Safer Recruitment Policy
Berkshire Music Trust

Date of policy: September 2026

Review date: September 2027

1. Introduction

This policy has been introduced to provide a framework for the efficient and effective recruitment of all categories of staff at Berkshire Music Trust.

The Trustees value the contribution of all staff and recognises that the recruitment of appropriately skilled staff is key to the provision of a safe and successful teaching and learning environment in which students can thrive.

The Trustees are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Accordingly, this policy complies with the current DfE guidance document 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'.

2. Aims of the Policy

- To ensure that newly recruited staff possess the most appropriate blend of qualifications, experience, knowledge, skills and abilities to meet the demands of the post and the needs of Berkshire Music Trust.
- To ensure a consistent and equitable approach to the appointment of all staff.
- To ensure that all relevant equal opportunities legislation is adhered to and that appointees are recruited without regard to gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, marital or civil partnership status, colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origins, religion or belief, age, pregnancy or maternity leave.
- To ensure that the recruitment and selection process is accessible to all by giving appropriate regard to the needs of individuals with a disability, with provision of reasonable adjustments where necessary.
- To ensure that all recruitment practices are compliant with DfE safeguarding guidance, with clear links to child protection policies and procedures, thereby ensuring as far as possible that all staff are suitable to work with children and young people.
- To ensure the most cost-effective use is made of resources in the recruitment and selection process.

3. Responsibilities

The CEO is responsible for determining the staffing complement of the Berkshire Music Trust and for all appointments to the organisation. The trustees are responsible for appointing the CEO.

Once the selection panel has been agreed, the lead person, in conjunction with the panel, will be responsible for drawing up the relevant documentation and planning the selection process.

The selection panel for any position will have responsibility for ensuring that a fair, equitable and non-discriminatory process is maintained throughout the recruitment and selection activities.

4. Safer Recruitment

Matters relating to child protection, safeguarding and the promotion of the welfare of children will be central to the recruitment process, starting with the planning of recruitment needs through to the selection exercise and appointment itself. Particular measures to ensure safe recruitment practice, compliant with DfE advice, are identified throughout this policy. The selection panel have responsibility for ensuring the implementation of these measures. The safeguarding measures noted in this policy are neither exhaustive nor intended to obviate the need to refer to the most recent DfE guidance as necessary.

5. The Planning Process

The CEO in conjunction with the senior leadership team will review the staffing requirements of Berkshire Music Trust annually and assess the short- and long-term recruitment needs so that, as far as possible, a planned approach to resourcing the organisation can be taken.

Before the start of the recruitment process, there will be a review of the requirements of the specific role. Where a job description or person specification does not exist (e.g. for new posts) then these will be drawn up for agreement by the selection panel.

Job descriptions and person specifications for existing posts will also be reviewed to determine whether the roles and responsibilities of the post need to be revised and to update the necessary qualifications, knowledge, experience, skills or abilities required by the postholder.

The person specification will also be assessed to ensure that it does not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of disability, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, marital or civil partnership status, colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origins, religion or belief, age, pregnancy or maternity leave.

Safeguarding Measures

- A statement of Berkshire Music Trust's commitment to the safeguarding and promotion of the welfare of pupils will be included in both the job description and the person specification.
- The job description will clearly set out the extent of relationships and contact with pupils and the degree of responsibility for children and young people that the postholder will have.
- All person specifications will give consideration to the need for the postholder to be suitable to work with children and young people. Qualifications, experience, competencies and qualities needed for the role will be identified, along with an explanation of how they will be assessed during the selection process.
- All shortlisted applicants will be notified that any relevant issues arising from references will be taken up at interview.

6. Advertising

6.1 All posts

All teaching and non-teaching posts will be advertised internally within the organisation. Posts may additionally be advertised on appropriate internet jobs sites, social media and/or in national/local press.

In certain circumstances a post or promotion opportunity will be ring-fenced for current staff in the first instance. Any such ring-fencing will be done in a consistent and transparent manner.

