

Recruitment (Safer Recruitment) Policy

Policy reviewed and adopted by the Board of Trustees

Autumn 2022

Version

V1

Date of next review:

Summer 2023

Responsible Committee:

Finance & Personnel

Monitoring:

**Finance & Personnel
Trust Board**

Related Policies

**Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022
Probationary
DBS Policy
Low level Concerns Policy**

Where is this policy published?

Thrive Intranet & Thrive Website

Contents

1 Thrive Charter	2
Thrive Mission Statement	2
Thrive Values	2
2 Introduction	2
3 Purpose	3
4 Equal Opportunities	3
5 Safer Recruitment	3
6. DBS Policy	4
7 Recruitment Authorisation	4
8 Job Description & Person Specification	5
9 Attraction	5
10 Advertising	6
11 Application	6
12 Selection Panels & Shortlisting	7
13 Interview & Selection	8
14 Seeking references	9
15 Conditional offer of employment	10
16 Confirmation of an offer of employment	11
17 Monitoring	11
18 GDPR	11
Appendix 1 Thrive Policy Statement on the Recruitment of Ex-offenders	12
Appendix 2 Flowchart for online search	13
Appendix 3 Online Search Record Form	14

1 Thrive Charter

Thrive Mission Statement

Inspiring pupils to thrive in life

Thrive Values¹

Thrive Co-operative Learning Trust **understands *thriving to mean learning***, and *learning* to mean **growing in knowledge, self-reliance and in responsibility towards others**. Achieving this will allow pupils and staff to **develop a sense of agency and co-agency**, which is the awareness that we are powerful and can affect change, that life is something to be grasped rather than something that happens, and that we have maximum impact when ***we work together for the common good***. This sense of agency plays out at three scales as it affects the future of ***the individual, their community (local and national), and their planet***.

To thrive, pupils and staff need **environments that are safe, for equality to be promoted and diversity to be celebrated**, and for **wellbeing to be valued, nurtured and supported**.

- Because the service we provide is crucial to each pupil's future life chances, we ensure that **we give all pupils the opportunity to thrive**, whatever their background or perceived abilities.
- Because our task is challenging **we all strive to grow and develop**, and we support each other in this and in developing a good work-life balance.
- Because thriving happens best where adults provide pupils with a consistency of approach, **we need people who will play their part for the greater good of the team**.
- Because we serve our local communities **we act as partners in the process of assisting our children to thrive** and will work cooperatively to see this happen.
- Because leadership is a privilege **we exercise leadership in an ethical manner** and commit ourselves to upholding [The Seven Principles of Public Life](#).
- Because we are facing a climate crisis **we will work towards being an environmentally sustainable organisation** and will develop pupil and staff participation in achieving this.
- Because we are funded with public money we will ensure that **we focus our resources on pupils and enable them to thrive**.

2 Introduction

2.1 Thrive welcomes the support of recognised Trade Unions in seeking to implement this policy in a fair and consistent manner.

¹ Thrive's values are directly descended from the [Co-operative Values](#)

- 2.2 We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Accordingly, this policy complies with current DfE guidance and the current version of the 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' document.
- 2.3 Thrive is committed to ensuring equality of treatment and fairness in the operation of the procedure in line with the Equality Act 2010.

3 Purpose

- 3.1 This policy seeks to ensure that the Trust demonstrates good practice regarding keeping children safe in education, by basing its recruitment and selection procedures on the prevailing statutory guidance and good practice on safer recruitment and reviewing this practice as and when guidelines and practices change. It is vital that we create a culture that safeguards and promotes the welfare of children in our Trust, and as part of this culture it is important that we adopt robust recruitment procedures that deter, prevent and reject people who are unsuitable to work with children from applying for or securing employment, or volunteering opportunities in our Trust.

