

RECRUITMENT POLICY

Recruitment plays a key role in the success and development of Alpha Plus Group ('APG'). A professional approach to the recruitment process helps APG in attracting and appointing employees with the necessary skills and experience to be successful in their role.

APG is committed to ensuring that the recruitment and selection of its employees is conducted in a manner that is safe, fair, efficient, effective, and promotes equality of opportunity.

APG is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff to share this commitment. Child protection and safeguarding considerations are included at every stage of the recruitment process, consistent with the statutory guidance provided in the Keeping Children Safe In Education ('KCSIE'), September 2021, part 3 ('Safer Recruitment').

This policy applies to recruitment across all employee categories.

Policy guidelines – contents of this document

- Safer Recruitment
- Equal opportunities
- Recruitment planning
- Job descriptions and person specifications
- Recruitment approval and advertising
- Managing candidates
- Employment history and references
- Job offer
- Pre-appointment checks
- Appointment process
- Single central register (SCR)
- Individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK
- DBS checks – additional guidance

Safer Recruitment training

At least one person on the panel interviewing and making decisions about appointing candidates must have successfully completed the Safer Recruitment Training.

Recruitment and Selection Training

At least one member of the panel involved in shortlisting, interviewing and making appointments must have successfully completed the APG fair selection training.

(This is effective from the 2021/22 Summer Term and supports the APG Equality and Inclusion Policy initiatives with Fair Recruitment & Selection training being rolled out during the Spring 2021/22 term).

Equal Opportunities

APG wholeheartedly supports the principle of equal opportunities in employment; and actively opposes all forms of unlawful or unfair discrimination on the grounds of sex, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), religion or belief, age or disability.

RECRUITMENT POLICY

We believe that it is in the company's best interests, and those of all who work in it, to ensure that the human resources, talents and skills of all potential employees are considered when employment opportunities arise. We apply these principles to all individuals working at all levels and grades, including senior managers, officers, directors, employees, consultants, contractors, trainees, home-workers, part-time and fixed-term Employees, volunteers, casual workers and agency staff. This policy aims to foster a culture of equality and to recognise the positive contribution that each individual can make to the business irrespective of their background.

Every possible step will be taken to ensure that individuals are treated equally and fairly and that decisions on recruitment, selection, appointment and promotion are based solely on objective and job related criteria. This policy applies to the advertisement of jobs, recruitment and appointment, training, conditions of work, pay and to every other aspect of employment. All terms and conditions of employment and related benefits shall be non-discriminatory, other than where there are legal, justifiable grounds for discriminating in the case of specific jobs with particular requirements. Applicants for employment will be assessed according to their skills, experience and suitability for the job.

Where a recruitment agency is commissioned to assist in the recruitment to a vacant post, they will be expected to abide by the spirit of the Group's equal opportunity policy, and may be asked to provide documentary evidence that they have done so.

All job applicants will be provided with a copy of the Group Equal Opportunity Policy. The effectiveness of the policy will be monitored through the collection of ethnic origin data from job applicants. If any applicant believes that he or she has been discriminated against in the selection process on the grounds of sex, sexual orientation, race, religion or disability, he or she should raise a grievance with the hiring manager or refer the matter to the HR Department for further investigation.

Recruitment Planning

Quality time should be set aside for the preparation of supporting documentation and planning. Before commencing recruitment it is important to consider whether there is a requirement for the role.

Job Descriptions & Person Specifications

Every position must have an up to date job description, which clearly defines the responsibilities of the role. The person specification is included within the job description. The job description must be reviewed each time a vacancy occurs to ensure that the contents are relevant and accurate. The job description should also always include the paragraph:-

"Alpha Plus Group (insert school name where appropriate) is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment"

Recruitment Approval and Advertising

An *Approval to Recruit* form should be sent to the HR department to gain approval to recruit for a vacant or new role. This should include all the places that the advert will be placed. Compulsory websites for Academic positions are:

- TES
- Guardian Jobs (not Colleges)
- The Alpha Plus website

RECRUITMENT POLICY

- Individual School/ College sites

If non-compulsory advertising channels are used in addition then the cost of the advert should be submitted on the form and the Head of HR advised. Engaging agencies should not be undertaken until advertising in the approved media has been exhausted. Authorisation is required before any recruitment agency is approached.

In order to commence recruitment, the appropriate authorisation must have been provided. Draw up an advert and make sure the Job Description, application form and equal opportunities form are downloadable.

The advert should include: the school's or college's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and make clear that safeguarding checks will be undertaken.

The job description and advert should always include the paragraph:-

"Alpha Plus Group (insert school name where appropriate) is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment".

