



Astrea Academy Trust
INSPIRING BEYOND MEASURE

Recruitment Policy 2024-25

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1. Introduction

1.1 This policy has been agreed by the Astrea Academy Trust (Astrea) Executive Board to provide a clear framework for the recruitment and selection process.

1.2 Astrea recognises its responsibilities under relevant legislation and guidance including the Equality Act 2010, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2016, Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, Rehabilitation of Offenders 1974 (Exceptions Order) 1975, The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, The Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006, The Data Protection Act 2018 and other statutory obligations as arise from time to time.

2. Aim

2.1 Astrea is committed to ensuring that recruitment is carried out in a fair, transparent, economical and consistent way across the Trust, taking into account all relevant legislation, safer recruitment and data protection requirements. The aim of this policy is to provide guidance that allows recruitment and selection to be carried out in a flexible yet lawful manner. The objective of this policy is also to uphold the following Trust-wide aim of supporting the recruitment and retention of a high quality teaching and support workforce. Advice should be sought from HR if any further clarification is needed regarding any aspect of this policy.

3. Scope

3.1 This policy is applicable to permanent, short term, temporary, fixed term, voluntary (see section twenty-five for specific guidance) and relief vacancies.

3.2 This policy applies to all Astrea employees.

3.3 This policy applies in respect of the recruitment of settled workers. In the event that the Trust decides to register to recruit those requiring a visa to work in the United Kingdom before the review date of this policy, a separate policy will apply.

4. Equal Opportunities

4.1 The application of this policy will not directly nor indirectly discriminate against members of staff on the grounds of their sex, age, disability, gender re-assignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy, maternity status, race (including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), religion or belief and sexual orientation.

4.2 Astrea seeks to provide equal employment opportunities for all staff and will comply with all relevant employment and equalities legislation and regulations at all times. All public authorities – including academies – must comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). To discharge the duty academies must have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

4.3 Astrea will continually monitor the implementation of this policy to ensure that it complies with the aforementioned legislation to ensure that all staff are treated fairly, minimising the risk of any direct or indirect discrimination practices.

4.4 All vacancies are advertised with an optional equal opportunities monitoring form – the completion and submission of which is voluntary.

5. Communication

5.1 All employees should be made aware of and have access to a copy of this policy upon starting their employment with Astrea.

5.2 A copy of this policy is available on request to all potential and actual candidates.

6. Responsibility

6.1 It is the responsibility of the Executive Board to ensure Trust-wide compliance with this policy.

6.2 It is the responsibility of all individuals involved in the recruitment process to implement the policy throughout any recruitment process.

7. Prior to Advertising a Vacancy

7.1 Prior to advertising a vacancy, authorisation from the Astrea Executive Board must be sought for both replacement post and newly created posts. The purpose of this is to assess how the role meets the Academies' present and future needs. Advice should be sought from the Central HR/Recruitment function at recruitment@astreaacademytrust.org for more details on these processes.

7.2 Where the vacancy is a replacement role, the job description and person specification should be reviewed by the hiring manager to ensure that the post title, salary grade, responsibilities, essential requirements and desirable requirements are still accurate. If they are not accurate then the job description and person specification should be amended appropriately. Further advice can be sought by contacting the Central HR/Recruitment function at recruitment@astreaacademytrust.org

8. Recruitment Pack & Advertising

8.1 Astrea's Recruitment Pack templates and application forms should be used when advertising all Astrea roles as this documentation is both up-to-date and legally compliant. The use of these templates also achieves consistency across the Trust and harnesses transparency. The recruitment pack template should include a job description for the role and a person specification to outline the desirable and essential criteria for the vacancy. This can be used by candidates and panel members to assess a person's suitability for the role. It should also include the salary grade for the role, the contract type, whether the role is full time or part time and the location of the role. The interview process is outlined for candidates in the recruitment packs for all Astrea roles.

8.2 Where a recruitment pack and advert has been supplied, the Astrea HR/Recruitment team will advertise all roles on the Astrea website, social media accounts, internal recruitment updates and external job alerts. The Astrea Recruitment team will also assist with the advertising of Principal, Senior Leadership Team and Central Team posts. It is the responsibility of individual academies to advertise roles elsewhere within their academy budget (e.g. local authority website, TES etc). Further guidance can be provided by the Astrea Recruitment Team by contacting recruitment@astreaacademytrust.org

8.3 The HR team will be able to advise and support with methods of attracting candidates particularly where managers have had difficulty filling similar vacancies in the past.