Occasionally the decision may be taken not to advertise a post. This may occur, for example, when a similar post has recently been advertised and an appointment can be made from the subsequent interviewees, or because a temporary appointment needs to be made as soon as possible to ensure continuity within a post.

6.2 Leadership posts

The CEO post will be advertised as the trustees consider most appropriate. As a general rule, such posts will, as a minimum, be advertised on a relevant internet jobs site. Other senior leadership roles will be advertised as per other the arrangements for other staff members.

Where the trustees or CEO have determined that there is good reason not to advertise a leadership post the decision-making process will be clearly documented.

An Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) statement should be placed into all adverts to showcase your standing commitment to EDI across all roles and departments, as well as at the core of your organisation.

Safeguarding Measures

- All advertisements will include:
    - a statement about the organisation's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, making clear that safeguarding checks will be undertaken;
    - information about the safeguarding responsibilities of the post (as per the job description and person specification); and
    - whether the post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, subject to the filtering rules which 'protect' certain spent convictions and cautions from disclosure.
- Reference will also be made to the requirement for the successful applicant to undertake an enhanced-level check via the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS).

7. The Application Process

For all posts, information packs will be sent, or made available electronically, to all interested parties. The information pack will generally consist of:

- a letter from the person leading the recruitment process;
- a job description and person specification;
- an application form, including an equality monitoring form, with details for completion;
- a copy of, or a link to Berkshire Music Trust's:
    - equal opportunities policy statement;
    - child protection policy and practices;
    - policy on employment of ex-offenders;
- a statement of terms and conditions relating to the post (hours, salary etc);
- information about the recruitment process (interview dates etc);
- any other relevant information regarding the post and Berkshire Music Trust.

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

Applications made through means other than application forms will not be considered, unless a reasonable adjustment has been made to accommodate the needs of an applicant with a disability.

Safeguarding Measures

- All applications must be made using the application form for the position to ensure receipt of all relevant personal data, education and employment history, qualifications, details of referees and a statement of personal qualities and experience. CVs will not be accepted.

- The application form will include a statement that it is an offence to apply for the role if the applicant is barred from engaging in regulated activity relevant to children.

8. The Selection Process

8.1 The selection panel

A selection panel of at least two people will be set up prior to the shortlisting process. The members of this panel will be comprised of a member of the leadership team and another suitable person. This may be:

- The line manager
- A second member of the leadership team.
- Trustee
- Someone from the Human resources team.

Wherever possible, all those with responsibilities for recruitment, including panel members, will have been trained in and/or have relevant experience of recruitment and selection and interviewing, particularly safer recruitment practices.

Where a candidate is known personally to a member of the selection 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 to ensure equal treatment of candidates.

Safeguarding Measures

- At least one member of the panel will have completed appropriate safer recruitment training.

8.2 Shortlisting

Prior to shortlisting, the equality monitoring forms will be removed from the applications. If an applicant has requested reasonable adjustments to a part of the shortlisting process to accommodate a disability, this will be notified to the chair of the selection panel.

The shortlisting process for interview will determine those applicants who best meet the criteria for the post as outlined in the person specification. Decision making will be based solely on the information available on the application forms.

If a disabled applicant meets the minimum criteria for the person specification then he/she will be shortlisted.

Safeguarding Measures

- Incomplete applications will be rejected and may, at the discretion of the selection panel, be returned to the candidate for completion.
- Notes will be made of any anomalies, discrepancies or gaps in employment so that these can be considered as part of the shortlisting process. Reasons for gaps in employment, repeated career changes, moves from permanent to temporary or supply teaching will also be noted for exploration and verification.

8.3 References

References will be requested where possible for all shortlisted candidates (including, where appropriate, internal applicants) prior to interview. The organisation will comply with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 by not asking questions about a candidate's health or disability as part of these references prior to a job offer being made (including information relating to levels of sickness absence). It will be for the selection panel to determine whether the referees given by applicants are suitable and appropriate. Any applicants currently working in a school setting will be expected to

give the headteacher/principal of that school/college as one referee. References from family members or friends will not be acceptable.