4 Equal Opportunities

- 4.1 Thrive is committed to providing equality of opportunity for all and ensuring that all stages of the recruitment and selection process are free from unlawful discrimination and bias. Recruitment and selection procedures will be regularly monitored to ensure that applicants are not being discriminated against on the grounds of any protected characteristic; sex, race, disability age, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity.
- 4.2 Applicants will be asked what adjustments they might require to participate in the recruitment process. The Trust will make every effort to make reasonable adjustments at each stage of the recruitment process.

5 Safer Recruitment

- 5.1 Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people is an integral part of the recruitment and selection process. Through each stage of this process the Trust will seek to deter, identify and reject those applicants whom it considers unsuitable to work with children and young people.
- 5.2 The following measures will be taken through the recruitment process:
- Information on the Trust's commitment to safeguarding children will be included in the advert, job description, person specification and any other relevant documentation;
 - At least one member of every interview panel, ideally all, will have successfully completed Safer Recruitment Training prior to the start of the recruitment process;
 - All staff involved in recruitment processes will have read and understood Keeping Children Safe in Education Part 3;
 - Specific questions relating to the applicant's suitability to work with children will be asked of each candidate at interview and their motivation to work with children will be explored and a safeguarding question(s) will always be asked;

- Comprehensive information will be obtained from all applicants which will be scrutinised, investigating any discrepancies or anomalies, including gaps in employment and education;
- Shortlisted applicants will be asked to make a self declaration of their criminal record and Childcare Disqualification declaration;
- Robust, relevant and appropriate references that fully cover the candidate's recent work history will be obtained, prior to interview. These references will be cross checked by the Headteacher in a education setting;
- Satisfactory statutory clearances will be obtained prior to the candidate commencing in post, except in exceptional circumstances and with an appropriate risk assessment.
- Online searches will be carried out only on shortlisted applicants; this is part of a robust safer recruitment process. These checks aim to identify and clarify any incidents or issues that may or may not have been declared previously, which are 'open source' and publically available. These may be relevant in considering whether the candidate is suitable to work in schools. Examples of relevant information may include press articles or specific gaps in employment that are highlighted by the online search.
- Any such information that is publicly available will always be discussed with the candidate at an appropriate time before any offer of employment is made.

5.3 At all times the Trust will adhere to the legislative data protection requirements. All information gathered during the recruitment and selection process will be treated confidentially and handled and stored securely. Application and assessment data for unsuccessful applicants will be held for 6 months, or until any complaints arising from the process have been dealt with, and then destroyed. Information collected in relation to successful applicants will be retained on their confidential employee files.

6. DBS Policy

6.1 The Trust has a policy regarding when it requests criminal conviction information and DBS disclosures as well as how it uses, stores, retains and destroys this information. The policy can be found on the staff intranet.

6.2 The Trust has adopted a policy on the Recruitment of Ex-Offenders which is available at Appendix 3 of the Recruitment and Selection Procedure.

7 Recruitment Authorisation

7.1 All recruitment requests must be approved by the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) prior to the vacancy being advertised. Before any decision is made to advertise a vacancy the CFO must be convinced that a vacancy exists that requires filling. The recruiting manager must consider fully the need to recruit and detailing their requirements when completing the Request to Advertise Form.

7.2 Prior to recruitment beginning the recruiting manager must consider:

- Whether the post needs to be filled;
- Any changes to the Job Description & Person Specification and any necessary job evaluation;
- Implications for any organisational changes elsewhere within the Trust;
- The need to minimise redundancy situations in line with Thrive Redundancy Policy.

7.3 The Request to Advertise form must be signed by the Headteacher or Head of School prior to submission and emailed to jobs@thrivetrust.uk

8 Job Description & Person Specification

- 8.1 The job description and person specification are essential tools and will be used throughout the recruitment and selection process.
- 8.2 A job description should be provided for all posts which set out the main duties and responsibilities of the post. The person specification will detail the skills, abilities, experience, attitude and behaviours required to do it. The job description and person specification will include the level of contact which the post has with children, criteria regarding the applicant's suitability to work with children and information on the Trust's commitment to safeguarding.
- 8.3 Whenever a new post is introduced, or an existing post amended, due consideration will be given to the job evaluation guidance within the 'Green Book' for non-teaching posts.
- 8.4 The job description and person specification must be finalised before the vacancy is advertised and included in the applicant pack.

