

A guide to Safer recruitment



Written by John Musgrave Bolanos

First published October 2022

Reproduction, storage, adaptation or translation, in any form or by any means, of this publication is prohibited without the prior written permission of the publisher. Excerpts may be reproduced for the purpose of research, private study, criticism or review, or by educational institutions solely for educational purposes, without permission, providing full acknowledgement is given.

This publication should only be used by the purchasing organisation or individual. JMB Education does not grant permission for the purchaser to distribute the content of this publication outside of their organisation, this includes placing the whole document or parts on social media or internet sites.

JMB Education Ltd

International House, 24 Holborn Viaduct, London, EC1A 2BN

www.jmbeducation.com

info@jmbeducation.com

© JMB Education



JMBedu



@JMB_Education



@JMB_Education

Contents

	Page
Creating a safer environment for children	4
Safer recruitment policy statement	11
Planning the recruitment process	19
Application form	36
Applicant information pack	39
Self-disclosure form	41
Shortlisting	49
References	58
Interviewing	94
Vetting, disclosure and barring checks	141
Regulated activity	157
Concerns raised from vetting checks	195
Induction	210
Ongoing supervision and training	216

About the author

John Musgrave Bolanos is a highly successful teacher, experienced Headteacher, consultant and school governor, with over 25 years experience of teaching in, and leading, a range of challenging inner-city primary schools in London.

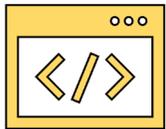
John's specialisms include curriculum design, developing teaching and learning, assessment, leadership and management and strategic change management.

In addition to working with individual schools and writing essential documents for school leaders, John also leads training courses in schools and venues - he is driven to inspire schools to achieve outstanding results for the children - not for the purpose of inspection. His training and materials combine best practice with practical OFSTED support, where appropriate, to help schools raise attainment and improve the quality of their teaching and learning.

Symbols used in this eBook



Action(s) required

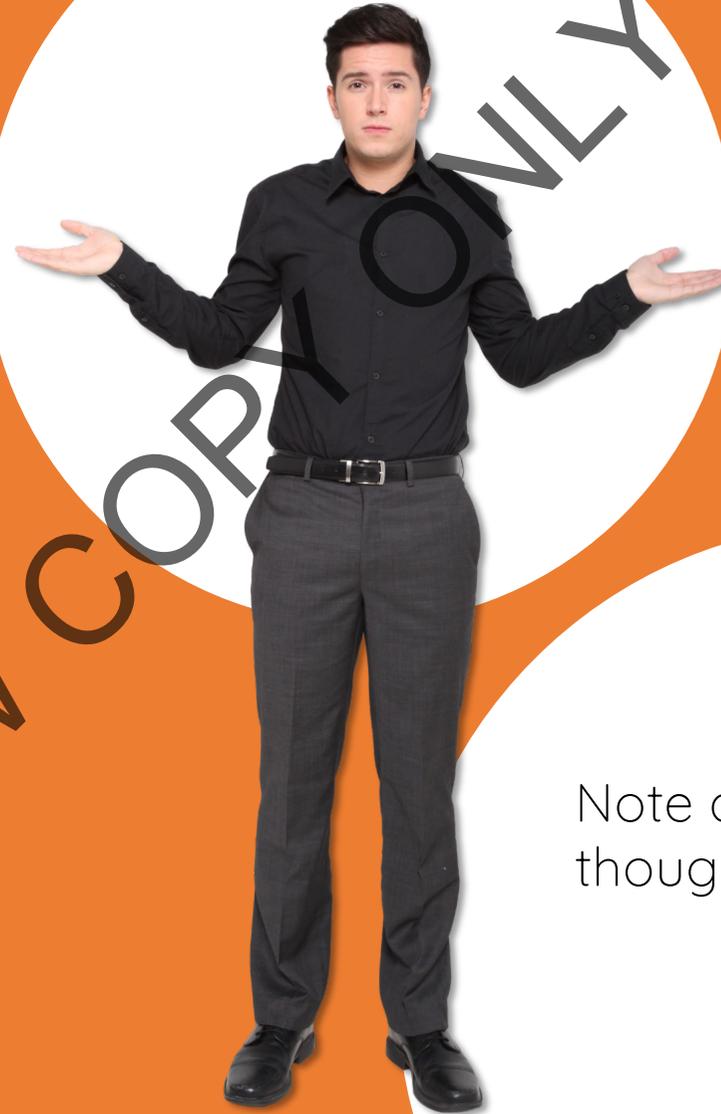


Useful website links

PREVIEW COPY ONLY



Why create
a safer
environment
for children?



