



MILTON ABBEY SCHOOL

RECRUITMENT POLICY

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Introduction

Milton Abbey School is committed to providing the best possible care and education to its pupils, and to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. The School is also committed to providing a safe and supportive working environment to all its members of staff and volunteers.

The School recognises that, in order to achieve these aims, it is of fundamental importance to attract, recruit and retain staff of the highest calibre who are aware of and share this commitment. Employees involved in the recruitment and selection of staff are responsible for familiarising themselves with and complying with the provisions of this policy.

This policy and procedure aims to provide clear guidance in relation to both the selection and appointment of staff to achieve the following:

- 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, and 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 (DofE), The National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools (NMS) and any guidance or code of practice published by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).
- to ensure that the School meets its commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people by carrying out all necessary pre-employment checks.

There are several stages of the school recruitment process:

Stage 1

Once a need is established, a 'Request to Recruit' form (Appendix 1) should be completed by the person wishing to recruit and forwarded with a copy of the relevant Job Description, Person Specification and advert draft, authorisation to proceed is required by the Head and Director of Finance.

Please note:

Job Descriptions should clearly state the main duties and responsibilities of the post.

Person Specifications should include:

- *the qualifications, skills, experience, and any other requirements necessary to perform the role with regard to working with children and young people*
- *the required and desired competences and qualities that the successful candidate should be able to demonstrate*

On receipt of the completed and signed 'Request to Recruit', the HR Team will liaise to determine timescales for advertising, closing dates and potential interview dates. The HR Team will also liaise to ensure that the content of the advertisement is appropriately worded and non-discriminatory.

To ensure equal opportunities for recruitment vacancies, most positions are advertised externally. Where it is considered that existing staff have the prerequisite skills, consideration may be given to advertising posts internally only.

The vacancy can be advertised in a number of forums, typically:

- TES
- School Website & School Social Media
- Dorsetforyou Job site

For costed forums, please contact a member of the HR team for guidance.

Once the advert has been placed, potential candidates can apply either online or via request for details made to the HR Team. All school adverts (whether internally or externally placed) contain a statement of the school's commitment to safeguarding and additionally, inform applicants that the role will be subject to vetting checks. All applicants for employment will be required to complete either an online application or a paper application form containing questions about their academic and employment history and their suitability for the role. A Curriculum Vitae cannot be accepted in place of the completed application form.

On requesting an application form or applying online, to assist in the application process applicants will normally also be offered:

- Guidance notes on the recruitment process
- Equal Opportunities Monitoring form
- Job Description
- Person Specification
- An Information Pack (including Terms and Conditions of Employment)
- Other documents (appropriate to the position)

On receipt of the completed application form, the Equal Opportunities Monitoring form will be kept separate, as it does not form part of the selection process (panel members, and those shortlisting are not permitted to see the Equal Opportunities information to ensure fairness).

After the closing date, all application forms and any attachments will be photocopied, and distributed to the interview panel, with the original documentation retained by the HR Team.

Stage 2

Once the closing date has arrived, and the applications are collated by the HR Team, we now move to stage 2 of the process – shortlisting and interviewing.

An appropriate interview panel should consist of a minimum of two people. At least one member of the interview panel must hold a recent 'Safer Recruitment Training' certificate.

To ensure impartiality, if a member of the panel is known to the candidate, this should be disclosed at the time. All panel members should be able to attend all interviews for the duration of the recruitment process, to maintain consistency and fair treatment of all candidates.

Each member of the interview panel should individually review and scrutinise all applications to ensure:

- they are fully and properly completed
- the information provided is consistent and does not contain any discrepancies
- any anomalies, discrepancies or gaps in employment identified are noted.

As well as reasons for obvious gaps in employment, a history of repeated changes of employment without any clear career or salary progression, or a mid-career move from a permanent post to perhaps supply teaching or temporary work, will need to be noted for further verification if the applicant is shortlisted for interview.

All candidates should be assessed equally against the agreed criteria (usually Job Description and Person Specification) and results scored against the 'School Shortlisting Matrix' (Appendix 2).

Once this process is complete, panellists should compare 'matrix scores' and agree a final shortlist of candidates to progress to interview – all connected paperwork should be submitted to the HR Team.

All applicants will receive written notification (via email) of the outcome of their application from the HR Team as soon as possible after the closing date. This notification will either be an invitation to interview (outlining date, time and place, format of the interview etc) or a notification informing them that their application has not been successful.

All applicants who are invited to an interview will be required to bring with them evidence of photo identity, date of birth, right to work in the UK, address, and qualifications.

PLEASE NOTE

A birth certificate is ONE of the mandatory items to confirm identity along with additional collaborative documentation (i.e.: name change documentation).

