



Hummingbird Learning Lab SAFER RECRUITMENT POLICY & PROCEDURE

This policy outlines our commitment to safeguarding and ensuring that we appoint great people who align with our principles and to our safeguarding policy.

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Objective

To implement robust recruitment procedures and checks for appointing staff and volunteers to ensure that reasonable steps are taken to not appoint a person who is unsuitable to work with children, or who is disqualified from working with children, or does not have the suitable skills and experience for the intended role.

The following pre-employment checks will be undertaken and the dates of such checks and details of who carried out such checks recorded

- ▶ conducting of 3 reference requests (written and verbal), one of which will be from the former or most recent employer
- ▶ verification of the candidate's identity (e.g. passport/ ID Card, full birth certificate, address, change of name documentation, residence permit)
- ▶ DBS check (including any prohibitions)
- ▶ Childcare Disqualification Declaration
- ▶ World Check from countries the candidate has lived in during the past 10 years
- ▶ verification of the candidate's medical fitness
- ▶ verification of qualifications
- ▶ right to work and reside in UK (where applicable)

System

Our SCR is used as our database for safer recruitment checks

All job posts are listed with a safer recruitment statement, and job postings also have questions that candidates are willing to submit for background screening.

Our Safeguarding Drive is used for the confidential keeping of candidates' information as well as interview notes and background search evidence that the Hiring Lead performs with regards to candidates who receive a high mark on the initial screening. The system allows a 5 star evaluation procedure for the candidates.

The process

1. Advertising

To ensure equality of opportunity, we advertise all vacant positions to encourage as wide a field of candidates as possible. Advertisements make clear HLL's commitment to ensuring equal opportunity for all, and following the safer recruitment process whereas the safeguarding of our children is of paramount priority, and as such discourages potentially criminal individuals to consider application by disclosing high standards and hurdles to hiring.

2. Applications

Most applications arrive via our applications system. However on some occasions applications arrive through other channels. All such enquiries are channeled into our applicant tracking system for oversight and central record keeping purposes. We require candidates to account for any gaps or inconsistencies in their employment. Where an applicant is shortlisted, these gaps - should there be any - will be discussed at the interview. Applicants are asked to agree to submit themselves to criminal background checks.

3. Screening

Upon an application coming in relevant parties receive an email notification from the Hiring Lead to view the candidate. All viewers are able to submit comments at this stage. See screening guide re Appendix 1. The hiring lead after their thorough review of the application will set the status to "screened" with a comment of recommendation to the faculty and colleagues, along with giving the candidate a rating 1-5 stars. Typically candidates receiving 3 stars or higher will remain in the selection process and might be invited for an interview whilst candidates with 0-1-2 stars will remain in the system for a while for contingency and eventually will be notified of being unsuccessful.

4. Interviews

The selection process always includes a multi tiered interview process which can include the following:

- First a screening interview
- Ensure that employment gaps are discussed
- Competency and aptitude interview questions regarding safeguarding are asked
- Group task
- Micro-teaching task
- Founders interview
- Community interview
- Employment negotiation interview

5. References

References for shortlisted candidates are collected before an employment offer is made. One of the two references must be the candidate's current superior or a person who oversaw their work. The only exception to this is where candidates have indicated that they do not wish their current employer to be contacted. In such cases, the reference will be taken up from previous employers or other reliable sources.

Reference checks are conducted by using our own in-house developed electronic reference check questionnaire. If the returned reference is highlighting any red flags these are followed up on the phone by the person who will be directly working with the candidate or ultimately by the principal. Open references or testimonials will not be acceptable. We will not accept references from relatives or people writing solely in the capacity as a friend. Only references from trusted, authoritative sources will be acceptable.

Reference requests will specifically ask:

- ▶ About the referee's relationship to the candidate (when, for how long and in what capacity did they work together);
- ▶ Whether the referee is satisfied that the candidate is suitable to work with children and, if not, for specific details of the concerns and the reasons why the referee believes that the person might be unsuitable.
- ▶ To confirm details of any issues related to the safety and welfare of children
- ▶ Details of any allegations or concerns that have been raised that relate to the safety and welfare of children or behaviour towards children and the outcome of these concerns.
- ▶ Details of any cases where the candidate was accused of any misconduct or negligence
- ▶ Details of any cases where the candidate had a conflict with parents

6. Proof of identity and right to work in UK and verification of qualifications and/or professional status

Shortlisted applicants for all posts will be required to provide proof of identity by producing documents on the day of the interview and, where applicable, proof of their right to work and reside in the UK. Shortlisted candidates will also be required to provide proof of their qualifications and professional status by submitting a copy of their relevant documentation. Proof of identity and other documentation will be verified by the management.

7. Commencement of employment prior to criminal record check results being received

With regard to the fact that issuing and posting criminal records may take quite a long time, it will be permitted to commence employment prior to receiving a criminal record check result. However, in the interim period, the new employee will not be permitted to be alone with any children, and will be accompanied by another adult whilst in the setting, at all times.

