

Meppershall Church of England Academy

SAFER RECRUITMENT POLICY

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We at Meppershall Church of England Academy, strive for excellence in education by providing a safe, secure, caring family environment, where all are valued and respected as individuals, enabling them to reach their full potential, whilst growing in their love and understanding of the Christian Faith.

Meppershall Church of England Academy is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of our children and young people and expects all staff, volunteers and visitors to the school to share this commitment.

POLICY STATEMENT

The safe recruitment of staff in schools is the first step to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in education. Meppershall Church of England Academy is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all pupils in its care. As an employer, Meppershall Church of England Academy expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. We wish to appoint the most suitable person for each vacant position regardless of age, marital status, sex, racial or ethnic background, religion or belief, sexual orientation or disability. Also, we will take no account of an applicant's membership or non-membership of a trade union. We intend to deter, identify and reject prospective applicants who are unsuitable to work with children.

We believe our recruitment and selection process is systematic, efficient, effective and fair. All applicants must declare spent and unspent convictions, cautions and bind-overs, including those regarded as spent.

Applicants are also subject to the relevant checks with the Disclosure and Barring Service.

Aims

The aims of the School's recruitment policy are as follows:

- to ensure that the best possible staff are recruited on the basis of their merits, abilities and suitability for the position;
- to ensure that all job applicants are considered equally and consistently;
- to ensure that no job applicant is treated unfairly on any grounds including race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or religious belief, sex or sexual orientation, marital or civil partner status, disability or age;
- to ensure compliance with all relevant legislation, recommendations and guidance including the statutory guidance published by the Department for Education (DfE), Keeping Children Safe in Education – September 2018 (KCSIE), the Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales 2015 (the Prevent Duty Guidance) and any to ensure that Meppershall Church of England Academy meets its commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people by carrying out all necessary pre-employment checks. Employees involved in the recruitment and selection of staff are responsible for familiarising

themselves with and complying with the provisions of this policy. Meppershall Church of England Academy has a principle of open competition in its approach to recruitment and will seek to recruit the best applicant for the job. The recruitment and selection process should ensure the identification of the person best suited to the job at the school based on the applicant's abilities, qualification experience and merit as measured against the job description and person specification.

We also comply with Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board procedures and ensure that all supply agencies and contractors supplying services to the school use Safer Recruitment practices.

In implementing this policy, staff must recognise the links between the Safer Recruitment Policy and other school policies and arrangements, including the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Complaints and Grievance Policy and Whistleblowing Policy.

The recruitment and selection of staff will be conducted in a professional, timely and responsive manner and in compliance with current employment legislation, and relevant safeguarding legislation and statutory guidance (including KCSIE 2018 and Prevent Duty Guidance).

If a member of staff involved in the recruitment process has a close personal or familial relationship with an applicant they must declare it as soon as they are aware of the individual's application and avoid any involvement in the recruitment and selection decision-making process.

The school aims to operate this procedure consistently and thoroughly while obtaining, collating, analysing and evaluating information from and about applicants applying for job vacancies at Meppershall Church of England Academy. Since January 2010 the School Staffing Regulations require that every recruitment panel for a school-based post must include at least one member with safer recruitment training. At our school, the following people hold this certificate and therefore at least one will be involved in every recruitment process: **Margaret Newman – Head of School, Michelle Allen – Assistant Head, Ann Halford – School Business Manager.**

Safer Recruitment Practice at Meppershall Church of England Academy

Safer practice in recruitment means thinking about and including issues to do with child protection and safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults at every stage of the process. It starts with the process of planning the recruitment exercise and, where the post is advertised, ensuring that the advertisement makes clear our commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. It also requires a consistent and thorough process of obtaining, collating, analysing and evaluating

information from and about applicants. Meppershall Church of England Academy uses the Central Bedfordshire application form for all candidates.

Main elements of the process include:

- establishing members of the recruitment panel
- ensuring the job description makes reference to the responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children
- ensuring that the person specification includes specific reference to suitability to work with children
- obtaining and scrutinising comprehensive information from applicants, and taking up and satisfactorily resolving any discrepancies or anomalies making sure that there are no gaps in the candidate's life and employment history and that any gaps are investigated and documented, with reasons, in the interview file
- obtaining independent professional and character references that answer specific questions to help assess an applicant's suitability to work with children and vulnerable adults and following up any concerns
- a face-to-face interview that explores the candidate's suitability to work with children as well as his or her suitability for the post
- verifying the successful applicant's identity
- verifying that the successful applicant has any academic or vocational qualifications claimed
- checking his or her previous employment history and experience
- verifying that s/he has the health and physical capacity for the job
- the mandatory DBS Barred list check (which replaced List 99) and a DBS certificate
- verify the person's right to work in the UK (for overseas candidates)
- Prohibition Register check (for teachers).

