



SAFER RECRUITMENT, SELECTION
AND INDUCTION POLICY

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> 1. Introduction and policy statement

Merrywood Education will continue to operate a safe recruitment, selection and staff induction policy, in order to deter, reject, or identify people who are not suitable for the role concerned, to work at Merrywood House, to work with children or to work in a special educational environment.

> 2. Scope

This policy applies to all staff, employment agencies and any others who take any part in Merrywood Education's recruiting, selection and induction of staff, whether they are paid or unpaid. It also applies to volunteers and to anyone else who works or wishes to work at our school.

> 3. Aims and objectives

The aims of this policy are:

1. To prevent the employment of anyone who might abuse children or may otherwise be unsuited to work with them.
2. To ensure that Merrywood Education employs the very best of the available applicants, who will help the children to achieve the best possible outcomes.
3. To ensure a consistent and equitable approach to the appointment of all school staff.
4. To leave a positive memory with unsuccessful applicants.
5. To give successful applicants a clear understanding of the post and what is expected of them.
6. To minimise the risk of a bad selection decision.
7. To ensure all relevant equal opportunities legislation is adhered to and that appointees are not discriminated against on the grounds of race, nationality, gender, religion, age, disability, marital status, sexual orientation.
8. To ensure the most cost-effective use is made of resources in the recruitment and selection process.

> 4. Principles

The following principles are encompassed in this policy:

1. All applicants will receive fair and equal treatment, and a high-quality service.
2. Selection will be based on a minimum of a completed application form, shortlisting, an interview, and pre-appointment checks.
3. The job description and person specification will be used throughout the process, for recruitment to all roles.
4. Employees will be selected and recruited according to the knowledge, experience and skills needed for the job.
5. Monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of this policy are an essential part of the process.
6. In accordance with the law, reasonable adjustments will be made to the recruitment process if an applicant makes the school aware that they have a disability. This applies to the whole recruitment process, from advertisement to appointment.
7. Appropriate checks through the Disclosure and Barring Service will be carried out on all potential employees and volunteers.

> 5. Equal Opportunities Policy

The school is committed to providing equality of opportunity for all, and ensuring that all stages of recruitment and selection are fair. Recruitment and selection procedures will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that applicants are not discriminated against on the grounds of race, nationality, gender, religion, age, disability, marital status, or sexual orientation. The school will consider equal opportunities as a core consideration for all of its activities.

> 6. Training for staff

At least one member of the interview panel must have completed the safer recruitment training prior to the start of the recruitment process.

> 7. Pre-interview process

Use of Agencies. New staff will normally be recruited from one of a few London agencies who specialise in supplying SEN / SEBD staff, or from current staff. The agencies used are briefed on what Merrywood Education does. They are tasked with sending only suitable interviewees, and are effectively the first selection filter although Merrywood does not rely on this in any way. Irrespective of where candidates come from, the pre-interview process will be as below. They also need to send a letter outlining that they have conducted the necessary checks for each candidate.

7.1. Job Description

An accurate job description is required for all posts. Included in this is a person specification, which lists the necessary skills, experience, qualifications and training requirements, required for all posts. This person specification will be sent to the recruiting agency(ies) or used in any Recruitment Advertising, who will send for interview only applicants who meet the criteria. Applicants will get this before they submit their application.

7.2. Application form

A standard application form, produced by Merrywood Education, will be used to obtain basic data for all applicants.

7.3. DBS Check

All applicants must provide a copy of an enhanced DBS clearance to the school, prior to interview if they have one. Candidates may be interviewed without DBS; but may never be employed without having first having provided proof of clearance (List 99 check) and the DBS application started.

7.4. References

Two referees must be provided by all short-listed applicants, including internal ones. The purpose of these is to reduce the risk of an inappropriate appointment. One of these must be from a previous employer. References will be checked and verified in all cases, prior to confirmation of any employment offer.

> 8. Interviews

The interview will assess the merits of each candidate against the job requirements, and explore their suitability to work with children with SEBD, challenging behaviour and complex needs. The selection process for people who will work with children and young people will always include a face-to-face interview even if there is only one candidate. A taster day will normally be conducted concurrently with the interview in order to confirm a candidates suitability to work within the School, before a final offer of employment is made.

8.1. Interview Panel

Selection will be carried out by a panel with at least two members but preferably with three. This will normally include either the Head of School or Executive Head and one member of the advisory board. At least one panel member will have received appropriate training on the recruitment and selection process as recommended by DFE. The members of the panel will have the necessary authority to make decisions about appointments.

The panel will meet before the interviews to:

- a) Reach a consensus about the required standard for the job to which they are appointing.
- b) Consider the issues to be explored with each candidate and who on the panel will ask about each of those (the use of the standardised interview question sheets is recommended).
- c) Agree their assessment criteria in accordance with the person specification.