The successful applicant will need to obtain an enhanced disclosure via the DBS and have DBS (Disclosure & Barring Service) clearance. The advert and job description should state that the safeguarding responsibilities of the post as per the job description and personal specification. If they are DSL, bullet points need to be included to state their specific safeguarding responsibilities.

"Please click the link below for further information on employing Ex-Offenders: [Policy on employment of ex-offenders.pdf \(alphaplusgroup.co.uk\)](https://www.alphaplusgroup.co.uk/policy-on-employment-of-ex-offenders.pdf)"

Internal applicants must inform their current Line Manager of their intention to apply for another internal position. Internal candidates, who are selected for interview, will be interviewed against the agreed job description and criteria.

This policy does not require all job vacancies to be advertised externally. Where there are suitable internal candidates who are already APG employees, the responsible Head/Principal/Director may decide to advertise the role to all employees across the Group or to relevant employees in a specific establishment or establishments.

Safeguarding

APG is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and as an employee of APG you are expected to share this commitment. The protection of our students' welfare is the responsibility of all staff within APG Schools and individuals are expected to conduct themselves in a way that reflects the principles of our organisation.

RECRUITMENT POLICY

Jobs covered by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

APG will not automatically refuse to employ a particular individual just because they have a previous criminal conviction. During job interviews, APG will ask job applicants to disclose any unspent convictions but will not ask job applicants questions about spent convictions, nor expect them to disclose any spent convictions.

If an applicant has a conviction that is not spent and if the nature of the offence is relevant to the job for which they have applied, APG will review the individual circumstances of the case and may, at its discretion, decline to select the individual for employment.

Jobs that are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

If the job into which the Group is seeking to recruit is one of the excluded jobs listed in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 [or the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exclusions and Exceptions) (Scotland) Order 2013], the Group will require the applicant to disclose all convictions, whether spent or unspent (other than where protected cautions and protected convictions do not need to be disclosed, depending on the job concerned).

Even in these circumstances, however, APG will not refuse to employ a particular individual unless the nature of the conviction has some relevance to the job for which the individual has applied. Furthermore, if the job is exempt, APG will, once it has selected the person to whom it wishes to offer employment, seek documentary evidence about that person's criminal convictions. The Group will seek the applicant's agreement to make a joint application to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) for a standard, enhanced or enhanced with DBS barred lists check (as appropriate). APG will reimburse the individual the fee for obtaining the appropriate criminal records certificate. Where the individual is member of the DBS update service, APG will, with their permission, carry out a status check on any current certificate.

Data protection

APG processes information about an individual's criminal convictions in accordance with its data protection policy. In particular, data collected during recruitment is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of completing the recruitment process. Inappropriate access or disclosure of employee data constitutes a data breach and should be reported in accordance with the Group's data protection policy immediately. It may also constitute a disciplinary offence, which will be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure.

Once an individual is recruited, information about their criminal record gathered in the course of the vetting process will not be transferred to their personnel file.

RECRUITMENT POLICY

Managing Candidates

Pre-interview planning

Arrange a **pre interview meeting** – that will enable you to agree:

- Approach – timetable; chair and room layout
- Focus - experience/views/challenges– also their understanding of the position
- Prepare questions, link to Job Description, and for the purposes of equal opportunities, ensure all candidates are asked the same questions

Suitable interview questions are available on the Portal <https://egiportal.alphaplusgroup.co.uk/apg-info/hr/Pages/Interview-Templates.aspx> as is a pro forma for recording answers and scores. To ensure consistency pre-determined questions should be used and should include questions relating to Child Protection and Safeguarding.

Shortlisting Candidates.

At least two members of staff should carry out shortlisting of candidates. Application forms need to be carefully checked to ensure:

- They are fully completed and consistent.
- To identify discrepancies and gaps in the person's employment history.
- To identify any details regarding motivation and attitude that need to be clarified at interview

Shortlisted candidates should be placed on the Candidate Selection Form.

Shortlisted Candidates should be asked to complete a self-declaration of their criminal record or information that would make them unsuitable to work with children. Self-declaration is subject to Ministry of Justice guidance on the disclosure of criminal records, further information can be found on GOV.UK

For example:

- if they have a criminal history;
- whether they are included on the barred list;
- whether they are prohibited from teaching;
- whether they are prohibited from taking part in the management of an independent school;
- information about any criminal offences committed in any country in line with the law as applicable in England and Wales, not the law in their country of origin or where they were convicted;
- if they are known to the police and children's social care;
- have they been disqualified from providing childcare (see paras 245-249); and,
- any relevant overseas information.

