

Newham Community Learning: Recruitment & Selection Policy

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Recruitment & Selection Policy

Purpose

1. The purpose of this policy is to ensure the Trust follows a robust, rigorous and fair process when recruiting staff, which minimises the risk of appointing people who pose a risk of harm to children, and which supports the Trust's goal of being an employer of choice.
2. This policy applies to both school-based roles and Central Trust roles. Where the term "school" is used, it should be read as inclusive of Central Trust roles or contexts where applicable. Where there is a reference to School Governors or LGBs, this should be taken as a reference to IEB members in cases where an IEB has taken on the delegated responsibility.
3. This policy should be used in conjunction with the other NCL associated policies, specifically these are the Safer Recruitment Policy, Equal Opportunity and Diversity Policy and Safeguarding Policy.

Responsibilities

4. As per the NCL Decision Planner, appointments at Deputy Headteacher, Headteacher, Head of School and Executive Headteacher require the involvement of the Central Team, and will routinely have the involvement of a member of the Central Team and either a Trustee or School Governor. Appointments at Assistant Headteacher level and below will be carried out by a school.
5. Because of the importance of monitoring budgets and to ensure that schools are not recruiting when there is capacity available elsewhere in the Trust each applicable budget holder must complete and submit a Request to Recruit form for approval prior to progressing with the placement of a vacancy advert. The appropriate HR link for each school can support with completing this form where required.

Internal Adverts

6. NCL does not automatically go to external advert, and the HR team will seek to prioritise advertising vacancies within the Trust, provided that is not an obstacle to recruiting the best possible candidate. The merits of placing an internal vacancy can be recognised as:
 - Supporting internal growth and professional development of existing employees;
 - Supporting NCL's equality values and succession planning aspirations;
 - Establishing career progression that is practiced;

- Recognising the existing internal talent pool across NCL.

Reasons for going external may include:

- An urgent need to recruit;
 - An assessment that there is unlikely to be a suitable candidate within the Trust.
7. Where there is a reasonable expectation that there are sufficiently qualified internal candidates, or where staff are at risk of redundancy, an internal advertisement will be followed. The awareness of the risk of redundancy will be something that the HR team is best placed to assess.
 8. If an internal vacancy listing is to be pursued initially, note should be given to the application window which can often be less than that applied to an external vacancy listing.
 9. An internal vacancy listing should not establish a barrier to then preceding with an external vacancy listing if no shortlisted field has been identified as a result of running an internal vacancy listing. Prior consideration should be given therefore to placing an external vacancy listing.
 10. Where a post is advertised internally the details should be posted as usual in the MNT system (which has the functionality to support internal listings), on any applicable staff notice board(s) and shared all staff emails, giving at least 5 working days for applications to be made as a minimum.
 11. Where a successful internal appointment has been made resulting in a permanent new role, TLR or secondment period, clear and defined terms should be set out in the appropriate paperwork including if any review periods are to be adhered to. A copy should also be kept on the personnel file.

Placing an advert (vacancy listing)

12. Once a Request to Recruit form has been approved the workflow alerts the HR Team who will then process the placing of the vacancy. This commences the recruitment workflow as demonstrated in Appendix A.
13. NCL has a confirmed contract with MyNewTerm (an applicant tracking system) and by default all recruitment traffic will be sign-posted back to the vacancy listing within this system.
14. When each vacancy is made live in MNT an assigned individual from the relevant school will be established as the 'Hiring Manager'. This will usually be a member of the Senior Leadership Team (unless stated otherwise). Each Hiring Manager will be provided with login to MNT with read-only access for the duration of their vacancy listing and shortlisting period. Within the system, the HR Team will be able to

communicate with applicants accordingly and progress applications in accordance to the stage they are at, this also includes the electronic requesting of employment references.

