



**Education & Cultural
Services**

Policy:

**Appointments – Head and Depute
Teachers**

Author:
Responsible Officer:
Service:

Human Resources
Andrew Sneddon
Strategic Customer & Information

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006 and the Parental Involvement in Head Teacher and Depute Head Teacher Appointments (Scotland) Regulations 2007 provide for the Parent Council to be involved in the appointment of Head Teachers and Depute Head Teachers.
- 1.2 This guidance describes West Lothian Council's appointment procedure and the role of the Parent Council in preparation of a short-list of candidates and on the appointment panel.
- 1.3 Where no Parent Council is formed, members of the parent association or parent members of the parent staff association may be substituted for Parent Council members.
- 1.4 It should be noted that when involved in recruitment and selection, the council's Code of Conduct stipulates that any kind of relationship, which could affect the ability to be impartial, must be declared to the Chairperson of the appointments panel. The Chairperson will decide if it is appropriate to participate in the recruitment and selection process.

2. APPOINTMENT PROCESS AND JOB/PERSON SPECIFICATIONS

- 2.1 The Depute Chief Executive has delegated responsibility for deciding if a vacancy should be filled on a permanent basis.
- 2.2 The Depute Chief Executive will consult with the particular school's Parent Council on the strategies to be employed to fill a Head Teacher or Depute Head Teacher Post, and on the job/person specifications. This consultation will cover the advert and school context and what the Parent Council are looking for in their school leader. However, this will not apply if the council has a Head Teacher or Depute Head Teacher currently subject to compulsory transfer who will be redeployed to that post.
- 2.3 Subject to this consultation, the normal procedure is that permanent post vacancies are advertised in appropriate publications as determined by the Depute Chief Executive.
- 2.4 To ensure consistency of professional standards and practice, and compliance with equalities legislation, the normal procedure (subject to consultation with the Parent Council), will be to use:
 - a standard job-specification/outline should be prepared (see Appendix 1 of the Recruitment & Selection Procedure); and
 - a person-specification compiled by the Education Development Manager under a series of headings linked to requirements for headship and reflecting the circumstances of the school, and any existing strengths and weaknesses identified by HMI or internal reports.

3. APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Human Resources issue application packs comprising:

- Application form;
- Job description;
- Other relevant information about the job/organisation/school profile etc;
- Equal opportunities monitoring form (the statistics will be used to compile a profile of applicants).

In the case of denominational schools, representatives of the church in whose interest the school is conducted, must have approved candidates regarding their religious belief and character. It is the responsibility of applicants to apply for this approval.

4. LONG AND SHORT-LEET PROCEDURE

4.1 The appropriate Head of Service, Education Officer and Education Development Manager screen applications as follows:

- candidates' experience and expertise in relation to the person specification;
- relevant HMle Reports regarding candidates' management and leadership skills;
- conditions for registration by the General Teaching Council (Scotland).

4.2 Long-leet interviews will normally be conducted where there are 4 or more eligible candidates. Applications are checked against the person specification and those that meet the essential and most of the desirable criteria are invited for a long-leet interview. Care must be taken at this stage to avoid discriminatory practice.

4.3 Long-leet interview panels will normally comprise of the Head of Service or Education Development Manager, Education Officer with responsibility for the particular school, and an assisting Head Teacher. For Depute Head Teacher Posts, the particular school's Head Teacher replaces the assisting Head Teacher.

4.4 Candidates are given the opportunity to visit the school.

4.5 **The Long-Leet interview and screening process may, at the discretion of the Head of Service for Head Teacher posts, and the Head Teacher for Depute Head Teacher posts, include additional stages designed to assist the assessment of candidates' suitability. These stages may include:-**

- **observed discussion with stakeholders at the school**
- **group exercises involving observed discussion between candidates**
- **completion of set tasks by candidates**

4.6 **These additional stages will be arranged to coincide with long-leet interviews, and will be conducted by those involved in the long-leet interview panels.**

5 INVOLVEMENT OF THE PARENT COUNCIL

- 5.1 The school's Education Officer (on behalf of the Director of Education & Cultural Services) will attend a formal meeting of the Parent Council to take account of the Parent Council's views prior to finalising a short-leet.
- 5.2 The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the merits of the candidates based on the long-leet interview and to explain the decisions taken. The full list of applicants will be made available at the meeting with as much information as necessary to consider the composition of the short-leet.
- 5.3 Following assessment against the criteria in the person specification and consultation with the Parent Council, 3 or in exceptional circumstances 4 candidates will be invited to short-leet interview. Unsuccessful long-leet candidates are given the opportunity to receive feedback on their interview performance at the conclusion of the appointment process, but will be informed that they will not progress to short-leet interview.
- 5.4 Where there are fewer than 3 eligible candidates, the Depute Chief Executive may decide to re-advertise, but will consult with the particular school's Parent Council before making this decision.
- 5.5 Following re-advertisement, if there are fewer than 4 eligible candidates, ALL candidates will be interviewed and the Parent Council will not be consulted.

