WOODBRIDGE HIGH SCHOOL

Staff Recruitment Policy and Procedures

Supporting Statement and Scope of this Policy

The appointment of a new member of staff is one of the most important tasks that a school has to undertake. This document outlines the school's policies and procedures concerning recruitment and selection, encompassing safer recruitment, equal opportunities principles and best practice.

This policy, which is underpinned by legislation and council policy, covers all job vacancies that occur within the school in respect of teaching and support staff posts. This document highlights the school's commitment to equality of opportunity for each and every member of its workforce in the areas of recruitment, promotion, training and all other employment practices. The school intends that the same treatment should be given to all applicants for employment. In this way, it is believed that the policy will enhance the quality of life for its existing staff and encourage people from all sectors of the community to apply for appropriate vacancies.

Policy Statement:

To ensure that the selection and recruitment process is objective, fair and efficient, and that the most suitable candidate is appointed to the vacant post, taking into account the school's strategic objectives and current legislation.

- This policy aims to safeguard and promote the welfare of our staff and pupils through an effective and thorough recruitment and selection procedure. The policy is consistent with Government guidance concerning safeguarding children and recruitment in Schools.

- The school is committed to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) process. The appointment of a new member of staff is subject to an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service record check, including `Children's Barred List Search' (formerly known as a 'List 99 Check'). A Single Central Record is maintained by the school, in accordance with statutory requirements.

- The school is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and opposing all forms of discrimination, and providing genuine equality of opportunity to make full and effective use of its workforce.

- The school is committed to considering the appropriate needs of diverse communities within its service provision.

- The school asserts that it will apply the same principles to all categories of employee or job applicant, to ensure equal treatment to all including those who may be vulnerable to discrimination.

- The school asserts its full compliance with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, Race Relations Act 1976, the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (as amended), and the various Codes of Practice dealing with the avoidance of any discrimination.

- Our Recruitment Policy aims to attract high quality applicants and to progress recruitment efficiently in accordance with best practice, policies on equal opportunities and in a cost-effective manner. All candidates for a particular post are assessed against the same criteria.

SCHOOL RECRUITMENT PROCEDURES

Job Description and Person Specification

All posts will have a job description and a person specification:

- The job description describes the post in detail and is a guide to the level/range of responsibilities the post holder will be expected to undertake initially. It is not exhaustive and may be changed occasionally to meet changing circumstances and demands. It will not form part of the post holder's contract of employment.

- The person specification identifies the minimum skills, knowledge, attributes, characteristics, experience and qualifications needed by the post holder to carry out the job effectively and the level of competencies required. The person specification provides the criteria against which the school selects the person most suited to the school.

Advertising Procedure

No advertisement may be placed until the incumbent has given formal notification in writing of their resignation or retirement, without prior agreement.

Permanent posts will usually be advertised externally (on the LBR Recruitment Website and the school website as a minimum), in line with national guidelines.

Some permanent posts, TLR or other promoted posts will only be advertised internally. This is usually where there is no vacancy for teaching or support staff capacity, but there is a vacancy for the leadership capacity.

For temporary appointments, the school will decide if the post should be advertised internally or externally (or both).

Where a position is to be advertised externally, the Headteacher will determine where the post is to be advertised i.e. locally or nationally, and on which platforms.

The advertisement must indicate reference to the:

- Job title and purpose;
- Salary scale range (including any TLR Allowances, as appropriate to teaching staff positions) and hours and/or days/full-time equivalent;
- Closing date;
- School's responsibilities for safeguarding the interests of its employees.

In preparing an advertisement the school should aim to review/consider:

- The success of previous advertisements;
- Current advertisements in the educational press and identify why some may attract the reader's attention better than others;
- Creative thinking;
- A simple cost/benefit analysis of the appropriate forms of advertising.

The Application Pack

This should be ready for dispatch when the advertisement is placed. Potential candidates will have the option of either downloading the application pack from the school website or
e-mailing, telephoning or writing to the Headteacher's PA to request a copy.