Note down your
thoughts.



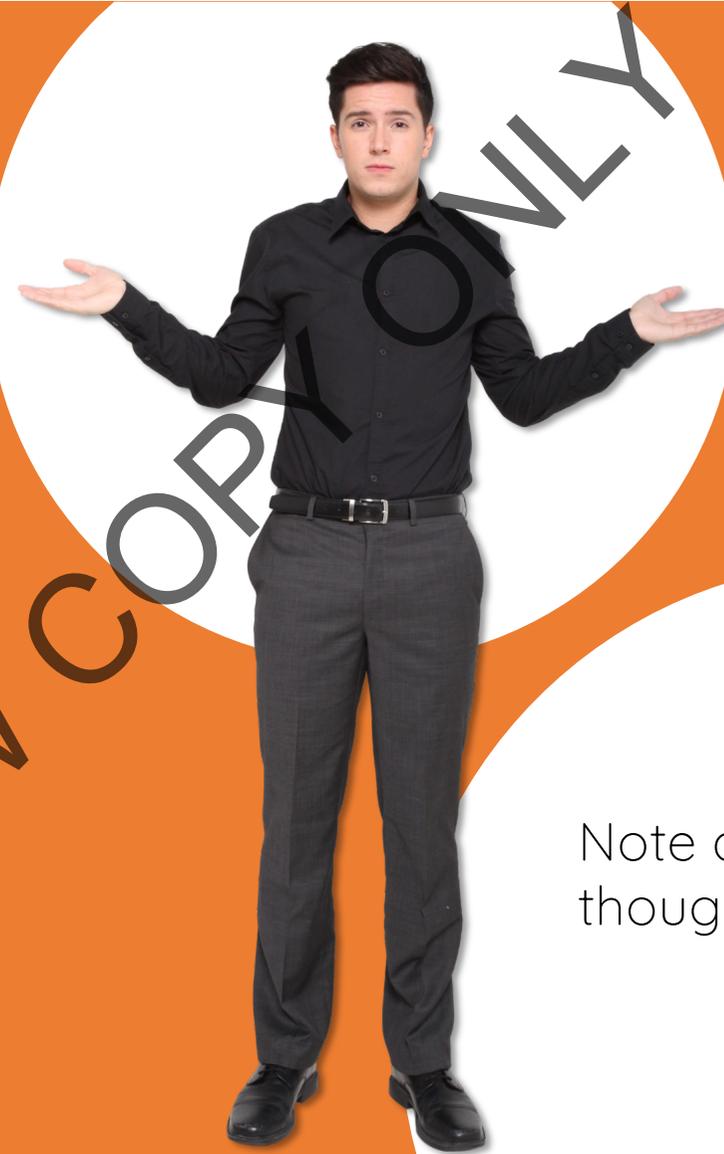
PREVIEW COPY ONLY

Some of the benefits of creating a safer environment for children are:

- ✓ Children are protected from harm
- ✓ Allegations are dealt with effectively
- ✓ An open and supportive culture promotes the safety of everyone in your setting
- ✓ Children and young people thrive when they feel secure
- ✓ Everyone in your setting is clear about roles, responsibilities and boundaries
- ✓ Staff and volunteers are protected from misplaced allegations
- ✓ Your setting shows that welfare is a priority



What is safer recruitment?



Note down your thoughts.



Safer recruitment is ...