9 Attraction

- 9.1 As a minimum, all posts will be advertised internally (in the school in which they arise) possibly internally within the Trust, and externally where appropriate. Advice on this must be sought from the People Development Lead. Where posts are advertised externally this may be on relevant websites (such as www.eteach.com and www.tes.com) and in relevant additional media as appropriate.
- 9.2 In exceptional circumstances, a post may not be advertised. This will usually only be for one of the following reasons
- As a result of internal restructuring where an existing member of staff is at risk of redundancy;
 - Where it is necessary to redeploy an existing employee for health reasons where they are unable to continue in their substantive position;
 - Because a similar post has recently been advertised and an appointment can be made from the subsequent interviews (usually within 6 months of interview);
 - Where the opportunity is for a temporary responsibility (e.g. TLR) which an existing employee will undertake in addition to their substantive post;
 - As a result of redeployment from another school within the Trust.
- 9.3 Where the need for a fixed term post or temporary responsibility becomes a permanent one, the Headteacher / Head of School will consider, in discussion with the People Development Lead and ahead of the advert, whether it is appropriate for the post-holder to be offered the permanent contract or whether the post should be advertised. This will depend on the original reason for the post initially being fixed-term, any accrued employment rights, any subsequent changes in the needs of the school and Trust and the original recruitment process that was undertaken.

10 Advertising

- 10.1 If the request is approved, the People department will draft an advert and Thrive creative will design a applicant information pack detailing information supplied on the Request to Advertise Form which will include:
- Job title;

- School / Location;
- Salary – including pro-rata values if part-time or term-time only;
- Hours of work and working days and whether the role is full or part-time;
- Proposed start date;
- Whether the post is temporary or permanent;
- Summary of the job role and minimum requirements;
- A named contact for informal enquiries where possible;
- How to access and return application forms;
- Closing date for applications;
- Information regarding the Trust’s commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children;
- That safeguarding checks will be undertaken for the successful candidate including obtaining a satisfactory enhanced DBS check for work with children which includes a online search on shortlisted candidates;
- Information regarding the Schools Safeguarding Policy;
- Whether the post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and the Exceptions Order 1975 as amended.

10.2 Unless there are exceptional circumstances, vacancies will be advertised for at least one week, including one weekend, to give applicants sufficient time to apply. Vacancies will also be shared with those staff who are absent on a long term basis (.eg. maternity, adoption, health).

10.3 All vacancies will be advertised on the Thrive Trust website, weekly jobs board internal email and externally if required and at the school to ensure it is easy for staff to access providing them with every opportunity to apply for internal vacancies.

11 Application

11.1 All applicants for posts advertised externally must complete the Trust’s standard application form.

11.2 CVs will not be accepted as an alternative to an application form and will not be used for short-listing when submitted with an application form. The use of standard application forms ensures that a common set of core data is obtained from all applicants.

11.3 Where an application is submitted electronically it will be taken that submission of the form is a declaration that the information is true and accurate.

11.4 Where posts are only advertised internally, the Trust may use an alternative method of application e.g. expression of interest.

11.5 Application received after the closing date will not normally be considered, unless the applicant has given prior notice of late application and this has been agreed by the selection panel, or there has been a particularly low response to the advertisement.

12 Selection Panels & Shortlisting

12.1 A selection panel of at **least two** people will be appointed prior to the shortlisting process with at least one panel member having completed safer recruitment training, ideally all. All panel members must have read and understood the KCSiE part 3.

