



**LEIGH**  
Academies Trust

## People Services

### Recruitment Policy

<b>Date issued</b>	September 2025
<b>Date to be revised</b>	September 2026
<b>Scope of policy</b>	Leigh Academies Trust's respective academies; Leigh Academies Trust Head Office; Thames Gateway Teaching School Hub; Kent and Medway Training; LAT Enterprises; LAT Apprenticeships.

# Recruitment Policy

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. We know that our staff are fundamental to our success. A strategic, fair, inclusive and professional approach to recruitment processes enable us to attract and appoint staff with the necessary skills and attributes to fulfil the Trust's strategic aims and values.
- 1.2. We are committed to ensuring that the recruitment and selection of staff is conducted in an efficient and effective manner, and promotes recruitment of the highest quality candidates and equal opportunities for all whilst being mindful of limited budgets.
- 1.3. Recruitment should be treated as a public relations exercise as the way it is managed affects the Trust's image and reputation; those involved in the recruitment process are representing LAT at every stage, and consequently its ability to attract and appoint high calibre staff.
- 1.4. This policy has been designed to provide a flexible framework which promotes good practice whilst being adaptable to the varying recruitment needs of our academies and partner organisations.
- 1.5. Professional advice and support is available at all stages of the recruitment process from the LAT Recruitment Team and wider People Services department.

## 2. What types of roles are covered by this policy?

- 2.1. This policy applies to the recruitment and selection of all staff to the Trust in any of its academies and associated organisations, whether paid, voluntary, as a school/university placement, introduced by an agency or under a service agreement. All colleagues involved at any stage of the recruitment and selection of staff should be aware of and adhere to the contents of this policy.
- 2.2. The policy does not cover the engagement of sole traders, self-employed workers, or individuals who work via third parties (e.g. agency staff).

## 3. Aims

- 3.1. To safeguard children and young people in our academies.
- 3.2. Appointments are made on the basis of merit through assessment of the candidates' suitability against role-specific selection criteria.
- 3.3. All recruitment and selection is compliant with relevant legislation such as the Equality Act (2010), GDPR (2018) and with the most recent update to Keeping Children Safe in Education.
- 3.4. All candidates are treated fairly and with respect and courtesy, aiming to ensure that the candidate experience is positive, irrespective of outcome. View our [LAT Candidate Charter](#) to see what measures we put in place to achieve this.
- 3.5. We balance our desire to help existing colleagues achieve their career progression aspirations and retain security of employment where they have the necessary skills and experience to carry out new job roles, with our commitment to applying open and fair recruitment processes.

## 4. Safer Recruitment

- 4.1. Safer recruitment features throughout this policy and the overarching aim is to help deter, reject or identify people who might pose a threat to learners or are otherwise unsuited to working with them. We will do this by having appropriate procedures for appointing staff at all levels. Leigh Academies Trust is committed to ensuring that only candidates who are

suitable to work with children are appointed, and thus help maintain a safe and positive environment across the organisation which protects children from harm. Specific steps taken to ensure only suitable candidates are appointed are as follows;

Steps taken	Details	Reviewed by
Close personal or familial relationships must be declared.	See 5.3.	LAT Recruitment Team
A statement on LAT's commitment to safeguarding and promoting welfare of children, and need for successful applicants to be DBS checked included in all formal adverts.	See 7.7.	LAT Recruitment Team
Job applications for shortlisted candidates are scrutinised with any gaps, discrepancies or general queries being raised.	See 8.4.	LAT Recruitment Team and panel members
Online Checks are completed for all shortlisted candidates, in accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance.	See 9.6.	LAT Recruitment Team
References will be sought at the appropriate time (pre-interview for teaching staff and post interview for support staff) and explicitly ask about the applicant's suitability to work with children.	See Section 10.	LAT Recruitment Team / People Services Team
Shortlisted candidates must complete a Self-Declaration Form, a separate criminal declaration form from the ATS.	See 11.2.	LAT Recruitment Team and panel members
<u>At least</u> one panel member must be trained in safer recruitment.	See 11.3.	LAT Recruitment Team and panel members
All interviews will include LAT's mandatory Safer Recruitment Questions in which candidate responses are collectively assessed. Panel members will grade this as satisfactory or unsatisfactory.	See 11.7.	Panel members

