

Safer Recruitment Policy and Guidance



1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Eat That Frog Group is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of young people and vulnerable adults. We require all staff and volunteers to share and demonstrate this commitment in every aspect of their work. These guidelines reflect the requirements expected of safer recruitment practice.
- 1.2. The Eat That Frog Group believes that our people are at the heart of everything that we do and are a key component to our success. A consistent and fair approach to recruitment processes ensures that we attract, appoint and retain those who possess the necessary skills and attributes to fulfil our aims and support our values. These guidance notes detail the key principles to be followed in relation to recruitment and selection and the responsibilities in all of those involved.
- 1.3. The Eat That Frog Group recognises its responsibilities to provide job opportunities to internal and external candidates in a fair, consistent and equitable basis. All appointments to the organisation will be made on merit and the recruitment and selection process is designed to ensure that the best person for the job is appointed.
- 1.4. Failure to apply these guidelines will leave us vulnerable to challenge.
- 1.5. Any significant deviation or variations in practice must be discussed with our HR Provider to ensure that actions comply with the relevant legislation, to minimise any potential risk to The Eat That Frog Group.
- 1.6. Advice and support is available from our HR Provider and our Designated Safeguarding Leads at all stages of the recruitment and selection process.

2. Scope

- 2.1. This policy and supporting guidelines apply to recruitment and selection of all staff.
- 2.2. All employees involved in any stage of the recruitment and selection of staff should be aware of and adhere to these guidelines. Our HR Provider, any external consultants, recruitment agencies or other external experts who assist in the recruitment and selection of staff are required to act in accordance with these guidelines.

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3. Aims

- 3.1. To ensure that learners, who may be young people or vulnerable adults, in our centres are safeguarded.
- 3.2. To ensure that the best person is recruited for each vacancy and opportunity.
- 3.3. To ensure compliance with relevant legislation including the Equality Act 2010, Keeping Children Safe in Education, General Data Protection Regulation and relevant UK Immigration legislation.
- 3.4. To ensure that recruitment processes are robust, fair, fit for purpose and can stand up to scrutiny.
- 3.5. To meet our strategic aims and to effectively promote the ethos and values of Eat That Frog Group.

4. Equal Opportunities

- 4.1. This policy should be read in conjunction with Eat That Frog Group's Equal Opportunities policy and Applicant Privacy Notice.
- 4.2. Eat That Frog Group is committed to a recruitment and selection process which promotes equal opportunities in employment. In doing so, it upholds its obligations not to discriminate against applicants on grounds of age, race (which includes ethnic and national origin), disability, religion or belief, gender, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, sexual orientation and marital or civil partner status.
- 4.3. We ensure full access to everyone applying for a vacancy, and decisions concerning transfers, internal promotions and external appointments are made on the basis of merit using non-discriminatory and, as far as possible, objective criteria.
- 4.4. Advertisements for vacancies will not include wording that stereotypes in any way or discourages groups of people from applying. Advertisements will be placed where they can reach as wide and diverse a pool of potential talent and recruit the best-qualified staff.
- 4.5. Nobody applying for employment within the Eat That Frog Group must be asked about their health or whether they have a disability before a job offer is made, except in very limited situations. It may, for example, be justifiable to ask whether the applicant

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needs any disability-related measures put in place for the interview, or to check that they are capable of carrying out a key part of the job. It is acceptable to make some job offers dependent on a medical examination.

- 4.6. We have a commitment to working towards creating a workforce based on ability that also mirrors the ethnic composition of the local community.

5. Vacancy Approval

- 5.1. The recruitment and selection process should not commence until the manager has carried out a full evaluation of the needs of the post against their staffing structure, improvement plans and budget. A Vacancy Approval Form must be submitted and approval to recruit must be confirmed before commencement of any recruitment action.
- 5.2. Job Descriptions and Person Specifications should be reviewed to ensure that they are accurate and reflect the skills and competencies required for the role.
- 5.3. Shortlisting and interview dates should ideally be determined before the post is advertised.

6. Advertising the Vacancy

- 6.1. As a minimum, all vacancies will normally be advertised through Eat That Frog and The Learning Curve websites and promoted across our social media channels. This will maximise equality of opportunity and provide staff with potential career development. Only in extenuating circumstances may the need to advertise be waived. This is likely to happen where positions may provide suitable alternative employment for existing staff whose post has been identified as at risk of redundancy. Advice on this should be sought from our HR Provider.
- 6.2. Positions should be advertised using the most appropriate and cost-effective advertising medium to maximise the number of suitably qualified candidates.
- 6.3. All job advertisements will be written in Plain English, reflect our Values and be based on details contained within the job description and person specification.

