



Calder Valley Steiner Education

Calder Valley Steiner Nursery

Making time for Childhood

Recruitment and Selection Policy

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Policy Lead	Personnel Team
Date Ratified by management team	July 2010
Status	Ratified
Last Review Date	Sep. 2025
Policy Number	CVSE doc 34

Safe Recruitment & Selection Policy

Policy Statement

The objective of this document is to ensure the safe and effective recruitment, selection and retention of the right staff required to meet the needs of Calder Valley Steiner Education. We are committed to recruiting a diverse workforce, which reflects the society in which we operate. This will be achieved through fair and systematic recruitment procedures, which ensure that appropriate selection decisions are made to meet legal, business and best practice requirements in this area.

Calder Valley Steiner Education is committed to employing safe recruitment and selection processes. This is also a requirement of the 2004 Children's Act. Following this Policy and the procedures contained therein will maximise the suitability of the appointed applicant for the post, will ensure that Calder Valley Steiner Education has done its utmost to deter and eliminate during the recruitment process any candidates unsuitable to work with children and young people, and will allow the recruitment process to run smoothly with all recruitment panel members working to the same sequence, procedures and time-scales, with the tasks at each stage clearly assigned and delineated.

Efficient organisation and an emphasis on prioritising safeguarding at the recruitment stage also send a strong message to potential candidates about the standards of work and the behaviour expected.

This Policy refers equally to paid staff and people working within the nursery on a voluntary basis. Volunteers are subject to all legal recruitment and safeguarding requirements and regulations.

Job Descriptions and Person Specifications

Before a post can be filled, an up-to-date Job Description and Person Specification must exist. Clear, precise documents make it much easier to work out what skills, experience, knowledge, qualifications and personal attributes are required for a job, and ensure that all members of the recruitment panel possess the same focus and are working to the same outcomes.

Writing and Preparing Job Descriptions

The Calder Valley Steiner Education standard Job Description and Person Specification templates must always be used. These will be adapted to individual job roles.

The outline of a job description **must** include the following:

- The job title;
- The job title(s) to whom the post-holder reports;
- The job title(s) who report to the post-holder;
- The main purpose(s) of the job;
- The specific responsibilities.

The job description should:

- Be written in plain language;
- Give full details of the job;
- Carefully describe the duties and responsibilities of the post;
- Refer to the work environment where the duties of the job would take place;

- Provide a balanced picture of the role, and be honest about the opportunities *and* the challenges therein.

The Job Description should include references to the competencies and attributes which the post holder is expected to have to execute the duties of the post.

Advertising a Post

Advertising a post appropriately is the fundamental first step towards safe recruitment. It is best practice to advertise as widely as possible within the appropriate sector(s) in order to eliminate discrimination and generate the best possible pool of short-listed candidates, and the wording in the advertisement, however short, is crucial in attracting strong applicants and in putting off people who would not be suitable, or who are not suitable for working with children or vulnerable adults. Giving reasons for specific requirements, (e.g. a childcare qualification is essential for meeting legal staff-child ratios) deters people who do not possess these, and also demonstrates the professional nature of the nursery. Different wording will elicit different responses – it is important to think carefully about what the desired outcome should be.

The advert should include:

- The Organisation name and logo;
- A sentence giving a true reflection into the ethos of the Organisation – why would a potential applicant choose to work here?
- Location of the job;
- Position title;
- Status of contract (Permanent or Fixed-Term)
- Key qualifications (if genuinely required for the role);
- Anticipated start date;
- Salary or salary range;
- A statement of commitment to Equal Opportunities*;
- A statement of commitment to Safe Recruitment and Child Protection**;
- A statement that the appointment will be subject to the receipt of satisfactory references, a satisfactory CRB check and any other vetting requirements;
- A statement that evidence will be required of proof of eligibility to work in the UK, and proof of qualifications;
- Deadline for applications;
- How to apply / obtain the application form;
- How to obtain the Job Description and Person Specification (attach these where possible if the advert is electronic);
- Contact email / address / telephone number for applications and queries.

* A statement of commitment to Equal Opportunities*;

** A statement of commitment to Safe Recruitment and Child Protection**;

The nursery should set a deadline for applications and keep to it, providing at least two weeks from the date of advertisement for candidates to complete and return their form, which should be available on the CVSE website, and also in hard copy on request (contact details should be provided in the advertisement).