This information should only be requested from applicants who have been shortlisted. The information should not be requested in the application form to decide who should be shortlisted. The self-declaration form should be attached when inviting applicants to interview stage. Please note a copy of this form can also be found on the portal under Recruitment.

Applicants should be asked to sign a declaration confirming the information they have provided is true. Where there is an electronic signature, the shortlisted candidate should physically sign a hard copy of the application at point of interview

RECRUITMENT POLICY

Interviewing

Suitable candidates should be interviewed by at least two people. At least one person on any appointment panel **must** have undertaken Safer Recruitment Training. Interviewers should independently score the candidates (rate 1-5) and then discuss the outcome together and agree the best candidate for the role. Reasons for non-appointment should be detailed. All interview notes should be kept in a lockable cupboard for at least six months after which they can be confidentially destroyed. Where the successful candidate is a migrant worker and requires sponsorship by APG the following documents must be retained on file for the duration of their appointment:

- All applications short listed for final interview, in the medium they were received, for example: emails, CV's, application forms. This should include the applicant's details such as name, address, date of birth etc.
- The names and total number of applicants short listed for final interview
- For each settled worker who was rejected or did not take up the offer of employment interview notes or other documentation which show the reasons why they were not employed
- Copies of the adverts and details of where it was posted (please see Employing Migrant Workers Policy for full details around content, duration and copying an advert)

Unsuccessful candidates

All candidates, either external or internal, should be informed if their application is unsuccessful this can be either by email, telephone, letter or face-to-face feedback.

Employment history and references

Employers should always ask for written information about previous employment history and check that information is not contradictory or incomplete. References should be sought on all short-listed candidates before interview, so that any issues of concern they raise can be explored further with the referee, and taken up with the candidate at interview.

Please note that shortlisting is the stage BEFORE an offer is made.

- If you have one round of interviews, references should be taken up before you interview
- If your interview schedule has two rounds, references should be taken up after the 1st round
- If your interview schedule has three rounds, references should be taken up after the 2nd round
- Please ensure any references are from the candidate's **current** employer and have been completed by a senior person with appropriate authority (if the referee is school or college based, the reference should be confirmed by the headteacher/principal as accurate in respect to disciplinary investigations);
- Obtain verification of the individual's most recent relevant period of employment where the applicant is not currently employed;
- Secure a reference from the relevant employer from the last time the applicant worked with children (if not currently working with children),
- If the applicant has never worked with children, then ensure a reference from their current employer;
- Always verify any information with the person who provided the reference;
- Ensure electronic references originate from a legitimate source;
- Establish the reason for the candidate leaving their current or most recent post.

RECRUITMENT POLICY

The panel needs to demonstrate that it has “sought” references on all shortlisted candidates, interviews can still go ahead as planned, as some references may not come back in time (before the interview). Please keep any emails/letters where the school has tried to obtain references for shortlisted candidates on file.

The purpose of seeking references is to obtain objective and factual information to support appointment decisions. References should always be obtained, scrutinised and any concerns resolved satisfactorily, before the appointment is confirmed. They should always be requested directly from the referee and employers should not rely on open references, for example in the form of ‘to whom it may concern’ testimonials. If a candidate for a teaching post is not currently employed as a teacher, it is also advisable to check with the school, college or local authority at which they were most recently employed, to confirm details of their employment and their reasons for leaving.

On receipt, references should be checked to ensure that all specific questions have been answered satisfactorily. The referee should be contacted to provide further clarification as appropriate: for example if the answers are vague. They should also be compared for consistency with the information provided by the candidate on their application form. Any discrepancies should be taken up with the candidate.

RECRUITMENT POLICY

Job offer

An offer of appointment to a successful candidate, including one who has lived or worked abroad, must be conditional upon satisfactory completion of pre-employment checks.

This can be followed up in writing with the standard job offer letter template on the portal.

Pre-Appointment Checks

Any offer of appointment to a successful candidate, including one who has lived or worked abroad, must be conditional upon satisfactory completion of pre-employment checks. When appointing new staff, the following steps must be taken:

