



Recruitment Policy

Aim

During the recruitment process our aim is to employ the best person for the role in question, and to actively promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. As a responsible employer, we understand the importance of an effective and fair recruitment process. We are committed to ensuring the best possible environment for the children and young people in our care. Although Downside Abbey no longer owns a School, our close proximity to Downside School together with our commitment to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all children and vulnerable adults, means that safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people is our highest priority. We aim to recruit staff that share and understand our commitment.

Principles

The following principles are encompassed in this policy:

- All applicants will receive fair treatment and a high quality service.
- The job description and person specification will be used throughout the process.
- Employees will be recruited on the basis of their merits, abilities and suitability for the position (including knowledge, experience and skills needed for the job).
- For all roles, selection will normally be carried out by at least two panel members. At least one of those will have received appropriate safer recruitment training.
- Selection will be based on a completed application form, an interview and depending upon the role may include additional assessment processes.
- All job applicants will be considered equally and consistently.
- No job applicant will be treated less favourably on any grounds including the following protected characteristics; age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity.
- In accordance with The Equality Act 2010 the Organisation endeavours to make reasonable adjustments in the recruitment process wherever possible, if it is made aware that this applies to any applicant.
- To ensure that the Organisation meets its commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people by carrying out all necessary pre-employment checks.

Employees involved in the recruitment and selection of staff are responsible for familiarising themselves with and complying with the provisions of this policy.

Equal Opportunities

We are committed to providing equal opportunity for all and to ensure that every stage of recruitment and selection process is fair. No applicant will be treated less favourably on the grounds of any protected characteristic.

Recruitment and Selection Procedure

All applicants for employment will be required to fully complete an application form or online application process. Applicants will receive a job description and person specification.

We will short-list applicants according to their ability to demonstrate the relevant qualifications, knowledge and skills, experience and personal qualities, as described in the job description and person specification. Short-listed applicants will then be invited to attend a formal interview at which their relevant skills and experience will be discussed in more detail.

In many cases, a formal interview will not be the only method of assessment of a candidate's suitability for a post. Additional methods of assessment might include: a presentation; psychometric, verbal or numerical reasoning testing; scenario based testing; in tray exercises; and/or a skills test e.g. word processing.

All candidates invited to interview must bring documents confirming any educational and professional qualifications that are necessary or relevant for the post (e.g. the original or certified copy of certificates, diplomas). Where originals or certified copies are not available for the successful candidate, written confirmation of the relevant qualifications must be obtained by the candidate from the awarding body.

We request that all candidates invited to interview also bring with them **original copies of the documents listed below (photocopies will not be accepted):**

- a current photo driving licence and full birth certificate, or a passport
- a utility bill or financial statement issued within the last three months showing the candidate's current name and address (we cannot accept documents printed from the internet);
- where appropriate, any documentation evidencing a change of name;
- where the candidate is not a citizen of a country within the European Economic Area or Switzerland, proof of entitlement to work and reside in the UK;
- evidence of professional qualifications.

Candidates with a disability should inform the Organisation of any necessary reasonable adjustments or arrangements to assist them in attending the interview, if short-listed.

Pre-employment Checks

The Organisation carries out a number of pre-employment checks in respect of all prospective employees. Any offer to a successful candidate will be conditional upon:

- Receipt of satisfactory references covering a five year history, including your current or most recent employer.
- Verification of identity and evidence of the right to work in the UK.
- Where an applicant has changed their name by deed poll or any other means (e.g. marriage, adoption, statutory declaration) they will be required to provide documentary evidence of the change).
- A satisfactory Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) (Child Workforce) with list check.
- A section 128 check (for management positions and Governors).
- A check that the candidate is not subject to a prohibition order including anywhere in the European Economic Area.
- Verification of professional qualifications, where appropriate.
- Overseas criminal records check (if applicable).
- Satisfactory medical fitness.

Any concerns relating to the suitability of candidates and their ability to work in proximity to Downside School, which arise as a result of the recruitment process, will automatically be referred to the Safeguarding Lead for advice and/or action as required.

Copies of these checks, where appropriate, will be retained on an individual's personnel file in line with appropriate legislation and policy, as amended from time to time.

Medical Fitness

It is our practise that all applicants to whom an offer of employment is made must complete a Health Declaration. This information will be reviewed against a Job Description and the Person Specification for the particular role, together with details of any other physical or mental requirements of the role i.e. proposed timetable, extra-curricular activities and layout of the work area. If we have any concerns about an applicant's fitness we will consider reasonable adjustments in consultation with the applicant. We may also seek a further medical opinion from a specialist or request that the applicant undertakes a full medical assessment.