9. Applications

9.1 Applications should be sent to the advertised address by the closing date specified to be considered. Curriculum Vitae, agency profiles or any other form other than the Astrea Application Form will be refused in line with safer recruitment guidance. The Astrea Application Form has been designed to ensure that all required information is gathered at the shortlisting stage, including current and former names, current and former addresses, academic qualifications, a full chronological record of education and work history (including any gaps in employment or time spent abroad), referee details, a personal statement detailing the candidates suitability for the post, a signed statement declaring if the candidate has any unprotected or unspent convictions, and other signed declarations covering relations with Astrea employees, equality, working time and data protection.

9.2 Applications received after the closing date (and time – if applicable) has passed should not ordinarily be accepted but allowances may be made in special circumstances.

10. Internal Vacancies

10.1 Where the Trust chooses to advertise a post internally, interested parties should submit an Expression of Interest form.

11. Recruitment Process

11.1 All candidates who have applied for the same specific role within the same time period should be subjected to the same recruitment process.

12. Shortlisting

12.1 The candidates selected for interview will be informed after shortlisting and full details of the interview will be provided. Feedback will not be provided for candidates who are not shortlisted for interview, unless requested.

12.2 It is the responsibility of panel members to complete shortlisting and this should be done independently of each other before agreeing a final list to invite to interview.

12.3 Candidates will be shortlisted for interview based on the quality of their application and how well they have demonstrated they meet the requirements of the person specification.

12.4 All applications are scrutinized for consistency and completeness of information, gaps in employment, anomalies and discrepancies. Incomplete applications may be rejected.

13. References

13.1 Two references will be sought prior to interview for all shortlisted candidates (this includes internal candidates) and one of these references must be from a current or most recent employer. Astrea will seek references for all Academy and Central Team based positions from the Referee information detailed on the submitted application form for each candidate. If a candidate has never had an employer then a reference should be taken from the candidates last place of study. Where possible at least one referee should be able to make reference to the applicants work in an earlier post/role within the same workforce (i.e. children). Referees should always be strictly Employment or Academic and character references will not be accepted. Advice for candidates is provided on the Astrea application form.

13.2 Referees must not be relatives or partners.

13.3 The Trust will not accept a standardised letter of recommendation from a former employer.

13.4 Any relevant issues arising from references will be taken up at interview and clarification should be sought from a referee if there are any areas of concern.

14. Identification and Documentation

14.1 All candidates invited to interview must bring original documentation to prove;

- their identity
- right to work in the UK
- proof of name
- proof of address
- any change of name
- their qualifications

Astrea have a legal legitimate interest to process candidates' data collected at the recruitment and interview stage to allow us to carry out DBS and Right to Work checks. Further details can be provided by the Astrea Recruitment Team.

14.2 Originals must be provided and photocopies or certified copies should not be accepted. Originals will be photocopied and witnessed.

15. Interviews

15.1 Interviews should always be conducted by a minimum of two interviewers.

15.2 A core set of questions to be asked of all candidates should be drawn up prior to interview based on the person specification for the role. Additional questions should be prepared relating to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. Any additional issues specific to each candidate that need to be explored further by the panel during the interview should be agreed beforehand (e.g. gaps in employment, declarations etc).

16. Data Processing

16.1 Recruitment is a process where interview panel members and HR staff will see confidential information of a personal nature. Due care and consideration for this information during and after the process, will always be in line with data protection law. The privacy notice as it applies to applicants will be made available to applicants on request.

16.2 Astrea has a legal obligation to collect relevant data from candidates during the recruitment process as well as a legitimate interest to process such data in order to form a contract of employment with successful candidates. Astrea also asks candidates to give explicit consent (when submitting an application form) for any data supplied as part of the application submission or at interview stage to be used as part of the Astrea Recruitment and Selection process.

16.3 The information supplied in applications, as well as any supporting documents, including disclosures, provided at the application or interview stage, will be used as part of Astreas Recruitment and Selection Process. Data is only passed to individuals who are authorised to receive it in the course of their duties. For example; Human Resources, interview panel members, and Astrea Executive Board (please note that this list is not exhaustive). All information is stored securely and all data submitted by unsuccessful candidates will be destroyed responsibly after 6 months from the date of interview.

17. Conflict of Interest

17.1 Any conflicts of interest should be declared by either the candidate or panel member as soon as the conflict of interest is apparent so that appropriate action can be taken.

17.2 A conflict of interest may be defined as; a panel member is related to or has a relationship with the applicant, a panel member has been named as a referee by the candidate, a panel member or their relation / partner has a pecuniary interest or external business interest.