When prospective candidates receive the information pack from the school, this is the first direct communication they have had from us. The quality and presentation of the information will send strong signals to the recipients about the school. It is therefore worth spending time and energy to produce a professional pack.

The recruitment information pack should reinforce the school's commitment to protecting children. The pack will include a job description and person specification, general information for all applicants to the school, a link to the online application form, deadline for receipt of the completed application, and any other appropriate information concerning the post.

The school website refers potential candidates to the school's Recruitment Policy, the *DFE Guidance for Safer Working Practices for Adults who work with Young People in Education Settings 2022* and the school's annually updated School Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Applicants will be required to complete an online application form (for both teaching or support staff) as the first part of the recruitment process. The contents of the school application form are in line with Government requirements. CVs or other testimonials will not be considered in place of the standard application form. For posts only advertised internally, applicants will be required to submit a letter of application setting out their suitability for the post.

The application form or letter of application is a key part of the selection process. Applicants should ensure that applications are related to the requirements of the person specification. This information will be used to decide how applicants may meet the job requirements and they will be selected for interview on this basis.

Regarding employment history, correct dates must be stated, and in date order. If there are employment gaps, then these should be explained.

Applicants will be asked to give their present or most recent employer as one of their referees (please see later section 'Other Recruitment Information' for further details) Unless candidates specify otherwise, the school will write for references after a candidate has been shortlisted. Ideally, references will be available to the interview panel at the time of the interview, which means that an appropriate deadline for return date should be included in the reference request letter. If a candidate requests that references should not be taken up prior to an interview, this will be respected. However, suitable references must be received prior to an offer of appointment being made.

The school will undertake rigorous vetting of staff to ensure that schools reduce the risk of appointing unsuitable staff to work in positions of trust with children and young people. Careful checking of references at an early stage will expose any gaps or inconsistencies in the candidate's history which will need to be explored at interview. Candidates will also be asked to complete a declaration form disclosing any information that may make them unsuitable to work with young people, including details of any criminal activity.

Shortlisted candidates are asked to complete a declaration form asking a series of questions, including whether they have any unspent criminal convictions and cautions even if deemed to be 'spent'. The school will then seek appropriate professional advice concerning declarations made, as appropriate.

Open references or testimonials will not be accepted. The Headteacher's PA will take responsibility for chasing references should they not be received prior to the deadline.

Reference requests should be specific about any particular information required. As well as asking for the referee's comment about the candidate's suitability for the position, the school uses a structured reference proforma which requires comment in predetermined areas. A copy of the person specification and job description should be included in all reference requests.

If an applicant requires special facilities at interview, this must be requested when accepting the school's invitation to attend. Every effort will be made to meet the identified need.

Monitoring Information

All applicants are requested to complete the section on the application form about monitoring information. This information is requested because we are seeking to provide equality of opportunity for our staff. We need, therefore, to monitor the implementation of our policy to ascertain its effectiveness and make recommendations as to how improvements can be made. The information in this section is confidential to the school and will be separated from the employment record before short listing occurs.
The recruitment monitoring form will be kept confidential and will only be used for this purpose. Recruitment monitoring information is made available to the Governors Personnel Committee as necessary.

Data Protection Regulations

The storing and processing of personal data provided by candidates is subject to The Data Protection Act 2018. The application forms of unsuccessful candidates will be kept on file for six months from the date of the interview and then shredded / deleted from electronic systems.

Shortlisting

Appropriate school staff will be chosen by the Headteacher for the short-listing panel. The panel will comprise members of the leadership team or appropriate post-holders and staff with skills and expertise relevant to the vacancy under discussion. There may be occasions when school governors are invited to be part of a shortlisting panel.

In selecting the panel, the following points should be considered:

- All panel members should be appropriately experienced/skilled in the principles of safer recruitment;

- At least one panel member should have attended *Safer Recruitment* Training (within the previous five years), as delivered by a suitably qualified trainer;

- All panel members should be involved in and take ownership of each stage of the recruitment and selection process.