- 12.2 The Trust's Scheme of Delegation indicates, in certain circumstances, when Trustees or Executives should be involved in selection panels.
- 12.3 Where a candidate is known personally to a member of the shortlisting panel this fact should be declared before shortlisting takes place. It may then be necessary to change the selection panel to ensure that there is no conflict of interest and equal opportunities principles are adhered to.
- 12.4 Applications will be scrutinised carefully to ensure they are fully and properly completed. Particular attention will be paid to the reasons for leaving any previous child care setting employment where the applicant no longer works with children. Incomplete applications may not be accepted and may be disregarded or returned to the candidate for completion.
- 12.5 Any gaps in employment and education will be identified and a written explanation obtained from the applicant, usually during the selection process in the application form and explored further at interview.
- 12.6 Candidates will be assessed equally against the job description and person specification according to the agreed criteria. Candidates who do not meet the essential requirements should not be shortlisted.
- 12.7 Where it is not possible to determine, from the application form, whether a candidate fully meets a criteria they may be progressed to the shortlist and further evidence will be sought through the selection process.
- 12.8 A written record will be kept of the shortlisting process. All applications must be treated in the strictest confidence and restricted to those directly involved in the recruitment process.
- 12.9 Shortlisted candidates will be invited to attend the selection process. The interview notification should detail the relevant arrangements, the selection activities and the make up of the selection panel.
- 12.10 Shortlisted candidates will be asked to complete a self declaration of their criminal record, they will be asked to sign the 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 declaration at the point of interview. The purpose of the self declaration is so that candidates have the opportunity to share relevant information and allow this to be discussed and considered at interview before the DBS is received.
- 12.11 At this stage, the Trust will undertake online searches, as outlined in section 5.2 . Only information pertaining to the candidate's suitability to work with children should be passed to the Recruitment Panel. The information that is obtained should be discussed with the candidate at an appropriate time - either in advance of or during the selection process, yet before any employment offer is made.
- 12.12 The person carrying out the online search should have an understanding of KCSiE and the ability to recognise issues/ incidents that could relate to a candidate's suitability to work with children. Where possible, this person should not otherwise be involved in the recruitment process to prevent bias, however it is recognised that this may not be possible in some settings.

- 12.13 Information disclosed during the self-declaration and online search processes may be discussed at interview. Where a shortlisted applicant discloses information which would make it unlawful for the school to employ that individual, the offer of interview may be withdrawn.
- 12.14 On occasions where it is appropriate to withdraw the offer of an interview. Clear evidence of any decision should be documented and communicated with the applicant.
- 12.14 The Trust will normally contact candidates to thank them for their interest and confirm when they have not been shortlisted. Candidates that are not shortlisted are not normally provided with feedback, however recruiting managers must provide internal candidates with an opportunity to receive feedback.

13 Interview & Selection

- 13.1 As a minimum the selection process will be based on completion of an application form / expression of interest (for internal candidates), shortlisting and interview. The interview will assess the merits of each candidate against the agreed criteria based on the job description and person specification, and explore their suitability to work with children and young people.
- 13.2 Other selection methods may be used depending on the role that is being recruited. Any methods used must be relevant to the post being appointed to and free from unlawful discrimination. All interview and assessment events are a two way process: they are an opportunity for the panel to select the best candidate for the role, and also an opportunity for a candidate to determine whether the job and the school and Trust are right for them.
- 13.3 Prior to the interview the recruiting panel should meet to:
- Consider the issues to be explored with each candidate, including any issues or inconsistencies arising from the application form and references, and who will ask about each of those;
 - A discussion regarding any declarations of criminal record;
 - Agree their assessment criteria in accordance with the job description and person specification including the core questions which all candidates will be asked;
 - Agree the questions which will be asked regarding suitability to work with children and attitude towards safeguarding.
- 13.4 The recruiting panel can find templates within the Thrive Recruitment drive specific to the school to ensure consistency.
- 13.5 The recruiting panel must consist of at least two people and preferably be three people. All should be involved in the shortlisting process. At least one of the interviewers must have completed safer recruitment training within the **last two years** and all members of the panel must have read and must understand KCSiE Part Three.
- 13.6 The Trust will make reasonable adjustments for applicants, should they be required, in order to enable them to attend and participate fully with the selection and assessment process.
- 13.7 Once the formal assessment process is completed, all members of the selection panel will reach a final decision. The selection will be made on the basis of which individual best fits the criteria set at the start of the recruitment process, using the scores and results of any assessments. A written record of the selection decision will be made.

