

# The Serendipity School



*every child deserves a chance*

## **SAFER RECRUITMENT POLICY**

June 2021

# The Serendipity School

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## Version History

Version Information Version No.	Updated By	Updated On	Description of Changes
1	Sue Tinson	June 2016	New policy
2	Linda Smith	June 2019	Policy review
3	Michele Aldridge	June 2020	Policy review
4	Pip Smith	June 2021	Policy review

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## 1 Monitoring and review

- 1.1 In order to ensure that it reflects current best practice, this policy will be reviewed every year by the Head Teacher who will assess the progress of the policy and will decide on any changes in conjunction with the appropriate staff.
- 1.2 The formal review will determine the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged, by no later than the review date, or earlier if significant changes to the systems and arrangements take place, or if legislation, regulatory requirements or best practice guidelines so require.

## 2 Scope

- 2.1 This document contains The Serendipity Centre Ltd's (TSCL) policy on staff recruitment at The Serendipity School.
- 2.2 In accordance with its responsibilities in the employment of staff in the school, TSCL wishes to ensure the fair and equal treatment of all its staff, all those who are applicants to work in the school and those individuals who undertake work on the school premises.
- 2.3 This policy sets out the principles under which TSCL will operate to meet these aims and complies with the requirements and recommendations of the DfE [RD1].

## 3 Reference Documents

- [RD1] Keeping Children Safe in Education  
DfE (2018)
- [RD2] The Equality Act
- [RD3] Promoting Disability Equality in Schools  
DfES (2007). DfES, Annesley
- [RD4] Education Safeguarding Policy  
The Serendipity School
- [RD5] The Employee Handbook  
The Serendipity Centre Ltd

## 4 Introduction

- 4.1 TSCL is committed to equality for all in the appointment, development, training and promotion of staff, and in all dealings with students and parents/carers of the school.
- 4.2 This policy focuses specifically on the employment of staff in the school.
- 4.3 TSCL recognises the value of a diverse and inclusive workforce.

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- 4.4 TSCL will operate within the requirements of anti-discrimination legislation at all times and will promote equality positively in its staffing decisions.
- 4.5 All decisions, including advertising of vacancies, shortlisting, selection, induction, appraisal, training, development, promotion, terms and conditions of employment, dismissal and pay will be based on an objective and fair assessment of school requirements.
- 4.6 The only personal characteristics, which will be taken into account, will be those which are necessary for the requirements and proper performance of the work involved.
- 4.7 There will be no generalised concepts or assumptions about the characteristics of groups.
- 4.8 All staff will have a right, through the agreed procedures, to challenge any decision or action which they believe to be in breach of these principles.
- 4.9 Any member of staff who deliberately and knowingly contravenes the policy will be liable to formal disciplinary action.
- 4.10 This policy forms part of a wider whole school commitment to safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults in its care and it sets out clear systems and processes for all who seek paid and/or voluntary employment at The Serendipity School.
- 4.11 The measures described in this policy will be applied to all who are employed to work at The Serendipity School who are likely to have contact with, and be perceived by our students as safe and trustworthy adults.
- 4.12 Incorporated within the scope of this policy are staff employed by contractors, supply staff, volunteers and the like who regularly work at The Serendipity School. Whilst they may not have direct contact with the students as a result of their role/job, but nevertheless may be considered safe and trustworthy due to their regular presence on the school site.

