receive an electronic notification the check has been completed, including the disclosure number and date issued. **The applicant must however bring the DBS certificate to the school before they take up a post or on their first day of employment** and the school must verify the printed certificate contains the same information as the electronic notification.

DBS certificates must be cleared before the person starts work within the school. Only at the decision of the Headteacher can an individual start work in regulated activity before the DBS certificate is available. Headteachers will need to ensure that the individual is appropriately supervised and that all other checks, including a separate barred list check, have been completed.

### **Convictions/Disclosures highlighted on a DBS check or application form**

All roles within the MAC have “access to children” therefore candidates who have been shortlisted for interview are required to declare any relevant convictions, adult cautions or other matters which may affect their suitability to work with children.

As a result of amendments to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (exceptions order 1975) in 2013 and 2020, some minor offences are now protected (filtered) and should not be disclosed to potential employers, and the school cannot take these offences into account.

If applicants are unsure whether they need to disclose criminal information, they should seek legal advice. Guidance and criteria on the filtering of these cautions and convictions can be found on the Ministry of Justice website.

If the post involves access to money or budget responsibility, it is the MAC’s normal policy to consider it a high risk to employ anyone who has been convicted at any time of robbery, burglary, theft, deception or fraud.

If the post involves some driving responsibilities, it is the MAC’s normal policy to consider it a high risk to employ anyone who has been convicted of serious driving offences.

If a disclosure is evident on the DBS certificate the Headteacher, in conjunction with MAC or Directors if appropriate, will consider the significance of the information before deciding whether or not it is appropriate to proceed with the appointment.

The following factors should be considered before reaching a recruitment decision:

- whether the conviction or other matter revealed is relevant to the position in question;
- the seriousness of any offence or other matter revealed;
- the length of time since the offence or other matter occurred;
- whether the applicant has a pattern of offending behaviour or other relevant matters;
- whether the applicant's circumstances have changed since the offending behaviour or other relevant matters; and
- the circumstances surrounding the offence and the explanation(s) offered by the convicted person.



## **DBS Checks for Existing Staff**

It is the MACs normal policy not to repeat DBS checks during the time an employee remains working for any school within the MAC. This includes updates through the DBS update service.

Occasions where repeat DBS checks may be appropriate are:

- Where a person has a change of role within the school or the MAC.
- If the school has concerns about an individual's suitability to work with children, it will carry out all relevant checks as if the person were a new member of staff.
- Break in service of 3 months or more (excluding sickness or maternity).

The MAC and school reserve the right to repeat DBS checks at any point without cost to the employee.

The MAC will refer to the DBS anyone who harmed, or posed a risk of harm, to a child, or if there were reason to believe the member of staff had committed one of a number of listed offences\*, and who had been removed from working (paid or unpaid) in regulated activity, or would have been removed had they not left. The DBS will then consider whether to bar the person. Referrals to DBS are made as soon as possible after the resignation or removal of the individual.

Where the school ceases to use the services of a teacher because of serious misconduct, or would have dismissed them had they not left first, the school must consider whether to refer the case to the Secretary of State, as required by sections 141D and 141E of the Education Act 2002. In such circumstances, the Secretary of State may investigate the case, and if s/he finds there is a case to answer, must then decide whether to make a prohibition order in respect of the person.

Employees must inform the Headteacher if they are subject to any caution or criminal proceeding during their employment or if any factor changes that may affect their DBS, failure to do so will result in disciplinary action against the employee.

*\*The list of offences is set out in the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (Prescribed Criteria and Miscellaneous Provisions) Regulations 2009 (SI 2009 No. 37) (amended).*

## **Single Central Record**

Each school must keep a single central record as the register of people in regulated activity. It covers the following people:

- all staff (including supply staff) who work at the school;
- in the case of supply staff, agencies confirm in writing that they have been recruited by the agency in accordance with the school's policy and the school notes the date it receives such a notification;
- all others who work in regular contact with children in the school, including volunteers; and
- all members of the local governing body.

### **Information to appear on the Single Central Record**

The following information must appear on the Single Central Record:

- Full Name
- Address
- Date of Birth
- Job Title

The following information that must be recorded on the Single Central Record is indicating if the following checks have been carried out or certificates/information obtained, who carried out each check, and the date on which the check was completed:

- an identity check;
- an enhanced DBS check and with the certificate number and date of issue
- address check
- a prohibition from teaching check (NCTL Prohibition Order);
- further checks on people living or working outside the UK, if appropriate;
- a check of professional qualifications
- a check to establish the person's right to work in the UK;
- disqualification by association check (For Primary Schools)

In order to comply with the requirements of the Data Protection Act, where the school chooses to retain a copy of the DBS certificate it must not be retained for longer than six months. A copy of the other documents used to verify the successful candidate's identity, right to work and required qualifications are kept for the personnel file whilst they are employed with the MAC.