



## Online Checks for Shortlisted Candidates

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### Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)

#### **Online searches for shortlisted candidates (point 225)**

*As part of the shortlisting process schools and colleges should consider carrying out an online search as part of their due diligence on the shortlisted candidates. This may help identify any **incidents or issues** that have happened, and are publicly available online, which the school or college might want to explore with the applicant at interview.*

With effect from 1st September 2022, Leigh Academies Trust made online checks a mandatory part of the shortlisting process. This document outlines LAT's approach to online checks.

<b>Aim</b>	<p>We are looking for material that could deem them unsuitable to work with children, and may include (but is not limited to); inappropriate / offensive / discriminatory material, drug or alcohol misuse, inappropriate photos or videos.</p> <p>Identify incidents or issues that may damage the reputation of the academy, Trust or individual that are publicly available to view online.</p>
<b>Examples of concerns</b>	<p>Examples of material that would raise concerns includes;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Posts which are critical/hostile regarding the 9 protected characteristics. These may be in the form of attempted humour but betray or perpetuate racist/homobic (etc) attitudes.</li><li>- Posts that refer to or allude to previous activities of an unacceptable nature. This includes any criminal activity.</li><li>- Posts that are unprofessional, and could include obscene language, inappropriate photographs, lifestyle choices, e.g drug use.</li><li>- Sharing/reposting/liking unacceptable material, thus promoting the views of people who hold racist/sexfist/transphobic views (etc).</li></ul>
<b>Scope</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <b>All</b> shortlisted candidates</li><li>- All roles (teaching, leadership, support roles, volunteers, apprentices)</li><li>- External candidates only</li><li>- Retrospective searches prior to 1st September 2022 will not be completed</li><li>- Checks will include 3-5 pages on Google search, and an appropriate sample of content from social media accounts, depending on the volume of activity of the candidate.</li><li>- Checks take approximately 10-15 minutes per candidate.</li></ul>
<b>Candidates informed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Advert text (under 'Our commitment to safeguarding' section) on all Jobtrain adverts and adverts posted on external platforms</li><li>- Jobtrain application (Teachers, Support Staff, Volunteers)</li><li>- Recruitment Guidance document</li></ul>
<b>Responsibility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- In-house, manual process for the LAT Recruitment Team (Recruitment Administrators)</li></ul>

<b>Search parameters</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Search using names (forename, surname and any previous names) provided on application, including any common abbreviations, e.g 'Joseph' and 'Joe'</li> <li>- Search using name(s) with key terms; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Convicted</li> <li>● Conviction</li> <li>● Crown court</li> <li>● Magistrates court</li> <li>● Allegations</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Geographical location, e.g Maidstone (current address) and Birmingham (previous address whilst studying at university)</li> <li>- If the candidate has lived abroad, the country and region will be included in the search</li> <li>- Google to be used as main search engine</li> <li>- Likely social media profiles to appear in searches; Linkedin, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, Youtube</li> <li>- Recruitment Team to look through any social media accounts that are set to public</li> <li>- Recruitment Team to look through Linkedin to see if it matches up to candidate's application / any reference information</li> </ul>
<b>Record keeping</b>	<p>The Recruitment Team will use their 'Interview Spreadsheet' to track;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) If the candidate is subject to an online search based on the role(s) they have been shortlisted for. This will be tracked as 'N/A' or box ticked. These entries are name and date stamped.</li> <li>b) Once the online search has been completed, a second column records the findings as 'N/A' for those who were not checked (see (a), 'Yes', or 'No'.</li> <li>c) If the online search produces findings that the Recruitment Team deem to be 'incidents or issues', they will save the online page or print screen the material and save it to the specific area on the HR Shared Drive. Relevant hiring managers will be made aware prior to interview that it needs to be discussed during the interview, and notes must be taken on the 'Mandatory Safeguarding Interview Questions' of the discussion that takes place on this topic.</li> <li>d) Overall, the hiring manager then records 'Satisfactory' or 'Unsatisfactory' which informs the recruitment decision.</li> <li>e) The Recruitment Team should be contacted if hiring managers have any concerns or queries at any stage of the process.</li> </ol> <p>Note: Online Checks will not be recorded on the SCR.</p>
<b>Process timeline</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Minimum turn-around time for interviews is 5 working days to allow for online checks to be completed</li> <li>- SLA of 3 working days from point at which we receive a shortlist to online checks being completed</li> <li>- Interviews cannot go ahead if online searches have not been completed</li> <li>- Decide if it's a condition of employment if not completed by the time onboarding starts</li> </ul>
<b>Points of consideration</b>	<p>There is a risk of bias, subjectivity and discrimination. However, the team has been trained to only record online search findings that could be considered as 'incidents or issues', rather than individuals expressing personal views that differ from the recruitment team or hiring managers.</p> <p>Online searches are a regulatory requirement considered to be a processing condition under GDPR UK / DPA 2018.</p> <p>All interviews must be scheduled by the Recruitment Team. Under no circumstances</p>

should individual academies or hiring managers arrange their own interviews to avoid KCSIE noncompliance if it doesn't go through the Recruitment Team.