The shortlisting panel will decide on the evidence given in the application form which applicants best meet the criteria prior to compiling a shortlist of applicants. The shortlisting panel will use the shortlisting tool within the online application system to record their findings concerning the assessment of application forms received. This is tailored to meet the needs of individual job requirements.

Prior to the interview process, internet and social media searches will be conducted for shortlisted candidates.

Interview Process

Candidates will be contacted as soon as possible after the closing date on the advertisement if they are to be invited for an interview. An appropriate school contact name and telephone number will be provided.

Shortlisted candidates will be asked to bring appropriate identification and evidence of their qualifications with them, where appropriate for the particular role in question.

Interview panels should consist of two to five people with skills and expertise relevant to the post. These will include at least one governor for all posts carrying a TLR Allowance, or where the post is within the Leadership Group; senior staff with relevant responsibilities; and external consultants as necessary.

A tour of the school site will be organised for the candidate at the time of the interview.

All candidates will be asked the same core questions, according to a pre-arranged agreed script, with supplementary questions asked by panel members as they see fit. Every candidate will be assessed for their capability/fitness to work with children/young people and a number of questions specifically pertaining to safeguarding will be asked as part of the interview process.

The interview panel will take notes during the interview. These notes will be kept with each individual's application form.

Applicants for teaching and cover supervisor posts will be required to teach/cover part of a lesson. Sufficient notice will be given of age and ability range and expected content.

Practical Assessments

For some appointments, practical assessments and/or written tasks may be used as part of the selection process in the following ways:

- To help provide additional information about an applicant's knowledge, skills or aptitude;
- To provide extra information for the selection process.

Appointments are not made solely on the basis of practical assessment. Applicants are given the opportunity to receive professional feedback on their performance in assessments.

Assessments separate to the formal interview may include: observation of the candidates in the working environment; oral presentation; written task; in-tray exercise; case study; aptitude tests; group discussions; and meetings with governors and/or pupils.

An appropriate timetable should be compiled in advance of the interview process, to include:

- Where each element of the process will take place. For example, the location where candidates are required to wait, where they are to undertake written tasks, and where the formal interviews are to be held.
- If the school is to provide an overhead projector, power-point facilities, a flipchart etc, for the candidates to use for their presentation.
- Who will be responsible for ensuring the above are organised and who will greet the candidates and administer any exercises.
- Details of the preparation of questions. These are agreed by the panel in advance and they link directly to the selection criteria. The panel will consider in advance about the nature of answers they will be seeking. The panel should also plan how they will reach their decision;
- Who will contact the successful candidate to make the informal offer and how the formal offer will be made.
- How safeguarding and medical checks will be managed.

Travelling and Accommodation Expenses:

The school will consider reimbursing travel expenses relating to a candidate's attendance at school interviews in exceptional circumstances. For example, in the case of an exceptionally long journey. Accommodation costs will not usually be reimbursed.

Travel costs will usually be met on those occasions when the successful applicant is required to attend the school in advance of their appointment date, e.g. for induction/training. Accommodation costs will not usually be reimbursed.

If induction or training days require a successful candidate to be absent from their current place of employment, the school will consider making an appropriate payment to that institution for their release time, if this is a condition of their release by that institution.

Other Recruitment Information

For all recruitment campaigns, the Headteacher's PA completes the School Recruitment Proforma which records procedures undertaken from the preparation of the job description and advert through to the processing of the documentation for the successful candidate. As this represents the official school audit trail of the recruitment process, the chair of the recruitment panel has responsibility for ensuring that this is done.

The decision of the interview panel is made on the basis of information given during the recruitment process.

The successful candidate will be required to complete a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) form at the Enhanced Level. This is for the purpose of determining whether the candidate has any criminal convictions/cautions, and must be completed after an offer of employment is made. It will be forwarded to the Disclosure and Barring Service via the Local Authority. New employees are subject to satisfactory Enhanced Level clearance through the Children's Disclosure and Barring Service's safeguarding procedures.

Part of the DBS safeguarding involves the school's checking that all those who deliver lessons to a class, small group, or even an individual, but who have not been employed as qualified teachers (for example, sports coaches and teaching assistants) are not prohibited from teaching.