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- 6.4. All job advertisements will be designed to ensure potential applicants are provided with sufficient information to make informed decisions regarding their suitability for the post.
- 6.5. All advertisements will include a clear statement about safeguarding checks and our commitment to equal opportunities:

ETF is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of learners, including children and young people, and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. All roles are subject to an enhanced DBS check and two satisfactory references.

ETF has a commitment to being an Equal Opportunities Employer.

7. Shortlisting

- 7.1. If a member of staff involved in the recruitment and selection process has a close personal or family relationship with an applicant, they must declare this as soon as they are aware of the candidate's application. It would then be appropriate for the member of staff to have no further involvement in the recruitment process. Failure to declare this could put the recruitment process at risk and may result in disciplinary action.
- 7.2. All recruitment will be based on an agreed job description and person specification. Recruitment and selection must be an evidence-based process and candidates should be assessed against agreed criteria, based on relevant knowledge, skills, competencies, experience and qualifications to perform the post as outlined in the person specification.
- 7.3. No additional criteria will be introduced at the shortlisting stage. The shortlisting process must be undertaken in a fair and consistent basis. No-one should be shortlisted who does not, as a minimum, meet the defined essential criteria within the person specification. Applicants must not be de-selected for interview based on where they are living, nor assumptions made about their willingness to attend for interview or accept an offer to take up the post.
- 7.4. All shortlisting decisions must be recorded by the panel, stored confidentially and kept for 6 months.

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- 7.5. A standard Application Form must be completed by all applicants to avoid any possibility of discrimination. All applicants must complete the application form in full. CVs will not be accepted.
- 7.6. Where an Equal Opportunities Monitoring form and/or Declaration of Offences (Self Disclosure) form is submitted at the application stage, this must be removed prior to any shortlisting activity taking place. It is discriminatory to use any self-disclosed information for shortlisting. Once shortlisting has taken place, the disclosed information may then be considered.

8. Invite to Interview

- 8.1. Ensure that candidates are informed in writing of:
- the date, time, location and approximate length of the interview
 - details of any other selection methods which will be used in addition to interview
 - the person to be contacted for any further information on recruitment arrangements
 - details of Eat That Frog Group's Applicant Privacy Notice
- 8.2. Every effort must be made to make reasonable adjustments in the interview process for candidates who have disclosed a disability. Further advice on this must be sought from our HR provider.
- 8.3. All candidates invited for interview will be asked to provide:
- proof of identity
 - original certificates of qualifications
 - eligibility to live and work in the UK
 - Asked to complete a DBS request form and provide the necessary ID to support

9. The Interview and Selection Process

- 9.1. Interviews will be conducted by a panel of a minimum of two people, and preferably by three people. All interviews for the same post must be conducted by the same panel.
- 9.2. At least one member of the recruitment panel must have completed the relevant safeguarding training for safer recruitment.

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- 9.3. Interview questions must relate to the job role as stated in the job description and person specification and the candidate's suitability for the post. The person specification should be used as the starting point to formulate interview questions.
- 9.4. Core interview questions will be based upon a proper consideration of the person specification for the job and will be agreed beforehand with all members of the interview panel. Supplementary questions are appropriate to clarify or expand on a candidate's response to a core question but must relate clearly to the duties and responsibilities of the job. Supplementary questions will be properly recorded, and candidate's responses logged.
- 9.5. Face to face interviews will be the primary means of recruitment to all vacancies. A range of other selection methods and processes may also be considered in relation to each vacancy. When adopting selection tools, care must be taken to ensure that they are relevant to the person specification and able to be objectively assessed as part of the selection criteria.
- 9.6. A practical assessment of skills and competencies will be used, where appropriate, to improve our ability to select the best candidate for any post.
- 9.7. Any skills tests (e.g. presentations, in-tray exercises, data analysis) must be directly related to the post and measured against objective criteria. Presentations for the same post should normally be assessed by the same panel members. Candidates must be notified about the details of any skills test when they are invited for interview.
- 9.8. The selection process for teaching posts must include a demonstration of teaching skills which will be objectively scored.
- 9.9. In addition to assessing and evaluating the candidate's suitability for the post, the interview panel should also explore:
 - the applicant's attitude towards children, young people and vulnerable adults
 - their ability to support Eat That Frog Group's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of learners, including children, young people and vulnerable adults
 - gaps in the applicant's employment history
 - concerns or discrepancies arising from information provided by the applicant and/or referee - The panel should also ask the candidate if they wish to declare anything in light of the requirement for an enhanced DBS disclosure.