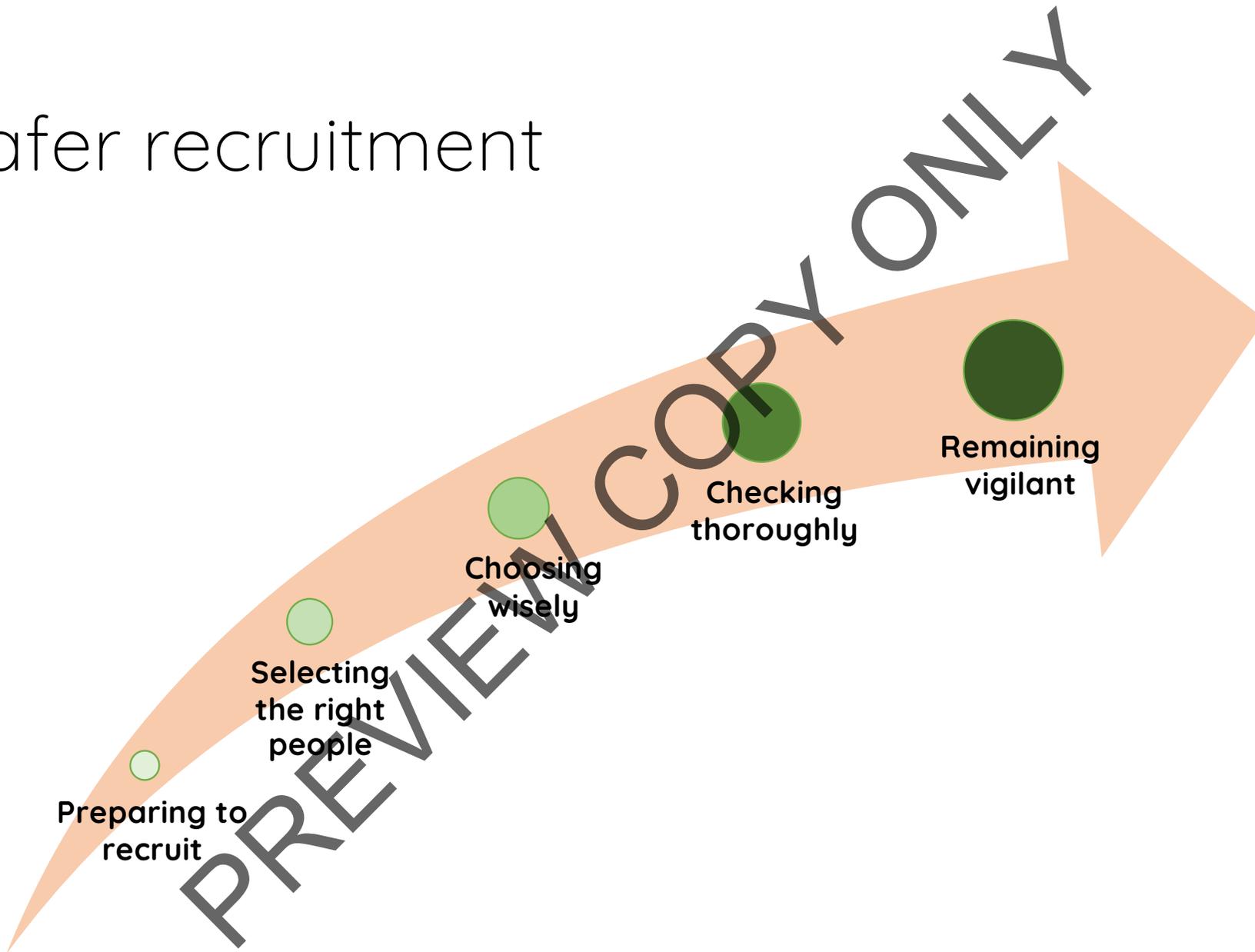
A **set of practices** to help make sure your staff and volunteers are suitable to work with children and young people.

A vital part of creating a safe and positive environment and making a **commitment to keep children safe from harm.**

A **continuing process of improvement** for every school, club, business or organisation whose work or services involve contact with children.