## 5 Statutory Requirements

- 5.1 TSCL is bound by law not to discriminate on certain grounds. *The Equality Act 2010* [RD2] has brought together all the current discrimination laws into one and sets out the “protected characteristics” that qualify for protection from discrimination as:
- age
  - disability
  - gender reassignment
  - marriage/civil partnership
  - pregnancy and maternity
  - race
  - religion/belief
  - sex
  - sexual orientation

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- 5.2 There are some exemptions from this legislation in situations where the essential nature of a job calls for a man, woman, or a person from a particular religion or racial group. TSCL will not normally seek to use exemptions from *The Equality Act 2010* [RD2].
- 5.3 TSCL will give sympathetic consideration to requests for time off for religious observance from staff who are active members of particular religions or beliefs, although such time off will be unpaid and will be considered only subject to the operational requirements of the school.
- 5.4 TSCL will, wherever possible, make reasonable adjustments to recruitment processes, working conditions or the working environment, including terms and conditions of employment, to help overcome practical difficulties created by applicants or members of staff who have a disability.
- 5.5 TSCL acknowledges these areas of regulation and confirms its commitment to enforce these statutory requirements in the school.
- 5.6 The over-riding premise that will be adhered to in matters of equality, by all staff in the school, is that everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and respect whatever their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.
- 5.7 To reduce and eliminate the barriers to the curriculum and to full participation in the school community for students and prospective students with a disability, to:
- Increase the extent to which disabled students can participate in the curriculum
  - Improve the physical environment of the school to enable disabled students to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided
  - Improve the availability of accessible information to disabled students

## 6 Specific Issues

- 6.1 **Age** - TSCL is opposed to any direct or indirect discrimination based on age.
- 6.2 **Disability** - TSCL is opposed to any discrimination against people with disabilities based on assumptions of their ability or otherwise to carry out the duties of a post in the school. Where a candidate who has a disability is appointed to a post in the school, reasonable provision will be made for adjustments to the working conditions or environment where this is practicable.
- 6.3 **Gender reassignment** - TSCL is opposed to any discrimination as a result of a person proposing to undergo, undergoing or having undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning the person's sex.
- 6.4 **Marital status or civil partnership** - TSCL is opposed to any discrimination against employees who are married or in a civil partnership.
- 6.5 **Pregnancy and maternity** - TSCL is opposed to any discrimination against a woman because of her pregnancy and/or maternity leave.

- 6.6 **Race** - TSCL is opposed to any direct or indirect discrimination based on race, colour, ethnic or national origin. There may be situations in the school which require special consideration and where an occupational requirement may apply to justify the employment of someone of one particular race or ethnic origin. However, these situations will be unusual and exceptional, and will be discussed with the staff in advance.
- 6.7 **Religion or Belief** - TSCL is opposed to any direct or indirect discrimination based on religion or belief.
- 6.8 **Sex** - TSCL is opposed to any direct or indirect discrimination based on gender. There may be situations in the school which require special consideration and where a genuine and determining occupational requirement may apply to justify the employment of someone of a particular sex. However, these situations will be unusual and exceptional, and will be discussed with the staff in advance.
- 6.9 **Sexual Orientation** - TSCL is opposed to any direct or indirect discrimination based on perceived or actual sexual orientation.
- 6.10 **Harassment or bullying** - TSCL is opposed to any unwanted conduct relating to a protected characteristic that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. TSCL is further opposed to any act of victimisation, harassment or bullying against any member of staff either by an employee or third party based on assumptions about their status in the above categories or any other grounds. Such action will be investigated in accordance with the school's procedure and may lead to formal disciplinary action.
- 6.11 **Non-statutory aspects** - Although there is no statutory requirement not to discriminate against other groups, or characteristics of staff, TSCL wishes to state that it will not in any way discriminate against members of staff or applicants for posts on the grounds of their political affiliation.

## 7 Personal Data – Barred List and Enhanced DBS Central Record

- 7.1 The school holds a Single Central Record (SCR) incorporating all employed staff and others that have contact with the students. The record is available to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT).
- 7.2 The record details a range of checks as set out by the *DfE* [RD1]. The record is maintained by HR and/or delegate.
- 7.3 Once DBS checks have been carried out on appointment, all staff are encouraged to join the DBS Update service.

## 8 Recruitment and Selection Process for Appointment or Promotion

- 8.1 **Advertising**
- 8.1.1 All adverts will be carefully constructed to ensure they promote The Serendipity School's commitment to the safeguarding and promotion of the welfare of our students.