13.8 The Trust may choose not to appoint should none of the candidates meet the required standard.

13.9 All candidates who have attended the assessment process should be notified of the outcome of the process.

13.10 Unsuccessful candidates will be offered feedback should they wish to receive this.

14 Seeking references

14.1 References are designed to provide selection panels with an objective view of the candidate, their strengths and areas for improvement as well as their suitability to the post. References must have been sought and received prior to interview. This allows any concerns raised to be taken up with the candidate at interview.

14.2 References should be sought using the Thrive template given in the recruitment toolkit.

We will:

- not accept open references e.g. to whom it may concern;
- not rely on applicants to obtain their reference;
- 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;
- contact referees to clarify content where information is vague or insufficient information is provided;
- compare the information on the application form with that in the reference and take up any discrepancies with the candidate;
- Following receipt of the reference we will verify by telephone the referee sent it.
- establish the reason for the candidate leaving their current or most recent post; and,
- ensure any concerns are resolved satisfactorily before appointment is confirmed.

14.3 Sometimes a referee will request an 'off the record' telephone conversation about a candidate. These conversations should be avoided and we should impress upon referees that they should be open and honest in their written reference of the candidate leaving us in no doubt about whether in their professional opinion the candidate is entirely suitable for the position. Managers should contact the People Development Lead if they have any concerns or questions regarding a reference.

14.4 Sometimes a reference may need clarification. Clarification should be sought in writing.

15 Conditional offer of employment

15.1 All offers of employment will be made on a conditional basis subject to:

- The receipt of at least two satisfactory written references where the referee is school-based, the request will ask that the reference is confirmed as accurate by the Headteacher in respect of disciplinary investigations;
- A written record of the candidate's full educational and employment history including documented reasons for any gaps;
- Verification of the candidate's identity, including viewing the birth certificate where this is available;
- Verification of eligibility to work in the UK;
- Verification of the candidate's mental and physical fitness to undertake the duties of the role, with reasonable adjustments if applicable;
- Verification of educational and professional qualifications;
- A satisfactory Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service criminal record check for work with children, with Children's barred list check;
- Overseas criminal records check or certificate of good conduct (if applicable);
- For Teaching posts, the requirement is to provide a letter of professional standing from the teaching regulatory body of any country outside the UK where you have worked as a teacher;
- For teaching posts, confirmation that the candidate is not subject to a prohibition order issued by the Secretary of State or has any current sanctions or restrictions imposed;
- For teaching posts verification of successful completion of statutory induction period if relevant (applicable to those who obtained QTS after 7 May 1999);
- Verification that the individual has not been disqualified from working with children under the Childcare Act 2006, if applicable;
- Section 128 check, if applicable.

15.2 New employees will usually not commence until the satisfactory completion of pre-employment checks. A member of staff may only commence prior to the return of the DBS criminal records check with the express permission of the Headteacher / Head of School in consultation with their Executive Headteacher and People Development Lead, and a documented risk assessment put in place which should be reviewed at least every two weeks.

15.3 If a DBS disclosure reveals information that a candidate has not disclosed in the course of the self declaration process further discussion will be held with the candidate prior to an employment decision being reached. The Trust's policy on the Recruitment of Ex-Offenders policy is available at Appendix 1.

15.4 All pre-employment vetting checks will be followed up where they are unsatisfactory or there are discrepancies in the information provided. In addition, they will be:

- Confirmed in writing;
- Retained on the personal file (subject to certain restrictions on the retention of information imposed by DBS regulations);
- Recorded on the relevant Trust and/or school single central record.