PREVIEW COPY ONLY

Safer recruitment

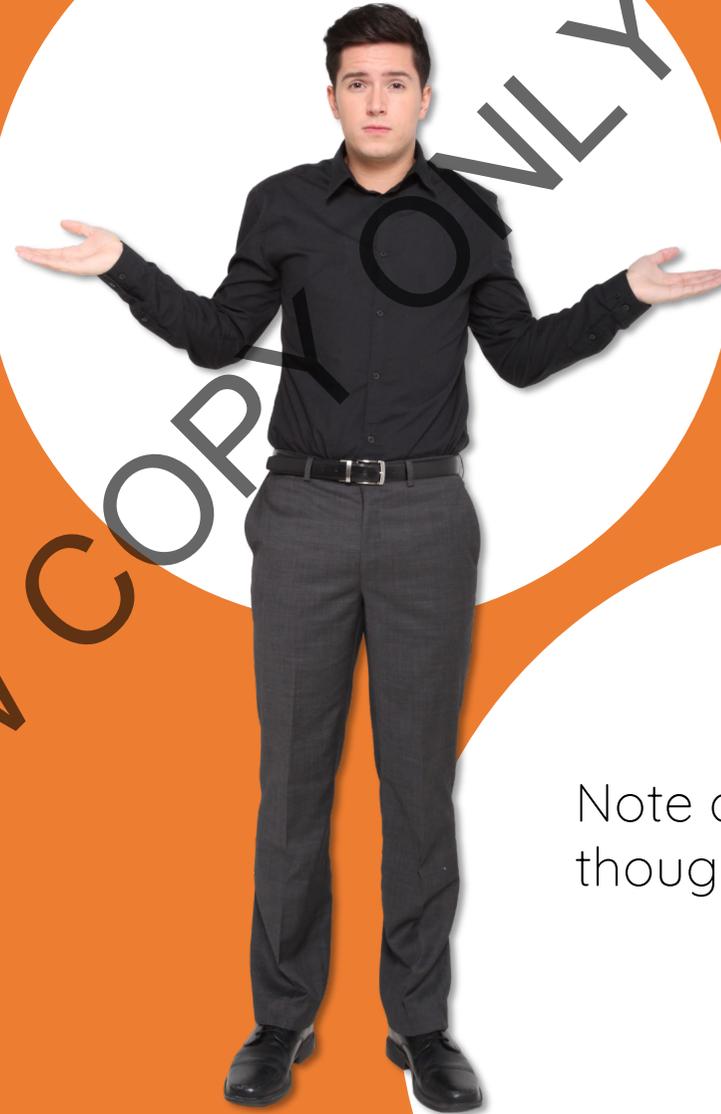


Safer recruitment doesn't stand alone.

It is part of a broad range of considerations that serve to create a safer organisation.



What is a
safer
recruitment
policy
statement?



Note down your
thoughts.



A safer recruitment policy statement is ...

A vital part of your overarching safeguarding policies and procedures. It sets out your organisation's commitment to recruiting staff and volunteers who are suitable to work with children.

It sends a clear message to staff, volunteers and potential applicants that your organisation prioritises the safety and welfare of children.