Role of the Governing Body

The Governing Body has:

- the responsibility of ensuring that the safe recruitment process complies with Department for Education guidance and legal requirements
- delegated certain powers and responsibilities to the Head of School to oversee compliance with Department for Education guidance and legal requirements
- delegated powers and responsibilities to the Head of School to ensure all school personnel and visitors to the school are aware of and comply with this policy
- responsibility for ensuring that the school complies with all equalities legislation
- responsibility for ensuring this policy and all policies are maintained and updated regularly
- responsibility for ensuring all policies are made available to parents
- nominated a link governor to visit the school regularly, to liaise with the Head of School and the coordinator and to report back to the Governing Body

- responsibility for the effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation of this policy.

Role of the Head of School

The Head of School will:

- promote the safeguarding and welfare of children at every stage of the procedure.
- ensure the school operates safe recruitment procedures
- organise safe recruitment training for school personnel involved in recruitment
- all appointment panels to include one person who has successfully passed safe recruitment training
- ensure all appropriate pre-employment checks are completed on school personnel and volunteer helpers
- ensure contractors and agencies comply with this policy
- undertake appointments of school personnel and volunteer helpers
- ensure all school personnel, pupils and parents are aware of and comply with this policy
- provide leadership and vision in respect of equality
- provide guidance, support and training to all staff
- monitor the effectiveness of this policy
- annually report to the Governing Body on the success and development of this policy.

Definition of Regulated Activity and Frequency

Any position undertaken at, or on behalf of Meppershall Church of England Academy will amount to "regulated activity" if it is carried out:

- frequently, meaning once a week or more; or
- provides the opportunity for contact with children.

Roles which are carried out on an unpaid / voluntary basis will only amount to regulated activity if, in addition to the above, they are carried out on an unsupervised basis. Meppershall Church of England Academy is not permitted to check the Children's Barred List unless an individual will be engaging in "regulated activity".

Meppershall Church of England Academy is required to carry out an enhanced DBS check for all staff, supply staff and governors who will be engaging in regulated activity. However, Meppershall Church of England Academy can also carry out an enhanced DBS check on a person who would be carrying out regulated activity but for the fact that they do not carry out their duties frequently enough i.e. roles, which would amount to regulated activity if carried out more frequently.

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCEDURE

Advertising

To ensure equality of opportunity, Meppershall Church of England Academy will advertise all vacant posts to encourage as wide a field of applicant as possible, normally this entails an external advertisement. Any advertisement will make clear the school's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. All documentation relating to applicants will be treated confidentially in accordance with the Data Protection Act (DPA).

Application Forms

Meppershall Church of England Academy uses Central Bedfordshire Council's application form and all applicants for employment will be required to complete this application form containing questions about their academic and full employment history and their suitability for the role (in addition all applicants are required to account for any gaps or discrepancies in employment history). Incomplete application forms will not be shortlisted. The application form will include 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. **CV's will not be accepted.**

It is unlawful for the School to employ anyone who is barred from working with children. It is a criminal offence for any person who is barred from working with children to apply for a position at Meppershall Church of England Academy. All applicants will be made aware that providing false information is an offence and could result in the application being rejected.

Job Descriptions and Person Specifications

A job description is a key document in the recruitment process, and must be finalised prior to taking any other steps in the recruitment process. It will clearly and accurately set out the duties and responsibilities of the job role.

The person specification is of equal importance and informs the selection decision. It details the skills, experience, abilities and expertise that are required to do the job. The person specification will include a specific reference to suitability to work with children.

References

References for short listed applicants will be sent for immediately after short listing. The only exception is where an applicant has indicated on their application form that they do not wish their current employer to be contacted at that stage. In such cases, this reference will be taken up immediately after interview. All offers of employment will be subject to the receipt of a minimum of two references, which are considered

satisfactory by Meppershall Church of England Academy. One of the references must be from the applicant's current or most recent employer. If the current / most recent employment does / did not involve work with children, then the second reference should be from the employer with whom the applicant most recently worked with children. The referee should not be a relative. References will always be sought and obtained directly from the referee and their purpose is to provide objective and factual information to support appointment decisions.

All referees will be asked whether they believe the applicant is suitable for the job for which they have applied and whether they have any reason to believe that the applicant is unsuitable to work with children. Referees will also be asked to confirm that the applicant has not been radicalised so that they do not support terrorism or any form of "extremism".

