



Recruitment & Appointment Policy

PURPOSE

The use of this policy and procedure is to ensure that Ark Schools employs appropriately skilled staff, assist Ark Schools to deter, identify and reject people who are unsuitable to work with children, help promote equality of opportunity and ensure that Ark Schools meets its statutory obligations.

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|----------------------|--|--------------------|---------------------|
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| Type of policy: | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Network-wide <input type="checkbox"/> Set for school <input type="checkbox"/> Tailored by school | Approval: | Management Team |
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POSITIONING WITHIN ARK OPERATIONAL MODEL

| Component | Element |
|--|-------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Strategic Leadership & Planning <input type="checkbox"/> Monitoring, Reporting & Data <input type="checkbox"/> Governance & Accountabilities <input type="checkbox"/> Teaching & Learning <input type="checkbox"/> Curriculum & Assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Culture, Ethos & Wellbeing <input type="checkbox"/> Pathways & Enrichment <input type="checkbox"/> Parents & Community <input type="checkbox"/> Finance, IT & Estates <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Our People | Recruitment |

Recruitment & Selection Policy and Procedure

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Ark Schools exists to give every young person, regardless of their background, to make sure that every pupil can go to university or into a career of their choice. This policy is intended to provide a framework for the efficient and effective recruitment of all categories of staff employed to work at Ark Schools, either within a school or centrally employed. Ark values the contribution of all staff and recognises that the recruitment of appropriately skilled staff is key to the provision of a safe and successful teaching and learning environment in which pupils can thrive.
- 1.2 These procedures abide by relevant legislation and guidance, and make particular reference to the statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (Department for Education September 2021 and subsequent versions), as well as the Equality Act 2010 Employment Statutory Code of Practice and **The Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Information Protection Regulations**
- 1.3 Ark Schools is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff, volunteers and apprentices to share this commitment. In order to meet this responsibility, it follows a rigorous selection process to discourage and screen out unsuitable applicants.

2. Purpose

- 2.1 The use of this policy and procedure is to ensure that Ark Schools employs appropriately skilled staff, who are suitable to work with children, help promote equality of opportunity and ensure that Ark Schools meets its statutory obligations.

3. Scope

- 3.1 This policy covers the recruitment of all academy and non-school based staff. It is also strongly recommended for use by external agencies/contractors appointing workers who will have access to Ark Schools academies as part of their role. It is the principal's responsibility within an academy to ensure that relevant agencies are made aware of these standards.

4. Equal Opportunities

- 4.1 Ark Schools is committed to eliminating discrimination and encouraging diversity amongst our employees. We endeavour to build a workforce that will be truly representative of all sections of society and that each employee feels respected and able to give their best. To that end we are committed to provide equitable employment practices and not to discriminate on grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage/civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation. We oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination.
- 4.2 The appointment and recruitment procedure must always be applied fairly and in accordance with employment law and the Ark Schools Equal Opportunities Policy Statement.
- 4.3 In line with part 7 of the Immigration Act (2016) the ability to speak fluent English is an

essential requirement of all public-facing posts advertised within Ark Schools including (but not limited to) teachers (qualified and unqualified), teaching assistants and reception staff

5. Responsibilities

- 5.1 Ark Schools is responsible for maintaining equitable, consistent and objective procedures for matters relating to recruitment and appointments.
- 5.2 The principal¹ has overall responsibility for the internal organisation, control and management in their academy² and the implementation of this policy in their academy.

6. General principles

- 6.1 When recruiting and selecting workers and staff, each Ark Schools academy will:
- Ensure its practices and systems are transparent, objective, thorough, consistent and in line with Ark Schools policies and guidance
 - Ensure those involved in the recruitment & selection process have access to appropriate training, and ensure at least one member of each panel has received Safer Recruitment training
 - Take account of issues relating to safeguarding children at every stage of the procedure, and avoid over-reliance on criminal background checks as a means of 'sifting' out candidates unsuited to working with children.

7. Recruitment & selection procedure

7.1 Stage one: Recruitment planning

As soon as a hiring need arises, the principal should review the following:

- **Recruitment Planning:** refer to your workforce plan to confirm whether the role is within the agreed future structure. If it is, initiate the vacancy approval process. If it is not, speak to your HR Business Partner and Regional Director to discuss the business case for the role prior to submitting a vacancy approval request.
- **Vacancy approval:** complete the online vacancy request form via the Ark recruitment portal (details on how to do this can be found in the Recruitment Toolkit on the Ark Library). Approval from all relevant stakeholders must be received prior to advertising and/or hiring to any roles
- **Job description and person specification:** use the current template available in the Recruitment Toolkit on the Ark Library for all vacancies. Up-to-date template job descriptions can be found within the online vacancy request form or in the Recruitment Toolkit, found in the People section of the Ark Library.