18. Safeguarding

18.1 Astrea is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

18.2 In addition to candidate's ability to perform the duties of the post, the interview will also explore issues relating to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. Any disclosures will also be discussed and a safeguarding risk assessment may be required prior to any offer being made. Any gaps

in employment and periods of spent abroad within the last five years will also be questioned at interview.

18.3 All recruitment advertising will contain the following statement *The Astrea Academy Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. We expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Posts are subject to enhanced DBS checks.*

19. Safer Recruitment

19.1 Astrea is committed to safeguarding children. This means that all employees (on either a paid or voluntary basis) require an Enhanced DBS check and/or Barred List check. For individuals applying for leadership and management positions a S128 check will also be required. For individuals who have previously lived abroad, overseas checks may also need to be taken prior to commencing employment. New employees should not commence work until all relevant checks have been completed.

19.2 Astrea actively encourages staff to undertake in Safer Recruitment Training if relevant, and all interview panels should include at least one person has been Safer Recruitment trained within the past three years. Please contact the Central HR/Recruitment function for further details on Safer Recruitment Training courses.

20. Conditional Offer

20.1 Any offer to a successful candidate (either paid or voluntary) will be conditional upon:

- Verification of right to work in the UK
- Receipt of at least two satisfactory references (if these have not already been received)
- Verification of identity checks and qualifications
- Satisfactory Enhanced DBS Check
- Verification of professional status such as QTS Status, NPQH (where required)
- Verification of all academic qualifications
- Satisfactory completion of a Health Assessment
- Satisfactory completion of the probationary period (where relevant)
- Where the successful candidate has worked, or been resident overseas in the previous five years, such checks and confirmations as may be required in accordance with statutory guidance

A conditional offer of employment is not binding.

21. Unsuccessful Candidates

21.1 Candidates who are unsuccessful after interview will be informed of the outcome of their interview by a member of the interview panel.

22. DBS Disclosures

22.1 All prospective employees and other adults working or otherwise having substantial unsupervised access to children require an enhanced disclosure.

22.2 Candidates are asked to apply for a disclosure after a provisional offer of employment has been made. Criminal background checks are completed before the employee takes up their post. When the check is complete, the candidate will receive a certificate, which must be shown to the member of staff who is responsible for the Single Central Record.

22.3 In some exceptional circumstances it may be possible for an individual to start employment without a returned criminal background disclosure. The Astrea Central HR function should be consulted prior to the employment start date where this is considered necessary. If it is determined there is a clear and urgent need for the post the Astrea Central HR function will then advise on the process for completing a risk assessment.

23. Making Decisions Using Disclosure Information

23.1 If a disclosure reveals information that gives cause for concern, the verifier should first check whether the individual has previously disclosed details of any convictions or cautions. The Principal and a member of the Astrea Central HR function should then meet with the individual to confirm that the disclosure is accurate. If the disclosure is accurate a DBS risk assessment form will be completed by the Principal with support from the Astrea Central HR function. Further advice on the disclosure process should be always be sought from the Astrea Central HR function.

23.2 Once it is established that the convictions or cautions relate to the individual, the principal should explore with them the circumstances surrounding the convictions/cautions. An applicant's criminal record should be assessed in relation to the tasks they will be required to perform and the circumstances in which the work is to be carried out. Factors to consider may include: the seriousness of the offence, the degree of risk that the offence suggests that the individual represents, repeat offences, the age of the offence and whether or not committed whilst a juvenile, whether the offence has been decriminalised by Parliament, an examination of the circumstances of the offence (for example the candidate's age at the time, the influence of financial or domestic circumstances), whether circumstances have changed since the offence was committed, and if the applicant disclosed the offence on their original application.

23.3 A conviction or caution is not an automatic bar to employment with the Astrea Academy Trust but serious consideration must be given before a decision is made.

24. Withdrawal of Roles

24.1 In the unfortunate case where a role is withdrawn due to a change of circumstances, either before or after the closing date, candidates will be notified at the earliest opportunity.

25. Voluntary Roles

25.1 As volunteers fulfil a wide variety of roles, the principle of safer recruitment should be applied with common sense and the process may need to be adapted to cater for certain roles (e.g. if a volunteer is helping out for a one-off day trip there is no need for a formal interview process, DBS certificate or Barred List check). For on-going or regular voluntary roles, the recruitment process for volunteers should still include the completion of an Astrea application form, obtaining two references and a face to face interview.

25.2 DBS checks for volunteers should be carried out if the volunteer's role will involve regulated activity (e.g. unsupervised, overnight activity or intimate care). All Trustees and committee members will undergo enhanced DBS checks.

26. Review

26.1 This policy will be reviewed, initially in August 2021 and every three years thereafter or when there are changes to relevant legislation or the circumstances of the Trust.