All references subsequently received will be held by the chair of the interview panel who will explore any areas of concern at interview. Once a preferred candidate has been chosen following the interview process, the rest of the interview panel will be given access to the references of that person only, in order to confirm their decision.

Safeguarding Measures

- References will be sought and obtained directly from the referee. References or testimonials provided by the applicant will not be accepted.
- References will seek relevant and objective information, including information to verify the applicant's suitability to work with children and young people.
- Issues of concern will be raised further with the referee and taken up with the candidate during the interview.
- Where, in exceptional situations, references are not received prior to the interview, any concerns will be resolved satisfactorily prior to any unconditional offer of employment.

8.4 Other checks prior to interview including online searches

Where a candidate is claiming specific qualifications or previous experience that is relevant to the job but is not verified by reference checks, these will be verified before interview so that any discrepancy can be explored at interview.

Applicants will be asked to provide details of any cautions, convictions, reprimands and final warnings that are not protected (i.e. that are not filtered out), as well as any other relevant information, prior to interview.

Where shortlisted applicants have disclosed a criminal record or have proceedings pending against them, and/or have had any sanctions imposed by the Teaching Regulation Agency (or its predecessors) then this will be followed up at interview as necessary. In certain cases it may be necessary to have a discussion with the applicant prior to the interview.

Any issues uncovered in online searches may not be used as a basis for a recruitment decision unless discussed at interview with the candidate.

In line with the statutory guidance document Keeping Children Safe in Education, Berkshire Music Trust will conduct online searches after the shortlisting process for any candidates who accept an invitation to interview. Candidates will be informed before online searches are undertaken.

The purpose of the online search is to uncover any information that may suggest the candidate is:

- a potential safeguarding risk
- their appointment may damage the reputation of Berkshire Music Trust or;
- they are unqualified for the role they have applied for

No recruitment decision will be made solely on the basis of an online search and all relevant information uncovered will be discussed with the applicant at interview.

All online searches will be conducted by individuals who not involved in any other aspect of the recruitment process.

No irrelevant information uncovered will be provided to the staff interviewing the candidate.

All candidates will be treated consistently. The same online search for all shortlisted candidates will be undertaken consisting of:

- A Google search of the candidate's name linked to their current employer, previous employer, educational institutions attended, previous job titles and news articles
- A search of Linkedin, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram reviewing posts made over past 3 years.

8.5 The interview and selection process

Prior to the interview and selection process candidates will be given any relevant information, e.g. details of any selection methods that will be used. Candidates who have a disability or any other particular needs will be given the opportunity to highlight this prior to any selection activities taking place in order that reasonable adjustments may be made to the recruitment process if required.

Whilst an interview is always likely to be used as the primary feature of the selection process, the selection panel will consider whether any additional selection methods are required to supplement the interview. These may include presentations, teaching observation, interaction with pupils, in-tray exercises, psychometric, verbal or numerical tests, according to the requirements of the role. Any psychometric tests used will have been validated in relation to the job, be free of bias, and be administered and validated only by a suitably trained person.

Whichever methods are chosen, the panel will use these to assess the merits of each candidate against the person specification and explore their suitability to work with children and young people. The selection panel will ensure that all candidates are asked the same core questions at interview based on the list of essential criteria for the post, although supplementary questions may differ according to the candidates' answers and backgrounds.

Particular care will be taken to ensure that no questions or selection methods could be viewed as discriminatory.

Safeguarding Measures

- Invitations for interview will require candidates to bring with them documentation to verify their ID, i.e. passport, driving licence, birth certificate, etc.
- Candidates will be instructed to bring with them to interview any relevant documentation that will confirm education and professional qualifications. Copies of all documents will be kept on file for successful candidates.
- In addition to assessing the candidate's suitability for the post, the panel will assess the candidate's attitude toward children and young people and his/her ability to support Berkshire Music Trust's safeguarding agenda and promote the welfare of children. Gaps in employment history and concerns or discrepancies in the application form and references will also be explored.