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- 8.1.2 All adverts will make reference to the need for the successful applicant to undertake a criminal record check through the DBS, as well as the usual details of the post, salary, qualifications and experience required.
- 8.1.3 All adverts will use appropriate language, without stereotyping, or without bias either of gender or race (except in the case of a job covered by Genuine Occupational Qualification) in order to encourage applications from a full range of potentially suitable candidates.
- 8.1.4 All adverts will state the closing date for receipt of applications and include the TSCL HR e-mail address.
- 8.1.5 Vacancies will be advertised openly and will normally be available for members of staff in the school to apply. In most cases vacancies will be advertised externally unless there are exceptional reasons why this should not occur, for example in situations of potential redundancy.
- 8.1.6 New appointments promoted internally will be conditional upon a 6 month probation in their new role.
- 8.2 **Applications**
  - 8.2.1 All interested applicants will receive a standard application form, job description (JD) and person specification (PS).
  - 8.2.2 All JDs and PSs produced by The Serendipity School will be reviewed prior to advertising. The JD/PS will make reference to the school's commitment to the safeguarding of students.
  - 8.2.3 The JD/PS will be available to all applicants and summarises the main duties and responsibilities of the post.
  - 8.2.4 Application forms and accompanying material will only be handled by those involved directly in the recruitment process.
  - 8.2.5 The school will not accept a curriculum vitae (CV) in place of an application form.
- 8.3 **Short Listing**
  - 8.3.1 All applications will be addressed to and handled by HR. The first section of the application form, giving personal information, and the Personnel Monitoring (Equal Opportunities) section will be detached and retained for monitoring purposes in HR before the shortlisting process.
  - 8.3.2 All applications are scrutinised by the shortlisting panel members to ensure that they are fully and properly completed; that the information provided is consistent and does not contain any discrepancies, and to identify any gaps in employment.
  - 8.3.3 Incomplete applications will not be accepted and returned for completion. Any anomalies or discrepancies and/or gaps in employment history identified by the scrutiny should be noted so that they can be taken up as part of the consideration of whether to short list the applicant.
  - 8.3.4 As well as reasons for obvious gaps in employment, the reasons for a history of repeated changes of employment without any clear career or salary progression, or a mid-career move from a permanent post to supply teaching or temporary work, also need to be explored and verified.

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8.3.5 Applicants will be assessed equally against the criteria contained in the PS without exception or variation. Applicants that have not been shortlisted will be informed in writing.

8.3.6 Applications received after the closing date will not be considered, unless there are exceptional circumstances as agreed by the Head Teacher or the Deputy Head in The Serendipity School.

8.3.7 All application forms and supporting information will be held in HR for a maximum period of 6 months before being destroyed.

## 8.4 References

8.4.1 The school will seek references prior to interview if possible and always before making a formal offer.

8.4.2 The school will also contact the applicant's current or last employer or placement school.

8.4.3 The school will NOT accept references and/or testimonials provided by the candidate, 'To whom it may concern' references or references from friends, relatives or neighbours.

8.4.4 Where a reference is considered to be vague, the referee will be contacted and asked to provide written answers or amplification as deemed appropriate.

8.4.5 Information given by the applicant's referee(s) will be compared with the application form to ensure that there is clarity and consistency. Where there is a discrepancy this will be addressed with the applicant at interview.

8.4.6 The school will consider all information regarding previous convictions, disciplinary action and/or allegations on a case by case basis and in accordance with HR support and guidance.

## 8.5 Student Voice

8.5.1 The school will involve students in the recruitment and selection process.

8.5.2 Student involvement is considered good practice and may take the form of an interview, lesson observation or similar activity.

## 8.6 Invitation to Interview

8.6.1 The invitation to interview will clearly indicate the purpose, date, time and an outline programme (if applicable), with reference to the Education Safeguarding Policy on the website.