- Verify a candidate's identity, preferably from current photographic ID and proof of address. It is important to be sure that the person is who they claim to be, this includes being aware of the potential for individuals changing their name. Best practice is checking the name on their birth certificate, where this is available. If there has been a name change, please ensure they provide a birth certificate to show the change.
- obtain a certificate for an enhanced DBS check with a barred list information where the person will be engaging in regulated activity (as defined by KCSIE 2021). Refer to the official [Guide for eligibility for DBS checks](#) for more details. Please note that when using the DBS update service you still need to obtain the original physical certificate.
- The Group undertakes to discuss any matter revealed in a Disclosure with the person seeking the position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.
- Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar you from working with us. This will depend on the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of your offences.
- Obtain a separate barred list check if an individual will start work in regulated activity before the DBS certificate is available but already being pursued. In addition, in order to start work, all other checks will be made and safeguarding will be put in place as a result of a written risk assessment, including safeguard checks every two weeks and the individual advised on the safeguards in place. Before the DBS certificate is available, the appointment will not be confirmed and a note will be added to the single central register.
- The applicant must show the original paper DBS certificate to their potential employer before they take up post, or as soon as practicable afterwards.
- Check that a candidate to be employed as a teacher is not subject to a prohibition order (or an interim prohibition order) issued by the Secretary of State, using the [Teacher Services system](#)
- for anyone engaged in management roles, an additional check is required to ensure they are not prohibited under section 128 provisions. This applies to both to those recruited externally and internal promotions. 'Management' includes roles such as head teachers, any teaching positions on the senior leadership team, and any teaching positions that carry a department headship. Depending on the facts of the case, it may also include other individuals such as teachers with additional responsibilities.
- verify the candidate's mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities. A job applicant can be asked relevant questions about disability and health in order to establish whether they have the physical and mental capacity for the specific role
- verify the person's right to work in the UK. If there is uncertainty about whether an individual needs permission to work in the UK, then prospective employers, or volunteer managers, should follow advice on the GOV.UK website.
- All schools must ensure that an applicant to be employed to carry out teaching work is not subject to a prohibition order issued by the Secretary of State.

RECRUITMENT POLICY

- Before employing a person to carry out teaching work in relation to children, schools must take reasonable steps to establish whether that person is subject to a prohibition order issued by the Secretary of State.
- All schools and colleges providing childcare must ensure that appropriate checks are carried out to ensure that individuals employed to work in reception classes, or in wraparound care for children up to the age of 8, are not disqualified from working in these settings under the 2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations.
- obtain at least two references with one of them being their current employer and one covering their previous employment, or if there is good reason for these being unavailable, from other appropriate sources.
- if the person has lived or worked outside the UK, make any further checks the school or college consider appropriate. This should include a check for information about any teacher sanction or restriction that an EEA professional regulating authority has imposed using the [Teacher Services system](#)
- If the candidate has worked overseas in the last 10 years for 3 months or more, please note that an overseas check will be required.
- verify professional qualifications, as appropriate.

Appointment Process

When appointing new staff, teaching and non-teaching staff, schools and colleges must send the following documents to the candidate and ensure they are signed and returned and placed on the individuals' personal file :-

1. Job offer letter
2. Contract of employment
(these may be sent by email but must be in a **pdf format**)
3. New employee information form
4. Recruitment of Ex-Offenders and SD form
5. Equal Opportunities Form
6. HMRC Starter form

Via email link

7. Pre-employment health questionnaire
8. DBS form link (Note the DBS cannot be completed until the relevant documents have been verified – candidates should be requested to visit your office with the relevant documentation)

In addition and as appropriate, you should save on each individual's personal file:-

9. Contents list of staff file
10. CV and or Application form.
11. New Employee Checklist
12. Verification of a candidate's identity (these are the same documents that are in use for a DBS check) Take photocopies of all documents and ensure that you write on them 'true copy of original' then sign and date the documents.
13. Obtain the number of the DBS certificate and make a note of the number on the Single Central Register. Until the full DBS certificate has been received then an employee who is in work should have been checked against the barred list information list and a Risk Assessment must have been completed (ensuring that those without full DBS are accompanied on the premises at all times). The exception to this is for Boarding staff who cannot start work until the enhanced DBS check has been received.
14. Verification of professional qualifications, as appropriate

RECRUITMENT POLICY

15. Written confirmation that a health check has been obtained
16. Written references covering the last five years (and preferably from two different sources)
17. Job Description for the role
18. All interview notes
19. If the new employees has lived or worked outside the UK then police checks for each country they have lived in, with consecutive dates needs to be supplied by the individual
20. A confirmation that the individual is not on the Prohibition from Teaching list and the Prohibition from Management lists, as appropriate.
21. Written evidence of any risk assessment that has taken place, including agreed action

Single Central Register

All the relevant checks and the dates they were made must be entered into the school's Single Central Register of appointments, with the date the document was completed and with the checker adding their initials.

RECRUITMENT POLICY

Individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK

Individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK must undergo the same checks as all other staff in schools or colleges. This includes obtaining (via the applicant) an enhanced DBS certificate (including barred list information, for those who will be engaging in regulated activity) even if the individual has never been to the UK.