## 5. Recruitment and Selection Process

- 5.1. All colleagues involved in the recruitment process should ensure that they are aware of their responsibilities under the relevant employment legislation.
- 5.2. Documentation relating to applicants will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and in accordance with GDPR requirements.
- 5.3. If a colleague involved in the recruitment process has a close personal or familial relationship with an applicant for any role across LAT, they must declare this as soon as they are aware of the individuals' application to avoid claims of nepotism. Candidates are also asked to declare any close personal or familial relationships on their application form. It would be necessary for the colleague to avoid any involvement in the recruitment and selection process in this instance, and should not be in a position as a direct line manager or have input in their performance or salary reviews.

## 6. Pre-Recruitment Stage

- 6.1. The recruitment and selection process should not commence until a full evaluation of the need for the role against the academy improvement plan and budget has been completed, and SLT approval has been provided.
- 6.2. The recruitment of staff will take into account the Trust's need for new ideas and approaches and support the Trust's commitment to equality and diversity.

## 7. Advertising

- 7.1. As a minimum, all vacancies will be advertised across the Trust via Jobtrain, our applicant tracking system (ATS). This will help maximise equality of opportunity and provide staff with opportunities for career development, thus maintaining the skills and expertise of existing staff.
- 7.2. In some circumstances, the Principal or Director may deem it appropriate to only advertise a position internally, i.e for existing LAT employees. The scope of this may be across the entire organisation, or ring-fenced to only their academy. An example for this would be when an opportunity for promotion is available but not an increase in headcount, thus it would not be feasible to accept applications from those not already based at the academy.
- 7.3. In extenuating circumstances, the Principal or Trust Director may waive the need to advertise. This is likely to include the following circumstances:
  - Where positions may provide suitable alternative employment for existing colleagues whose post has been identified for redundancy, including the termination of fixed-term contracts or following a restructuring exercise.
  - Positions requiring specialised expertise where the Principal/Director can demonstrate that a comprehensive search has been conducted and the nominated individual is the most suitable person for the position.
- 7.4. LAT is able to utilise its visa sponsorship licence to recruit overseas candidates requiring sponsorship inline with the UK Shortage Occupation list. In this instance, the appropriate advertising methods must be adhered to.
- 7.5. Positions will be advertised using the most appropriate and cost-effective platforms to maximise the quality and quantity of candidates. This may include local, national publications, social media and websites, all of which should adhere to the Trust's branding. Internal advertisements should appear for a minimum of **3 working days** and external advertisements should appear for a minimum of **3 working days**.
- 7.6. Each academy will hold its own advertising budget for recruitment. Any adverts placed will be charged directly to/back to the academy, including in the case of Trust subscription packages. Placement of any job adverts will be undertaken by the Recruitment Team through the platform(s) agreed with the Talent Manager.
- 7.7. All formal advertisements must include a statement on equal opportunities and LAT's commitment to safeguarding and promoting welfare of children, and need for successful applicants to be DBS checked. This is not possible on some social media platforms due to wordcount constraints, but candidates will be made aware when they come to apply via LAT's ATS.
- 7.8. Where necessary and with the support from the Recruitment Team, the academy may use an agency to assist in recruiting staff where the vacancy is hard to fill. Every effort must be made to ensure a fair cost for any agency placements, including supply and permanent.
- 7.9. Where appropriate, particularly in main recruitment windows, shortlisting and interviews are likely to take place prior to the advertised closing date. A clause will be included in the advert informing candidates of this, or candidates will be contacted via Jobtrain.

## **8. Application Process**

- 8.1. All candidates, without exception, must complete an online application form via Jobtrain, LAT's applicant tracking system, prior to any interviews being conducted. We cannot accept retrospective applications for candidates who are interviewed and then offered the chance to complete an application form afterwards as this means noncompliance with Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance on safer recruitment processes.
- 8.2. All applicants will be treated with respect and provided with sufficient information to make informed decisions regarding their suitability for the role.
- 8.3. All applications are acknowledged on receipt.
- 8.4. All applications are scrutinised and checked for any discrepancies / anomalies / gaps in employment. These are noted and recommended for the panel to explore at interview stage if a candidate is shortlisted.