Under no circumstances should any questions be discriminatory in relation to race, age, disability, sex, marital status, sexuality, ethnicity, nationality, religion or any grounds upon which discrimination can occur as defined in law. It is especially important to be aware that questions regarding a candidate's health and impact of any medical conditions on his or her ability to work are illegal under the Disability Discrimination Act, unless it can be genuinely and clearly evidenced that this information is required for the safe and effective performance of the role, **and** this assessment is carried out by medical professionals (i.e. in the form of an authorised medical questionnaire through an external health agency). The **only** question which is otherwise permissible is, *“Are there any reasonable adjustments we should make to enable you to do the job?”*

Questions regarding family planning (pregnancy, etc.) are also illegal under Sex Discrimination laws.

'Positive discrimination' at the advertising stage (i.e. "We particularly welcome applications from women and from people from ethnic minorities") is lawful at the advertising stage **if it is addressing an under-representation of these specific sectors in the nursery compared with the representation in the local community**. However, this 'discrimination' **must not** be applied at any other stage of the recruitment process, and indeed should not be possible if the front pages of all applications are removed prior to short-listing.

Short-listing Guidelines

Short-listing is the point at which the recruitment process often goes wrong. The Person Specification must be robust enough to short-list against – a Specification which can be met by 80% of the population would not be much help, but one that can be met by only 1% may be discriminatory in nature, and would not be much help either if not enough people are able to apply.

If a person has stated on their application form that they have been the subject of any allegations at work, etc., these should be disregarded for the purposes of short-listing, and investigated after this stage (but prior to interview).

When drawing up the short-list, the selection panel **must**:

- Agree as a panel their understanding of the *key criteria* in each Person Specification (the weighting of these in the scoring may be legitimately increased);
- Be clear at the start what their **ideal** and **minimum** candidate scores should be;
- Measure the attributes of each candidate methodically against each requirement in the Person Specification and the Job Description (but **not** against other candidates);
- Judge applicants only against the Person Specification used in the advertising process. This means that no part of the original Person Specification should be changed at a later stage;
- Assess applicants based on **information given**, rather than on information you **think** they have given by 'reading between the lines';
- Assess applicants against the **essential criteria** of the Person Specification only, and **not** the desirable criteria (this is used post-interview to choose between the final two or three short-listed candidates);
- Record reasons for rejecting an applicant in writing on the short-listing form;
- Ensure that all original material used in creating a short-list is filed with the recruitment records; **and**
- Ensure that all panel members have declared any personal or social relationships or contacts they may have with any of the candidates.

The selection panel **must not**:

The selection panel will have at least one member of staff with the safer recruitment training.

- Introduce any new standards, qualifications or experience in the Person Specification during or after the short-listing process;
- Casually sift through the application forms in advance to get an impression of suitable candidates;
- Shortlist any candidates who do not meet the key criteria;
- Continue the recruitment process with the current applicants if none satisfy the key criteria (the post should be re-advertised if this is the case);
- Take into account the standard of handwriting in the application form as a means of determining the candidate's level of skills or abilities, unless handwriting is a key criterion; **or**
- Exclude a candidate from the short-list on the grounds of his or her age, sex, sexuality, marital status, physical or mental abilities, disability or illness,

religious or cultural background, political or trade union activities, ethnic background or social background.

The short-listed candidates should be notified of their interview date by telephone where possible.

Asylum & Immigration Act 1996: Prevention of Illegal Working

It is a criminal offence to employ a person who is not entitled to live or work in the UK. The maximum penalty for doing so is £5,000 for each employee found not to have the entitlement.

All candidates invited to interview should be requested to bring with them proof of their eligibility to work in the UK. Copies of any documents seen **must** be taken by the designated person at interview stage and copied. All candidates will be asked for evidence, regardless of ethnic origin.

Legally Employing Overseas Candidates

In order to legally recruit candidates from overseas, the nursery must conform to the government requirements, which can be obtained from the Border Agency. These requirements may include performing a Residential Labour Market test (are there any appropriately skilled workers within the UK/EU) and may necessitate specific advertising requirements to be met. Please see the Border Agency website for further information.

Requesting References

Reference request will be made in line with KCSIE and the Early Years Statutory Framework guidance 2025

References should be requested after the short-listing stage, but before the interview stage as part of the Calder Valley Steiner Education Safe Recruitment procedure. This must be stated clearly on the application form, in order to let the applicant, know that referees will be contacted without notice unless the Organisation is specifically contacted by the applicant pre-interview, giving good reasons why this should not be done. In this way, the onus is on the applicants to contact us, not the other way around, and this should be made clear on the form. Employers have the automatic right to request references from a candidate's current or most recent employer even if they have not been identified as referees on the application form. However, the Organisation should remain sensitive to the fact that the employer may not be aware of a candidate's intention to leave the company, and it is best practice to inform the candidate first (unless they have included this employer in the referees' section of the form).