Additionally, all shortlisted applicants who are invited to interview will be required to complete a 'Pre-Interview Vetting Form' (see Appendix 3). This form contains the following questions:

- *Do you have any unspent conditional cautions or convictions under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974? (Y/N)?*
- *Do you have any adult cautions (simple or conditional) or spent convictions that are not protected as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 (Amendment) (England and Wales) Order 2020? (Y/N)?*

The HR Team will provide an interview pack to each panel member prior to the interview day. This pack will include the following: interview timetable, copies of relevant application forms, references, copy of job applicant pack and other associated paperwork to the interview panel prior to the interview day.

Online searches on each of the shortlisted candidates will be conducted in house by the HR team (who is not part of the shortlisting or panel teams). The online search is there to help identify any incidents or issues for example things said or done that would either harm the reputation of your school, or trust, or make the candidate unsuitable to work with children. The searches will go back over the past 5 years and will include a Google search including the news tab, social media activity and images within the public domain. If no content is found the check will be concluded as 'clear'.

However, if there is content found which is an area of concern, the information will be passed to the Head of Operations for advice prior to being shared with the interview panel to form part of the wider recruitment process. It will then be decided to either end the process for that candidate or put the information found forward at interview and ask for context.

It is best practice for the interview panel to meet prior to the interview to discuss questioning, format and required criteria. A list of questions should be agreed and should reflect the needs of the school, and post. These questions and answers should be recorded and signed as a 'true record' of the interview (see Appendix 4). Please note that panel members may ask supplementary questions in response to answers given by the candidate.

In addition to assessing and evaluating the applicant's suitability for the particular post, the interview panel should also explore:

- the candidate's attitude toward children and young people and suitability for working in a School environment and ability to support the School's commitment for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people
- question fully all gaps in, or any issues relating to the candidate's employment history and ensure these are fully noted on the question sheet.
- concerns or discrepancies arising from the information provided by the candidate and/or a referee

To comply with The Employment Practices Data Protection Code, the interview panel must ensure that all applications are kept in a secure location and remain confidential throughout the process.

The interview panel will meet to discuss the outcome of the selection process and make recommendations regarding the candidate selection. Whilst a member of the panel will contact the successful applicant to offer the post, the HR Team will contact the unsuccessful interview candidates via email.

Stage 3

Following verbal acceptance of the job, a conditional offer of employment will be sent to the successful candidate. This start date can only be a guideline date, as no employee may start work without a satisfactory Enhanced DBS check, all other relevant checks and two references that have been received and verified, one of which MUST BE from the candidate's current employer (Employee Checklist – Appendix 5).

Initial documentation to accompany the conditional offer will include:

- Offer letter
- Contract of Employment
- Job Description
- Pensions opt-out
- Service Licence Agreement (if residential accommodation is applicable)

Supplementary documentation will include:

- Personal Details Form e.g.: Emergency Contact Details/Bank Details/Next of Kin
- Self-declaration of medical suitability
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Relevant Safeguarding documentation

The Offer of Employment will be conditional upon the following:

- 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 identity using appropriate ID, this must include a birth certificate and at least one photographic identification source.
- the receipt of two references (one of which must be from the applicant's current employer and if unemployed at the point of interview, from the most recent employer) which the School considers to be satisfactory. Any and all gaps in employment history must be satisfactorily explained. References will be taken up for shortlisted candidates and verified prior to interview and will form part of the information available to interview panel members, to assist with decision making. Ideally references should be sought from different organisations (i.e.: not two members of staff within the same organisation) to allow a full and balanced assessment.
- 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. Neither referee should be a relative or someone known to the applicant solely as a friend.
- All referees will be sent the standard 'School Reference Request Form' for completion (Appendix 6). This form covers all of the main areas of requirement (suitability to work with children, safeguarding allegations or concerns, absence history, performance, etc). The School will only accept references obtained directly from the referee and it will not rely on references or testimonials provided by the applicant or on open references or testimonials. (See Appendix 7 for Reference Guidance).
- for teaching work (teachers, teaching assistants, classroom technicians, peripatetic, coaching and one to one tutors etc), nursing, and management positions, the relevant prohibition checks will be carried out.
- the receipt of an Enhanced disclosure from the DBS which the School considers to be satisfactory and confirmation that the applicant is not named on the Children's Barred List, administered by the DBS. All of our school staff are required to hold 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. It is a condition of employment with the School that the original disclosure certificate is provided to the School within one week of it being received by the applicant.
- verification of the applicant's medical fitness for the role. The School is legally required to verify the medical fitness of anyone to be appointed to a post at the School, after an offer of employment has been made but before the appointment can be confirmed. It is the School's practice that all applicants to whom an offer of employment is made must complete the Medical Questionnaire. If it is later found that the employee has withheld relevant health information and chosen not to disclose within the Medical Questionnaire in an effort to mislead, this employee will be dismissed for gross misconduct. This information will be reviewed against the Job Description and the Person Specification for the role. If the School

has any doubts about an applicant's fitness, the School will consider reasonable adjustments in consultation with the applicant. The School may also seek a further medical opinion from a specialist or request that the applicant undertakes a full medical assessment. In accordance with the Equality Act 2010 the School will not withdraw a job offer without first consulting with the applicant, obtaining medical evidence, considering reasonable adjustments and suitable alternative employment.