It should be explicit on the job description that candidates will be expected to

¹ This policy applies to all Ark Schools staff. Appropriate substitutions will be made to accommodate differences in organisational structures across the Ark Schools network and central office. For example, all references to the principal are replaced with the head teacher depending on the specific school structure.

² For Ark Schools central office all references to the principal are replaced with the appropriate senior leader, and the senior team replaces all reference to the senior leadership team.

demonstrate a commitment to safeguarding the welfare of children, and that this will be tested at interview.

The Principal or a nominated member of the SLT is responsible for approving the final job description and advert text; this can also be delegated to a member of HR staff within the school. The HR Business Partner will review final documents submitted via the online vacancy request form, to ensure consistency across the network.

7.2 Stage two: Advertising and applicant management

The recruitment advert should be attractive, clear, and communicate the right messages. It should be drafted in line with the above principles and should include:

- Post title, and a brief description of the associated duties
- Remuneration
- Whether full time, part time or suitable for job share
- Essential characteristics/qualifications/skills/ experience necessary
- Details of the academy and who to contact for further information
- A statement of Ark Schools' commitment to equal opportunities and commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children
- The requirement for an enhanced DBS check

Every Ark Schools academy must use the appropriate Ark Schools application form, which is accessed by candidates through the recruitment portal during the application process.

The application form has been designed to ensure that the following minimum information is obtained from candidates prior to the shortlisting stage:

- Full identifying details of the applicant, including current and former names, current address and contact details
- Academic/professional qualifications relevant to the post applied for, with details of the awarding body and dates
- QTS reference number, where relevant
- Confirmation of whether the applicant requires a work visa (and details associated with this)
- A full chronological history since leaving education, including periods of training, work (including voluntary work), and an explanation for any gaps. Start and end dates should be provided in all instances³.
- Contact details for two referees (one of whom must be the applicant's current or most recent employer), covering at least five years.
- A supporting statement of the knowledge/skills/experience/personal qualities that the applicant is able to bring to the job, and how they feel they meet the person specification
- A signed, dated statement from the applicant that they are not disqualified from working with children, or subject to sanctions imposed by a regulatory body such as the Teaching Regulation Agency or qualifications awarding organisations

³ In some instances a short application form accompanied by a CV is accepted provided the preceding points are explored at interview

- A signed statement declaring if they have any criminal convictions, cautions, reprimands or final warnings not filtered under current guidelines.

7.3 Stage three: Assessment

- **Shortlisting** - Principals will ensure that the following standards are met:
 - Those responsible for shortlisting should normally take part in the interview process; at least a minimum of one shortlister should be on the panel
 - All applications must be scrutinised for consistency and completeness of information, gaps in employment, anomalies and discrepancies. Incomplete applications are not accepted. If CVs are requested, they must be accompanied by an appropriate safeguarding statement and/or short application form
 - A shortlisting grid is used for recording applicants and whether they meet the shortlisting criteria as defined by the job specification, (for a standard shortlisting grid please refer to the Recruitment Toolkit in the People section of the Ark Library).
 - All candidates are to be assessed equally against the criteria contained in the person specification
 - If a candidate requires Sponsorship, Ark's Sponsorship recruitment guidelines must be followed (please refer to the Recruitment Toolkit in the People section of the Ark Library)
- **Invitation to interview** - Prior to inviting shortlisted candidates for interview/testing, the principal must ensure that:
 - For Ark Schools school-based staff, references are sought for each candidate prior to interview, with permission from candidate. The Ark Schools' reference request template held in the recruitment portal must be used to ensure all information required in line with safer recruitment practices is consistently collected
 - The assessment process does not discriminate against disabled applicants (as defined by the Equality Act 2010) and consider making any reasonable adjustments that may be requested by a candidate⁴
 - Candidates are made aware that: the interview will assess their suitability to work with children and will include questions relating to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children
 - Candidates are asked to bring identification documents, qualifications and original certificates to the interview.

Important note: It is essential that references, qualification details, and other documents provided by the applicant are cross-checked against details on the application form, in order to rule out possible anomalies. Where anomalies are found or where references are vague or unspecific, follow-up action will be taken by the principal to establish the candidate's suitability for the post.

- **Interviews** - The principal must ensure that:
 - No offer of appointment is made without the candidate having attended a face-

⁴ If a reasonable adjustment has been requested you can contact AskHR at askhr@arkonline.org for guidance on how to make an appropriate reasonable adjustment

- to-face interview, or where this is not possible, a video conference.
- Interviews are conducted by a minimum of two interviewers at all times
- At least one member of every panel has completed Safer Recruitment training and this should be noted on interview paperwork⁵
- A core set of questions to be asked of all candidates is drawn up prior to interview, and is based on the competencies specified on the person specification
- Additional questions to be asked of all candidates are prepared related to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, including:
 - o Motivation to work with children and young people
 - o Ability to form and maintain appropriate relationships and personal boundaries with children and young people
 - o Ability to deal with challenging behaviours and attitudes to use of authority and maintaining discipline
- The interview panel agrees the required standards before the interviews take place and how they are to be measured
- The interview panel agrees beforehand what additional issues specific to each candidate need to be explored at interview (based on the candidate's application and references)
- Any gaps in the employment history must be explored and noted down on the interview paperwork
- Candidates are reminded that their identity needs to be checked and that they are subject to an enhanced criminal background check. Candidates are asked to confirm the declaration they signed on the application form and if they need to disclose anything.