Please note that no questions will be asked about health or medical fitness prior to any offer of employment being made. Any discrepancies or anomalies will be followed up. Direct contact by phone will be undertaken with each referee to verify the reference. Meppershall Church of England Academy does not accept open references, testimonials or references from relatives.

Interviews

The selection process for people who will work at Meppershall Church of England Academy always includes a face-to-face interview even if there is only one candidate and a minimum of two interviewers will see the applicants for the vacant position.

The candidates whose application forms provide information that best meets the criteria of the job description, person specification, experience and qualifications are invited for interview. At the interview, the identity of the candidates is verified by checking original documents such as ID documents (passport, driving licence) and certificates to ensure the person is who he or she claims to be.

The interview process will explore the applicant's ability to carry out the job description and meet the person specification. It will enable the panel to explore any anomalies or gaps have been identified in order to satisfy themselves that the chosen applicant can meet the safeguarding criteria (in line with Safer Recruitment Training). Any information in regard to past disciplinary action or allegations, cautions or convictions will be discussed and considered in the circumstance of the individual case during the interview process, if it has been disclosed on the application form. All applicants who are invited to an interview will be required to bring evidence of their identity, address and qualifications. Original documents will only be accepted and photocopies will be taken. Unsuccessful applicant documents will be destroyed 6 months after the recruitment programme.

Conditional offer of Employment – pre-employment checks

An offer of appointment to the successful candidate will be conditional upon:

- the receipt of at least two satisfactory references, (if not already received).
- verification of the candidate's identity (if that could not be verified at interview)
- a satisfactory enhanced DBS Disclosure Certificate
- a separate barred list check for individuals who start work in regulated activity (school based staff only).
- verification of the candidate's medical fitness
- verification of qualifications (if not verified at interview)
- verification of professional status where required e.g. Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) (unless properly exempted)
- verification of previous employment history and experience, including exploration of any gaps and anomalies
- (for teaching posts) verification of successful completion of statutory induction period (applies to those who obtained QTS after 7 May 1999)
- the agreement of a mutually acceptable start date and the signing of a contract incorporating the School's standard terms and conditions of employment;
- verification of the applicant's medical fitness for the role;
- verification of the applicant's right to work in the UK;
- any further checks which are necessary as a result of the applicant having lived or worked outside of the UK; and
- verification of professional qualifications which the School deems a requirement for the post, or which the applicant otherwise cites in support of their application (where they have not been previously verified).
- (for teaching posts) check the Prohibition Register (using Employer Access Online)

(NB In any case where a reference has not been obtained on the preferred candidate before interview, the chair of the interview panel must ensure that it is received and scrutinised, and any concerns are resolved satisfactorily, before the person's appointment is confirmed.)

A personal file checklist will be used to track and audit paperwork obtained in accordance with Safer Recruitment Training. The checklist will be retained on personal files. **The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974** The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 does not apply to positions which involve working with, or having access to pupils. Therefore, any convictions and cautions that would normally be considered 'SPENT' must be declared when applying for any position at Meppershall Church of England Academy.

DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) Check (formerly known as CRB Disclosure) Meppershall Church of England Academy applies for an enhanced disclosure from the DBS and a check of the Children's Barred List (now known as an Enhanced Check for Regulated Activity) in respect of all positions at the School which amount to "regulated activity" as defined in the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (as amended). The purpose of carrying out an Enhanced Check for Regulated

Activity is to identify whether an applicant is barred from working with children by inclusion on the Children's Barred List and to obtain other relevant suitability information. It is Meppershall Church of England Academy policy that the DBS disclosure must be obtained before the commencement of employment of any new employee. Members of staff at Meppershall Church of England Academy are aware of their obligation to inform the Head of School of any cautions or convictions that arise between these checks taking place. DBS checks will still be requested for applicants with recent periods of overseas residence and those with little or no previous UK residence.

DBS Certificate

The DBS no longer issue Disclosure Certificates to employers; therefore employees/applicants should bring their original Certificate to school office, (within 7 days of issue or applicants before they commence work or any project involving regulated activity).

Dealing with convictions

Meppershall Church of England Academy operates a formal procedure if a DBS Certificate is returned with details of convictions. Consideration will be given to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and also:

- the nature, seriousness and relevance of the offence;
- how long ago the offence occurred;
- one-off or history of offences;
- changes in circumstances,
- decriminalisation and remorse.