References should be sought **directly** from the named referees, and not from any third party (e.g. a secretary or other colleague). A minimum of **two** references should be obtained for each short-listed candidate. The key questions to ask on the form are, "Would you re-employ the candidate in **the same** role?" and "Is he/she suitable, in your opinion, to work with children?"

The candidate should not be allowed to bring paper references.

The application form should also state, as a deterrent to people who would be unsuitable for the post or to work with children, **why** references are requested by the Organisation (i.e. to ensure that the candidate is suitable, is presenting him/herself accurately, and is not unsuitable for working with the vulnerable).

It is perfectly acceptable for a candidate to nominate a supervisor from a voluntary role as a referee.

Personal references, however, should not be accepted. If an applicant has not previously been employed or retained in a voluntary capacity, the panel should request a reference from his/her most recent educational establishment.

If time is short, a verbal reference may be requested, but the person receiving the reference via telephone should take dated notes and either post or email this sheet to the referee asking them to sign and return a slip or confirm by email that they confirm the reference to be accurate. The questions asked verbally should mirror exactly those asked of other candidates on the written form.

The Organisation should never accept "To Whom it May Concern" references, as these are not specific enough and may be faked.

The panel should always verify the identity of **all** referees on receipt of references (either by telephone or email). Any discrepancies (e.g. from the information given on the application form) should **always** be followed up by telephone.

If for any reason references for the successful candidate have not arrived at the time of selection, then the letter of appointment **must** say that the offer is subject to satisfactory references and checks (it is best practice to state this regardless).

If any reference received indicates that the candidate is banned from or is unsuitable for working with children or young people, **the candidate must be eliminated from the recruitment process at this stage if the information received is subsequently evidenced to the satisfaction of the panel.**

The panel should remember that candidates have the right to see their references (as all other notes and documents pertaining to them from the recruitment process) upon request. It is best practice to state this clearly on the reference request form for referees.

The Organisation should store the references securely during and following the recruitment process, in accordance with the Data Protection Act, and destroy documents it no longer needs to retain.

Remember to allow enough time to obtain references when planning the recruitment schedule.

Interviewing

All candidates, whether internal or external, are to be treated equally at all times. The same amount of time should be allocated to all candidates, and they should be assessed on what they say and evidence, and not on what the panel believes it knows about them.

At least one member of the recruitment panel will have undertaken the safer recruitment in Education Training.

Ideally, only one interview should take place per day to allow each candidate to be scored freshly, without direct comparisons to other candidates. If this is not possible, the interviews should be as spaced out as possible.

It should be remembered that the interview is only one method of assessing a candidate, and that safer and more effective practice and a clearer and fuller picture of a potential staff member can be achieved by utilising multiple assessment methods. These might include short tests where these are appropriate to the position - e.g. computer skills, typing, teaching part of a lesson (care should be taken not to discriminate on any of the grounds mentioned above). An observed collaborative task involving a group of candidates can provide an excellent insight into a person's working processes and team-working skills. **It is important not to over-rely on any one aspect of the recruitment process, but to use each stage and multiple methods to provide a full and balanced picture of the candidates' skills and experience.**

The interviewing procedure should reflect the following:

