

Bay Learning Academy CIC

Safer Recruitment Policy

2024 – 2025

INTRODUCTION

Bay Learning Academy CIC is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all the students in our care. The academy expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment as an employer.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The Safer Recruitment policy aims to help deter, reject or identify people who might abuse students or are otherwise unsuited to working with them by having appropriate procedures for appointing staff.

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

- to ensure that the best possible staff are recruited based on 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 (KCSIE), the Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales 2015 (the Prevent Duty Guidance) and any guidance or code of practice published by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS); and
- to ensure that the 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.

The 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 academy based on the applicant's abilities, qualifications, experience and merit as measured against the job description and person specification.

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 2016 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 academy aims to operate this procedure consistently and thoroughly while obtaining, collating, analysing and evaluating information from and about applicants applying for job vacancies at the academy.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the responsibility of the Principal involved in recruitment to:

- Ensure that the academy operates safe recruitment procedures and makes sure all appropriate checks are carried out on all staff and volunteers who work at the academy
- To monitor contractors' and agencies' compliance with this document
- Promote the welfare of children and young people at every stage of the procedure

Definition of Regulated Activity and Frequency

Any position undertaken at, or on behalf of the academy will amount to "regulated activity" if it is carried out:

- frequently, meaning once a week or more; or
- satisfies the "period condition", meaning four times or more in 30 days; and
- 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.

The academy is not permitted to check the Children's Barred List unless an individual will be engaging in "regulated activity". The 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, the 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, the academy will advertise all vacant posts to encourage as wide a field of applicants as possible, normally this entails an external advertisement.

Any advertisement will make clear the academy's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

All applicant documentation will be treated confidentially under the Data Protection Act (DPA).

Application Forms

Bay Learning Academy CIC uses its own application form and all applicants for employment will be required to complete an 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 Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 provisions. CVs will not be accepted.

It is unlawful for the Academy 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 the Academy. All applicants will be made aware that providing false information is an offence and could result in the application being rejected or summary dismissal if the applicant has been selected, and referred to the police and/or the DBS.

Job Descriptions and Person Specifications

A job description is a key document in the recruitment process and must be finalised before 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's 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's specification will include a specific reference to suitability to work with children.

References

References for short-listed applicants will be sent immediately after shortlisting. The only exception is when 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 an interview.

All offers of employment will be subject to the receipt of a minimum of two references which are considered satisfactory by the 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 working 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 objectives and 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 before any offer of employment is made.

Any discrepancies or anomalies will be followed up. Direct contact by phone will be undertaken with each referee to verify the reference.

The academy does not accept open references, testimonials or references from relatives.

Interviews

There will be a face-to-face interview wherever possible, and a minimum of two interviewers will see the applicants for the vacant position. The interview process will explore the applicant's ability to carry out the job description and meet the person's specifications. It will enable the panel to explore any anomalies or gaps that have been identified to satisfy themselves that the chosen applicant can meet the safeguarding criteria (in line with Safer Recruitment Training).

Any information regarding past disciplinary actions 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.

At least one member of any interviewing panel will have undertaken safer recruitment training or refresher training as applicable.

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.

OFFER OF APPOINTMENT AND NEW EMPLOYEE PROCESS

If it is decided to make an offer of employment following the formal interview, any such offer will be conditional on the following:

- the agreement of a mutually acceptable start date and the signing of a contract incorporating the Academy's standard terms and conditions of employment
- verification of the applicant's identity (where that has not previously been verified)
- the receipt of two references (one of which must be from the applicant's most recent employer) which the academy considers to be satisfactory
- the academy being satisfied that the applicant is not, and has never been, the subject of any proceedings before a professional conduct panel or equivalent body in the UK or any other country for any reason which prevents the applicant from working at the Academy or which, in the Academy's opinion, renders the applicant unsuitable to work at the academy
- where the position amounts to "regulated activity" the receipt of an enhanced disclosure from the DBS which the academy considers to be satisfactory
- where the position amounts to "regulated activity" confirmation that the applicant is not named on the Children's Barred List*
- confirmation that the applicant is not subject to a direction under section 142 of the Education Act 2002 which prohibits, disqualifies or restricts them from providing education at an academy, taking part in the management of an independent Academy or working in a position which involves regular contact with children
- confirmation that the applicant is not subject to a direction under section 128 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 which prohibits, disqualifies or restricts them from being involved in the management of an independent Academy
- 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 because of the applicant having lived or worked outside of the UK; and
- verification of professional qualifications which the academy deems a requirement for the post, or which the applicant otherwise cites in support of their application (where they have not been previously verified).

Whether a position amounts to "regulated activity" must therefore be considered by the academy to decide which checks are appropriate. It is however likely that in nearly all cases the academy will be able to carry out an enhanced DBS check and a Children's Barred List check.

A personal file checklist will be used to track and audit paperwork obtained under 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 students. Therefore, any convictions and cautions that would normally be considered 'SPENT' must be declared when applying for any position at Bay Learning Academy CIC.

DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) Check (formerly known as CRB Disclosure)

The 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 academy that 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 the Academy policy that the DBS disclosure must be applied before the commencement of employment of any new employee.

Members of staff at Bay Learning Academy CIC are aware of their obligation to inform the Principal of any cautions or convictions that arise between these checks taking place.