PREVIEW COPY ONLY

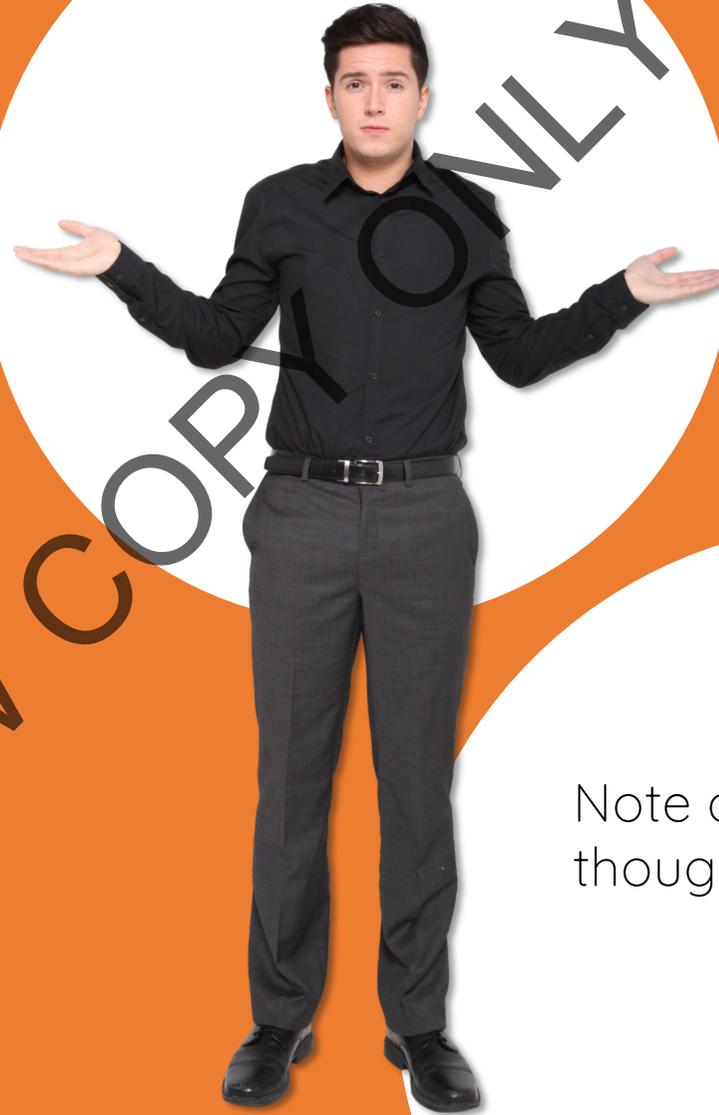
PREVIEW COPY ONLY

Safer recruitment policy statement

Having a safer recruitment policy statement in place is a vital first step towards keeping the children and young people who have contact with your staff and volunteers safe. But it's also important to establish **clear written procedures** and make sure **everyone who is involved with any form of recruitment knows how to follow them.**

These will ensure that staff and volunteers are recruited safely and fairly, and that **children's safety is being considered at every stage of the process.**

What should a safer recruitment policy statement include?



Note down your thoughts.



Your safer recruitment policy statement should set out your organisation's commitment to:

- Safeguarding and protecting all children and young people by **implementing robust safer recruitment practices**
- **Identifying and rejecting applicants who are unsuitable** to work with children and young people
- **Responding to concerns about the suitability of applicants during the recruitment process**
- **Responding to concerns about the suitability of employees and volunteers once they have begun their role**

Your safer recruitment policy statement should set out your organisation's commitment to:

- Ensuring all new staff and volunteers participate in an induction which includes child protection
- A list of the supporting procedures that accompany the policy
- The date the policy comes into force and when you will review it

PREVIEW COPY ONLY

Safer recruitment policy statement

Your safer recruitment policy statement should **work alongside other policies within your organisation**, for example your equal opportunities policy. **It should sit under a wider safeguarding policy statement.**

Aim to keep your policy statement under two sides of A4.

You could **consider incorporating safer recruitment statements into existing policies** on recruitment, selection and induction.

Actions



- Ensure that you have a clear safer recruitment policy statement
- Incorporate safer recruitment statements into existing policies

PREVIEW COPY ONLY

Plan the recruitment process



ONLY

Plan the whole of your recruitment process in advance to make sure you have a consistent approach every time you recruit a new staff member or volunteer.

Recruiting staff can be a lengthy and complex process. Taking a planned and structured approach to recruitment will:

- Reduce the risk of appointing someone unsuitable
- Help to ensure that all relevant steps are taken
- Ensure that there are records of the process for future reference
- Make for better appointments



A clear recruitment process is the first step towards safer recruitment.

Many people applying for paid and unpaid roles within schools are safe and trustworthy around children or young people. However, **perpetrators of abuse may deliberately target settings that give them easy access to children**. They may seek to gain a position of trust and authority that will put them above suspicion.

Your setting's **commitment to safeguarding and child protection should be clear and explicit** at every stage of the recruitment process.

Getting it right

It's vital to **ensure that everyone you recruit is safe to work with children.** Getting this wrong can not only be costly in terms of time, money and reputation, but more importantly could place the children and young people in your setting at risk of harm.

By following the principles of safer recruitment when planning your recruitment process, you will be better equipped to **make sure you employ the right staff and volunteers.**

Planning your recruitment will enable you to avoid common errors.

Plan the recruitment process

Taking a planned and structured approach will help:

- minimise the **risk of appointing someone unsuitable**
- ensure you select the **right person for the role**
- make sure the **process is fair**
- make sure there are **records of the process** for future reference

PREVIEW COPY ONLY

Plan the recruitment process

Following a written procedure also means you're **less likely to miss anything out** and that each time you recruit you're **adhering to legislation and guidance**.

Think about the resources that you'll need and how you are going to make them available.

This includes making sure **enough people will be available** to help conduct the interviews.