8.6.2 Shortlisted candidates will be asked whether, if they consider themselves to have a disability, they require any special arrangements to be made at interview to enable them to complete on equal terms with other candidates.

8.6.3 All candidates will be required to evidence original photo identification and documents confirming their educational and/or professional status relevant to the post, e.g. the original or a certified copy of a certificate, or diploma, or a letter of confirmation from the awarding body.

8.6.4 Copies of the documents used to verify the successful candidate's identity and qualifications will form the basis of the individual's personnel file.

## 8.7 Interview

- 8.7.1 The school will seek to have a minimum of two interviewers one of whom will be the 'safeguarding' representative.
- 8.7.2 At least one person who conducts the interview will have completed safer recruitment training.
- 8.7.3 Where the interview is for a teaching post the Head Teacher, Deputy Head Teacher or a senior teacher will form part of the interview panel. Where the interview is for a support staff post a senior member of Learning Support Staff will form part of the selection panel.
- 8.7.4 All interviews will be clearly structured and include pre agreed questions, relating to the requirements of the post.
- 8.7.5 The interview panel will be required to record candidate answers. The recorded answers will form part of the successful candidate's personal file. The panel will ask candidate's specific questions relating to the information provided on application. The panel will in all cases ask questions relating to the safeguarding of children and young people.
- 8.7.6 The interview panel will NOT ask questions about marital status, marriage plans, family commitments or intentions, dependants, political or religious beliefs, union membership or about any other subject which could be construed as direct or indirect discrimination. In connection with disability, it is permissible to ask the candidate what, if any, adjustments he/she would require to the workplace to enable him/her to undertake the work required.
- 8.7.7 Any issues will be explored with each candidate based on the information provided in the candidate's application and references.
- 8.7.8 Either before or after the interview, teaching/instructor posts will normally be invited to lead a lesson to assess their suitability for working with students with complex needs.
- 8.7.9 In addition to assessing and evaluating the applicant's suitability for the particular post, the interview panel will also clarify the following for each candidate:
- Understanding of safeguarding and promotion of welfare for children, young people and vulnerable adults in line with the school's *Safeguarding Policy* [RD3] and *DfE* [RD1] guidance.
  - Attitude toward children, young people and vulnerable adults.
  - Clarification regarding concerns and/or discrepancies arising from the information provided by the candidate and/or a referee.
  - Any declaration in light of the requirement for an enhanced DBS check.
  - Any gaps in employment history.
  - In connection with disability, clarification of adjustments required to the workplace to enable him/her to undertake the work required.

## 9 Conditional Offer of Appointment – pre appointment checks

- 9.1 A verbal and provisional offer of appointment to the successful candidate is conditional and subject to the following:
- Receipt of at least two satisfactory references as before described. One reference being the most recent/current employer.
  - Verification of the candidate's identity (if not verified at the interview).

- A satisfactory DBS Enhanced Disclosure check.
- Verification of section 128 direction checks for staff in management positions.
- Verification of the candidate's medical fitness, through pre-employment health checks through Occupational Health (if applicable), to carry out their work responsibilities.
- If the candidate has lived or worked outside the UK, any further checks deemed relevant.
- Verification of qualifications (if not verified at the interview).
- Verification of professional status where required e.g. QTS status (unless exempt), NPQH.
- Verification of successful completion of statutory induction period (Teaching Staff Only - Applies to staff that obtained QTS after 07 May 1999).
- Verification of teachers and LSA prohibition check from Secure Access.
- Satisfactory completion of the 6 month probationary period.
- Right to work in the UK.