Successful applicants will be required to sign a declaration of medical fitness confirming that there are no reasons, on grounds of mental or physical health, why they should not be able to discharge the responsibilities required by the role. If an applicant prefers to discuss this with the Organisation instead, or to attend an occupational health assessment to consider their fitness for the role, they should contact the Human Resources Department so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

The Organisation is aware of its duties under the Equality Act 2010. No job offer will be withdrawn without first consulting with the applicant, considering medical evidence and all reasonable adjustments.

References

Where reasonable to do so, references will be taken up on short listed candidates prior to interview. If the candidate does not wish us to take up references in advance of the interview, they should notify us at the time of applying.

All offers of employment will be subject to the receipt of a references which are considered satisfactory, from the current or most recent employer and covering a five-year employment history. Referees should not be a relative or persons known to the applicant solely as a friend.

We will only accept references obtained directly from the referee and will not rely on references or testimonials provided by the applicant or on open references or testimonials e.g. To Whom It May Concern. References received by email will only be accepted where the account and sender can be fully verified.

DBS Checks

We comply with the provisions of the DBS Code of Practice issued under section 122 (2) of the Police Act 1997, which is accessible on the www.gov.uk website.

DBS checks will still be requested for applicants with recent periods of overseas residence. These applicants will also be asked to provide further information, including a criminal record/police check from the relevant jurisdiction(s).

Contractors and Agency Staff

Contractors engaged by the Organisation must complete the same checks for their employees that the Organisation is required to complete. The Organisation requires confirmation that these checks have been completed before employees of the Contractor can commence work.

Agencies who supply staff to the Organisation must also complete the pre-employment checks which we would otherwise complete for our own staff. Again, we require confirmation that these checks have been completed before an individual can commence work here.

We require all contractors and agency staff to provide us with their original identification evidence and enhanced DBS certificate for verification before they can commence any engagement on site.

Retention and Security of Records

The Organisation will comply with its obligations regarding the retention and security of records in accordance with the appropriate legislation in place e.g. Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR and with our Organisation's Records Retention Policy. Electronic DBS Certificates issued by our provider will not be retained by Downside for longer than six months.

Applicant's data will be handled in accordance with our Privacy Notice for Job Applicants which is available on our website or from our Human Resources Department.

For unsuccessful applicants, all documentation relating to the application will normally be confidentially destroyed after six months.

Our approach to the recruitment of ex-offenders

The Organisation will not unfairly discriminate against any applicant for employment on the basis of conviction or other details revealed. The Organisation makes appointment decisions on the basis of merit and ability. If an applicant has a criminal record this will not automatically bar them from employment within the Organisation. Instead, each case will be decided on its merits in accordance with our shortlisting and assessment criteria.

The recruitment of all positions within the Organisation will take into consideration the requirements of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

Assessment criteria - In the event that relevant information (whether in relation to previous convictions or otherwise) is volunteered by an applicant during the recruitment process or obtained through a disclosure check, the Organisation will consider the following factors before reaching a recruitment decision:

- Whether the conviction or other matter revealed is relevant to the position in question.
- The seriousness of any offence or other matter revealed.
- The length of time since the offence or other matter occurred.
- Whether the applicant has a pattern of offending behaviour or other relevant matters.
- Whether the applicant's circumstances have changed since the offending behaviour or other relevant matters.
- The circumstances surrounding the offence and the explanation(s) offered by the convicted person.

If the post involves regular contact with children, it is the Organisation's normal policy to consider it a high risk to employ anyone who has been convicted at any time of any of the following offences:

- Murder, manslaughter, rape, other serious sexual offences, grievous bodily harm or other serious acts of violence.
- Serious Class A drug related offences, robbery, burglary, theft, deception or fraud.

If the post involves access to money or budget responsibility, it is the Organisation's normal policy to consider it a high risk to employ anyone who has been convicted at any time of robbery, burglary, theft, deception or fraud. If the post involves some driving responsibilities, it is our normal policy to consider it a high risk to employ anyone who has been convicted of drink driving.

Assessment procedure - In the event that relevant information (whether in relation to previous convictions or otherwise) is volunteered by an applicant during the recruitment process or obtained through a disclosure check, the Organisation will carry out a risk assessment by reference to the criteria set out above and our safeguarding procedure.

If an applicant wishes to dispute any information contained in a disclosure they can do so by contacting the DBS direct. In cases where the applicant would otherwise be offered a position were it not for the disputed information, the Organisation will, where practicable and at its discretion, defer a final decision about the appointment until the applicant has had a reasonable opportunity to challenge the disclosure information.

Recruitment of existing staff

Where an existing member of staff has a change in role or moves from a post that is not a regulated activity. We will carry out all the appropriate checks required for their new position.

Individuals not directly employed

In the case of individuals not directly employed by the Organisation e.g. Volunteers or others; all relevant checks will be undertaken in line with the nature of their engagement with the Organisation and in accordance with the appropriate regulatory requirements.