Person specification

This should show the **experience and attitudes you expect** any applicant to demonstrate. It should always include the required:

- skills and level of experience
- abilities, behaviours, attitudes and values
- qualifications

As core requirements for working with children and young people, these should be highlighted as **essential criteria** and must be **met in full**. The person specification should contain all of the key criteria for the post and cannot be changed later in the recruitment process.

Who is responsible for keeping children safe?

Senior leadership

Designated Safeguarding lead

Staff

Agency staff

Volunteers



Who is responsible for keeping children safe?

- Senior leadership
- Designated Safeguarding lead
- Staff
- Agency staff
- Volunteers

Keeping children safe is a responsibility shared by everyone. For any role working with children and young people, both the role/job description and the person specification should highlight the safeguarding responsibilities.

Advertising the role

The advertisement is **your first opportunity to send out a clear safeguarding message. Every advert** for a role that includes work with children **should include a statement about your commitment to keeping children safe.**

If the role requires a criminal records check, this should be included in the advert.

You should **advertise all vacancies to attract a wide selection of applicants** – whether the role is for paid staff or a volunteer.

What should your advert include?

- Job/role title
- Location
- Length/type of post (fixed term/permanent/sessional/ volunteer)
- Diversity and equality statement
- Safeguarding and child protection statement

If applicable:

- Salary
- Hours (full-time/part-time/flexible working)

What else do you need to consider?

- Where to place your advert
- The audience you want to reach
- The impact of language used and the message this sends
- Genuine occupational requirements to discriminate on the grounds of a protected characteristic as specified in the Equality Act 2010 for employers in England, Scotland and Wales or relevant anti-discrimination legislation in Northern Ireland.
- Cost implications
- Timescale of the recruitment process
- Start date of job/voluntary role
- If relocation expenses apply

What should you avoid?

Avoid making blanket requirements, as these may unreasonably exclude people with impairments.

Always allow the opportunity to explore what reasonable adjustments could be made to remove disabling barriers.

Unnecessarily increasing the risk in the role by using inappropriate language or unbalanced statements, such as "You will work with some of the most vulnerable children in school who have multiple and complex needs".

PREVIEW COPY ONLY

Application form

Your selection process will be safer by ensuring you **get accurate and complete information from each applicant**. CVs only contain information that applicants wish to convey, so should never be used in place of application forms.

You should ensure explanatory notes are available as part of your application process.

Include a statement about how you will use the information provided by candidates, making it clear it will be kept confidential and in a way that complies with your data protection policy.

Application form

Please fill in ALL the boxes below in BLOCK CAPITALS, using black ink. If you do not fill in all the boxes or if you do not fill them out it might delay your application. Conditions booklets enclosed and the

Personal details

Full identifying details of the applicant, including current and former names, address and national insurance number.

PREVIEW COPY ONLY

Surname

Middle name

Date of birth

Application form

Please fill in ALL the boxes below in BLOCK CAPITALS, using black ink. If you do not fill in all the boxes or if you do not follow the conditions booklets enclosed and the information you provide is not correct, your application may be rejected and it might delay your application.

Education and training

Any academic and/or vocational qualifications and Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) obtained with details of the awarding body and/or dates of award.

Details of relevant training undertaken recently, such as teaching courses, first aid, IT skills.

Teacher reference number (TRN), details of professional membership.

Application form

Please fill in ALL the boxes below in BLOCK CAPITALS, using black ink. Anything out it might delay your application.

Conditions booklets enclosed and the

Employment history

Full employment history in chronological order (including part-time and voluntary work, as well as full-time employment) with start and end dates, explanations for periods not in employment and reasons for leaving employment.

PREVIEW COPY ONLY

Surname

Middle name

Date of birth

Application form

Please fill in ALL the boxes below in BLOCK CAPITALS, using black ink. Failure to do this might delay your application. Conditions booklets enclosed and the

Personal statement

A statement written by the applicant on how they meet each of the requirements set out in the personal specification.

PREVIEW COPY ONLY

Application form

Please fill in ALL the boxes below in BLOCK CAPITALS, using black ink. Anything out it might delay your application. Conditions booklets enclosed and the

Signed declaration 1

State that providing false information is an offence and could result in rejection of the applicant, summarily dismissal if selected and possible referral to the police.