## **9. Selection Process**

- 9.1. The selection process should be transparent, timely and free from conflict of interest.
- 9.2. All recruitment will be based on agreed written job descriptions and person specifications. Recruitment and selection must be conducted as an evidence-based process and candidates should be assessed against agreed written selection criteria, based on relevant knowledge, skills, competencies, experience and qualifications to perform the role as outlined in the person specification. All decisions must be recorded.
- 9.3. Shortlisting must be undertaken by at least two individuals who are involved in the interviewing process. A member of the Senior Leadership Team should be involved in all interviews in addition to at least one other member of staff. The Recruitment Team will make recommendations for shortlisting wherever possible/appropriate.
- 9.4. The Executive Team will be involved in the selection process of any senior leadership appointments.
- 9.5. Where required, every effort must be made to make reasonable adjustments for candidates with disabilities. Advice can be sought from People Services and the Recruitment Team. Candidates are asked to disclose if they require any assistance at interview during the application process.
- 9.6. Online checks are completed for all shortlisted candidates by the Recruitment Team. See ['Online Checks - Guidance'](#) for more information.

## **10. References**

- 10.1. References will be requested for teaching posts prior to interview at the point of shortlisting. For non-teaching posts, references will be requested at the point of acceptance of employment.
- 10.2. References are sought directly from the referee that the candidate has provided, but the Recruitment Team has the right to seek additional references using publicly available contact information if a candidate fails to provide a referee to cover a period of employment or education stated on their CV or application form.
- 10.3. Referees are asked to complete a LAT standardised pro-forma. Any other formats provided may warrant further clarification if all information is not provided. The reference form includes recommended specific questions; including reason for leaving and any previous safeguarding allegations or concerns / disciplinary action. All references are scrutinised on receipt checked against information on the candidate's application; the Recruitment Team will ensure the referee has appropriate authority, clarify any discrepancies/issue of concern. These are noted and taken up directly with the referee and/or applicant at interview stage or as part of the onboarding process.

- 10.4. Any offer of employment, amongst other criteria (see '11. Post-interview'), is conditional upon receipt of a minimum of two satisfactory references (one of which must be the current or most recent employer) and/or cover a 5 year period.
- 10.5. Character references may be required to cover any gaps of employment or if the candidate has not previously been employed.
- 10.6. References will need to be provided in the name the candidate will use in their new job. Transgender colleagues may need to disclose a previous identity to enable us to obtain references from past employment. If this is the case a representative from People Services will manage the on boarding process sensitively and confidentially.

## 11. Interviews

- 11.1. Candidates are required to bring one form of photographic ID to the interview that a panel member must visually check against the name used on their application (no copies need to be taken). Any discrepancies need to be raised with the Recruitment Team.
- 11.2. Candidates no longer complete a criminal declaration form on Jobtrain. They will be emailed a PDF copy of the [Self-Declaration and Disclosure Form](#) and asked to bring a signed copy to the interview with them, to be handed over and kept with all other interview documents by the panel. Blank copies of the form will be available to complete on the day if candidates did not bring a copy with them. Each form must be scrutinised, and if any information is declared on this form, it must be discussed during the interview and recorded. Guidance for hiring managers is provided by the Recruitment Team and People Services so that staff are confident in having these conversations.
- 11.3. At least one member of the panel must have completed Safer Recruitment Training (LAT's Recruitment Team determines the provider to use). LAT takes the approach that, as best practice, any employee in a management position should undertake Safer Recruitment Training, which usually means more than one panel member is appropriately trained.
- 11.4. All interviews for one post should be conducted by the same panel with a minimum of two panellists. Where this isn't possible, e.g. on the occasion of high volume recruitment whereby several interviews occur on a weekly basis, the panel members must all be fully briefed and aim for a consistent approach across all interviews.
- 11.5. Interview questions must relate to the job requirements as detailed in the job description and person specification and the candidate's suitability for the position. The person specification and job description should be used as the basis for determining the interview questions.
- 11.6. Interview questions must be on a standardised form on which answers to questions must be recorded, as well as the candidates' names and the panel member completing each form.
- 11.7. All interviews will include LAT's Mandatory Safeguarding Questions which are separate from the job-specific interview questions for all interviews. At least 10 minutes will be allocated to go through this section with the candidate. Sections include; the applicants motivations for working with children, safer recruitment questions, discussion of the Self-Declaration and Disclosure Form, any findings from conducting the Online Checks, any queries or concerns raised from references obtained.
- 11.8. Post COVID-19, on the whole, virtual interviews have been replaced with face to face interviews. On occasion, virtual interviews may be appropriate. Please seek guidance from the Recruitment Team regarding interviews for overseas candidates on a case-by-case basis.
- 11.9. Any skills tests (e.g. presentations, in-tray exercises) must be directly related to the role and measured against objective criteria, and assessed by the same persons.
- 11.10. Candidates must be notified of any skills test when they are invited for an interview and the selection process for teaching posts must include a presentation or demonstration of teaching skills. This can be in person or, as a result of Covid, can be conducted virtually to include an activity whereby the teacher prepares and talks through a hypothetical lesson.