- The interview room and furniture arrangements should be planned carefully so as to provide a non-threatening environment, whilst still giving a professional message to candidates;
- The interview panel should consist of the same people as the short-listing panel, and should meet for a **minimum** of thirty minutes prior to the interview sessions commencing to carefully read through the Job Description, Person Specification, Recruitment Policy and interview questions, and to ensure clarity regarding the timetable and each panel member's particular tasks during the interviews. In addition, **at least twenty minutes should be allowed prior to each interview** to refer to the candidate's application and to read through the interview questions once more. The scoring of a candidate should take place **immediately after** each interview to ensure that candidates are assessed only against the criteria of the Job Description and the Person Specification (and **not** against each other), and adequate time **must** be allowed between each interview to allow for these requirements to be met;
- **There should be at least two people on an interview panel. More than four people would be excessive and threatening to the candidates;**
- **One member of the panel must have undertaken the Safer recruitment in Education training.**
 - One member of each interview panel should be a Trustee;
 - Both sexes should be represented on the interview panel;
 - No panel member should be related to any of the applicants;
 - A timetable for the interviews should be set and be maintained;
 - The panel should be very clear on who will be taking notes and who will be asking which questions;
- The interview record proforma should always be used for all note-taking, and the panel should be aware that candidates are allowed to request to see their notes and all scoring/short-listing sheets pertaining to themselves). Notes should be brief and factual;
- All of the candidates should present their proof of eligibility to work in the UK and their qualifications prior to the interview. These should be copied and returned to the candidates, with the copies subsequently stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act and with due reverence to confidentiality, and the copies pertaining to the unsuccessful applications being destroyed immediately upon the acceptance of the post by the successful applicant;
- The interview record proforma should always be used for all note-taking, and the panel should be aware that candidates are allowed to request to see their notes and all scoring/short-listing sheets pertaining to themselves). Notes should be brief and factual;
- All of the candidates should present their proof of eligibility to work in the UK and their qualifications prior to the interview. These should be copied and returned to the candidates, with the copies subsequently stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act and with due reverence to confidentiality, and the copies pertaining to the unsuccessful applications being destroyed immediately upon the acceptance of the post by the successful applicant;
- It is important to be very clear at the start of every interview that the Organisation is committed to safe recruitment practices and child protection;
- The panel members should maintain good eye-contact with the candidates when addressing them and listening to their responses. This is why it is important for each member of the panel to be clear who is taking notes/asking questions, and in what order (also, good note-taking helps prevent the panel from "filling in the gaps" erroneously from memory at a later time);
- The percentage split of 'talk time' should be approximately 30% of the talking done by the members of the panel, and 70% by the candidate;
- It is important to give the candidates the opportunity to ask questions themselves, and include a tour of the nursery beforehand if possible;
- **A minimum of seven days' notice should be given to candidates invited for interview (from the day they will receive the letter).**

Composing Interview Questions

A reasonable number of principal questions for an interview lasting 45 minutes to one hour is **six to eight**. While the **sub-questions** (see below) will differ somewhat, all candidates should have the sense of **having had the same interview** (for example, if they were to discuss it together afterwards, no candidate would feel that they had been asked wildly different questions or been treated differently).

All interview questions should be prepared in advance, and the principal questions should be the same for all candidates being interviewed, with the exception of the **first question**, which should be derived from the application form (e.g. *"We noticed that... Could you please tell us more about..."*)?

Additional sub-questions should be used and tailored during the interview to the candidates' replies in order to probe further, both as to their suitability for the post, and to their suitability to work with children (this is where sub-questions may differ between candidates as they are based on the same principal questions), and to substantiate the content of the initial replies. It is acceptable to keep pressing the candidate until the required information is forthcoming (i.e. their response is supported satisfactorily or evidenced to be insubstantial). Sub-questions may also be used, where they flow naturally from the conversation, to ask for more information that is individual to the candidates, perhaps based on a link between a comment they have made and something the panel has picked up on from the application form. It will not be possible in the main to pre-draft these sub-questions as they will be based mainly on the candidates' responses, but if the proper preparation procedure is followed, the information given in the candidates' application forms will be clear in the interview panel's minds and further questioning will come easily.

The panel should be aware that direct questions lead to a focused answer, whereas open questions can lead to open-ended and sometimes vague responses. There is a place for both types of question in the interview, but they should be used carefully to complement each other and elicit information as required, rather than due to an accident of wording. **Questions should be designed to oblige the candidate to give the panel the information it wants, and not the information he/she wants to give.**

The candidates will be as good as the panel helps them to be, and it is in the Organisation's interest to design questions and create an ambience conducive to drawing out the best the candidates have to offer, as well as highlighting any inconsistencies. Questions can be "sign-posted" to indicate the information that is desired, without leading the candidate or answering for him/her.

When choosing the wording of interview questions, the following should be taken into consideration:

- Questions should be based on the requirements of the Job Description and Person Specification **only**;
- Questions may be based on the desirable criteria in addition to the essential criteria at this stage (but the essential criteria should be used **first** when scoring);
- Questions should be based on the requirements of the Job Description and Person Specification **only**;
- Questions may be based on the desirable criteria in addition to the essential criteria at this stage (but the essential criteria should be used **first** when scoring);
- The first questions should be designed to ensure that the information provided by candidates in their application forms is genuine and tallies with their replies at interview;
- Past performance is the best indicator of future behaviour. It is better to avoid the conditional tense when questioning (*"What would you do if...?"*) and instead to ask for specific instances from the past (*"Can you give us an example of a time when... and what was your reaction?"*);
- Career breaks and gaps in employment should be particularly probed, as should the candidates' work-life balance;
- **At least** two interview questions should be designed from a Safeguarding perspective to probe the candidate's suitability for working with children.