15. By default, all vacancy listings (external and internal) will be placed on MNT, capturing the recruitment statistics for the Trust. Should a Hiring Manager wish to have statistical data on their individual vacancy listing, a request can be placed with the named HR Link. Additionally, vacancy listings will also be replicated within the Trust's vacancy page on the website.
16. MNT will automatically link to our Trust vacancy site (Trust website), DfE and Google Jobs. Vacancy placements on Tes will need to be processed additionally given Tes is a separate job board. Where vacancies are posted on Tes, our existing Trust subscription with the *Diversity Network also places these adverts with the following platforms for broad national visibility for all education-based roles, both teaching and support:
 - Teacheroo – broad national visibility for all education-based roles, both teaching and support
 - Diverse Educators Jobs – focused on inclusive hiring, connecting with values-led candidates
 - BAMEed Jobs – dedicated to improving ethnic representation and reaching underrepresented communities

**The Trust will review the use of this subscription with a view to renewing as required*

17. Should a Hiring Manager wish to place an advert with any other job boards, this information should be detailed within the Request to Recruit form so that any additional costing can be budget checked.
18. Each vacancy listing should include:
 - Job Description outlining the duties of the post, with an indication of where the post fits into the organisational structure of the Academy;
 - Person Specification indicating the qualifications, skills and types of experience or expertise which are regarded as essential or desirable in relation to the job and how these will be tested;
 - Supplementary information about the Trust, Academy and Other General Information:
 - o a description of the school relevant to the vacant post;
 - o information about the recruitment and selection process e.g. the closing date for the receipt of applications and interview dates;
 - o salary level of the post;

- o a statement about potential for visits should applicants wish to visit the school before submitting an application;
- o reference to the legislation concerning the Protection of Children (KCSiE & Working Together to Safeguard Children);
- o reference to the Trust's policy on Equality and Diversity;
- o contact name and details for any queries about the vacancy.

Shortlisting

19. A minimum of two people should carry out the shortlisting process, at least one of whom should have completed appropriate safer recruitment and selection training within the last three years and intend to be a member on the final interview panel (for consistency).
20. The Hiring Manager is responsible for ensuring that staff undertaking recruitment and selection have the appropriate experience, skills and knowledge to do so.
21. Shortlisting will be based only on information supplied in the application and all identifying information (personal details, equality information) will be removed prior to being shared with the shortlisting panel. This practice is referred to as blind shortlisting.
22. The job description and the person specification will be used to set the criteria for shortlisting. This criteria for selection will be consistently applied to all applicants.
23. All applications should be carefully scrutinised to ensure they are fully and properly completed. Any anomalies or discrepancies or gaps in service employment should be accounted for and checked. Reasons for repeated and regular changes in employment should be explored.
24. The Local Governing Body (and Trust Board for Central Trust) may be involved in the recruitment and selection of staff providing they have received appropriate training. Members of the Local Governing Body will not be excluded from being involved in the recruitment and selection of staff providing it would not constitute a conflict of interest.
25. Where the recruitment and selection is for senior leaders in a school, Local Governing Body or Trust Board members, and a member of the Trust Executive Team, must be involved in the interview.
26. Posts involving regular contact with children or young persons are exempt under The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, by virtue of The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exemptions) Order 1975. Applicants for such posts are required to declare any criminal convictions, including spent convictions,

that they have or any cautions, reprimands or final warning that they have been subject to in relation to any offences.

27. If the field of applicants is felt to be weak the vacancy listing may be re-advertised.
28. Where possible all employment checks should be completed between shortlisting and interview so that any necessary information can be followed up.

Safer Recruitment

29. Specific guidance on safer recruitment is detailed within the NCL Safer Recruitment Policy.
30. The following safer recruitment practices should be undertaken:
 - The job description and the advert should make reference to the responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. The statement should be as follows:
 - “Newham Community Learning is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. The post is subject to an enhanced Disclosure Application to the Disclosure and Barring Service and check against the ISA Barred List for children.”
 - The person specification should include specific reference to “suitability to work with children”
 - Supporting Statements should be scrutinised, including checking the candidate’s previous employment history and experience and ensuring that any discrepancies, gaps or anomalies are satisfactorily explained during the interview process (identified at shortlisting)
 - Obtaining independent professional employment references prior to any interview (as far as possible) that ask specific questions to help assess the applicant’s suitability to work with children and following up any concerns
 - A face to face interview that explores the applicant’s suitability to work with children as well as their suitability for the post
 - Verifying the successful applicant’s identity (as verified from original documentation brought to interview)
 - Verifying the successful applicant’s essential academic qualifications (as verified from original documentation brought to interview)