- 11.11. The Recruitment Team must be informed of and arrange all interviews on behalf of hiring managers as we will hold the central record for interview activity across the Trust, and can ensure consistency and compliance with Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance.
- 11.12. Panel members have the authority to appoint.
- 11.13. Interview – explores applicant’s suitability for work with children as well as suitability for the requirements of the post.
- 11.14. Where appropriate, relevant qualifications of applicants based on the job applied for should be verified on the day of interview. Candidates are informed in their invite to interview if qualifications are required to be presented in their **original** copy. No copies need to be taken at this stage due to GDPR.

## 12. Post-interview

- 12.1. All interview notes and accompanying documents (such as tasks) should be scanned over to the Recruitment Team post-interview, ideally within 48 hours of the interview taking place. These will be kept on file for 6 months.
- 12.2. The successful candidate(s)' [Self-Declaration and Disclosure Form](#) must be scanned and attached to the Job Offer Form. Any delay in submitting this will result in a delay in generating the contract.
- 12.3. A copy of the candidate’s Jobtrain application is saved to their HR file. Jobtrain archives applications after 2 years, so saving a copy to their file ensures we have the ability to refer back to it once the 2 year archiving process has occurred.
- 12.4. Conditional offer of appointment – offers of appointment are made based on conditional satisfactory completion of the following pre-appointment checks (and consideration of a probationary period for support staff);
  - References - received and checked (if not obtained and scrutinised previously); any issues are clarified with the referee and/or candidate. Content confirmed with the referee and electronic references must be verified as from a legitimate source i.e a work email address. See ‘9. References’.
  - Identity and qualifications. If the recruitment process was remote, the originals must be seen in school on or before the start date and the date seen should be recorded. Examples of common qualifications required are;
    - 12.4.■.1. Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) – the teacher has obtained QTS, QTLS, PGCE or Certificate of Education (Cert. Ed).
    - 12.4.■.2. [Early Years Qualification – for relevant early years positions such as Early Years Assistant, Nursery Manager, etc. Level of qualification depends on role \(3-6\)](#). Advice is available from the Recruitment Team.
  - Evidence of right to work in the UK – refer to <https://www.gov.uk/legal-right-work-uk> for guidance. Originals must be seen on or before the start date and the date seen recorded.
  - Relevant level DBS check; the certificate is sent to the applicant. Applicants should present the original certificate to the hiring manager/HR. Any disclosed information should be compared with the self-disclosure. HR should make a note on the Single Central Record of the date it was seen by them. For applicants who are signed up to the DBS update service, permission must be sought from the candidate to view the certificate by HR. If it isn’t at the appropriate level or the disclosure details have changed, a new DBS must be obtained. If the recruitment process was remote, a scanned copy of the ID and DBS certificate can be used to check status on the update service but originals must be seen on or before start date and cross-referenced with details on scanned documents.
  - Barred list check to determine if the candidate is barred from taking up the post (only to be undertaken for those working in regulated activity - more guidance at [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/550197/Regulated\\_activity\\_in\\_relation\\_to\\_children.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/550197/Regulated_activity_in_relation_to_children.pdf)).

