Grove
Learning Trust

Recruitment and Retention Policy

Updated Spring 26

Version – Final 02

Vision

As one organisation, our vision for Grove Learning Trust is unapologetically bold. We are all about **creating remarkable futures.** For our children, our people, our places of work, we want the very best. We know that strong connections will enable us to achieve our vision, in a world where purposeful collaboration, based on mutual respect and trust, helps us to achieve more together.

Trust >> Connect >> Collaborate

Our policies underpin our vision and set out clearly our expectations of each other.

About this Policy

1. Grove Learning Trust (The Trust) is committed to attracting selecting and maintaining individuals who have the right motivation, skills, and experience to make a positive contribution to the organisation's success and the delivery of high-quality education.

2. This will be achieved by:
   - Following a fair, consistent, effective, robust, and safe recruitment process in accordance with good practice and equal opportunities.
   - Attracting and drawing on applicants from a range of backgrounds reflecting the communities being served.
   - Adhering to legislation and guidance which governs recruitment and selection.

3. The Trust is committed to creating a safe environment for our pupils by offering safer recruitment practice in line with the statutory requirements and guidance.

4. The Trust will comply with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and are 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, gender, gender re-assignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

5. In the very exceptional circumstances where we are required to discriminate due to an occupational requirement this must be approved by the Trust Board.

6. If an applicant makes the Trust aware at any stage of the recruitment process that they have a disability, then reasonable adjustments will be considered to ensure the applicant is not disadvantaged by the process.

7. The Trust will ensure compliance strictly in accordance with all Data Protection regulations and the more stringent requirements contained within the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

Who does this policy apply to?

8. This policy applies to all school staff including volunteers, temporary and fixed term staff, casual staff, governors, and trustees responsible for and involved in recruitment and selection.

Who is responsible for this policy?

9. Whilst written and agreed centrally, the Board has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy.

10. Any questions regarding the application of this policy should be referred to their line manager or the HR department in the first instance.

Accountability

11. The appointing manager is responsible for ensuring the recruitment and selection process is administered in line with this policy and the process is compliant. If the appointing manager delegates this, the overall accountability will remain with the appointing manager.

12. At least one member of the recruitment panel will be trained in 'safer recruitment' as identified in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' and The School Staffing (England) Regulations 2009. The appointing manager is responsible for ensuring that the recruitment panel is compliant with the relevant 'safer recruitment' legislation.

13. If a member of staff involved in the selection process has a personal relationship with an applicant, they will declare this as soon as they are aware of the application to ensure they are not involved in the decision-making process to avoid any risk of bias and ensure that all applicants have complete equality of opportunity.

Safer Recruitment and Selection Process

14. The Trust recognises its legal obligations in safeguarding vulnerable groups. This policy directly endorses and supports mandatory guidance in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'. All recruitment will be in line with this policy to ensure that the Trust identifies, deters, and prevents people who pose of risk of harm from working with our pupils.

15. Recruitment and selection in the Trust will focus on safeguarding children by reducing the risk of harm through employing suitable, appropriately screened, vetted, and checked individuals.

16. All staff involved in the recruitment process will read the most recent 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' guidance and the Trusts safeguarding policy.

17. All recruitment will be sufficiently planned to ensure that there is adequate time to recruit safely.

18. The Trust's Safeguarding Policy is available on the Trust website.

Advertising

19. To ensure equality of opportunity the Trust will advertise all vacant posts to encourage as wide a field of applicants as possible.

20. The Trust will aim to advertise externally as far as possible however, there may be times that internal advertisement in considered appropriate particularly in cases where there are sufficiently qualified internal candidates or employees who are at risk of redundancy.

21. All job advertisements will include the following statements to demonstrate its safeguarding commitment to safeguarding and safer recruitment practice.

    "The Grove Learning Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment".

    "This position is subject to an Enhanced Disclosure check under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974".

Application Form

22. All applicants will be required to complete an Application Form. The Application Form will ask for the following:

    - Full, identifying details of the applicant, including current and former names, current address, and National Insurance Number.
    - A full, chronological career history over the past 10 years. The applicant will be asked to clarify any gaps.
    - Any academic and/or vocational qualifications that are relevant to the position for which they are applying.
    - Supporting statement, where the applicant will outline how they meet the criteria detailed in the personal specification.
    - A declaration of any existing contacts/relationships in the Trust.
    - Details of referees; within the last three years and one of which must be their present, or last, employer.
    - A declaration of any convictions, cautions, reprimands or final warnings, except for those to which the DBS filtering rules apply. Please see:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-filtering-guidance/dbs-filtering-guide for further information.

23. Only fully completed forms will be accepted; a Curriculum Vitae will not be accepted in place of the completed application form.

24. Applicants will not be asked, as a matter of course, to complete generic health questionnaires as part of the application process.

