




SAFER RECRUITMENT POLICY

Date of last review:	July 2024	Review period:	2 years
Date of next review:	July 2026	Owner:	CEO
Type of policy:	Trust	LGB or Board approval:	Board
		Signed	

Introduction

Victoria Academies Trust (VAT) and its academies are committed to providing the best possible care and education to its pupils and recognises the importance of recruiting and retaining staff of the highest quality.

The purpose of this policy is to set out the requirements for the recruitment of staff to VAT and its academies. The aim is to:

- Attract the best possible applicants to vacancies
- Deter prospective applicants who are unsuitable to work with children or young people
- Identify and reject applicants who are unsuitable for work with children and young people

All decisions on recruitment will be made with regard to curriculum needs and financial circumstances.

This policy takes into account the provisions of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (DfE September 2023). VAT will abide by the existing legislation and in particular will not discriminate on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics listed in the Equality Act (2010), these being:

Age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity.

VAT will promote equality in all aspects of academy life, including the recruitment of staff.

Recruitment Panel

When recruiting the Scheme of Delegation must be followed, ensuring the relevant skilled staff are on the panel and that staff have up to date safer recruitment training.

Advertising and inviting applications

Advertisements for all posts will include the following statements:

"Victoria Academies Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects its entire staff to share this commitment. All post-holders will be required to have an Enhanced Disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)."

"This post is covered by Part 7 of the Immigration Act (2016) and therefore the ability to speak fluent and spoken English is an essential requirement for this role."

The following documents will be available in the vacancy area of the website:

1. Job advertisement / recruitment pack
2. Job description and person specification
3. Safer Recruitment Policy
4. Application form
5. Self-declaration and disclosure form
6. Recruitment Monitoring form
7. Rehabilitation of Ex Offenders Policy

Applicants will also be made aware of the relevant policies, including the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Advertisements for external vacancies will be placed on the academy and trust website and in any suitable relevant media.

In cases where a member of staff is employed on a fixed term contract for a post which then becomes available as a permanent post, that member of staff may be offered the permanent post without further advertising subject to approval following the Scheme of Delegation.

Where staff are invited to take on a management or leadership responsibility which does not require an additional member of staff the post will be advertised internally.

Advertisements will specify: the main subjects to be taught and/or the nature of any leadership allowance; the start date of the appointment and whether the post is permanent or fixed term and, in the case of fixed term contracts, the end date of the contract; the remuneration for the post will be expressed in terms of the applicable pay scales and the closing date for applications will also be stated.

Applications

All applicants for externally advertised posts will be required to complete a VAT application form, which should be returned to the nominated person by the specified closing date. C.V.'s will not be accepted in place of a completed application form.

Applications received after the closing date will not normally be considered unless there is proof of a postal or technical/electronic delay), applicants are advised to submit their application via email to avoid late arrival.

For posts where it is known that recruitment is likely to be difficult, references may be requested as the applications are received in order to reduce the time from the closing date to making the appointment. VAT reserves the right to close applications early in order to meet the aims of this policy, although the expectation is that in the majority of posts, this will not be the case.

Shortlisting and references

Applications will be shortlisted against the criteria in the person specification.

Shortlisted candidates will be advised that the Trust carries out online searches of applicants as part of due diligence checks. The purpose of such searches is to identify any incidents or issues that have occurred, and or are publicly available online, which the Trust might want to explore with the applicant at interview.

Where possible, references will be taken up on shortlisted candidates prior to interview. All applicants will be asked to provide two referees, one of whom should be the applicant's current or most recent employer. The referee should be a senior person with relevant authority. In a school setting the Headteacher would need to confirm the reference is accurate.

References will be sought and obtained directly from the referee. References or testimonials provided by the candidate will not be accepted.

If a candidate for a teaching post is not currently employed with working with children but has done in the past, a reference should be sought from the most recent school the applicant worked, to confirm details of employment and reasons for leaving.

The trust reference form must be completed

Employees are entitled if requested to view their employment references.

In line with KCSIE 2023 schools may complete online searches as part of the shortlisting process as part of their due diligence on the shortlisted candidates.

This may help identify any incidents or issues that have happened, and are **publicly available online**, which the school might want to explore with the applicant at interview.

Selection Process

Selection techniques will be determined by the nature and duties of the post. 'All applicants for education based posts will be required to undertake an activity with children, and for all teaching posts, a lesson observation will be undertaken. Candidates that are successful in the initial stages of the selection process will be invited to attend for interview; unsuccessful candidates will not be interviewed.

Interviews will always be face to face. In rare circumstances e.g. if the candidate is abroad, this may be conducted via a visual electronic link.

Ideally all members of the recruitment panel should have completed the formal safer recruitment training. It is a requirement that at least two members of the recruitment panel have completed the formal safer recruitment training.

The VAT interview proforma must be used for all new appointments.

Candidates will always be required to:

- Satisfactorily explain any gaps in employment.
- Satisfactorily explain any anomalies or discrepancies in the information available to the panel.
- Declare any information that is likely to appear on a DBS disclosure.
- Demonstrate their capacity to safeguard and protect the welfare of children and young people.

Employment checks

All successful applicants are required to undergo the following checks: DBS Check, prohibition from teaching, Overseas check (if applicable), qualification check, identity check and barred list.

Due to the nature of the work of Victoria Academies Trust, all employees and volunteers must undertake an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check. Posts within schools are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (updated guidance March 2014), therefore as a prospective employer, we encourage candidates to disclose any unspent and spent convictions during the application stage.