16 Confirmation of an offer of employment

16.1 When all satisfactory clearances have been received, the recruiting manager must complete the New Starter Template prior to the employee starting and return to payroll. The People department will issue a contract of employment with a supporting letter and email will be sent to the relevant department to ensure appropriate

arrangements are in place prior to start date (e.g. IT generating email and google accounts, induction arrangements etc.).

- 16.2 Managers are encouraged to maintain contact with successful candidates ensuring they feel welcomed and part of the team before they begin.

17 Monitoring

- 17.1 The Trust is mindful of its commitment and to best practice in recruitment and its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the DfE safer recruitment guidance and will ensure regular monitoring of recruitment activity. Effectiveness and compliance of this policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.

18 GDPR

- 18.1 Records relating to recruitment and selection activities will remain confidential and accessible to those who require the information either as part of the recruitment decision making process or for the administration of the process . Records relating to successful candidates will be placed in Personnel files. Records relating unsuccessful candidates will be securely retained for a period of 6 months, after which time they will be destroyed.

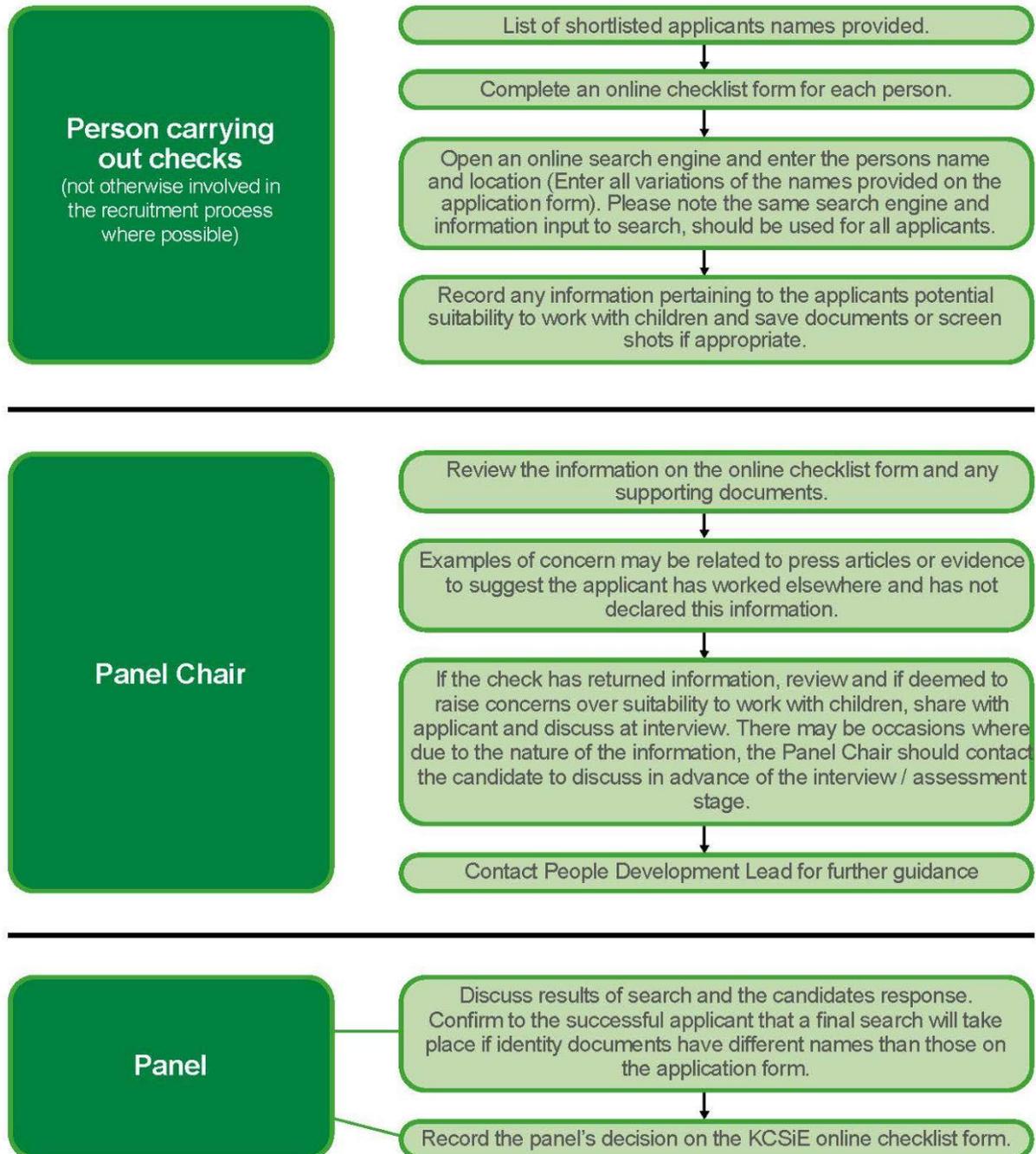
Appendix 1 Thrive Policy Statement on the Recruitment of Ex-offenders