Following the UK's exit from the EU, schools and colleges should apply the same approach for any individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK regardless of whether or not it was in an EEA country or the rest of the world. These checks could include, where available:

- criminal records checks for overseas applicants - Home Office guidance can be found on GOV.UK; and for teaching positions
- obtaining a letter (via the applicant) from the professional regulating authority in the country (or countries) in which the applicant has worked confirming that they have not imposed any sanctions or restrictions, and or that they are aware of any reason why they may be unsuitable to teach.
- Applicants can find contact details of regulatory bodies in the EU/EEA and Switzerland on the Regulated Professions database. Applicants can also contact the UK Centre for Professional Qualifications who will signpost them to the appropriate EEA regulatory body.
- In addition, schools and colleges must make any further checks they think appropriate so that any relevant events that occurred outside the UK can be considered

In addition these individuals must supply criminal records checks for each country in which they have reside .Where available, such evidence can be considered together with information obtained through other pre-appointment checks to help assess their suitability. Where this information is not available schools and colleges should seek alternative methods of checking suitability and or undertake a risk assessment that supports informed decision making on whether to proceed with the appointment.

If the person appointed is a national of a non-EEA country, a Certificate of Sponsorship may be required. This process can be complex and the timescales protracted. Please inform the HR Department as soon as possible if it is likely that the role will be filled from an individual overseas. Please refer to the policy "Employing Migrant Workers on the portal.

Additional guidance

Supply staff from Employment Agencies

Employment agencies will be required to provide written, dated evidence of checks of identity, barred list/List 99; qualifications; overseas checks (including EEA), where applicable; right to work in the UK; prohibition from teaching; the date of written notification that it or another agency has received an enhanced disclosure, and the date of the disclosure; whether the agency has supplied a copy of the enhanced criminal record certificate. You must check the individual's passport and obtain proof of address and record that the individual presenting themselves is the same person. Further checks can be required from the agency to confirm that references, medical fitness and disqualification from childcare has been completed.

Trainee/Student workers

Where trainees are sponsored by an external body it is the responsibility of the provider to carry out the necessary checks and to provide written confirmation to APG that these checks have been carried out. There is no requirement to enter these individuals on the single central register.

RECRUITMENT POLICY

Periodic renewals for existing staff

Regular DBS checks or barred list checks are NOT required by APG for existing staff unless there are concerns about their suitability to work with children. In this case APG may carry out all relevant checks as if the person were a new member of staff. Individual schools and colleges may decide to operate periodic renewals at a frequency appropriate to them.

Referral to the DBS

Schools and colleges have a legal duty to refer to the DBS anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a child where:

- the harm test is satisfied in respect of that individual;
- the individual has received a caution or conviction for a relevant offence, or if there is reason to believe that the individual has committed a listed relevant offence; and
- the individual has been removed from working (paid or unpaid) in regulated activity, or would have been removed had they not resigned. This includes suspension and redeployment to non-regulated activity.

Referrals should be made as soon as possible, and ordinarily on conclusion of an investigation. Further information can be found [here](#).

Volunteers

Schools should endeavour to supervise volunteers at all times when they are working with children. A risk assessment should be undertaken to clarify the role of the volunteer and if there is a possibility that they may engage in regulated/unsupervised activity, an enhanced DBS check should be completed. You must check the individual's passport and obtain proof of address and record that the individual presenting themselves is the same person.

Governors and Proprietors

An enhanced DBS check for all Governors and Proprietors should be obtained prior to them being appointed. Where they have lived outside the UK they must be able to provide the relevant checks from the country they have resided in. Checks on Governors and Proprietors are carried out at Head Office, including checking the individual's passport, proof of address and confirmation that the individual presenting themselves is the same person.

Interview Expenses

Candidate interview expenses are not paid unless previously agreed by the relevant Education Director (for academic or pastoral roles directly reporting to the Head or Principal of a school or college), by the relevant Director (for a post reporting directly to that Director) or by the CEO (for a Head, Principal position, or post reporting directly to the CEO). Where they are agreed standard class

RECRUITMENT POLICY

rail fares should be booked.

Interpretation

This policy applies in all schools, colleges and other work environments within the Group. This policy applies within the following company, which is a wholly owned subsidiary of Alpha Plus Holdings plc, a company registered in England, registered number 4418776, that is to say:

Alpha Plus Group Limited, registered number 438111

and the terms "Group" and "Company" should be interpreted accordingly, dependent on the employing company.

The registered office is 50 Queen Anne Street, London W1G 8HJ. Any enquiries regarding the application of this policy should be addressed to the Head of HR at that address.

RECRUITMENT POLICY

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