



**Kestrel House  
School**

**ACORN**  
Better days, Better lives

## **Safer Recruitment Policy**

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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Acorn Care and Education is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. The Group recognises the vulnerability of the children and vulnerable people in its care and is committed to operating to the highest standards when recruiting employees. It accepts that it is vital to adopt recruitment and selection procedures that help to deter, reject or identify people who might abuse children or are otherwise unsuited to work with them. Whilst this policy does cover other areas the protection of children is at its heart.
- 1.2 Acorn operates a non-discriminatory, fair and objective recruitment and selection process. In line with the Equal Opportunities Policy, internal and external applicants will receive equal treatment and access to opportunities, irrespective of sex, age, sexual orientation, race, ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, membership or non-membership of a Trade Union.

## **2. Scope**

- 2.1 This policy applies to the recruitment, selection and induction of all full and part time employees and bank staff of the school, residential and fostering setting. It covers all employees irrespective of whether they are employed on permanent, temporary or fixed term contracts.

## **3. General Recruitment principles for safer practice**

- 3.1 The Group recognises that safer practice in recruitment requires considering and including issues to do with child protection and safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children at every stage of the process.

### 3.2 **Planning**

Those responsible for recruiting will consider carefully the skills, knowledge and experience the successful candidate will need to demonstrate, and whether there are any particular matters that need to be included in the advertisement for the post in order to attract suitable candidates. The information for candidates will set out clearly the extent of the relationships/contact with children and vulnerable people, and the degree of responsibility for children and vulnerable people that the appointed person will have.

3.3 The Job Description will be revised where appropriate and the Person Specification will need careful thought to include essential and desirable criteria. The Job Description will make reference to the responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children/young people and the Person Specification will include specific reference to suitability to work with children and vulnerable people.

3.4 The groups safeguarding statement as outlined below must be added to the bottom of both the advert copy and the job description/person specification.

*Acorn Care and Education is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the children and vulnerable people in our care. Successful applicants will be subject to a Disclosure and Barring Service check.*

3.5 Posts will be advertised, via our applicant tracking system '**Job Train**' on our website and on the appropriate recruitment job boards. In most cases they will be advertised externally, including on the internet, depending on the type and category of the position.

3.6 An **application form** should be used in order to obtain a common set of core data from all applicants. Applications for both internally and externally advertised posts will only be accepted from candidates who complete the online Acorn Care and Education Application Form in full via Jobtrain. CV's will not be accepted in place of a completed application form but may be submitted alongside.

3.7 The application form should be fully completed, including any gaps in employment history; any inconsistencies must be explored further during the short listing and interview stage.

3.8 Incomplete applications should not be accepted and should be returned for completion. Any anomalies or discrepancies or gaps in employment identified should be noted so that they can be taken up as part of the consideration of whether to short list the applicant.

3.9 **Shortlisting** for job candidates will be carried out using the Person Specification, Job Description and Application Form. All records of the reasons for the selection should be saved in the candidate notes section on Jobtrain.

- 3.10 All **interviews** will be conducted in person and the areas explored will include the candidate's suitability to work with children and vulnerable people. The panel should consist of at least two people, one of whom has been trained in Safer Recruitment to ensure that interviews reflect the importance of safeguarding children and vulnerable people.
- 3.11 To ensure fairness and objectivity, all candidates should be assessed equally against the criteria contained in the person specification without exception or variation.
- 3.12 Interview questions should be prepared in advance of the interview, should be well structured and the same questions applied for each candidate throughout the interviewing process. A record of the interviewer's assessment of the candidate's response will be recorded on Jobtrain.
- 3.13 Interview questions should test a candidate's attitudes, motives and suitability for this role with at least one question in the interview must be relevant to safeguarding children and vulnerable people.
- 3.14 All candidates invited to interview will be asked to bring original documents to confirm educational and professional qualifications that they have specified on the Application Form. Alongside this they will bring right to work documents which includes their passport or photo driving licence, birth certificate and a utility bill/bank statement, or other document with their name and address on it. These documents will be inspected and copied at interview (certified as a true copy of the original) to be filed and saved onto Jobtrain.