8. Employment offer

With the exception of criminal record disclosures, the checks listed must be completed before a person's appointment is confirmed. In the case of criminal record disclosures, the certificate must be obtained before or as soon as practicable after appointment. Once all pre-employment checks have been satisfactorily completed / received, an offer of employment will be made and the contract of employment issued subject to clear references and criminal background checks. The contract will be issued as soon as possible.

9. Record retention / Data protection

We will retain all digital interview notes on all applicants for a 36 month period, after which time the notes will be deleted. The 36 month retention period will allow REAL School to deal

with any data access requests, recruitment complaints or to respond to any complaints made to the Employment tribunal.

10. Single Central Record

We keep and continuously maintain a single central record of staff and vetting checks. The central list records all staff who are employed at HLLI including casual staff, supply agency staff, volunteers, Board members who also work as volunteers, and those who provide additional teaching or instruction for learners, but who are not staff members as well as proprietors. Each employee record is linked to the employees electronic HR file in the school database to allow easy cross referencing and checking of data

11. Probation period

Newly appointed educators will be subject to a probationary period. All staff (including any volunteers) will sign a declaration before commencing employment stating that they have read and understood all policies relevant to their post as determined by the Director. We will ensure that existing staff have read and signed the same documentation. We adopt a culture of vigilance where all concerns are listened to and taken seriously.

12. Agency / Third party supply staff

In case we use supply agencies they have to meet the following criteria in terms of safer recruitment. The agency must adhere to a strict code that ensures that none of the data they hold is used without the owner's permission, nor is it compromised in any way.

We expect that supply agencies comply with the following criteria in checking teaching staff:

- ▶ Formal application form
- ▶ Face- to -face interview with supply agency staff
- ▶ Criminal record / DBS checked from the country/countries the person lived for a period longer than 3 months in the course of the past 5 years
- ▶ Qualifications checked
- ▶ Two good professional references
- ▶ Identity and right to work in UK checked

In addition to checking documents at interviews, we also ask agencies to complete new checks whenever there is a gap of more than 3 months. For agency and third party supply staff, schools must also include whether written confirmation has been received that the employment business supplying the member of supply staff has carried out the relevant checks and obtained the appropriate certificates, and the date that confirmation was received.

APPENDIX 1
Candidate screening steps
Risk Mitigation

1. Review of academic background, professional training education, and qualifications This includes checking for dates and times and institutions. Googling and checking indicated institutions for existence, their ranking and recognition if not immediately recognised or known. Reviewing specific courses mentioned on the application form for their evaluation and international recognition, If specific highlights found these are recorded in notes in the candidate's file.
2. Review of past work experience by dates, closely following start/end dates. Check that there are no unreasonable large gaps spent between positions or schools attended. If so this would be followed up and questioned at the screening interview.
3. Review of the cover letter and looking for why. Usually passionate candidates who demonstrate a strong affinity for our school or ethos, mission, and desire to work in our environment are pursued.
4. The candidate's name is searched online. Google is a powerful tool to find information about a candidate beyond what they are sharing. Or to understand the depth of a candidate's ability in an area or their dedication to a subject and equally provides a tool to determine their fit with the community and faculty.
5. This search also includes finding and viewing the candidate's social media presence with the exception of LinkedIn. LinkedIn provides notification to candidates if their profile was viewed and we would like to remain discrete in our search, and not alert the candidate that we are viewing their background.
6. Review of candidates additional links such as some candidates prepare a promotional website or a record of their work with videos and audio materials to back up their credentials
7. Some candidates approach HLL from the basis of already knowing some of our colleagues. These are noted, yet the same rigour is followed, and their academic and professional background is scrutinized..
8. Checking of current location and nationality of candidates

APPENDIX 2

SCR process

The SCR and the employee records are restricted and only the HR Director and Designated Safeguarding Lead are able to upload and modify documents, files and entries in the SCR. Two people having access allows continuous check and control, while also allows for the full protection of the integrity of the documents. Should anything be modified the two persons having access inform each other about it.

1. Identify documents are received in person and an electronic copy is prepared or in case the candidate is not in the country the documents are received electronically. Either way an electronic copy is made and emailed to the HR Director. This forms the electronic record of receiving the documentation.
2. The HR Director uploads the electronic documents into the candidate's folder. The only other person who is able to make uploads is the DSL.
3. The uploaded documents then get logged into the SCR with the corresponding date of the upload.
4. The HR Director performs the reference background checks.
5. If the candidate starts their employment before criminal checks are submitted they will be under a probation period and also under full supervision till all clearances are obtained. In case of educators the superior is also notified so that they are aware of the candidate's situation and able to help them obtain the required clearances and also provide them air cover and supervision. In the case of certain countries it is not possible to obtain a criminal background check. In this case an alternative solution is followed - such as obtaining a legal representation from the employer that the candidate was not under any criminal investigation while they were in their employ. We ask for criminal background clearances for any places where more than 3 months were spent in the course of the past 5 years.
6. All sections of the SCR must be filled out with N/A for not applicable and NEEDED for missing markings, or with the relevant date/signature.