References

31. The selection panel will take up two references (one of these must be from the current or most recent employer and, where this is a school should ordinarily be from the headteacher of that school) on each short listed candidate. This process will be conducted via the MNT system by a member of the HR team once the Hiring Manager has advised that shortlisting has taken place (unless the HR representative was included in the shortlisting process).
32. Ideally references are provided back by the named referees before interviewing so that any concerns can be explored further at interview. At least two references should be taken up for external candidates, and minimum one written reference should be provided for an internal candidate (which should be from their line manager, unless there are exceptional circumstances).
33. On receipt of these references any anomalies or areas that are vague should be thoroughly investigated further. Where necessary, clarification should be sought by telephone and referees asked to confirm in writing any key extra information provided. A written record of any telephone conversation must be kept with the personnel notes. The candidate should also be given the opportunity to declare or discuss anything that may come to light on the collection of references.
34. References will be sought against the requirement of the job description and person specification and information regarding issues relating to child protection. Once received, references are strictly confidential.
35. It is strongly advisable not to rely on testimonials or open references. In instances where the selection panel feel this may be appropriate, advice must be sought from the HR team in advance of the confirmation of any appointment and the rationale for accepting a reference of this nature must be stored on the employee's personnel file). Referees should complete the required reference proforma. No verbal references should be obtained.
36. Any information about past disciplinary action, allegations or concerns (including those with child protection connotations) should be considered in the circumstances of the individual case. Where there is a history of repeated concerns or allegations, advice must be sought from the HR team in advance of the confirmation of any appointment and the rationale for proceeding to appointment, alongside a risk assessment, must be stored on the employee's personnel file.

Interviews and Selection Tasks

37. The format, style and duration of the interviews and associated selection tasks are matters for the school to decide but the following should be adhered to:

Before the interviews:

- All candidates will be given thorough detail about the arrangements for interview, including any tasks they may be required to review or complete prior to attendance. Invitations to interview should:
 - Detail all the arrangements such as date, time, panel members, length of the selection process, an overview of selection activities;
 - Remind them to bring all relevant documents, such as proof of qualifications, proof of identity and proof of address. Only originals of the required documentation can be accepted; copies should not be accepted. Copies of original documents should be kept on the employee file.
- Those forming the final selection panel will decide the structure of the interview and selection tasks, determining which areas to cover and the approximate time allocation for each. The panel should refer to the shortlisting notes to identify any issues they want to explore further from the candidate's application form and employment checks. The HR team will be able to support with the drafting of selection tasks and interview schedules, including providing in-person support as required.
- Those sitting on the interview panel will also agree on the line of questioning to be followed and will ensure that similar questions are put to each candidate, selecting which panel member will lead on each focused area.
- The panel will decide a procedure for evaluating the candidates that is fair, consistent, and a role-based assessment. The notes taken (including interview notes) and documentation used in this evaluation process will form part of the formal record of why candidates were or were not selected and will be retained for six months; after that time they will be confidentially destroyed. This information is subject to being requested by any candidate involved and therefore the detail recorded should be as objective as possible, linked to the requirements for the role (as detailed in the job description and person specification), and detailed so as to demonstrate the clear overall decision of the interview panel. The HR Team will be able to provide a shortlisting summary grid for this purpose and will advise on record retention.

Interviews and selection tasks:

- All candidates should receive a briefing about the role and the school upon attendance to enable them to make further enquiries about the vacancy that they may not have already obtained as part of their own due diligence.
- A robust selection process should not rely solely on the interview. A range of selection activities should be designed in order to help assess who is the most suitable candidate for the job. For teachers and teaching support roles, it is legitimate to involve pupils and specific staff groups in the process. These individuals should not take part in assessing overall candidate suitability but can

contribute to the panel's assessment of the ability to interact with staff and children. Selection tasks and interviews should:

- Assess the merits of each candidate against the requirements in the person specification and the job description;
- Explore each individual's suitability to work with children by assessing attitudes and behaviours;
- Not include questions which would discriminate directly or indirectly on grounds of sex, marital status, sexual orientation, race, religious belief, disability or age;
- Deal with the issues of child protection with each candidate during the interview. Appendix B lists example questions designed to examine an interviewee's attitudes toward safeguarding children.

Offer of Appointment

38. It is essential that every offer of employment is made subject to the successful completion of all relevant pre-employment checks, including Disclosure and Barring Service check. An unconditional offer should therefore never be made until this is the case. All offers prior to this should be labelled as conditional.
39. In the event that the full range of checks have been undertaken by the time an offer is made, reference should still be given to that of conditional so as to provide the ability for reflection and thorough consideration of all the information available.
40. All offers of employment will be confirmed in writing by the HR team and will state the conditions of the offer.
41. The HR team should be informed that an offer is to be made so the process of raising formal paperwork and supporting the employee induction can be commenced.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks

42. Specific guidance on DBS is provided within the NCL Safer Recruitment Policy.
43. NCL is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff, volunteers, and contractors to share this commitment. As part of safer recruitment practices, the Trust requires appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks for relevant roles.
44. The Disclosure and Barring Service supports safer recruitment decisions by providing access to criminal record information and barring information.