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- 9.10. During the interview process, care should be taken to avoid any questions which could be interpreted as discriminatory. The focus should always be on job-related criteria and any questions related to a protected characteristic might suggest intention to discriminate. Therefore, any questions based on gender, ethnic origin, marital status, sex, age, family circumstances or sexual orientation must be avoided. Asking an applicant about their religion for a job entailing weekend working would not, for example, be permissible.
- 9.11. An interview assessment form will be used to record and score candidates objectively.
- 9.12. The decision on who is appointed is a joint decision of the members of the panel based on the scoring against the criteria.
- 9.13. The recruiting manager should contact all candidates to inform them of the outcome following the selection process as soon as possible, but preferably within 48 hours. Candidates should be offered the opportunity to have constructive feedback provided to them by the recruiting manager.

10. Safer Recruitment Vetting

- 10.1. All appointments to jobs will be subject to the receipt of satisfactory pre-employment checks to include:
- Receipt of at least 2 satisfactory references
 - identity check
 - proof of the right to work in the UK – complete and retain the Home Office Right to Work Checklist
 - Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service Check
 - Children’s barred lists check (formerly list 99)
 - Prohibition list (teachers)
 - evidence, where applicable, of appropriate qualifications and where required, QTS
 - where appropriate, verification of the candidate’s medical fitness for the role and what reasonable adjustments should be considered
- 10.2. All appointments will be made having regard for safeguarding arrangements for our learners who may be young people or vulnerable adults, including careful assessment

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- of application forms, gaps in employment and pre-employment checks as detailed above.
- 10.3. Where possible references will be taken up before the interview. A template reference request will be used. References must be given proper consideration in the recruitment process and their content must be satisfactory to the organisation, at least one reference must apply to the most recent role where the applicant worked with either children or vulnerable adults. Where references have been provided prior to interview and there are questions or areas to clarify, these may be asked during the interview and responses noted accordingly. Advice can be sought from our HR Provider in the event of information of concern arising from references for a preferred candidate, which arrives after the interview. References must be taken up before a conditional offer of employment is sent to the candidate and without exception and before the candidate starts in employment. References are just as important for volunteer posts to assist in background checks.
 - 10.4. Consent of candidates should be obtained before reference checks are carried out.
 - 10.5. References are sought directly from the referee. References or testimonials provided by the candidate are never accepted instead of a signed reference from a referee. Referees can be contacted by telephone or e-mail prior to receiving a written, signed reference.
 - 10.6. References must include the candidates current or recent employer and referees should preferably be known in a professional capacity.
 - 10.7. References from previous employers will gather information on the candidate's suitability for working with children and young people; any disciplinary warnings, including time-expired warnings that relate to the safeguarding of children; the candidate's suitability for the post.
 - 10.8. Eat That Frog Group recognises that it is common practice for some employers to only give limited references based on dates of employment, position held and sometimes salary. We will endeavour to obtain as much objective information on a candidate's employment history as possible to assess whether a reference is satisfactory. Proper enquiries should be made, in accordance with the Employment Practices Data Protection Code, where any information is received that conflicts with information previously provided and the candidate should be allowed an opportunity to provide an explanation before a final decision is reached.

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10.9. Confidential employment references are exempt from disclosure under a subject access request. Advice should be sought from our HR provider should a candidate or employee request to see copies of their employment references.

11. The Offer of Employment and the Employment Contract

11.1. A conditional offer letter must be issued to the successful candidate within a reasonable timescale outlining;

- the job title
- the date of commencement of employment (if confirmed)
- salary
- payment arrangements
- the term of the employment (whether temporary/fixed term/ permanent contract)
- reference requirements, if not already complete
- medical clearance, if required
- Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service Check
- Overseas check, if relevant
- whether the employment is subject to a trial or probationary period and if so, the terms which will apply to this
- any particular or special benefits which might apply

11.2. In the event of a delay of the return of a DBS by the Disclosure and Barring Service, an appointment may be made subject to checks with the Children Barred Lists, risk assessment and appropriate safeguards being put in place, where an employee is awaiting a DBS they will be required to be supervised at all times until the information is received by the assigned supervisor, a record of this will be stored on the ETF SharePoint system. If there is any doubt, a delay to the start date should be put in place and where appropriate advice sought from the designated Safeguarding Lead. All other referencing and pre-employment checks must be complete.

