

Recruitment Policy and Procedure

Excellence • Integrity • Supportiveness

Our Mission

Raising Aspirations, Unlocking Potential, Advancing Futures

Our Values

Excellence, Passion, Teamwork, Integrity, Innovation,
Sustainability, Valuing Others and Supportiveness

Sparsholt College Group

The Sparsholt College Group (the College Group) includes Sparsholt College, Andover College, University Centre Sparsholt, Sparsholt College Services, Westley Enterprises and Andover Town Football Club. College Group policies apply to each part of the group unless specified otherwise.

The **Recruitment Policy and Procedure** was approved by the Board of Governors in December 2022 and supersedes previous editions.

Originator:	HR Manager
Located:	College Group Intranet
Due for review:	November (for December) 2025

RECRUITMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1. The College Group ('the College') recognises its staff as being fundamental to its success. A strategic and professional approach to recruitment processes help enable the College to attract and appoint staff with the necessary skills and attributes to fulfil its strategic aims and support the College's values.
- 1.2. The College wishes to adopt recruitment and selection procedures and other human resources management processes that help to deter, reject or identify people who might abuse children, or vulnerable adults, or who are otherwise unsuited to work with them. To this end successful applicants will not commence employment at the College until all required checks have been completed to the College's satisfaction.
- 1.3. The College is committed to ensuring that the recruitment and selection of staff is conducted in a manner that is systematic, efficient effective and promotes equality of opportunity.
- 1.4. All applicants for any position must be assessed objectively on their individual merits.
- 1.5. Recruitment should be treated as a key public relations exercise as the way it is managed affects the College's image, and consequently its ability to attract and appoint high calibre staff.
- 1.6. This policy has been designed to provide a flexible framework, which promotes good practice, adopts a proactive approach to equality and diversity issues and supports fully the College's core business.
- 1.7. Guidelines which form the basis for the implementation of this policy, are also provided. They have been designed to maximise flexibility to meet the needs of all areas. For these reasons, while still ensuring that the College complies with relevant legislation any significant variations in practice must be discussed and agreed with the Human Resources (HR) Manager to minimise risk to the College.
- 1.8. Professional advice and support are available at all stages of the recruitment process from the HR department.
- 1.9. This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment, and it may be amended at any time.

2. Scope

- 2.1. This policy applies to the recruitment and selection of all staff to the College

Group.

2.2. All employees involved at any stage of the recruitment and selection of staff should be aware of and adhere to the contents of this policy. In addition, any external consultants, recruitment agencies or external experts who assist in the recruitment process must act in accordance with this policy. The appointing manager is responsible for providing such external parties with this policy prior to their involvement in the recruitment process.

3. Aims

- To ensure that recruitment processes are fit for purpose.
- To appoint the best person for each position.
- To ensure equality of opportunity for all applicants.
- To ensure compliance with the College's position as to equality, diversity and inclusion as set out in the Single Equality Scheme and relevant employment legislation.
- To promote the College's values.
- To meet the College's operational requirements and strategic aims.

4. General Principles

4.1. All employees involved in the recruitment process and, in particular Chairs of selection panels, should ensure that they have appropriate recruitment training. Staff involved in the recruitment process should be aware of their responsibilities under the relevant legislation. The College aims to secure equality of opportunity in all its activities, and in this respect all staff should maintain a positive attitude towards equality of employment.

4.2. All cost centre managers will undertake the on-line Safeguarding and Safer Recruitment in FE course provided by the Education & Training Foundation (ETF) every 3 years.

4.3. If a member of staff involved in the recruitment process has a close personal or familial relationship with an applicant, they must declare this as soon as they are aware of the individuals' application.

4.4. Documentation relating to applicants will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA). Applicants will have the right to feedback and to access any documentation held on them in accordance with the DPA.

5. Preparation Stage

5.1. The recruitment and selection process should not commence until a full evaluation of the need for the role against the area's strategic plans and budget has been completed. It is also useful to look at any relevant exit interviews. Discussion with an appropriate member of the HR team at this point will include:

- Is there funding for this post?
- Is the post still required in the current form?
- Are there any existing staff in the team or across the college with the skills or free hours who could undertake the role?
- Are there any contacts in other colleges who could identify staff with spare hours etc?

5.2. The recruitment of staff will take into account the College's need for new ideas and approaches and support the College's commitment to ensuring a diverse workforce by proactively seeking to attract groups that are under-represented in the College's staffing profile to maximise its ability to meet diverse student requirements.

5.3 The college may on occasion take lawful positive action to advance equality where necessary to support the recruitment to under- represented groups.

6. Obtaining Candidates

6.1. As a minimum, all positions will normally be advertised within the College. This will provide staff with opportunities for career development, thus maintaining the skills and expertise of existing staff. In extenuating circumstances, the relevant member of SLT, in consultation with the HR Manager, may waive the need to advertise. This is likely to include the following circumstances:

- Where positions may provide suitable alternative employment for existing staff whose post has been identified for redundancy, including the termination of fixed term contracts or following a restructuring exercise.

6.2. Positions will be advertised using the most appropriate and cost effective medium to maximise the number of suitably qualified candidates. This may include local, national and international publications and web sites and should adhere to the College's visual identity. Internal advertisements should appear for a minimum of 5 days and external advertisements should appear for a minimum of 14 days.

6.3. All vacancies advertised either internally or externally, must specify:

- the job title;
- the salary or pay scale/band applicable to the position*;

- any significant benefits applicable to the position;
- any minimum qualifications for the position;
- any particular skills and/or experience required for the position;
- any atypical features of the position (e.g., part-time, fixed-term, outside UK);
- the closing date for applications.