- Prohibition / GTCE – (for teaching posts) the teacher has not been included in the prohibition list, interim prohibition list or subject to GTCE sanctions.
- Section 128: Prohibition from management (independent/free schools/academies and maintained school governors) – check to determine that anyone appointed to a management position is not barred from management by the Secretary of State.
- Health – ensure the candidate is medically fit to take up the post. This requirement can be satisfied by using the self-declaration medical form.
- Disqualification from childcare – (for relevant posts only) go to <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/disqualification-under-the-childcare-act-2006/disqualification-under-the-childcare-act-2006> for more guidance on who is bound by the disqualification rules.
- Candidates who have lived or worked outside the UK must undergo the same checks as any other candidate, as well as further checks so that relevant events that occurred outside the UK can be considered. Further guidance on overseas criminal checks can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-records-checks-for-overseas-applicants>

### 13. Appointment and induction

13.1. Induction will include the following for all staff:

- Appropriate level of safeguarding and child protection training
- Name and how to contact the appropriate Designated Safeguarding Lead
- KCSIE part 1 (or annex A if appropriate) with annex B (for staff in contact with children)
- Online safety and IT acceptable use agreement
- Whistleblowing
- Safe working practice / staff code of conduct
- Health and safety in the workplace
- Emergency evacuation procedures
- Any other relevant CPD

### 14. The Employment Contract

- 14.1. At the end of the recruitment process, all records must be retained. For successful candidates, documents are retained for the duration of employment. For unsuccessful candidates, written records relating to shortlisting and interviewing will be retained for 6 months. During this period, candidates can request feedback. After 6 months, the data will be destroyed.
- 14.2. Contractual documents are sent electronically to the successful applicant which are subject to the completion of pre-recruitment checks. New starter forms and induction documents are sent to new starters. People Services notify payroll and the relevant academy contacts of the new appointment. Line managers are responsible for ensuring new starter activities e.g. induction, ID cards, electrical equipment including laptops, etc are available.
- 14.3. DBS checks are processed by EmploymentCheck and can be issued as quickly as 3 to 5 working days, but can take considerably longer during busy periods. Separate children's barred checks are requested which are normally completed within 24 to 36 hours. Where DBS checks are delayed, it may be possible to put a risk assessment in place and the People Services Team will provide advice on this situation. Where a positive disclosure is received, People Services will support the Principal/Director in their decision making.
- 14.4. The DBS offers a confidential checking service for transgender applicants known as sensitive applications. This route allows transgender colleagues the choice not to have any gender or name information disclosed on their DBS certificate, that could reveal their previous identity. If you do not want a previous identity disclosed you should call or email the

sensitive applications team (0151 676 1452, [sensitive@dbs.gov.uk](mailto:sensitive@dbs.gov.uk) (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/transgender-applications>)) prior to submitting the application.

- 14.5. The People Services team receives notifications from EmploymentCheck that a DBS has been completed. Where a DBS check reveals a caution or conviction the colleague will be asked to meet with a representative from the People Services Team to discuss. There is the possibility that where a conviction or other relevant information has been recorded in a previous name, this may be revealed on the disclosure and as such details of any previous identity may be apparent. In this case this information will be treated confidentially and the risk assessment will make no reference to any previous names.

## 15. Responsibilities

Role	Accountable For
CEO and Board	Creation of new positions and replacement positions for Trust Directors. Creation of new positions and replacement positions for academy Principals. Approve salary level for academy Principals and Trust Directors.
CEO, Chairs of Governors, Principals and Trust	Creation of new positions and replacement positions for academy leadership teams (including consultation with CEO).
Central Services Directors	To appoint candidates to their respective teams. Approve salary level for all appointments, taking account of equal pay considerations.
Principals	Creation of new positions and replacement positions in relation to their academy, in-line with budget. Approval to appoint candidates.
Lead Panel Member	Ensuring the selection process is transparent and equitable. Managing the interview process. Conveying verbal offers to the preferred candidate. Providing feedback to unsuccessful applicants. Providing a record of all stages of the recruitment process, including the reasons for selecting/rejecting each candidate. Communication with the Recruitment Team regarding the conditions of appointment.
People Services and Recruitment Team	Providing professional human resources and talent management advice, including advising on the grading of positions, equal pay issues and the content of job descriptions, person specifications and advertisements. On-going improvements to the recruitment process and supporting policies and advisory documentation. To manage the candidate experience ensuring a professional and fair process throughout the candidate journey. Providing feedback to candidates who were not shortlisted. Ensuring that the ATS is regularly updated and used appropriately.

If you have any questions regarding any aspect of this policy, please contact the LAT Recruitment Team on [joinus@latrust.org.uk](mailto:joinus@latrust.org.uk) / 01634 412 263.