- **There should also be a statement/question regarding disqualification by association.**

The “Ws” are a good guide for how to start questions off:

- What?
- Why?
- Who?
- Where?
- When?
- [Ho]w?

Scoring Interviews

Notes taken during interview should be written on the standard interview proforma form, which should provide columns for:

- (a) **Question (or Sub-Question) Number;**
- (b) **Notes of Response;**
- (c) **“This indicates that...”**

Notes should be written in short, bullet point form and **must always be factual**.

The standard interview selection tool should always be used to score the candidates. As stated above, the final scoring of a candidate should take place **immediately after** each interview to ensure that candidates are assessed only against the criteria of the job and the Person Specification (and not against each other). Adequate time **must** be allowed between each interview for this purpose, and any discussion should focus on the questions asked and the notes taken during the interview, and with reference to the Job Description and the Person Specification. **It is important to remember that any notes, scores or other written comments made about a candidate must be provided in full to him or her on request.** If the panel follows the selection process described here, it will not be leaving itself open to any potential disputes about the unfairness or inappropriate nature of the selection process.

As at the short-listing stage, the panel must **score on the basis of evidence given**, and not on what you think the candidate is saying, or the impression you have received 'reading between the lines'.

Selection decisions tend to frequently be made by panel members early on during the interview (typically within the first four minutes). The panel should be careful of this as it is neither good practice nor based on an accurate picture of the candidate. Panel members are also frequently 'attracted' to interviewees who are most like themselves, and this can often be evident in their scoring. It is important to believe the evidence; not just what people say or what the panel feels might be the case.

Candidates should **only** be compared directly against each other (still in conjunction with the Person Specification) if and when the majority of the candidates have been eliminated during the short-listing process, and only two or three eligible candidates remain with equal scores. At this stage, where all remaining candidates could be confidently offered the position, the preferred criteria really come into their own in helping to determine which candidate would truly be better for the nursery.

The panel should **never** inform a candidate at interview whether he/she has been successful or not, even if there is only one candidate. It is essential that the panel follows the appropriate scoring procedures to determine suitability.

For a teaching post, more than one member of the interview panel should witness all short-listed candidates actively teaching. This should be a required element of the interview and any candidates not consenting to this should not be interviewed.

Pay and conditions of employment (references, DBS check, proof of qualifications/ID/eligibility to work in the UK, etc.) should be explained clearly at the interview to avoid subsequent misunderstanding.

Job Offer

The successful applicant must be advised in writing of the offer of employment (Letter of Appointment).

The Letter of Appointment should include the following:

- Agreed start date
- Salary
- Outline terms and conditions (DBS check, suitable references etc.)

The following should be given to the new employee before or shortly after commencing employment (some of these documents may form part of the Staff Contract, which must be presented to the employee within two months):

- The Equal Opportunities Policy Statement
- The Confidentiality Policy Statement
- The Safeguarding Policy
- The Employee Handbook
- The Health and Safety Policy Statement*
- The Discipline and Grievances Procedure
- The Job Description
- Terms and Conditions (if appropriate)

*The most important operational policies and procedures should be presented to all new staff members during their induction (see Induction Policy for more information).

Unsuccessful Candidates

All unsuccessful candidates should be informed as soon as possible of the decision & given opportunity for feedback.

DBS Checks / Vetting

All new staff appointments are subject to the receipt of a satisfactory DBS check. The Organisation should take into account when recruiting and setting a start date that this can take several weeks and that no adult may be left alone with a child or children until this has been received. It is essential that new staff start after the DBS check has been received.

Posts which do not involve the staff member coming into direct contact with children, but which do involve the handling of sensitive information (such as data on or photographs of children or vulnerable adults) also require a satisfactory DBS check to be received.

The Organisation must remain aware of all current vetting and barring legislation, as this frequently changes.

Induction

The successful candidate should be given a full induction on arrival on his/her first day. The initial induction should focus mainly on Health and Safety, fire procedures, Safeguarding and important information that the person is likely to need to know immediately. Further information may be imparted over the course of his/her first days or weeks, although access should be provided immediately to all the Policies and Procedures, and the employee advised of his/her responsibility to become familiar with them at the earliest opportunity.

Please see the Calder Valley Steiner Education Induction Policy for further information.

Further Information

Please see the Calder Valley Steiner Education Employee Handbook for further information about the staff Code of Conduct and general terms and conditions of employment, e.g. holiday entitlement, disciplinary procedures, confidentiality, etc.

Date:

Signature:

To be reviewed by:

Related Policies

- CVSE Safeguarding Policy
- CVSE Mentoring and Supervision Policy
- CVSE Equal Opportunities