Job Descriptions

25. A job description will be required for all posts which describes the duties and responsibilities of the post. The job description will also include a person specification which outlines all the necessary skills, experience, qualifications, and knowledge requirements for the post.

26. All job descriptions will reference the responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

Shortlisting

27. The recruitment panel will carry out the shortlisting and interviews. Late applications will not usually be considered. If the applicant has completed an equal opportunities monitoring form, this will be removed from the application and not provided to the recruitment panel. They will scrutinise application forms identifying any gaps in employment or any matters that require further exploration at interview and a satisfactory response will be obtained.

28. Applications will be assessed against the criteria identified in the job description and person specification. The outcome of the shortlisting process will be recorded and retained.

29. The Trust may carry out an online search on shortlisted candidates to help identify any issues that are publicly available in line with the 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' guidance.

30. The Equality Act 2010 limits the circumstances when an employer can ask general health-related questions **before** a job offer is made. Therefore, prior to making an offer of employment to an applicant, health related questions will only be asked to help the Trust to:

    - Decide whether there is a duty to make reasonable adjustments for the person to undertake any part of the assessment/selection process.
    - Decide whether an application can carry out a function that is essential to the job once reasonable adjustments have been put in place.
    - Monitor diversity among people making applications for jobs.
    - Take positive action to assist people with disabilities.

31. Shortlisted candidates will be sent an invitation for an interview that reiterates the Trust's commitment to safeguarding and the requirement for pre-employment checks. Identity and proof of right to work in the UK should be checked at interview stage.

Interviews

32. A formal interview will be undertaken for all shortlisted applicants. The use of video conferencing such as Teams, Skype or similar technologies are acceptable for this purpose. The purpose of this 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.

33. The recruitment panel will be appropriately trained and will consist of at least one member who is trained in safer recruitment, which is updated every two years.

34. Before the interview commences, the panel will have:
    - Determined the assessment and interview structure.
    - Agreed assessment criteria which reflects the job description and person specification.
    - Prepared appropriate questions for the role for every applicant to answer.
    - Prepared appropriate questions to test the applicant's suitability to work with children and young people.
    - Identified any areas for further probing, e.g. If a criminal record has been declared or if there are gaps in employment etc.

35. In cases where a number of selection activities take place, the scores and feedback from those will be taken into account before a decision is made.

36. Interview notes for successful applicants will be held on their personnel file.

References

37. All offers of employment will be conditional upon receipt of at least two satisfactory references. The purpose of seeking references is to obtain objective and factual information to support the selection panels decisions.

38. References for candidates for posts not involving children will be obtained after interview, and for the successful candidate only to comply with the Equality Act 2010, which prevents references being taken that require disability or sickness absence details to be provided prior to interview.

39. References will:
    - be requested for all shortlisted applicants including internal applicants.
    - be requested before interview for teaching posts.
    - For support roles, be requested immediately after interview where a candidate may not want their current employer to be aware of their application.
    - be the candidate's current or most recent employer.
    - ask the current employer for details of any capability/disciplinary history over the past two years and the reasons. Any information provided will be carefully consider when assessing the candidate's suitability for the role.

- not be accepted when titled 'whom it may concern' except in specific circumstances where this can be justified.
- request information on the applicant's suitability to work with children and young people.

40. References may be explored further with the referee to seek further clarification particularly if answers are vague and can also be discussed with the applicant at interview if necessary.
41. If a referee fails to provide a reference, the candidate will be contacted to provide an alternative referee. If a candidate for a teaching post is not currently employed as a teacher, a check will be carried out with the school or local authority at which they were most recently employed, to confirm details of their employment and their reasons for leaving.

42. In cases where applicants are unable to provide references that meet the above criteria, the recruitment panel will seek advice from HR.

43. In cases where it has not been possible to obtain references prior to interview, concerns subsequently raised will be resolved before an appointment is confirmed.

Pre-employment Checks

44. Relevant documentation will be fully completed at each stage of the process. This will include the verification of original documents of candidates at the interview stage and the completion of all necessary pre-employment checks as specified in the DfE 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' guidance document which includes but is not limited to:
    - a Disclosure and Barring Service Check,
    - Teacher Prohibition Check,
    - Childcare Disqualification,
    - satisfactory references and
    - medical assessment and
    - Right to work in the UK

45. The pre-employment checking and appointment process will not be circumvented for the sake of expediency.

46. At the end of the selection process, the preferred choice candidate will be made a conditional offer of employment subject to the acquisition of satisfactory pre-employment checks. Failure to satisfy all pre-employment checks may result in the withdrawal of a conditional offer of employment.

47. All pre-employment checks will be recorded on the Single Central Record in line with the guidance published in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'. Documents verifying the employee's identity, right to work and required qualifications will be retained on their personnel file.

48. If the headteacher requires an individual to start work in regulated activity before the DBS certificate is available, then a risk assessment must be completed and held on the personnel file. The headteacher/HR will make the decision as to whether it is appropriate for this person to start employment after reviewing this document. As a minimum, the individual must be appropriately supervised and all other checks, including a barred list check, must have been completed.