** On occasions, and at the approval of the Principal, a position, particularly if it is a managerial role, may be advertised as competitive salary with the aim to attract a strong recruitment pool of applicants.*

- 6.4 Executive Search, through an appointed consultancy firm, for management positions or hard-to-fill professional posts may be an appropriate way to assist with finding potentially suitable candidates. This approach may be used exclusively to attract applicants or to complement advertising on the open market to attract a pool of suitable candidates. The approval of the Principal will be required in all cases where it is proposed to use Executive Search techniques.
- 6.5 Applicants will be treated with respect and provided with sufficient information to make informed decisions regarding their suitability for the role. To this end, relevant background information may be helpful, e.g., the academic specialisms of the department, the strategic priorities of the service area or section.
- 6.6 The College has a Staff Recruitment Referral Scheme whereby staff receive a financial reward if they introduce a friend/family member or external contact to work for the College.

7. Selection Process

- 7.1. The selection process should be:
- Transparent
 - Timely and cost effective
 - Equitable
 - Free from conflict of interest
- 7.2. All recruitment will be based on agreed job descriptions and person specifications. Recruitment and selection must be conducted as an evidence-based process and candidates should be assessed against agreed selection criteria, based on relevant knowledge, skills, competencies, experience and qualifications to perform the role as outlined in the person specification. All decisions must be recorded and signed by all involved.
- 7.3. Shortlisting must be undertaken by at least two individuals who are involved in the interviewing process. Interviews should normally be conducted by at least two people, and all interviews for one post should be conducted by the same people. In order to promote equality of opportunity selection panels should, wherever possible, be of mixed composition.

- 7.4 The College wishes to enable the recruitment of disabled staff and will make reasonable adjustments to all stages of the recruitment process and, as required, in order for a successful disabled candidate to undertake the post. In being invited to interview, candidates are invited to indicate if they require any special requirements to assist them to attend the interview and/or to undertake any of the selection process components.
- 7.5 In accordance with KCSIE¹ guidance, as part of the shortlisting process an online search may be undertaken on shortlisted candidates which may help identify incidents/issues that have happened and are publicly available online. Issues/incidents which the organisation considers would need further exploration with an applicant include, but not limited to, content that indicates inappropriate behaviour, inappropriate photos or videos unbecoming of working in an educational institution, acts of discrimination, serious drug or alcohol misuse. Any identified issues will be explored with the applicant at interview. Searches will be undertaken by a member of the HR team, or someone appointed by the HR Manager
- 7.6 Any skills tests (e.g., presentations, in-tray exercises, micro-teaches) must be directly related to the role and measured against objective criteria, and presentations for one post must be assessed by the same persons. All tests will also need to be verified as being free from any discriminatory element. Candidates must be notified of the details of any skills test when they are invited for interview. The selection process for lectureships and senior management roles must include assessment activities.
- 7.7 Interview questions must relate to the job requirements as exemplified in the person specification and the candidate's suitability for the position. The person specification should be used as the basis for determining the interview questions. No questions will be asked about an applicant's personal circumstances, and no assumptions will be made about an applicant's willingness to undertake, or suitability for, the position.
- 7.8 Standard questions about the disciplinary record and any criminal record of the individual will be asked at interview. Any gaps in employment will also be explored with the individual at interview.
- 7.9 The choice of appointee will be determined by the majority view of the interviewers.
- 7.10 Successful candidates will not commence employment with the College without the following checks having been completed to the College's satisfaction:
- DBS Disclosure Certificate (usually Enhanced with children's' barring list and some roles may also require the adults barring list check being undertaken)

¹ DfE 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' statutory guidance for schools and colleges

- References including one from most recent employer and covering the last three years. Where applicants have had a period of self-employment or have not been in employment, then a reference verifying the period of self-employment/unemployment will need to be obtained. Our approach is to seek references from someone who holds professional standing within the community or public sector arena and someone whom Ofsted would consider has a suitable status to provide a reference. For example: Accountant, Solicitor, GP, Dentist, Minister of Religion, Social Worker, JP, Local Councillor, Head Teacher, Police Officer, Probation Officer, CEO/Senior manager of a recognised charity/public sector organisation, etc. For an applicant who has been unemployed, then a letter from the DWP or relevant government agency is acceptable.
- On-line digital search
- Medical
- The Right to Work in the UK
- Relevant qualifications
- Relevant valid registrations/licences where required (e.g., Nurse, counsellor)

The outcome of all of these checks will be recorded on the College's HR System.

8. The Employment Contract

- 8.1. At the end of the recruitment process, all records must be handed to the Human Resources department who will retain them for six months in case of requests for feedback or the potential for litigation.
- 8.2. Offers of employment are conditional upon receipt of references, medical assessment, DBS disclosure certificate relevant qualifications and licences, on-line digital search and right to work in the UK all being satisfactory to the College.

9. Use of Agency Staff or Contractors

- 9.1. All agency staff or contractors will be subject to the same checks, other than medicals, as staff employed directly by the College. We are currently working with our key agencies to ensure this is done before workers are given contracts with us. No one within these categories will be able to work within the College unsupervised without a DBS check. However, if all other checks are satisfactory, these workers will be able to start work within the College subject to an appropriate level of supervision. These checks will be recorded within HR.

10. Monitoring and Review of Policy

- 10.1. In order to monitor compliance with and the effectiveness of the College's Recruitment and Selection and Single Equality Scheme policies, a member of the Human Resources department or other person designated by the Principal may be invited to or elect to be present at any stage of the recruitment process.
- 10.2. A Vice Principal must oversee any academic appointments.
- 10.3. Regular reports on trends and statistics relating to recruitment and appointments will be provided to the Principal, the SLT and the Governing Body as appropriate.
- 10.4. This policy will be reviewed tri-annually by the HR Manager.