45. A risk assessment template for Commencing Work Prior to DBS Clearance is detailed in Appendix C.
46. The level of DBS check required will be determined by the nature of the role and the level of contact with children:

1. Basic DBS Check

- Reveals unspent convictions and conditional cautions.
- May be required for roles that do not involve regulated activity with children.

2. Standard DBS Check

- Reveals spent and unspent convictions, cautions, reprimands, and final warnings.
- May be required for certain non-teaching roles with limited access to children.

3. Enhanced DBS Check

- Includes the same information as a Standard check, plus any relevant information held by local police forces.
- Required for roles involving regular or unsupervised contact with children.

4. Enhanced DBS Check with Barred List Information

- Includes a check against the Children's Barred List.
- Required for all roles that constitute regulated activity with children, including teachers and most support staff.

Regulated Activity

47. Regulated activity includes teaching, training, instruction, care, or supervision of children on a regular basis, or unsupervised activities carried out frequently or intensively. Individuals engaged in regulated activity must not be barred from working with children.

Timing and Conditional Appointments

48. A DBS check must be completed before employment commences, unless exceptional circumstances apply.
49. Where a conditional appointment is made prior to receipt of the DBS certificate, a written risk assessment must be completed and appropriate supervision put in place - see Appendix C
50. An appointment will not be confirmed if the DBS information is deemed unsuitable.

DBS Update Service

51. The DBS Update Service allows individuals to keep their DBS certificate up to date and enables employers to carry out online status checks (with the individual's consent), rather than requesting a new DBS check each time.
52. New staff are required to subscribe to the DBS Update Service within 30 days of their DBS certificate being issued. Existing staff are required to subscribe to the DBS Update Service once their existing DBS has reached the 3 year point (and within 30 days of receiving a new DBS).
53. Subscription is expected and the responsibility of the individual, however the expense of this subscription will be funded by NCL for the duration of employment with the Trust. The HR team will be able to advise individuals how to subscribe to the DBS update service.

Use of the Update Service

54. Where successful candidates are already a part of the update service, written consent will be sought before carrying out an online status check.
55. A DBS certificate obtained for another employer will be accepted only where:
 - The individual is subscribed to the DBS Update Service, and
 - An online status check confirms the certificate remains current, and
 - The level and type of check (including barred list information) is appropriate for the role, and
 - The certificate is for the workforce: children.

If these conditions are not met, a new DBS application will be required.

Handling of DBS Information

56. DBS information will be handled in accordance with data protection legislation.
57. Information will be used only for the purpose for which it was requested and will be stored securely.
58. DBS certificates will not be retained for longer than necessary; however, a record of the check (certificate number, date, and level) will be kept on the Single Central Record (SCR).

Single Central Record (SCR)

59. Entries will be made on a Single Central Record for all staff, supply staff, and relevant volunteers, recording:
- Identity checks
 - Right to work checks
 - DBS check level, date, and certificate number
 - Barred list check where required
 - Prohibition and other statutory checks where applicable

Non-Compliance

60. Failure to obtain or maintain an appropriate DBS check may result in withdrawal of an offer of employment, suspension, or termination of employment in line with the Trust's disciplinary procedures.

Agency Staff

61. Where a school uses supply staff, they must be assured that these individuals have undergone the necessary checks to assess their suitability for the post.
62. Academies must use approved Agencies only once the business case for utilising an agency has been made.

Diversity, Inclusion and Equality

63. NCL is actively committed to diversity, inclusion and equity – no one is left out or left behind.
64. As part of this commitment, NCL will take steps to ensure that vacancy listings are advertised to a diverse labour market and, where relevant, to particular groups that have been identified as disadvantaged or

underrepresented in the Trust. Examples of providers who may support this and have been used by NCL include Teacheroo, Diverse Educators Jobs and BAMEed Jobs.