#### **4. Conditional Offer of Appointment (Pre-appointment checks)**

- 4.1 An offer of appointment to the successful candidate should be conditional upon:
- The receipt of at least two satisfactory references. All references must be verified by a call to the referee on a landline number, ideally by head office. This should be documented detailing name of person who it was verified with, name of verifier, date and time of verification
  - Verification of the candidate's identity (if that could not be verified straight after the interview)
  - A satisfactory enhanced DBS Disclosure
  - Verification of the candidate's medical fitness
  - Verification of qualifications (if not verified after the interview)
  - Verification of professional status where required
  - Satisfactory completion of the probationary period.
- 4.2 All offers of employment will be subject to at least two satisfactory references, one of which must be from their current/last employer. The purpose of seeking references is to obtain objective and factual information to support

appointment decisions. They should always be sought and obtained directly from the referee.

- 4.3 A standard proforma will be used to seek references; in cases where referees prefer to write a letter instead of using the standard proforma, these employment references will be acceptable as long as they are not 'open' (they are addressed directly).'
- 4.4 References should always be obtained and scrutinised and any concerns resolved satisfactorily, before the appointment is confirmed. They should include details of disciplinary offences, including disciplinary offences relating to children or young peoples (whether the disciplinary sanction is current or time expired), and whether the candidate has been the subject of any child protection allegations or concerns, and if so the outcome of any enquiry or disciplinary procedure. Details of allegations that have not been substantiated, are false or malicious will not be sought.
- 4.5 For positions within Fostering & Residential, references will be requested from all previous roles in a childcare setting.
- 4.6 If a candidate is applying for a teaching post and is not currently employed as a teacher, it is also advisable to make best efforts to check with the school, college or local authority at which they were most recently employed to confirm details of employment and their reasons for leaving.
- 4.7 When neither the candidate's current nor previous employment has involved working with children or young people, their referees will still be asked about their suitability to work with children and vulnerable people. In this instance, they may answer 'not applicable' if the candidate's duties had not brought them into contact with children or young people.
- 4.8 The Group will adhere to its mandatory responsibility to secure DBS disclosures on all new applicants for work and for those applicants who have lived or worked abroad to seek additional information about an applicant's conduct. DBS checks will be renewed every three years.
- 4.9 The Group will keep a single central record collating when checks on staff were made and by whom, including identity, qualification requirements, and DBS checks.
- 4.10 No employee can commence regulated activity without an enhanced DBS check. Any employee with access to sensitive information about children and vulnerable people needs a standard DBS check.
- 4.11 Prohibition checks will be carried out for ALL colleagues working in the Education division.
- 4.12 HCPC registration will be checked for all relevant fostering positions.

- 4.13 The Group commits to request full details of DBS checks carried out on staff supplied through an agency.
- 4.14 A Single Central Register / Record of all colleagues is in place and should be kept and updated within the Cascade HR system.

## 5. Induction

- 5.1 An induction programme will be undertaken by all new colleagues. Certain elements of the induction will also be applicable to those who are changing roles within Acorn Care and Education.
- 5.2 The content and nature of the induction process will vary according to the role and previous experience of the new colleagues, but as far as safeguarding the individual and promoting the welfare of children is concerned, the induction programme **must** include information about, and written statements concerning:
- The structure and role of relevant departments and/or services.
  - Policies and procedures in relation to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children e.g. child protection, anti-bullying, anti-racism, physical intervention/restraint, intimate care, internet safety and any local child protection/safeguarding procedures.
  - Safe practice and the standards of conduct and behaviour expected of staff and pupils/residents in the establishment.
  - Health, Safety and Welfare.
  - How and with whom any concerns about issues should be raised, and
  - Other relevant personnel and school/residential home policies and procedures e.g. grievance, disciplinary, capability, absence management, computer usage, dealing with allegations of abuse, CSC, Radicalisation and FGM against staff, and whistle-blowing.