

Music for Life Safer Recruitment for Employed Members of Staff

Reviewed October 2024

BACKGROUND

This policy refers to the onboarding of employed members of staff at Music for Life.

Music for Life directly employs a small team staff that are involved in the management and administration of the service. Work in schools is required from time to time for one off events such as workshops, concerts etc, but also more regular activities such as assemblies or taking whole class projects or teaching from time to time. As these people have either direct or indirect contact with young people, it is essential that safer recruitment processes are followed.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Music for Life is committed to acting ethically and with integrity in all aspects of the services provided. Our recruitment policy is therefore based on recruitment best practices, respecting human rights, embracing fairness and inclusivity, whilst also ensuring the process seeks to deter, reject or identify people unsuitable to work with children and young adults. This policy seeks:

- To ensure that the best possible employed staff are recruited on the basis of their merits, abilities and suitability for the position.
- To ensure that all employed staff are fairly and equally treated in accordance with the Protected Characteristics: age, gender, reassignment, being married or in a civil partnership, being pregnant or on maternity leave, disability, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- To ensure compliance with all relevant legislation, recommendations and guidance including the statutory guidance published by the Department for Education (DfE), Keeping Children Safe in Education - (KCSIE), and any guidance or code of practice published by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).
- To ensure that all necessary checks are carried out.

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCEDURE - EMPLOYED POSITIONS.

Job Descriptions and Person Specifications

A job description must be finalised prior to taking any other steps in the recruitment process. It will clearly and accurately set out the main duties and responsibilities of the job role. Alongside this, it will include the title of the job role, the working hours, the extent to which the role will involve contact with children, pay/salary, location and working areas, background of Music for Life and our commitment to safeguarding, any associated training supplied if applicable, confirmation that a DBS check will be undertaken and the closing date for applications. The application pack will also include the necessary application form, along with any other information required to apply for the position. This may include but not limited to CV requirements or interview needs, for example, the need to do a presentation to the panel.

The person specification is of equal importance and informs the selection decision. It details the skills, experience, abilities and expertise that are required to do the job. The person specification will include a specific reference to suitability to work with children.

A self-disclosure form will also be included as part of the application pack, but will only be reviewed when candidates have been shortlisted for interview.

References

References for shortlisted applicants will be sent for immediately after shortlisting. The only exception is where an applicant has indicated on their application form that they do not wish their current employer to be contacted at that stage. In such cases, this reference will be taken up immediately after interview.

All offers of employment will be subject to the receipt of a minimum of two references which are considered satisfactory. One of the references must be from the applicant's current or most recent employer. The referee should not be a relative. References will always be sought and obtained directly from the referee and their purpose is to provide objective and factual information to support appointment decisions.

All referees will be asked whether they believe the applicant is suitable for the job for which they have applied and whether they have any reason to believe that the applicant is unsuitable to work with children.

Any discrepancies or anomalies will be followed up. Direct contact by phone will be undertaken with each referee to verify the reference.

Interviews

There will be a face to face interview in person or via teams/zoom, and a minimum of two interviewers will see the applicants for the vacant position. The interview process will explore the applicant's ability to carry out the job description and meet the person specification, and that the chosen applicant can meet the safeguarding criteria.

Any information in regard to past disciplinary action or allegations, cautions or convictions will be discussed and considered in the circumstance of the individual case during the interview process, if it has not been disclosed on the application form or the self-disclosure form. Furthermore any queries relating to answers on the self-disclosure form will be raised.

All applicants who are invited to an interview will be required to bring evidence of their identity, address and qualifications, one of which should be a valid photo ID, for example a passport or driving license. Only original documents will be accepted and photocopies will be taken. Unsuccessful applicant documents will be destroyed six months after the recruitment programme.

APPOINTMENT

If it is decided to make an offer of employment following the interview, any such offer will be conditional on the following:

- The agreement of a mutually acceptable start date and the signing of a contract terms and conditions of employment.
- Verification of the applicant's identity (where that has not previously been verified).
- The receipt of two references (in the case of employed positions, one of which must be from the applicant's most recent employer) which Music for Life considers to be satisfactory.
- The submission of an Enhanced DBS check and its satisfactory return.
- If relevant to the post, safeguarding training to be completed, or completed within MfL guidelines.
- Verification of the applicant's medical fitness for the role.
- Verification of the applicant's right to work in the UK.
- Any further checks which are necessary as a result of the applicant having lived or worked outside of the UK.
- Verification of professional qualifications which Music for Life deems a requirement for the post, or which the applicant otherwise cites in support of their application (where they have not been previously verified).

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 does not apply to positions which involve working with, or having access to children or vulnerable people. Therefore, any convictions and cautions that would normally be considered 'SPENT' **must be** declared when applying for any position with Music for Life, as outlined from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975.

DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) Certificate

Music for Life applies for an enhanced disclosure from the DBS and a check of the Children's Barred List (now known as an Enhanced Check for Regulated Activity) in respect of all positions at the School which amount to "regulated activity" as defined in the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (as amended). The purpose of carrying out an Enhanced Check for Regulated Activity is to identify whether an applicant is barred from working with children by inclusion on the Children's Barred List and to obtain other relevant suitability information.

It is Music for Life's policy to re-check employee's DBS Certificates every five years and in addition any employee that takes leave for more than three months (ie: maternity leave, career break etc) must be re-checked before they return back to work.

Dealing with convictions

If a DBS Certificate is returned with details of convictions, consideration will be given to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and also:

- The nature, seriousness and relevance of the offence.
- How long ago the offence occurred.
- One-off or history of offences.
- Changes in circumstances.
- Decriminalisation and remorse.

Music for Life will evaluate all of the risk factors above before a position is offered or confirmed and will take into consideration whether the relevant information was volunteered by an applicant during the recruitment process or obtained through a disclosure check.

If an applicant wishes to dispute any information contained in a disclosure, they may do so by contacting the DBS office directly. In cases where the applicant would otherwise be offered a position were it not for the disputed information, the School(s) may, where practicable and at its discretion, defer a final decision about the appointment until the applicant has had a reasonable opportunity to challenge the disclosure information.

Proof of identity, Right to Work in the UK & Verification of Qualifications and/or professional status

All applicants invited to attend an interview will be required to bring their identification documentation (such as passport, birth certificate, driving licence etc) with them as proof of identity/eligibility to work in UK in accordance with those set out in the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006 and DBS identity checking guidelines.

Where an applicant claims to have changed their name by deed poll or any other means (e.g. marriage, adoption, statutory declaration), they will be required to provide documentary evidence of the change.



In addition, applicants must be able to demonstrate that they have actually obtained any academic or vocational qualification legally required for the position and claimed in their application form.

Music for Life is aware of its duties under the Equality Act 2010.

All new employees will be given an induction programme which will clearly identify policies and procedures and make clear the expectations which will govern how staff carry out their roles and responsibilities.

Record Retention / Data Protection

If an applicant is successful in their application, Music for Life will retain on their personnel file any relevant information provided as part of the application process. This will include copies of documents used to verify identity, right to work in the UK, medical fitness and qualifications. Medical information may be used to help Music for Life to discharge its obligations as an employer e.g. so that we may consider reasonable adjustments if an employee suffers from a disability or to assist with any other workplace issue.

This documentation will be retained for the duration of the successful applicant's employment. All information retained on employees is kept digitally on a secure folder.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "DGP", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dan Gooch-Peters
Managing Director - Music for Life