Where a candidate is known personally to a member of the selection panel it will be declared before shortlisting takes place. It may then be necessary to change the selection panel to ensure that there is no conflict of interest and that equal opportunities principles are adhered to.

Scope and conduct of the Interview. Interviews will be conducted in accordance with recommendations on practice from the HR Office. In addition to assessing and evaluating the applicants' suitability for the particular post the interview panel will also explore:

- a) The candidate's attitude towards children and young people.
- b) The candidate's understanding of and likely compliance with Staff

8.2. Code of Conduct

- a) His/her ability to uphold and implement the school's policy for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.
- b) Any gaps in the applicant's employment history, or unexplained employment changes.
- c) All candidates will be required at interview to account for any such gaps.
- d) If candidates wish to declare anything in light of the requirement for a DBS check, irrespective of whether this has already been done or not.
- e) Concerns or discrepancies arising from the information provided by the candidate and/or the referees.
- f) It is vital that the references are obtained and scrutinised before a person's appointment is confirmed and before he or she starts work.
- g) Applicants' identity will be also verified at interview, using original documents. Copies will not be accepted. The Office will take copies of these documents to initiate their Staff File if successful.

Applicants who are to be offered work, either as an employee or through an Agency, will be required to read the staff Code of Conduct, and sign to confirm they will comply with it, before they are offered an appointment.

If references are not obtained prior to the interview, candidates will be asked if there is anything he or she wishes to declare or discuss in light of the questions that have been/will be put to his/her referees. It will be made clear to candidates that anything but complete honesty and integrity would be contrary to Merrywood's Code of Conduct.

Evaluation/markings will be done independently by at least two panel members.

> 9. Staff checks prior to offer of employment

Confirmation of any offer of employment will be conditional on the points below. Until these are complete, no new staff member may be put in a position of responsibility for children.

1. The receipt of at least two satisfactory references, 1 of which has been verified.
2. Verification of the candidate's identity (to be done at interview).
3. Confirmation that the candidate is medically fit to be employed.
4. Verification of eligibility to work in the UK.

> 10. Staff checks post offer of employment.

Following interview and any taster day, the following checks need to be completed:

1. Confirmation of professional or other qualifications.
2. Management and Teacher barred list check.
3. List 99 check.
4. Confirmation of satisfactory DBS clearance.
5. Satisfactory completion of the required induction programme and induction training.
6. Satisfactory completion of the required probationary period.

If the DBS checks reveals information that a candidate has not disclosed in the course of the selection process, then the school will re-consider his/her suitability for employment.

All DBS checks will be recorded on the Merrywood's Single Central Register, and filed by the school, subject to restrictions on the retention of information. In the event that:

a) The candidate is found to be on List 99, the PoCA list, or the DBS disclosure shows that (s)he has been disqualified from working with children up by a court;

or

b) An applicant has provided false information in, or in support of, his or her application.

or

c) There are serious concerns about the applicants suitability to work with children, Then these facts will be reported to the Police and/or the DFE Children's Safeguarding Operations Unit.

> 11. Induction process

All new staff will be required to do undergo an Induction process, irrespective of past experience or employment status. This must be done as quickly as is practical, in accordance with the Merrywood Education Induction Checklist.

> 12. Probation

All new staff will normally be on probationary terms for a period 6 months, at the discretion of the Executive Head.

If at any time during a probationary period (or afterwards), any member of staff is deemed unsuitable for Safeguarding reasons, then they will with immediate effect be allowed no further contact with children.

> 13. Monitoring the effectiveness of this policy

It is important that this policy is implemented effectively. Compliance will be checked annually.

> 14. Recruitment checklist

Define the need (raise Business Case if necessary).

1. Agree Terms of Reference.
2. Gain Executive Head agreement to proceed, School office informed of pending recruitment.
3. Draft job description and associated job advert.
4. Approve job advert – Executive Head
5. Submit job advert.
6. Closing date and time for replies included
7. Date of interviews (2 week gap between closure of job advert and interviews)
8. Send out application pack to any interested parties (includes application & disclosure form)
9. Collate responses.
10. Sift (Executive Head/Head of School)
11. Inform applicants of success or failure, warn about us asking for references and schedule the interview.
12. Seek 3 references per successful applicant – HR dept.
12. Interview
13. Panel: Executive Head & one member of the advisory board
14. Standard question set to be used.
15. Applicant to bring 2 forms of ID, relevant certificates and DBS if applicable.
16. Decision made post interview (this may wait until post taster visit).
17. HR dept informed of result – interview documents retained in staff pack.
18. Contract issued.
19. Staff training and induction.
20. Start work.

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The Old Pheasantry, Merrywood Grove, Tadworth KT20 7HF

01737 336352

admissions@merrywood.org.uk

merrywood.org.uk