- A1.1 In accordance with the Disclosure and Barring Service Code of Practice this policy is made available to all job applicants at the outset of the recruitment process. The DBS Code of Practice is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-code-of-practice>
- A1.2 As an organisation which uses the Disclosure and Barring Service, Thrive complies fully with the DBS Code of Practice and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly.
- A1.3 Thrive undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a criminal record check on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed.
- A1.4 We meet the requirements in respect of exempted questions under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. A DBS check will therefore be carried out before appointment to any job at Thrive is confirmed. This will include details of convictions, cautions and reprimands, as well as 'spent' and 'unspent' convictions. A criminal record will not necessarily be a bar to obtaining a position.
- A1.5 We are committed to the fair treatment of its staff and potential staff on all protected grounds or offending background.
- A1.6 We promote equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills and potential and welcome applications from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records. Candidates are selected for an interview based on their skills, qualifications and experience and criminal record information is only requested from short-listed candidates.
- A1.7 Application forms and recruitment information will contain a statement that a DBS certificate will be requested in the event of the individual being offered the position.
- A1.8 We ensure that Thrive staff who are involved in the recruitment process have access to professional advice to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of offences.
- A1.9 We also ensure that they have received appropriate guidance in the relevant legislation relating to the employment of ex-offenders, e.g. the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- A1.10 At interview, or in a separate discussion, this school ensures that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matter that might be relevant to the position. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment.
- A1.11 This school makes every subject of a criminal record check submitted to DBS aware of the existence of the [DBS Code of Practice](#) and makes a copy available on request.
- A1.12 Thrive undertakes to discuss any matter revealed on a DBS certificate with the individual seeking the position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.

Appendix 2 Flowchart for online search

Flowchart for Online Search

This flowchart offers a suggested approach and guidance on how to carry out an online search for shortlisted applicants



Appendix 3 Online Search Record Form

Online Search

This checklist has been developed in line with statutory KCSIE guidance and as part of the school's commitment to robust safer recruitment practice.

Please note - the same search engine should be used for all applicants.

Candidate name:	
Role shortlisted for:	
Form completed by:	
Date and time of online search:	
Name and role of person performing online search:	
Search term used (i.e. name, location):	

Search Engine Used:	Names searched	Date	Outcome and list of supporting documents (if applicable) i.e. screen shots

Results shared with Panel Chair:

- Yes
 N/A (if no presence found)

Results shared with Applicant (N/A if no results found)

- Yes
 N/A (if no presence found)

Response from Applicant:

Record of decision:

Following successful appointment

Date of second search if ID documents have a different name than those on application:

Please note - for successful appointments this document should remain on the staff member's personal file. For unsuccessful applicants this document should be stored for a minimum period of 6 months. The online check forms part of safer recruitment checks and it is recommended that this is recorded on the Single Central Record.