9. Job Offers to Successful Candidates

9.1 Job offers

Successful candidates will normally be offered the post verbally, followed by an offer letter as soon as possible afterwards. A written offer of appointment will include any terms upon which the offer is made conditional, e.g. satisfactory completion of an occupational health questionnaire, provision of appropriate documentation to verify entitlement to work in the UK and other relevant details.

9.2 Conditions of Appointment

Any offer of employment at the organisation will be conditional upon:

- The receipt of at least two satisfactory references, if not already received;
- Verification of the appointee's identity, if not verified following interview;
- A satisfactory Enhanced DBS Check (including a check of the Children's Barred List);
- Verification of the appointee's medical fitness to undertake the role;

- Verification of the appointee's right to work in the UK (including a photocopy of the original evidence provided);
- Verification of the appointee's qualifications, if not verified following interview.

Where it is a requirement of the post the offer will also be conditional upon:

- Verification of professional status, e.g. QTS/QTLS status, successful completion of statutory induction etc;
- A completed declaration form to confirm the appointee is not restricted in the work they may perform under childcare disqualification regulations;
- Verification that the appointee is not subject to a section 128 direction by the Secretary of State;
- Satisfactory completion of a probationary period.

If the successful candidate has lived or worked outside the UK, the offer of employment will also be conditional on such additional checks as the school deems appropriate.

If any of the following circumstances come to light during the vetting process the facts will be reported to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and/or the police, as appropriate:

- Candidates are found to be on the Children's Barred List, or the DBS check shows that the candidate has been disqualified from working with children;
- An applicant has provided false information in, or in support of, his/her application; or
- There are serious concerns about an applicant's suitability to work with children.

10. Appointment and Promotion of Existing Staff

Berkshire Music Trust values the contribution of all staff within the Trust community and seeks to retain key skills. Berkshire Music Trust will support as far as possible the continued professional development of all staff as they seek promotion to new opportunities both within the trust and elsewhere. All members of staff are therefore encouraged to consider their suitability for any vacancy within the trust. Where a member of staff applies for a vacant post they will be given equal consideration alongside external candidates, based on the essential criteria for the post.

11. Use of Fixed Term and Temporary Contracts

Where it is determined that posts are only of a short-term nature, this will be clearly specified in the job description and on any advertising literature. Posts will only be advertised on a temporary or fixed-term basis for genuine reasons. Most temporary or fixed-term contracts will come to a natural end. Where, however, a fixed duration contract expires and the need for the post remains for a further definite period, then the postholder will usually be given an extension to their fixed period contract.

Where the need for a temporary or fixed-term post becomes a permanent one, there will be no automatic entitlement for the temporary postholder to be offered the permanent contract. It will be for the CEO to consider the most appropriate recruitment process in the circumstances. This could include, for example, consideration of the original reason for the post initially being temporary, any subsequent changes to the needs of the trust and the original recruitment process that was undertaken.

12. Use of Partners and Volunteers

Berkshire Music Trust's workforce is made up of a rich variety of professional and highly skilled and committed people, not all of whom are paid employees. The Trust values the diversity that this brings to its community as it strives to provide a safe environment and improve the musical learning for all pupils. To ensure the continued high standards of contributions, we will:

- Use delivery partners that operate to high quality standards, particularly in terms of recruitment checks and legislative compliance;

- With appropriate adjustment, adopt similar recruitment measures for volunteers as for paid staff.

Please reference Appendix A for the process of recruitment checks for volunteers.

13. Employment of Migrant Workers

Berkshire Music Trust will not employ, as a member of staff, any individual who cannot demonstrate that he/she has the right to work in the UK, regardless of the individual's colour or apparent race, nationality or ethnic origins. Any employee who has a restricted right to work in the UK will be required to provide ongoing evidence of that right during employment.

Berkshire Music Trust is not currently licensed to sponsor migrant workers who require sponsorship in order to work in the UK under Home Office rules.

14. Monitoring

The Trustees are mindful of their commitment to best practice in recruitment and its obligations under both the Equality Act 2010 and DfE safer recruitment guidance and will ensure regular monitoring of all recruitment activity. This will be undertaken with a view to improving future recruitment practices and thereby achieving the aims of this policy. The results of this monitoring and any recommended actions will be reported to the trustees on an annual basis.