Provide a declaration for applicants to sign to denote that the information provided is true and nothing has been omitted, particularly if it has been submitted online.

Application form

Please fill in ALL the boxes below in BLOCK CAPITALS, using black ink. If you do not fill in all the boxes, your application might be rejected. Please read the conditions booklets enclosed and the

Signed declaration 2

Give candidates the option to disclose any relationships with your school or college or its staff to ensure they are neither disadvantaged nor favoured in the recruitment process.

State how their data will be processed for recruitment purposes or refer to your privacy notice to comply with data protection legislation.

Applicant information pack

Providing an application pack ensures that people interested in applying for a role have **all the information they need** about your organisation and the advertised vacancy.

It's best practice to **use a standard application form for all roles**, whether paid or unpaid. This helps make sure you **get all the information you need from each candidate**. It should include **space for the candidate to explain how they meet the criteria** outlined in the person specification.

Do not accept CV's - use your standard application form for everyone!

Applicant information pack

You should also **include an overview of your safer recruitment process** so that candidates understand what information will be sought from them and why, and **what will be expected** of them **at each stage of the process**.

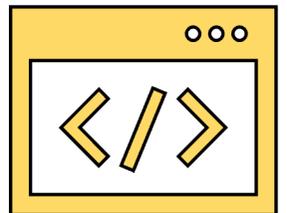
Remember to include background information on your school or college to provide candidates with insight into your needs. Highlight the **specific characteristics of your setting**, such as its **beliefs and values**, aspects of **diversity** and its **culture of keeping children safe**.

Self-disclosure form

A self-disclosure form gives candidates the opportunity to tell you confidentially about any relevant criminal convictions, child protection investigations or disciplinary sanctions they have on their record.

You can only ask for the information you are entitled to know about as a potential employer. What you can ask will depend on the role they will be doing. Full details can be found here:

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1974/53/contents>



Self-disclosure form

If applicable, applicants should complete a self-disclosure form **before the interview** and bring it in a **separate, sealed envelope marked 'Confidential - disclosure'**.

You should **only open the self-disclosure forms of candidates who have been selected for the role**, and review the information inside as part of your vetting checks, **applying a risk assessment process if information has been disclosed**.

Further information is provided in the section 'what to do if you have concerns'.

Self-disclosure form

You must **securely dispose of all unopened self-disclosure forms.**

The **self-disclosure form does not replace the need for a criminal records check.**

Criminal records checks should always be carried out as appropriate to the role.

PREVIEW COPY ONLY

That's really serious.

I don't know. It was a very long time ago.

I disagree. This is really straightforward. It's a no.

An applicant has disclosed a conviction for possession of indecent photographs of children. It happened over 20 years ago and resulted in a £5,000 fine.

What action do you think an interview panel should take?

How did he get to the interview stage? Surely he's on the list of people not allowed to work with children anymore.



This is a very serious offence involving children and this person may need to be barred from working with children.

You should refer this matter to the criminal records agency in your nation; any relevant professional bodies (such as teacher registration bodies); and the police if necessary.



There's a disclosure statement with this application. He has an unspent conviction for assault.

It seems a bit unfair to dismiss somebody just because of a one-off incident. It was a domestic dispute that happened several years ago. I think we should still consider him.

An applicant has disclosed an unspent conviction for assault for which he received a three-month custodial sentence. The offence occurred two years ago.

What action do you think an interview panel should take?

I wouldn't feel very comfortable with this. This man shouldn't have access to young people. He has an unspent conviction for assault against his wife, who's no longer with him.



In relation to this disclosure, you should note that there are some factors that might cause concern about the person's suitability to work with children.

The person received a three-month prison sentence, suggesting that the court took a very serious view of the offence. It also suggests that it may have involved a significant level of violence and that the person might have anger management issues.

Also, although it was a first offence, it was relatively recent, so the panel might want to seek a reference from the applicant's employer at the time to find out if they can provide any further information.

Application information pack



- Role/job description
- Person specification
- Statement on child protection and keeping children safe
- Outline of the recruitment process
- Self-disclosure form
- Application form
- Recruitment of ex-offenders policy
- Reference pro-forma

PREVIEW COPY ONLY