- verification of the applicant's right to work in the UK (including EU Settled Status). The school will retain copies of applicants' birth certificate to evidence 'Right to Work'.
- If an applicant has worked abroad in the last five years (for more than 3 months), we seek a 'criminal records check' from the appropriate overseas body to confirm that the applicant has not been subject to arrest, imprisonment etc whilst working abroad. This is due to the fact that our own UK DBS Body, only covers criminal records for crimes committed on UK soil. The Home Office Website provides information on how to obtain such checks in other countries.
- Additionally, if the applicant is due to engage in teaching work with pupils (say, a teacher, TA, visiting music teacher, coach etc) and has also engaged in teaching work outside the UK, an additional check is required, known as a 'letter of professional standing' (LPS).

This letter should be obtained by the applicant from the regulatory body which oversees teaching in the country where he/she has engaged in teaching work and should cover all periods when the applicant has undertaken teaching work outside the UK. There are likely to be occasions when a letter of professional standing is not obtainable in certain countries. Whenever this is the case, the school will undertake a risk assessment to determine what alternative information can be obtained to compensate for the LPS being unobtainable. This is likely to result in the candidate being asked to provide an additional reference from a person of suitable standing in the country in question.

- 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).

Miscellaneous Information

Contractors regularly engaged by the School are subject to the similar checks (including Safer Recruitment, prohibition checks etc) that the School is required to complete for its' staff. The term contractor includes everyone without a contract of employment (agency staff, coaches, umpires, speakers, consultants, construction workers, invigilators, Peripatetic's etc).

All contractors working on the school site during term time should be in possession of a clear Enhanced DBS which includes a Children's Barred List check or supervised at all times by a nominated member of staff (for further details please refer to our Visitor Policy).

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 all relevant checks have been completed before an individual can commence work at the School. This takes the form of a 'Third Party Safeguarding Statement and Identity Check' (appendix 14).

The School has separate guidance for the assessment of offences in recruitment which can be found at Appendix 10 of this document.

The School's policy is to observe the guidance issued or supported by the DBS on the use of disclosure information (staff or contractor). In particular, the School will:

- store disclosure information and other confidential documents issued by the DBS in locked, storage containers, access to which will be restricted to the Head of Operations and HR Team members.
- not retain disclosure information or any associated correspondence for longer than is necessary, and only retain it for a maximum of six months. The School will keep a record of the date of a disclosure, the name of the subject, the type of disclosure, the position in question, the unique number issued by the DBS, date original seen and the recruitment decision taken.
- ensure that any disclosure information is destroyed by suitably secure means such as shredding or returning to candidate.
- prohibit the photocopying or scanning of any disclosure information without the express permission of the individual to whom the disclosure relates.

The School is legally required to undertake pre-employment checks. Therefore, if an applicant is successful in their application, the School 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, references, and qualifications.

Medical information may be used to help the School to discharge its obligations as an employer (so that the School 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 the School for the duration of the successful applicant's employment with the School. After employment ends it will be retained in accordance with the School's document retention guidelines. If the application is unsuccessful, all documentation relating to the application will normally be confidentially destroyed after six months.

All information relating to Safer Recruitment Checks is held on the school Single Central Register (SCR). This vital document is used to record all our safer recruitment procedures for all adults who work on out site in regulated activity.

Regulated activity is defined as working with (directly) or around children (i.e. visiting our site) once a week or four or more days in a 30-day period.

Our SCR is subject to scrutiny as per regulatory requirements undertaken with inspections.

Head	once per academic year.
Chair of Governors	twice per academic year
DSL	once a term, per academic year

Where references are requested for our own staff, responses will be made using a standard 'School Reference Response Letter' (see Appendix 9), and a copy will be retained on the relevant personnel file for the duration of employment at our school.

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 the School 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 in teaching work, the School may also decide to make a referral to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA).

In addition to applying for Enhanced DBS clearance for all new staff, all governors, volunteers (determined by following the ISI CRR guidance – see Appendix 11) and all adults living on site (as partners and family members of residential staff over the age of 16) must also hold an Enhanced DBS and all relevant checks undertaken (including the Children’s Barred list) (see Appendix 8).