All offers of employment are subject to receipt of two satisfactory references (one of which must be their present or most recent employer and should be undertaken by a person who has the authority to write a reference which, for teaching posts, must be the headteacher of the applicant's current school, where applicable). Where candidates have previously worked with children, at least one reference must be sought from this source. Posts will not be confirmed until two satisfactory references have been received.

A job offer will be subject to confirmation that an individual is permitted to work in the United Kingdom in accordance with the provisions of the Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants, etc) Act 2004. Under Section 8 of the Act it is a criminal offence to employ someone who is subject to immigration control, but who does not have permission to live or work in the United Kingdom. All successful applicants will be required to provide documents, as appropriate, before an offer of employment is made, an individual will be advised of the acceptable documents.

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 recognises the principle that people who have been convicted of an offence should not, as a result, be discriminated against for the rest of their lives and therefore it prohibits discrimination in employment within defined limits. For certain jobs there is a requirement to take into account any previous convictions. There are others where convictions which have not become 'spent' can be taken into consideration at the discretion of the Headteacher after receiving appropriate professional advice. Please ensure that this section of the application is completed.

New permanent support staff employees are subject to a six months' probationary period before the appointment is confirmed.

Successful candidates will be expected to take part in child protection training (including 'Prevent') events organised by the school as appropriate and must complete the appropriate annual online safeguarding programme provided by the school.

Note: All references completed concerning Woodbridge staff on request from other institutions must be quality assured and cleared by the Headteacher. They are to then be submitted by the Headteacher's PA on the school headed paper.

Results of the Selection Process

Once the interview panel has decided on which candidate they wish to recommend for appointment, this will be subject to:

- Reconsidering references to ensure that they are satisfactory;
- Satisfactory health checks (medical clearance) by our chosen Occupational Health Service provider. Successful candidates (once offer has been made) are emailed a link to a pre-employment online questionnaire which could, in some cases lead to a medical examination.
- A 'Children's Barred List Search' (formerly known as a `List 99 Check') through our chosen service provider;
- Safeguarding clearance from the Disclosure and Barring Service (through our chosen service provider);
- Proof of academic and other qualifications (if relevant to the post)

The candidate should not be notified of a successful appointment until references have been checked.

The meeting to ratify the decision should take place as soon as possible after the interview. The Chair of the interview panel will contact unsuccessful candidates as soon as possible after the successful candidate has accepted the provisional offer.

We will normally let the successful applicant know by telephone on the day of the interview, subject to all prescribed procedures having been addressed (or once references have been received). If appropriate references have not yet been received, posts may be offered provisionally, subject to satisfactory references. This will be followed up by an offer letter within two school days. Unsuccessful applicants will be contacted by phone or letter within five working days. Feedback from an interview will be provided if this is requested.

Successful candidates will be written to advising of what checks and clearances (e.g. Disclosure and Barring Service and medical) will be required prior to a formal appointment being confirmed. The successful candidate is able to begin employment in advance of Enhanced Level safeguarding clearance received from the Disclosing and Barring Service, as long as he/she is appropriately supervised when in post. In such circumstances, the new employee MUST be appropriately supervised by his/her line manager at all times whilst working with students. Only once the Disclosing and Barring Service (DBS) safeguarding clearance is received, and the school is satisfied with its contents, will the new member of staff be permitted to work unsupervised and be left alone with students.

Induction

New staff will be introduced to their work colleagues, be shown around the school premises and will be familiarised with appropriate school procedures and working regulations, including health and safety requirements within the workplace. This forms part of a structured induction procedure for both teaching and support staff.

Appropriate training will be given that is relevant to the requirements of the post. This will be ongoing and individual needs will be monitored accordingly. Training is provided by appropriate staff within the school and/or by external providers.