DBS Certificate

The DBS no longer issues Disclosure Certificates to employers; therefore employees/applicants should bring their original Certificates to Bay Learning Academy CIC.

Dealing with convictions

The 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:

- 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 decision will be made following a formal face-to-face meeting. If 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 Principal will evaluate all of the risk factors above before a position is offered or confirmed.

All applicants invited to attend an interview at the academy 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 the UK under those set out in the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006 and DBS identity checking guidelines. The 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 obtained any academic or vocational qualification legally required for the position and claimed in their application form.

Medical Fitness

The academy is legally required to verify the medical fitness of anyone to be appointed to a post at the 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 the role, together with details of any other physical or mental requirements of the role.

The 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

The academy, per the UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) will, if applicable, sponsor new foreign nationals (see Certificate of Sponsorship section).

In addition, applicants who have lived/travelled abroad for more than 3 months will need to obtain a criminal record 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 the academy.

Induction Programme

All new employees will be given an induction programme which will identify the academy 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.

Single Centralised Register of Members of Staff

In addition to the various staff records kept in the Academy and on individual personnel files, a single centralised

record of recruitment and vetting checks is kept. This is kept up-to-date and retained by Bay Learning Academy CIC. The Single Centralised Register will contain details of the following:

- all employees who are employed to work at the academy
- all employees who are employed as supply staff to the academy whether employed directly or through an agency
- all others who have been chosen by the Academy to work in regular contact with children. This will cover volunteers, governors, peripatetic staff and people brought into the academy to provide additional teaching or instruction for students but who are not staff members e.g.: sports coaches etc

Record Retention / Data Protection

The academy is legally required to undertake the above pre-employment checks. Therefore, if an applicant is successful in their application, the 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 the academy to discharge its obligations as an employer e.g. so that the 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 the academy for the duration of the successful applicant's employment with the Academy. All information retained on employees is kept centrally at the registered Office in a locked and secure cabinet.

The same policy applies to any suitability information obtained about volunteers involved with academy activities.

Bay Learning Academy CIC will retain all interview notes on all unsuccessful applicants for 6 months, after which time the notes will be confidentially destroyed (ie: shredded). The 6-month retention period follows the Data Protection Act 1998.

Ongoing Employment

Bay 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 academy will therefore provide ongoing training and support for all staff, as identified through the QA process.

Leaving Employment

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 before employment is confirmed. Whilst these are pre-employment checks the academy also has a legal duty to make a referral to the DBS in circumstances where an individual:

- has applied for a position at the academy despite being barred from working with children; or
- has been removed by the academy from working in regulated activity (whether paid or unpaid), or has resigned before being removed, because they have harmed, or pose a risk of harm to, a child
- Visiting Speakers (and Prevent Duty)

The Prevent Duty Guidance requires the academy to have clear protocols for ensuring that any visiting speakers, whether invited by staff or by students, are suitable and appropriately supervised.

The academy 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 academy or perform any other regular duties for or on behalf of the academy.

All visiting speakers will be subject to the academy's usual visitors signing-in protocol. [Screening for visitors to the academy policy] This will include signing in and out at Reception, always wearing a visitors' badge and being escorted by a fully vetted member of staff between appointments.

The academy 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 academy. In doing so the academy 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 academy 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.

Volunteers

The 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 the academy (the definition of regulated activity set out above will be applied to all volunteers).

Under no circumstances will the academy permit an unchecked volunteer to have unsupervised contact with students.

It is the academy's policy that a new DBS certificate or one valid within 6 months is required for volunteers who will engage in regulated activity but who have not been involved in any activities with the academy for three consecutive months or more.

In addition, the 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): character references from the volunteer's place of work or any other relevant source; and an informal safer recruitment interview.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Principal will be responsible for ensuring that this policy is monitored and evaluated throughout the academy. This will be undertaken through formal audits of job vacancies and monitoring of interviews and the SCR.

Policy Statement of the Recruitment of Ex-Offenders

In accordance with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Code of Practice, the DBS Code of Practice is available at www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-code-of-practice

General Principles

As an organisation that uses the DBS, the Academy complies fully with the DBS Code of Practice and undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a disclosure based on a conviction or other information revealed.

We meet the requirements in respect of exempted questions under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. A DBS check will be carried out before the appointment to any job within the Trust is confirmed. This will include details of convictions, cautions and reprimands, as well as 'spent' and 'unspent' convictions. A criminal record will not necessarily be a bar to obtaining a position.

We are committed to the fair treatment of applicants on all protected grounds and concerning all history of offending.

We promote equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills and potential and welcome applications from a wide range of applicants, including those with criminal records. We select all applicants for interview based on their competencies, qualifications and knowledge.

Application forms and recruitment information will contain a statement that job applicants will be required to disclose their criminal record if they are invited to interview, and a DBS check will be carried out if they are offered the job. The information will only be seen by those who need to see it as part of the recruitment process.

At the interview, or in a separate discussion, we ensure that an open and measured discussion takes place about any offences or other matter that might be relevant to the position. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the job sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment.

We undertake to discuss any matter revealed in a disclosure with the person seeking the job before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.

Please note having a criminal record will not necessarily bar you from working within the Academy This will depend on the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of your offences.