Applicants with recent periods of overseas residence and those with little or no previous UK residence may also be asked to apply for the equivalent of a disclosure, ie overseas criminal record check if one is available in the relevant jurisdiction(s).

Overseas applicants can be asked to provide additional checks such as letter of professional standard, certificate of good conduct or character references. These checks are undertaken if an applicant has been abroad for 3 months or more in the last 5 years. However, the decision should be risk based and you can go back 10 years rather than 5 years.

As soon as the applicant receives their DBS certificate the original certificate must be shown to the Head Teacher and HR manager for verification. The Trust do not keep copies of DBS Certificates.

VAT expects supply/temporary worker agencies/contractors that are used by the Academy to register with the DBS on their own account and to follow their policy or their own comparable policy. Proof of registration will be required before VAT will commission services from any such organisation.

Disqualification Declaration (Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006)

(Staff working with/volunteering/having management responsibility for provision for children aged 8 years and under).

All new staff and volunteers will be made aware of their duty with regard to Disqualification Declaration and asked to complete a declaration form, all existing staff and volunteers will be reminded of the requirement on an annual basis as part of the safeguarding training.

Barred List

A separate Barred List check will be carried out if an individual will commence employment before the DBS Certificate is available.

Verification of Identity and Address

All applicants will be required to provide evidence of identity, address and qualifications (examples of which are set out below):

- Current driving licence (including photograph) or passport; and
- Two utility bills or statements (from different sources) less than three months old showing their name and home address; and
- Documentation confirming their National Insurance number (P45, P60 or National Insurance card); and
- Where an applicant claims to have changed his/her name by deed poll or any other mechanism (e.g. marriage, adoption, statutory declaration) he/she will be required to provide documentary evidence of the change, ie marriage certificate.
- Birth Certificate

In all cases original (not photocopy) documents must be provided.

Verification of Qualifications

All candidates will be required to provide actual certificates that evidence they have obtained any qualifications required legally or otherwise for the role. Qualifications legally required including QTS for teachers.

Prohibition Order Check

A Prohibition Order Check will be carried out on all candidates to be employed as teachers, unqualified teachers and HLTA's.

Single Central Register SCR

Upon contract offer/ acceptance Information will be held on a secure SCR.

Volunteers

The Trust will ensure that any volunteers engaging in regulated activity, an enhanced DBS check with a barred list check will be required. If volunteers are not engaging in regulated activity, an enhanced DBS check will be obtained and a barred list check will not be required.

Existing volunteers in regulated activity do not need to be re-checked if they have already had a DBS check (including barred list information); however, the Trust may decide to conduct a repeat DBS check. If a volunteer is not in regulated activity, the school will use its professional judgement, after conducting a risk assessment, to determine whether to seek an enhanced DBS check, but no barred list check will be required.

Internal applicants/transfer to another VAT Academy

Existing members of staff who apply for internal post must complete an application form and self-declaration. Successful applicants must complete a new DBS check and any other relevant checks must be carried out. For example, a TA successfully securing a HLTA or unqualified teacher role must have a prohibition check, or if the position requires to carry out management responsibilities, then a Section 128 Direction Check must be completed. If an employee has been internally appointed to work at another VAT school, the current Head Teacher must provide an internal reference.

Trainee/student teachers

The Trust will ensure that enhanced DBS certificates and barred list checks are obtained on all salaried applicants for initial teacher training who are in regulated activity.

Where trainee teachers are fee-funded, it is the responsibility of the initial teacher training provider to carry out the necessary checks.

The Trust will obtain written confirmation from the agency that the checks have been carried out.

Agency and third-party staff

In the case of any employee working at the Academies who is sourced from an agency or third-party organisation, confirmation must be obtained from the organisation, in writing, that all necessary checks have been completed.

Confirmation will also be obtained that the individual who presents for work is the same person on whom all checks have been completed. The Trust will always check the identity of agency and third party staff on arrival.

Contractors

The Trust will ensure that any contractor, or any employee of the contractor, has been subject to the appropriate level of DBS check. Contractors engaging in regulated activity will require an enhanced DBS certificate (including barred list information).

For all other contractors who are not engaging in regulated activity, but whose work provides them with an opportunity for regular contact with children, an enhanced DBS check (not including barred list information) will be required.

The Trust will always check the identity of contractors and their staff on arrival.

The Trust recognises that there may be occasions whereby emergency situation arises and contractors are called in an emergency and therefore no DBS checks are carried out. In these circumstances, contractors would be supervised at all times by a member of the school premises team.

Academy Councillors

Academy Governors will have an enhanced criminal records certificate from the DBS. Academy Counsellors role is not a regulated activity and they will not need a barred list check unless, in addition to their governance duties, they also engage in regulated activity.

Existing staff

The Trust reserves the right to ask existing member of staff at any point during their employment to be DBS checked.

In certain circumstances the Trust will carry out all the relevant checks on existing staff as if the individual was a new member of staff.

These circumstances would arise if a member of staff moved from a post that was not regulated activity to one that is, the relevant checks will be carried out. Or when there are concerns about an existing member of staff's suitability to work with children.

The Trust will refer to the DBS anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a child or vulnerable adult where:

- The harm test is satisfied in respect of that harm.
- The individual has received a caution or conviction for a relevant offence, or if there is reason to believe that the individual has committed a listed relevant offence.
- The individual is deployed to another area of work not in regulated activity, or where they have been suspended.