A formal meeting will take place face-to-face to establish the facts with the Head of School. A decision will be made following this meeting. In the event that relevant information (whether in relation to previous convictions or otherwise) is volunteered by an applicant during the recruitment process or obtained through a disclosure check, the Head of School will evaluate all of the risk factors above before a position is offered or confirmed. If an applicant wishes to dispute any information contained in a disclosure, they may do so by contacting the DBS. In cases where the applicant would otherwise be offered a position were it not for the disputed information, Meppershall Church of England Academy may, where practicable and at its discretion, defer a final decision about the appointment until the applicant has had a reasonable opportunity to challenge the disclosure information.

Proof of identity, Right to Work in the UK & Verification of Qualifications and/or professional status.

All applicants invited to attend an interview at the school will be required to bring their identification documentation such as passport, birth certificate, driving licence etc. with them as proof of identity/eligibility to work in UK in accordance with those set out in the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006 and DBS identity

checking guidelines. Meppershall Church of England Academy does not discriminate on the grounds of age. Where an applicant claims to have changed their name by deed poll or any other means (e.g. marriage, adoption, statutory declaration) they will be required to provide documentary evidence of the change. In addition, applicants must be able to demonstrate that they have actually obtained any academic or vocational qualification legally required for the position and claimed in their application form.

Medical Fitness

Meppershall Church of England Academy is legally required to verify the medical fitness of anyone to be appointed to a post at Meppershall Church of England Academy, after an offer of employment has been made but before the appointment can be confirmed.

All applicants are requested to complete a medical questionnaire and where appropriate a doctor's medical report may be required. This information will be reviewed against the Job Description and the Person Specification for or the particular role, together with details of any other physical or mental requirements of the role. Meppershall Church of England Academy is aware of its duties under the Equality Act 2010. No job offer will be withdrawn without first consulting with the applicant, obtaining medical evidence and considering reasonable adjustments.

Overseas checks

In addition, applicants who have lived/travelled abroad for more than 3 months will need to obtain a criminal records check from the relevant country. The applicant will not be permitted to commence work until the overseas information has been received and is considered satisfactory by Meppershall church of England Academy.

Induction Programme

All new employees will be given an induction programme which will clearly identify the school policies and procedures, including the Child Protection Policy, the Code of Conduct, and Part One of KCSIE, and make clear the expectations which will govern how staff carry out their roles and responsibilities.

The Single Central Record

In addition to the various staff records kept in school and on individual personnel files, we keep a Single Central Record as described in DfE guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2021 part 3: Safer Recruitment. The School's Office staff are responsible for the day to day up keep of the SCR as directed by the Head of School. The Single Central Record includes all employees, supply staff, relevant consultants (those involved in regulated activity), trustees and volunteers. The central record must indicate whether or not the following have been completed:

- Identity checks;
- Barred list check (as relevant for those engaged in regulated activity);

- DBS certificate (previously an enhanced CRB disclosure); disapplication by association check list
- Qualification checks for any qualifications legally required for the job, e.g. those posts where a person must have QTS;
- Prohibition from teaching check;
- Checks of permission to work in the United Kingdom and
- Further overseas criminal records checks where appropriate (see 'Safeguarding Children & Safer Recruitment in Education' (DfES 2006) paragraphs 4.65 to 4.71 for advice on staff who have lived or worked outside the United Kingdom). This will also cover volunteers, governors, peripatetic staff and people brought into the school to provide additional teaching or instruction for pupils but who are not staff members eg: sports coaches etc.

A designated Governor will be responsible for auditing the Single Centralised Register annually and reporting his/her findings to the full Governing Body during the Summer Term meeting.

Volunteers

Meppershall Church of England Academy will request an enhanced DBS disclosure and Children's Barred List information on all volunteers undertaking regulated activity with pupils at or on behalf of Meppershall Church of England Academy (the definition of regulated activity set out above will be applied to all volunteers). Under no circumstances will Meppershall Church of England Academy permit an unchecked volunteer to have unsupervised contact with pupils.

It is Meppershall Church of England Academy policy that a new DBS certificate is required for volunteers who will engage in regulated activity but who have not been involved in any activities with Meppershall Church of England Academy for three consecutive months or more.

Those volunteers who are likely to be involved in activities with Meppershall Church of England Academy on a regular basis may be required to sign up to the DBS update service as this permits Meppershall Church of England Academy to obtain up to date criminal records information without delay prior to each new activity in which a volunteer participates. In addition Meppershall Church of England Academy will seek to obtain such further suitability information about a volunteer as it considers appropriate in the circumstances. This may include (but is not limited to the following):

- formal or informal information provided by staff, parents and other volunteers;
- character references from the volunteer's place of work or any other relevant source; and
- an informal safer recruitment interview.

