



**Federation of
Westminster Special Schools
& Bi-Borough Inclusion Service**

Recruitment and Selection Policy for Employees and Volunteers

**Approved by Full Governing Board: March 2025
Next Review: March 2026**

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Recruiting the best people to the Federation is vital for our continued success in providing the highest standards of education, and support, to our children and young people
- 1.2 Not appointing the right people to our roles can have a negative impact on the performance of our schools and the Bi-Borough Inclusion Service.
- 1.3 The Executive Headteacher, Headteachers, Head of Bi-Borough Inclusion Service and Federation Business Manager will be responsible for deciding on the arrangements to recruit to a vacant post, according to the scheme of delegated responsibility. This is with the exception of the Executive Headteacher and Headteacher posts where the Governing Board will be responsible.
- 1.4 In carrying out our recruitment processes we are committed to the creation of a safe environment for our children and young people by operating safer recruitment practices in line with the statutory requirements and guidance.
- 1.5 We are also committed to ensuring that throughout our recruitment and selection processes no applicant is disadvantaged or discriminated against because of the protected characteristics of age, disability, sex, gender re-assignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.
- 1.6 In the very exceptional cases where we are required to discriminate due to an occupational requirement this must be approved by the Governing Board who will provide reasons for this requirement.
- 1.7 Recruitment will be solely on the basis of the applicant's abilities and individual merit as measured against the criteria for the job. Qualifications, knowledge, experience and skills will be assessed at the level that is relevant to the job.
- 1.8 If an applicant makes the Federation aware, at any stage of the recruitment process, that they have a disability then reasonable adjustments must be considered to ensure the applicant is not disadvantaged by the process.

2. Scope and Purpose

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is to set out our processes for recruiting, selecting and appointing any employee to work within the Federation.

3. Safer Recruitment

- 3.1 All recruitment must be in line with this policy to ensure that we identify, deter and prevent people who pose a risk of harm from working with our children & young people
- 3.2 The recruitment of all applicants and volunteers to our Federation must, without exception, follow the processes of safer recruitment. All offers of employment will be subject to us being satisfied that the applicant or volunteer is a suitable person to work with children and young people, with satisfactory references where applicable.

- 3.3 All recruitment must be planned to ensure that there is adequate time available to complete the recruitment process effectively.
- 3.4 Where it becomes apparent that this policy is not being followed during recruitment, the Executive Headteacher must be informed immediately.
- 3.5 All of the checks described in Sections 11 and 12 must be carried out and have been determined as satisfactory before an applicant can start their employment in the Federation.

4. Advertising

- 4.1 To ensure equality of opportunity, the Federation will advertise all vacant posts via the most appropriate channels to ensure the most appropriate field of applicants is obtained.
- 4.2 Where there is a reasonable expectation that there are sufficient qualified internal candidates or where staff is at risk of redundancy, an internal advertisement may be considered appropriate.
- 4.3 All advertisements will have the following statement about safeguarding children and young people and the requirement to have a DBS check:

‘The Federation of Westminster Special Schools is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and therefore expects all its staff and volunteers to share this commitment. All appointments are made subject to receipt of a completed application form, satisfactory references and an Enhanced DBS Disclosure’.

5. Job Description

- 5.1 A job description will be required for all posts which describes the duties and responsibilities of the post. It must be up to date, accurate and specific to the role. The job description must also include a person specification which outlines all of the necessary skills, experience, qualifications and knowledge requirements for the post.
- 5.2 All job descriptions and person specifications must make reference to the responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people

6. Application form

- 6.1 All applicants for **paid employment** are required to fill out the standard Westminster City Council application form. CVs will not be accepted and therefore do not replace the application form.
- 6.2 The Federation requires candidates to account for any gaps or discrepancies in employment history on this application form. Where an applicant is shortlisted, these gaps will be discussed at interview.
- 6.3 Applicants should be 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 possible referral to the police and other professional regulatory bodies.