## **10 Notifying Candidates of the Outcomes of Interviews**

- 10.1 All candidates are contacted as soon as reasonably practicable, if not provided on the day of the interview to advise them of the outcome of the interview process. The contact may take the form of a telephone conversation between candidate and a representative of the interview panel.
- 10.2 Constructive feedback will be offered to all candidates regardless of the outcome.
- 10.3 The successful candidate will receive written confirmation of the offer once satisfactory references have been received by the school. However, the offer at this stage will be subject to Enhanced DBS clearance and medical clearance (if applicable).
- 10.4 A formal written offer of appointment will NOT be made until these checks are processed and deemed satisfactory.
- 10.5 HR will monitor the receipt and clearance of the appropriate forms, receipt of references, date of birth, entitlement to work in the UK, and a check of ID documents prior to obtaining a DBS Disclosure. All appropriate checks and clearance must be received prior to the new employee commencing employment.

## **11 Post Appointment Induction**

- 11.1 In all cases newly appointed staff employed at the school will be subject to a 6 month probation period which will include an induction programme.
- 11.2 In all cases the probationary period/induction process will be initiated by the appropriate senior post holder. The process of induction will be cascaded down and the process monitored and reviewed at regular intervals.
- 11.3 The purpose of the induction process is to:
- Provide appropriate training and information commensurate with the role and the school's policies and procedures.

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- Ensure staff are integrated and feel safe and valued.
- Establish the conduct expected of staff within the school.
- Provide a platform for new members of staff to discuss any issues or concerns they may have regarding their role/responsibilities.
- Enable the line manager/mentor to monitor and review the new staff member's ability, suitability and/or capability.
- Reinforce policies and procedures in relation to safeguarding and promoting the welfare/wellbeing of our students.

11.4 All induction programmes will include Safeguarding and Prevent training.

11.5 New staff will have the opportunity to evaluate their induction programme.

## **12 Staff**

12.1 All appointments are subject to an Enhanced DBS check prior to taking up their appointment.

## **13 Contractors**

13.1 The Serendipity School will ensure that all contractor staff engaged in building or similar works are at a minimum List 99 checked prior to commencement of works.

13.2 Where only a List 99 check is in place and there is the possibility that contractor staff may come into contact with students they will be escorted by a member of The Serendipity School staff. At no time will contractor staff have unsupervised access to students without an Enhanced DBS check in place.

## **14 Volunteers**

14.1 All volunteers will be subject to The Serendipity School's recruitment procedures.

14.2 No volunteer will be permitted to work unsupervised at The Serendipity School without an Enhanced DBS check being in place.

## **15 Supply/Agency Staff**

15.1 No supply/agency staff will be permitted to work at The Serendipity School without written confirmation from the agency of the individual's DBS disclosure number and date of clearance.

15.2 Where supply/agency staff attend The Serendipity School for the first time the member of staff is to evidence their DBS disclosure number, date of clearance, photographic image combined with a copy of their teacher reference number to the school.

15.3 When Supply Agencies are approached for cover they will be required to provide the following information:

- ID Checks:
  - Agencies will be required to send through by fax a photograph image of the member of supply/agency staff prior to their arrival on site.
- Qualification Checks:
  - Agencies are to verify qualification before agreeing placement.
- NCTL Registration Checks:
  - Agencies take responsibility for ensuring that NCTL checks and registration numbers are obtained before teaching staff are deployed.
- DBS Checks:
  - Enhanced DBS clearances are made available before any the placement will be permitted to commence. It is the agencies responsibility to regularly review and update DBS checks.
- Right to Work in the UK:
  - It is the agencies responsibility to undertake all the necessary checks to ensure that supply/agency staff are eligible to work in the UK. The relevant documents are to be presented to the school prior to the commencement of any placement.

## 16 Reporting and Recording

- 16.1 For successful candidates HR will maintain a written record of the checks performed to verify their
- Identity
  - Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) / Prohibition checks
  - Vocational and academic qualifications
  - Previous employment history
  - Health
  - Professional and character references
- 16.2 HR will maintain a written record of the interviews and their outcomes for all candidates. All application forms and supporting information will be held in HR for a maximum period of 6 months before being destroyed.