11.3. Advice from our HR Provider should be sought if there are any issues or concerns regarding the suitability or standard of pre-employment checks, before taking any action.

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- 11.4. The contract of employment should be issued along with the offer letter to enable transparency in the recruitment process and the full terms of employment to be given to the candidate to enable them to make an informed decision on accepting the offer.

12. Review and Monitoring of Appointments

- 12.1. All employees will receive regular observations and assessments from Line Managers with records obtained. Regular One to One meetings will take place to review employees performance with any feedback, actions and support agreed.
- 12.2. Each new employee is subject to an initial 6-month probation period which will be regularly reviewed and assessed throughout to ensure duties and responsibilities are being carried out at the required standard.
- 12.3. We may record and analyse information about equal opportunities within the workplace. When applying to join the Eat That Frog Group, applicants will be asked for their consent to gather and process data about them.
- 12.4. The information provided will be held confidentially and will not be seen or used by the panel in selection in any way.
- 12.5. The aim of recruitment monitoring is to enable Eat That Frog Group to identify the numbers and relative proportion of various groups participating in the selection process at application, shortlisting and appointment stages. This information will also help to assess progress in implementing our Equal Opportunities Policy and identify actions which might improve the fairness of our recruitment and selection procedures.
- 12.6. We will use the information to make sure this policy is operating properly and refine it, to review the composition of the workforce, and to promote workplace equality.

13. Record Keeping

- 13.1. Data and documentation relating to applicants should be treated with strict confidence and in accordance with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation and Eat That Frog Groups Applicant Privacy Notice. Only people deemed necessary to participate in the selection process will have access to applicant's data in order to undertake their duties with regard to the recruitment process. Managers

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should be aware that applicants will have the right to request feedback and to access any documentation held on them, in relation to the recruitment and selection process.

- 13.2. Assessments from application form, interview, all tests and/or other exercises used within the selection process, will be properly documented and recorded against each individual candidate. Details will be placed within the recruitment file for all unsuccessful candidates which should be retained for six months, after which they should be confidentially destroyed, unless consent has been provided to keep a candidate's data on file for a longer period.
- 13.3. A record is kept of all employment verification checks for:
- all staff who are employed to work at Eat That Frog Group – recorded on our HR Portal
 - all staff who are employed as supply staff or contractors to Eat That Frog Group whether employed directly by Eat That Frog Group or through an agency; recorded on the ETF SharePoint system
 - all others who have been chosen by Eat That Frog Group to work in regular contact with learners and young people. This will include volunteers, trustees and directors recorded on the ETF SharePoint system
- 13.4. Our Applicant Privacy Notice and Data Retention Policy contains more details on how we process and share data in the recruitment process and how long we keep data for.

14. Induction

- 14.1. All newly appointed staff will, either prior to or at the point of taking up the post, undergo a programme of induction appropriate for their post. The induction will specifically address issues concerning the safeguarding of learners and young people and safe working practices as well as matters directly related to the effective performance of their post.

15. Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

- 15.1. All posts within Eat That Frog Group are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Applicants will be required to declare spent and unspent convictions, cautions and bind-overs, including those regarded as spent and have an Enhanced Criminal Records Disclosure.

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16. How We Handle Complaints

- 16.1. We investigate any complaint or allegation a candidate raises where they believe they have been unfairly selected or discriminated in the recruitment process.
- 16.2. Complaint raised by internal applicants should follow our grievance procedure. Complaints from external candidates will be investigated by a person independent to the recruitment process.
- 16.3. Most concerns are raised in good faith, but occasionally someone makes a false allegation out of malice or because they believe they have something to gain. This is classed as a vexatious claim. Advice on vexatious claims can be sought from our HR Provider.

17. Review

- 17.1. This policy reflects current legislation and advice on safer recruitment practices at the time of writing. Our practices will be continuously monitored for compliance and improvement throughout the recruitment process.
- 17.2. History of Policy Changes

Date	Page	Details of the change	Agreed by
	All	New Policy – replaces Recruitment and Selection Policy	Board Meeting