- 6.4 The Federation uses its own form for **Volunteers** (who tend to be students on placement but may not necessarily be) and relies on the supporting organisation to confirm their suitability but the necessary form has to be completed.

7. Self-declaration of convictions by all applicants

- 7.1 The Federation requires shortlisted applicants for all posts (including volunteers) to declare all criminal convictions whether “spent” or “unspent” and include any cautions and pending prosecution at the shortlisting stage.
- 7.2 Such declarations will be made on an appropriate form and should be submitted in a sealed envelope, marked strictly private and confidential to the Executive Headteacher/ Headteacher/Head of Service or senior leader prior to the interview. They will discuss relevant, positive declarations confidentially with the applicant at interview. The disclosure of convictions, cautions or pending cases will not necessarily prevent employment but will be considered in the same way as positive DBS disclosures.

8. Short-listing

- 8.1 Applicants will be short-listed against the requirements of the person specification. The same people should carry out the short-listing and the interviews. The outcome of the short-listing process will be recorded and retained.

The equal opportunities monitoring form must be removed from the application and not provided to the short-listing panel.

- 8.2 The Associate Executive Headteacher, Headteacher, Bi-Borough Inclusion Service (dependant on the post advertised) are responsible for scrutinising the application forms and identifying any gaps in employment or other areas that may affect an applicant’s suitability to work with children and young people. A satisfactory explanation for any concerns must be obtained from the applicant during the interview process. Where the application is for the Executive Headteacher post, this would also apply to the Governor’s selection panel.

9. Interviews

- 9.1 A face to face interview should take place for all applicants to all posts. {The use of video conferencing, Zoom, Teams, Facetime or other similar technologies is acceptable for this purpose if there is a good reason why face to face cannot take place (eg the applicant is abroad).
- 9.2 All those involved in interviewing must be properly trained. At least one person on the interview panel must have possess the appropriate safer recruitment training certificate.

- 9.3 The purpose of the interview is to assess the merits of each applicant against the job description and person specification to establish their suitability for the post and to work with children and young people.
- 9.4 Interviews should be conducted with two or three interviewers on the panel depending on the seniority of the post.
- 9.5 Before the interview commences the interview panel should have:
- (a) prepared appropriate questions for the role;
 - (b) prepared appropriate questions to test the applicant's suitability to work with children and young people;
 - (c) identified any areas for further probing, e.g. if a criminal record has been declared or if there are gaps in employment etc;
 - (d) agreed assessment criteria which reflects the person specification; and
 - (e) decided a structure to the interview and established which member of the panel will ask which questions.
- 9.6 A set of common questions relating to the requirements of the post will be asked of each applicant. Their response will determine whether that is followed up through further questioning.

10. Other selection methods

- 10.1 In addition to a face to face interview with the interview panel a variety of other selection methods may be used, such as:
- (a) Observation of teaching practice in our Federation
 - (b) One or more additional panel interviews (for example, a panel made up of children and young people and /or stakeholders;
 - (c) A presentation;
 - (d) In tray exercises;
 - (e) Any other tasks deemed appropriate.
- 10.2 Those responsible for deciding the arrangements for recruitment to a specific post will determine the selection method(s). They will be relevant and appropriate to the role and will be based on the requirements for the particular post as set out in the job description and person specification.
- 10.3 Candidates will be informed in advance if any selection methods are to be used in addition to a face to face interview and what these are.

11. Offer of employment and pre- employment checks

- 11.1 It may be possible to negotiate a provisional start date with the preferred candidate, however, with the exception of DBS disclosures, the checks detailed above must all be completed BEFORE a person's appointment is

confirmed. In the case of DBS disclosures, the certificate must be obtained before or as soon as practicable after appointment.

If the DBS confirmation has not been received, a risk assessment must take place to determine if the applicant may begin work and what arrangements need to be made.

Once all pre-employment checks have been satisfactorily completed / received, an offer of employment will be made and the contract of employment issued. The contract will be issued as soon as possible but in all circumstances within 8 weeks of employment commencing.