15. Data Protection

Records relating to recruitment and selection activities will remain confidential and accessible only to those who require information either as part of the recruitment decision-making process or for the administration of the process (including monitoring activities for the purposes of this policy or equality policies). Records relating to successful candidates will be placed in personnel files. Records for unsuccessful candidates will be retained in a secure place for a period of six months, after which time they will be securely destroyed. Inappropriate access or disclosure of recruitment data constitutes a data breach and should be reported in accordance with the Trust's data protection policy. It may also constitute a disciplinary offence, which will be dealt with under the Trust's disciplinary procedure.

16. Status of Policy and Review

The content and operation of this policy is reviewed as and when deemed necessary by the Board of Trustees. The policy is discretionary and does not confer any contractual rights.

17. EDI policy statement

Equality, diversity, and inclusion requires a strong commitment and concerted action to build an inclusive environment where opportunities are open to all, diversity is valued, and where everybody can reach their full potential without fear of harassment, prejudice or discrimination. Every person in the Berkshire Music Trust community has a responsibility for making our environment inclusive where all members of our community feel welcome and are able to be themselves.

Our work to embed equality, diversity and inclusion is anchored in the duties as applied to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010 that require us to have due regard to:

- Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

It is the general expectation that all members of staff, including others who may be working on behalf of Berkshire Music Trust, will behave in an acceptable manner – treating others with courtesy, respect and consideration – and conducting themselves professionally when interacting with members of the Trust community. Unacceptable behaviour, including bullying, harassment and victimisation or discrimination – including but not limited to the protected characteristics covered by the Equality Act 2010 – will not be tolerated and any allegations will be taken seriously and dealt with appropriately under the relevant procedures.

Appendix A - Volunteer Checks Matrix

Type of volunteer	Under 16 regular volunteering	Under 18 regular volunteering	One-off volunteering and supervised. No contact with children.	One-off volunteering and supervised. Working with children.	Regular volunteering some of which may be unsupervised and fall into regulatory work.
Application process	Fill in under 16 volunteer application form. Reference if the child is not known to us.	Fill in under 16 volunteer application form. Reference if the child is not known to us.	Volunteer application form	Volunteer application form.	Volunteer application form. One reference
Induction	Meet staff member who will be supervising and go through volunteer proforma. Establish motivation for volunteering.	Meet staff member who will be supervising and go through volunteer proforma. Establish motivation for volunteering.	Meet staff member who will be supervising and go through volunteer proforma. Establish motivation for volunteering.	Meet staff member who will be supervising and go through volunteer proforma. Duties and briefing needs to be signed off by DSL. Establish motivation for volunteering (however these are usually requests to parents for help.)	Meet with responsible staff member and a safer recruitment trained staff member. Go through volunteer proforma and responsibilities Establish motivation for volunteering.
Checks needed	No DBS check needed. Not in regulated activity and supervised at all times.	Enhanced DBS barring check	No DBS check needed, Not in regulated activity and supervised at all times.	Copy of Enhanced DBS check and barring check and ID.	Enhanced DBS with barring check Checks to qualifications if relevant to role e.g. supporting with finance.
Examples of volunteering	Helping with an ensemble. Helping with younger children at an event.	Helping with an ensemble and helping with young children at an event	Supporting at an event e.g. selling programmes.	Helping supervising children at an event. (Only ask for volunteers with DBS.)	Helping out at an ensemble. Trustee

				Accompanying a group once or twice.	
Safeguarding training needed	Briefing as to what to do if you are concerned	Safeguarding online Training	Briefing as to what to do if you are concerned	Briefing and where and how to report concerns.	Safeguarding online training
Record keeping needed	Application form and volunteer proforma. Reference.	Form, notes of meeting, DBS number, reference, record that the qualification check took place, confirmation that safeguarding training has been completed. .	Form	Form	Form, notes of meeting, DBS number, reference, record that the qualification check took place, confirmation that safeguarding training has been completed. .