• **References** - All candidates are required to provide details of two referees covering at least the past five years, one of whom should be their current employer. Should the candidate not currently be working with children, a reference must be sought from their most recent work with children where possible, (this is not necessarily relevant for Central posts). The reference request form should be sent through the recruitment portal; referees are asked to complete a detailed questionnaire, including whether the candidate has been subject to concerns for any child protection issues.

Please refer to the Compliance area in the People section on the Ark Library for further information on pre – employment checks or for guidance contact AskHR on 0203 116 0739 or email askhr@arkonline.org

- **Post Interview Feedback** – all candidates should be informed of the outcome of any assessment as soon as possible, ideally no later than 5 working days after the interview. Feedback given to unsuccessful candidates should be:
 - Professional, sincere and founded in facts evidenced at interview
 - Personalised, with constructive feedback for the candidate, where possible
 - Given in a positive manner

You can find further guidance on giving feedback to unsuccessful candidates in the

⁵ Staff requiring this training should contact AskHR at askhr@arkonline.org

Recruitment Toolkit, found in the People section of the Ark Library.

7.4 Pre-employment checks & commencing employment

Staff responsible for pre-appointment checks in schools should refer to the 'SCR and Pre-Employment Check Guidance' found in the Compliance area in the People section on the Ark Library

No applicant should be allowed to start work for Ark Schools in a school-based post until a satisfactory DBS certificate has been received. This includes temporary employees and secondments. In exceptional circumstances, the principal may decide, in consultation with their Designated Safeguarding Lead and relevant HR Business Partner or AskHR, that an applicant can start work before the disclosure is received. This must only be in situations where there is an urgent need to maintain service delivery and all reasonable steps have been taken to protect the safety of children. Reasonable steps to protect children include not allowing unsupervised access to children, allowing the applicant to start work in an alternative post or shadowing other employees.

7.5 Documentation retention

Application and interview details of those candidates not appointed should be destroyed after 6 months from the interview date. All other relevant recruitment documentation relating to the chosen candidate must be kept securely and in-line with data protection rules, including:

- The application form (including signed declaration)
- The interview assessment notes
- Shortlisting forms
- Documentation from any selection tests

Important note: If the chosen candidate is being sponsored on a Tier 2 visa by Ark Schools then all applications and interview details of every candidate assessed should remain on file until the UK Visa and Immigration gives permission for them to be destroyed.

7.6 Agency workers

The Supply Register is the Managed Service Provider for Ark Schools and is therefore responsible for ensuring that the correct pre-employment checks are in place for temporary supply workers. Ark Schools should however ensure that Ofsted requirements are being met for the purpose of the Single Central Record.

The Supply Register must ensure that the required number of reference checks and a satisfactory enhanced disclosure for their workers are obtained prior to employment. If The Supply Register or one their supply agencies is unable to provide the necessary disclosure and reference checks, the agency worker should not be used.

The Supply Register and its third-party suppliers must also demonstrate that they are committed to safer recruitment practices. The Supply Register and its third-party suppliers should confirm they have checked the following:

- ID
- QTS number (where relevant)
- Qualifications evidence
- Childcare disqualification completed and date (where required)
- Barred List checked and expiry date
- Further disclosure information (if relevant)
- Prohibition order checked and date
- Overseas police check (if relevant)
- Right to work evidenced
- References checked
- Employment history checked

The Service Level Agreement between The Supply Register and Ark Schools can be found in the Recruitment Toolkit on the Ark Library, this details the commitment by The Supply Register to provide only fully vetted temporary workers.

7.7 Self-employed staff/consultants

Where a consultant or self-employed worker is to be engaged, Ark must first be satisfied that the individual is a contractor for tax purposes. This is established by completing the HMRC IR35 test online where the hiring manager needs to answer a number of questions about the role which will define whether or not the individual can be engaged with as an independent contractor or if instead they must be employed on a fixed term contract. The IR35 test can only be found online at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/check-employment-status-for-tax>. A copy of the IR35 test results should be retained.

8. Training, Resources and Guidance

Safer Recruitment training can be requested via AskHR askhr@arkonline.org

Recruitment resources and guidance can be accessed through the [Recruitment Toolkit](#) within the People section of the Ark Library.

The relevant HR Business Partner will work in consultation with the principal/hiring managers on the hiring process and any concerns raised including assessing criminal background disclosures and safeguarding concerns.

Any further questions can be directed to AskHR on 0203 116 0739 or by email at askhr@arkonline.org