11.2 Offer of appointment to the successful applicant will be conditional upon the following:

- (a) receipt of at least two satisfactory written references (one of which must be their current or most recent employer);
- (b) verification of the applicant's identity, preferably from current photographic ID and proof of address;
- (c) verification of the applicant's mental, medical and physical fitness to carry out work responsibilities;
- (d) verification of qualifications where relevant;
- (e) verification of professional status where applicable. For teachers, this will include checking that the individual has the required teaching qualification and has successfully completed any statutory induction- <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/check-a-teachers-record>
- (f) satisfactory enhanced DBS check (see Section 11);
- (g) for teachers, verification that they are not subject to a prohibition order by checking the NCTL's Employer Access Online System;
- (h) a clear children's barred list check (except supervised volunteers);
- (i) verification of right to work in the United Kingdom;
- (j) any further checks where the applicant has lived or work outside of the UK including receipt of criminal record information from overseas;
- (k) confirmation that the applicant is not disqualified or disqualified by association Regulation (Appendix 1)
- (l) appropriate on line search has been completed.

11.3 All checks must be confirmed in writing, retained on the personnel file and recorded in the single central record (SCR).

12. References

- 12.1 All offers of employment will be conditional upon receipt of at least two satisfactory written references. References for shortlisted candidates will be sent for immediately after shortlisting and BEFORE interview. The only exception to this is where candidates have indicated on their application forms that they do not wish their current employer to be contacted. In such cases, this reference will be taken up immediately after interview and prior to any offer of employment being made. One reference will always be sought prior to interview wherever possible.
- 12.2 References must be in writing and be specific to the job for which the candidate has applied - open references or testimonials are not acceptable. The Federation will not accept references from relatives or people writing solely in the capacity as a friend. Only references from a trusted authoritative source will be acceptable.
- 12.3 References will:
- (a) be requested for all shortlisted applicants, including internal applicants;
 - (b) include the applicant's current or most recent employer and where an applicant for a teaching post is not currently employed as a teacher, will include the applicant's most recent employer as a teacher;
 - (c) ask the current employer for details of any capability history in the previous two years, and the reasons for this;
 - (d) be directly from the referee;
 - (e) not be accepted if they are 'to whom it may concern' letters;
 - (f) request information on the applicants suitability to work with children and young people;
 - (g) be requested before the interview; and
 - (h) Ask about the referee's relationship with the candidate
 - (i) be explored further with the referee and with the applicant during the interview if necessary.
- 12.4 Where it has not been possible to obtain references before the interview any concerns that are subsequently raised will need to be resolved before the appointment is confirmed.
- 12.5 Any information about past disciplinary action or allegations will be considered in the circumstances of the individual case. Cases in which an issue was satisfactorily resolved some time ago, or an allegation was determined to be unfounded or did not require formal disciplinary sanctions, and which no further issues have been raised, are not likely to cause concern. More serious or recent concerns or issues are more likely to cause concern. A history of repeated concerns or allegations over time is also likely to give cause for concern.

- 12.6 In order to comply with the Equality Act 2010, information relating to sickness absence will only be requested after a conditional offer of employment has been made.

13. Induction

- 13.1 All new employees will be given an induction programme which will clearly identify the Federation policies and procedures, including the Child Protection Policy, and make clear the expectation and codes of conduct which will govern how staff carries out their roles and responsibilities.

14. Probation Period

- 14.1 All newly appointed staff will be subject to a probationary period in accordance with WCC conditions of employment guidance.

15. Agency staff

- 15.1 The Federation must ensure that the arrangement with the agency imposes an obligation on the agency to carry out all recruitment checks as set out in section 10, including DBS and children's barred list checks that the Federation would otherwise complete for its staff. The Federation must obtain written confirmation from the agency that these checks have been carried out and are satisfactory. This must be recorded in the single central record (SCR).