Successful candidates confirmed in post will receive a copy of:

- The school's Induction Booklet (including Child Protection Procedures);
- The school's Safeguarding Policy which staff are required to sign a school return form to acknowledge receipt of the above and to advise that they fully understand their contents and accept their responsibilities by agreeing to adopt their contents;
- The DFE's *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023)* document;
- The school's various staff ICT safeguarding policies and procedures;
- The School Workforce Census Form (for completion and return).

Management/Staff Appraisal Review:

Staff participate in an annual system of professional development (known as staff appraisal) review as outlined in the school's schemes (there are separate policy schemes for teaching and support staff).

The purpose of the professional development review is to support the process of dialogue and feedback on performance. This two-way process provides a professional setting for staff and their line managers to constructively consider past performance and

future development. The process seeks to promote dialogue, discussion and collaboration and provides an organisational framework for evaluating and improving management and leadership in the school.

Woodbridge High School as an Equal Opportunities Employer:

Woodbridge High School is a major employer in the London Borough of Redbridge and therefore we have a key role to play in tackling inequality and discrimination. We aim to ensure equality underpins all aspects of employment policy and practice. We recognise that promoting equality also makes good business sense. We intend to become an 'employer of choice'.

The school aims to:

- Be an equal opportunities employer committed to a policy of equal access to employment opportunities, training and development, at all levels of the organisation;
- Recruit and retain a workforce that reflects the expertise and diversity of our community and ensure that recruitment and selection procedures are in place to attract the best applicants to the school;
- Support staff in increasing their understanding of equality issues through regular staff development programmes;
- Build on our positive action policies to redress any inequality and discriminatory practices;
- Create a safe working environment where any form of discrimination and harassment is dealt with quickly, appropriately and effectively, and where staff feel supported in challenging discrimination and harassment; and
- Promote and further develop work-life balance policies to ensure that we maximise employment opportunities for all.

This means that at each stage in the recruitment and selection process, from the initial letter of resignation from an employee to the new employee actually starting work, the headteacher/manager must demonstrate that all applicants have been treated fairly and that the employee has been appointed on merit.

The law protects people from unlawful discrimination on grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, religious belief, gender, marital status, disability, sexual orientation and age.

Unlawful discrimination can take the form of "direct discrimination" or "Indirect discrimination".

Direct discrimination takes the form of treating a person less favourably than another. Advertising for a male caretaker or a female secretary would be examples of direct discrimination unless this could be objectively justified by the requirements of the job. Indirect discrimination occurs, for example, where you set an unjustifiable condition or requirement that applies to all but can more easily be met by some groups compared to others. Advertising for a candidate who lives locally may indirectly discriminate against some ethnic groups. This would be deemed unlawful unless it could be demonstrated that the job demands that someone must live locally.

If a candidate with a physical disability (for example, in the case of an applicant being in a wheel-chair) is called for an interview, the school will make reasonable adjustments to the workplace for access purposes. If the candidate is successful in their application and is appointed, the school will seek to make further workplace adjustments, as deemed to

be reasonable, to enable the person to undertake their role (e.g. consideration of using a ground floor classroom/office).

The selection process must, of course, be carried out in a fair and non-discriminatory manner. The key points here are to ensure that questions / exercises are not different for any candidate. All questions / exercises must relate to the key documents, particularly the person specification.

The selection panel must not be seen to be discriminating on any grounds. Therefore, to avoid the possibility of discrimination, questions on the following areas must be avoided:

- marital status;
- occupation of spouse/partner;
- number of children or intentions in this respect;
- domestic arrangements;
- religion;
- sex, colour, race, age, nationality, ethnic or gender;
- national origin;
- disability; and
- sexual orientation.

Applicants who have been unsuccessful and have been asked questions in these areas could pursue an application to an employment tribunal on the grounds of discrimination.

Policy and Procedures Review:

This policy and Procedures document will be reviewed every two years to ensure that it complies with current legislation and that it meets the school's needs. A more frequent review may be required in respect of future Disclosure and Barring Service safeguarding requirements.

Approval Process:

Approved by Personnel Committee on 11th June 2024

Date of Next Review: Summer term 2027

Policy Reviewer: Mr S. Hogan (Headteacher)