49. Where an existing employee change's role, additional checks may need to be carried out applicable to the role e.g., when an employee moves into regulated activity.

50. DBS certificates will only be issued to the applicant. All applicants must produce the disclosure when requested to do so. The disclosure will be scrutinised to ensure it is authentic and to detect any fraud. The DBS disclosure number and date of the check will be recorded in the Single Central Record (SCR).

51. The Trust Is not required to take a copy of the DBS certificate, however they may choose to do so for decision making purposes. Any copy will be held for no longer than necessary, and up to a period of six months and will be processed in line with Data Protection Legislation.

52. Any applicant who refuses to produce their DBS disclosure will not be able to start work at the Trust and the conditional offer will be withdrawn, as satisfactory checks are not in place. Any volunteer who refuses to produce their disclosure will not be able to volunteer in any of the Trust schools.

53. Information relating to an individual's criminal record will only be shared with the relevant people to enable the Trust to make a decision about their suitability to work with children and young people.

Recruitment of ex-offenders

54. The Trust as an organisation assessing applicants' suitability for positions which are included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order uses criminal record checks processed through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and complies fully with the code of practice and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly.

55. The Trust commits not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a criminal record check on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed and will only ask an individual to provide details of convictions and cautions that we are legally entitled to know about. Where a DBS certificate at either standard or enhanced level can legally be requested (where the position is one that is included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 as amended, and where appropriate Police Act Regulations as

amended). Grove Learning Trust can only ask an individual about convictions and cautions that are not protected.

56. At interview, or in a separate discussion, The Trust ensures that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matter that might be relevant to the position. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment.

Adults working with children who are not directly employed by the Trust.

Supply Staff

57. The Trust will only use agencies which operate a Safer Recruitment Policy and supply written confirmation that all relevant checks have been satisfactorily completed. Trust schools will carry out identity checks when the supply staff member arrives for work. This will be recorded on the Single Central Record.

Volunteers

58. The Trust will carry out DBS and pre-start vetting checks appropriate to the post and require regular volunteers to provide details of two referees in accordance with this policy.

59. DBS and pre-start vetting checks are not always required for volunteers who help on an occasional basis and are supervised, in accordance with legislation. In these instances, a risk assessment is completed and held on file by the Trust school.

Contractors

60. The Trust will ensure contractors, or any employee of the contractor, working on site has been subject to the appropriate level of DBS check.
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61. Contractors and contractors' employees for whom an appropriate DBS check has not been undertaken will be supervised if they will have contact with children. The Trust school will check the identity of contractors and their staff on arrival.

Contracts of employment

62. There is a statutory responsibility to give new employees written details of the main terms and conditions of employment from day one of their employment. This is also known as a Statement of Particulars.

63. The type of contract and the terms and conditions of employment will be clear and appropriate for the category of job. If the contract is temporary the reason for this must be written in the contract.

Remuneration

64. It is normal policy for support staff to be appointed to the minimum of the grade. However, it is recognised that starting salaries may need to be offered above the minimum in certain circumstances e.g., to take account of experience/qualifications or current salary levels.

65. Teachers' remuneration will be in line with the Schools Pay Policy which correlates with the School Pay and Conditions Document.

Monitoring and Data Protection

66. The Trust will monitor this policy and ensure that its application is compliant, consistent, and fair to all colleagues.

67. As part of the application of this policy, the Trust will comply with the UK GDPR and collect, process and store personal data and special categories of data in accordance with our data protection policy.

68. The Trust has a responsibility to maintain a central record for the complete recruitment process for a period of 12 months. The following should be recorded:
    - Assessment and selection criteria used (person Specification)
    - Application of assessment and selection criteria (e.g., application form)
    - Interview and other selection method notes (e.g., question proformas/test results)
    - Reasons for decisions made.
    - Any additional information such as copies of qualifications.

69. All recruitment paperwork relating to the successful candidate will be retained and placed on the employee's personal file.

Breaches of the Policy

70. Any instances of this policy not being adhered to will be taken very seriously and appropriate disciplinary action will be taken.

71. Any complaint in relation to this policy, including its application will be managed through the Trust's Complaints Policy or Grievance Policy, for existing employees (whichever is appropriate).

Review of Policy

72. The People & HR Lead and CFO monitor charges and remissions and ensures these comply with this policy. This policy will be reviewed by People & HR Lead and CFO every 2 years..

Version Control

Version	Date	Status	Author (AU) / Approver (AP)
Draft 01	Autumn 23	Completion of first draft	PJB(AU)
Final – A	Spring 24	Signed off by Trust Board	Trust Board (AP)
	Spring 26	Minor grammatical updates made Removed reference to policy approval at board	SR(AU)

Review

Next Review	Date: Spring 28