16. Breaches of the policy

- 16.1 Any instances of this policy not being adhered to will be taken very seriously and appropriate disciplinary action will be taken.
- 16.2 Any complaint in relation to this policy, including its application will be managed through the Federation's complaints policy or grievance policy (for existing employees).

17. Review of policy

- 17.1 This policy is reviewed annually by the Federation. We will monitor the application and outcomes of this policy to ensure it is working effectively.

APPENDIX 1

Appointment of the Executive Headteacher

- a) The Chair of Governors meets with the Federation's Professional Advisor to agree the job description and the detailed arrangements of the selection procedures.
- b) The identified member of Federation staff or chosen external provider, advertises the vacancy and handles the administration

- c) All Governors and at least one LA representative will participate in the selection procedure, with three Governors and the Professional Adviser normally present on the Shortlisting and Interview Panels.
- d) The Governor Interview Panel will recommend appointment of the successful candidate to the full Governing Board for approval.
- e) The identified member of Federation staff initiates the contract procedure.

Appointment of Headteachers/Head of Bi-Borough Inclusion Service and Federation staff working across FWSS

- a) The Executive Headteacher will write the job description in consultation with the Governing Board.
- b) The Executive Headteacher in consultation with the identified member of Federation staff advertises the vacancy and undertakes the administration.
- c) The Chair of Governors, one further Governor and Executive Head short-list candidates and agree selection procedure. Informal visits to the school prior to interview are offered.
- d) A Senior LA officer will be invited to attend the selection procedure for the Headteacher in an advisory capacity.
- e) The Executive Headteacher and at least two Governors will participate in the selection procedure.
- f) The Governor panel will recommend appointment of the successful candidate to the full Governing Board for approval.
- g) The identified member of Federation staff will initiate the contract procedure.

Appointment of all other Teaching Staff

- a) The Headteacher of the school concerned or Head of BIS will write the job description in consultation with the appropriate Senior Leadership Team.
- b) The identified member of Federation staff will advertise the vacancy and undertake the administration.
- c) The Headteacher, Deputy Headteachers, or the Assistant Headteachers and, where appropriate, the Executive Head, shortlist candidates and agree on selection procedure.
- d) The Headteachers, Deputy Headteachers and or Assistant Headteachers participate in the selection procedure.
- e) The identified member of Federation staff initiates the contract procedure.

Appointment of Teaching Assistants

- a) The appropriate Headteacher will write the job description in consultation with the school's Senior Leadership Team.
- b) The identified member of Federation staff will advertise the vacancy and undertake the administration.
- c) Representatives of the school's Senior Leadership Team will shortlist candidates and agree the selection procedure.
- d) Representatives of school's Senior Leadership Team will participate in the selection procedure.
- e) The identified member of Federation staff initiates the contract procedure.

School Office Staff and Site Management

- a) The Federation Business Manager will write the job description in consultation with the Headteachers/Head of Bi- Borough Inclusion Service.
- b) The Federation HR Manager will advertise the vacancy and undertake the administration.
- c) The appropriate Headteacher or the Head of BIS and Federation Business Manager will shortlist candidates and agree selection procedure.
- d) The appropriate Headteacher or Head of BIS and Federation Business Manager will participate in the selection procedure.
- e) The Federation HR Manager will initiate the contract procedure.

Temporary Staff/Supply Agency staff

- a) The Headteacher will write the job description in consultation with the school's Senior Leadership Team.
- b) The Business Support Team staff member with responsibility for cover management will contact agencies for details of staff available.
- c) The school's Senior Leadership Team will shortlist candidates and agree the selection procedure.
- d) The following staff will participate in selection procedures: Assistant/Deputy Heads as appropriate.

Volunteers and Students

- a) The Headteachers and Head of BIS have the responsibility to seek and appoint volunteers. [
- b) The Deputy or Assistant Headteachers have the responsibility to place and supervise students.

Friends and Relatives

The Headteacher/Head of BIS must be informed if any friend or relative of existing staff is seeking employment at the Federation. This also applies to Students and Volunteers.