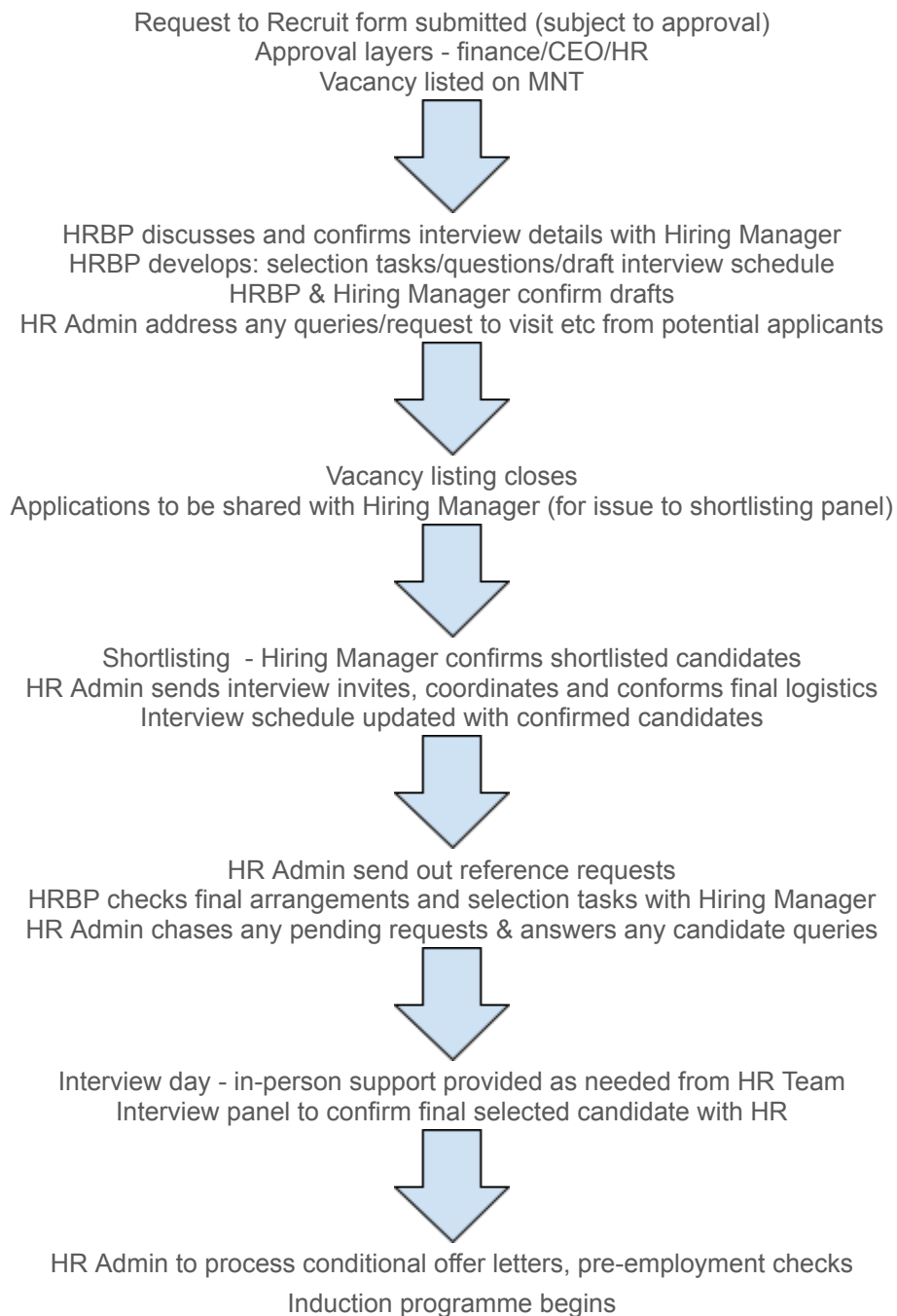
65. Adverts will make reference to the Trust's diversity, inclusion and equity commitment. The statement will be as follows:

"Newham Community Learning has a strong commitment to achieving equality of opportunity in both its services to the community and in its employment of people, and expects all staff to understand and to promote its policies in their work."

66. To ensure that NCL recruitment and selection processes are operating effectively, and to identify groups that may be underrepresented or disadvantaged, the Trust will monitor applicants' ethnic group, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion and age as part of the recruitment procedure. Provision of this information is voluntary and it will not adversely affect an applicant's chances of recruitment or any other decision related to their employment. Analysing this data helps NCL to take appropriate steps to avoid discrimination and improve equality and diversity.
67. Such information will be removed from applications before being shared for shortlisting purposes and kept in an anonymised format solely for the purposes stated in this policy (ie. blind shortlisting).
68. Further specific information is detailed within the NCL Equal Opportunity and Diversity Policy.