Record Retention / Data Protection

Meppershall Church of England Academy is legally required to undertake the above pre-employment checks. Therefore, if an applicant is successful in their application, Meppershall Church of England Academy will retain on their personnel file any relevant information provided as part of the application process.

This will include copies of documents used to verify identity, right to work in the UK, medical fitness and qualifications. Medical information may be used to help Meppershall Church of England Academy to discharge its obligations as an employer e.g. so that Meppershall Church of England Academy may consider reasonable adjustments if an employee suffers from a disability or to assist with any other workplace issue.

This documentation will be retained by Meppershall Church of England Academy for the duration of the successful applicant's employment with the school. All information retained on employees is kept centrally in the School Office in a locked and secure cabinet. The same policy applies to any suitability information obtained about volunteers involved with School activities.

Meppershall Church of England Academy will retain all interview notes on all unsuccessful applicants for a period of 6 months, after which time the notes will be confidentially destroyed (ie: shredded). The 6 month retention period is in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Ongoing Employment

Meppershall Church of England Academy recognises 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. The school will therefore provide ongoing training and support for all staff, as identified through the Annual Review/appraisal procedure.

Leaving Employment at Meppershall church of England Academy

Despite the best efforts to recruit safely there will be occasions when allegations of serious misconduct or abuse against children and young people are raised. This policy is primarily concerned with the promotion of safer recruitment and details the pre-employment checks that will be undertaken prior to employment being confirmed. Whilst these are pre-employment checks the School also has a legal duty to make a referral to the DBS in circumstances where an individual:

- has applied for a position at the School despite being barred from working with children; or
- has been removed by MEPPERSHALL CHURCH OF ENGLAND ACADEMY from working in regulated activity (whether paid or unpaid),
- or has resigned prior to being removed, because they have harmed, or pose a risk of harm to, a child.

If the individual referred to the DBS is a teacher, Meppershall church of England Academy may also decide to make a referral to the National College for Teaching and Leadership.

Contractors and agency staff

Contractors engaged by Meppershall Church of England Academy must complete the same checks for their employees that Meppershall Church of England Academy is required to complete for its staff. Meppershall Church of England Academy requires confirmation that these checks have been completed before employees of the Contractor can commence work at the school. Agencies who supply staff to the school must also complete the pre-employment checks which the School would otherwise complete for its staff. Again, the School requires confirmation that these checks have been completed before an individual can commence work at the School. The School will independently verify the identity of staff supplied by contractors or an agency in and will require the provision of the original DBS certificate before contractors or agency staff can commence work at the School.

Visiting Speakers (and Prevent Duty)

The Prevent Duty Guidance requires the School to have clear protocols for ensuring that any visiting speakers, whether invited by staff or by pupils, are suitable and appropriately supervised. The School is not permitted to obtain a DBS disclosure or Children's Barred List information on any visiting speaker who does not engage in regulated activity at the School or perform any other regular duties for or on behalf of the School.

All visiting speakers will be subject to the School's usual visitors signing in protocol. This will include signing in and out at Reception, the wearing of a visitors badge at all times and being escorted by a fully vetted member of staff between appointments. The School will also obtain such formal or informal background information about a visiting speaker as is reasonable in the circumstances to decide whether to invite and/or permit a speaker to attend the School.

In doing so the School will always have regard to the Prevent Duty Guidance and the definition of "extremism" set out in KCSIE which states: *"Extremism" is vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also include in our definition of extremism calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas. Terrorist groups very often draw on extremist ideas developed by extremist organisations.*" In fulfilling its Prevent Duty obligations the School does not discriminate on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or religious belief, sex or sexual orientation, marital or civil partner status, disability or age.

Post-Appointment: Induction

There is an induction programme for all staff newly appointed to our school, including teaching staff, regardless of previous experience. The purpose of induction is to:

- provide training and information about our policies and procedures
- support individuals in a way that is appropriate for the role for which they have been engaged
- confirm the conduct expected of staff within the school
- provide opportunities for a new member of staff or volunteer to discuss any issues or concerns about their role or responsibilities and
- enable the Head of School or mentor to recognise any concerns or issues about the person's ability or suitability at the outset and address them immediately.
- The induction programme includes information and written statements of: policies and procedures in relation to safeguarding and promoting welfare e.g.
- child protection, antibullying, anti-racism, internet safety and local child protection and safeguarding procedures – as referred to by the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board
- safer working practice and the standards of conduct and behaviour expected of staff and children / young people at Meppershall Church of England Academy;
- how and with whom any concerns about those issues should be raised; and other relevant personnel procedures e.g. disciplinary, capability and whistleblowing.