Appendix A

Recruitment Workflow



Appendix B

Example interview safeguarding questions

The following are example questions designed to examine an interviewee's attitudes toward safeguarding children:

- What do you feel are the main drivers that led you to want to work with children?
- How do you motivate young people?
- What has working with children, to date, taught you about yourself?
- Tell me about a time when you have been working with children when your authority was seriously challenged. How did you react? What strategies did you employ to bring things back on course? How did you manage the situation?
- Tell me about a person you have had particular difficulty dealing with. What made it difficult? How did you manage the situation?
- What are your attitudes to child protection? How have these developed over time?
- What are your feelings about children who make allegations against teachers or staff?
- How do you feel when someone holds an opinion which differs from your own? Give me an example. How did you behave in this situation?
- Have you ever had concerns about a colleague? How did you deal with this?
- Tell us about what you have done in the last 12 months to actually improve child protection in the workplace. How did this action arise? Who did you talk to? What were the results?
- What is the safeguarding policy in your workplace? How is it monitored? What steps have you taken to improve things?
- Give me an example of when you have had safeguarding concerns about a child. How did it arise? Who did you speak to? What actions did you take?
- Have you ever had to challenge the views of someone more senior than yourself in relation to safeguarding concerns? What were the circumstances? How did you go about it? What was the outcome?

Appendix C

Risk Assessment for Commencing Work Prior to DBS Clearance

This risk assessment must be completed before an individual is permitted to start work where DBS clearance has not yet been received. It must be authorised by the Headteacher or an appropriately delegated senior leader.

Starting work prior to DBS clearance should be exceptional and time-limited.

A copy of this form must be kept on the personnel file until a DBS clearance has been issued.

Key Principles

No individual may undertake regulated activity unsupervised until satisfactory DBS clearance is confirmed.

All risk control measures identified below must be implemented immediately.

This assessment must be reviewed regularly and updated if circumstances change.

Section 1: Individual and Role Details

Item	Details
Full Name	
Job Title / Role	
Academy / Setting	
Start Date	
Line Manager	
DBS Check Applied For (level)	☐ Enhanced ☐ Enhanced with Barred List
DBS Application Reference Number	
Date DBS Application Submitted	

Section 2: Reason for Starting Prior to DBS Clearance

Provide a clear justification explaining why it is necessary for the individual to start work before DBS clearance is received:

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Section 3: Role Risk Evaluation

Tick all that apply and provide further detail where required:

Risk Factor	Yes / No	Details / Mitigation
Role involves regulated activity with children	☐ Yes ☐ No	
Regular contact with pupils/students	☐ Yes ☐ No	
Unsupervised access to pupils/students	☐ Yes ☐ No	Must be No
Access to changing rooms/toilets	☐ Yes ☐ No	
One-to-one working	☐ Yes ☐ No	
Access to pupil records or sensitive data	☐ Yes ☐ No	

Section 4: Safeguarding Controls and Supervision Arrangements

The following controls must be in place before the individual starts work:

Control Measure	Confirmed
Individual will not undertake regulated activity unsupervised	☐
Named supervisor allocated (see below)	☐
Supervisor is DBS cleared and experienced	☐
Individual briefed on safeguarding and child protection procedures	☐
Code of Conduct issued and acknowledged	☐
Individual does not undertake one-to-one work	☐
Access restricted to agreed areas only	☐

Named Supervisor:

Name: _____

Role: _____

Section 5: Additional Checks Completed

Check	Date Completed	Completed By
Identity check (original documents seen)		
Right to work in the UK		
References received (minimum of one)		
Overseas checks (if applicable)		

Section 6: Risk Rating

Based on the above assessment:

Overall Risk Level	Tick
Low	☐
Medium	☐
High	☐

Note: A High risk rating should normally prevent the individual from starting work prior to DBS clearance.**Section 7: Authorisation**

I confirm that I have reviewed this risk assessment and that appropriate safeguards are in place to protect children and young people:

Name: _____

Role: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Section 8: Review and Outcome

This risk assessment must be reviewed weekly until DBS clearance is confirmed:

Review Date	Outcome / Notes	Reviewed By

DBS Certificate Received: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Date Received: _____

Once DBS clearance is received and deemed satisfactory, this risk assessment will cease to apply and a record of the DBS check will be entered onto the Single Central Record.