6. PARENT COUNCIL MEETINGS

- 6.1 Human Resources will advise the Parent Council's Chairperson of any meeting to be called regarding selecting candidates for the post of Head Teacher or Depute Head Teacher.
- 6.2 The Parent Council must give the Depute Chief Executive advance notice of any proposed meeting regarding the appointment of a Head Teacher or Depute Head Teacher. The Director or nominee (normally the school's Education Officer) is entitled to attend the meeting and give advice in relation to the appointment.

7 APPOINTMENT PANEL COMPOSITION

7.1 CHAIRPERSON OF INTERVIEW PANEL

Depute Chief Executive (or nominee) – Head Teacher appointment

Head Teacher – Depute Head Teacher appointment

7.2 OTHER PANEL MEMBERS

- Education Officer (or nominee)
- 2 elected or appointed members chosen from the nominated pool of trained elected members. For denominational schools, the Roman Catholic religious representative is invited to attend as one of the two elected or appointed members.
- 2 parent council members, or other persons duly nominated at a formal Parent Council meeting.

7.3 A quorum consists of 3 – provided that professional officers, elected or appointed members and Parent Council representatives are all represented. In exceptional circumstances an interview may proceed without each category of member being represented, for example where no Parent Council is formed and no other parental representation is available, where a member expected to attend cannot attend due to particular circumstances but authorises the interview to proceed in their absence. In such circumstances the Chair will decide whether or not to proceed, having regard to this policy.

7.4 The panel must recommend one candidate for appointment unless it considers that no one on the short-list is suitable.

8. APPOINTMENT PANEL PROCEDURE

8.1 Candidate selection is carried out by a panel interview, where candidates can expect to deliver a short presentation and answer questions.

The panel members meet immediately prior to the interview to:

- Familiarise themselves with candidate information, job description and person specification
- Agree topics each will take - for example:
 - Parent Council members may wish to ask questions focused on the candidate's approach to maintaining discipline in the school, developing links with the local community etc.;
 - Elected members may wish to ask how the candidate will put council values into the job (e.g. developing a performance culture/good communications etc.).
- Decide what questions to ask candidates. Questions must:
 - relate to the job description and the person specification;
 - be framed so that they are not discriminatory (see Appendix 1 below);

8.2 The same questions should be put to all candidates and, depending on the answers, supplementary questions can be asked. Sample questions are available from professional officers.

- 8.3 Interview preparation helps the interview to flow smoothly, and presents candidates with a positive image of the panel and the organisation they represent. It also helps:
- the panel to get to know each other so that they feel more comfortable working together;
 - build confidence in panel members who may be anxious as they have little interviewing experience;
 - ensure that panel members are clear about what they are looking for, making it easier to choose a preferred candidate
 - ensure that unfair discriminatory questions are not asked.
- 8.4 Officers of the council, including officers from Education Services, Human Resources and Legal Services, will provide training in the interview process.

9. ASSESSING A CANDIDATE'S SUITABILITY FACTORS TO BE CONSIDERED

- 9.1 Staff applying for senior management posts in schools should be able to show that they:
- have led school or cluster working groups or departments successfully;
 - have taken opportunities provided by the council to develop their professional knowledge or skill;
 - have shown innovation in their work;
 - can manage people well, motivate them to achieve success and handle problems in a sensible way;
 - have a sound and practical grasp of major initiatives and Authority Policy and can implement these effectively;
 - relate well to staff, pupils, parents and the wider community through activities inside and outwith school;
 - have a breadth and depth of experience to bring to bear in the particular circumstances of the school in question;
 - know their own strengths and weaknesses, are realistic and optimistic in their outlook and can handle difficult situations.
- 9.2 An issue that can arise with Parent Council members at interview panels, is the tendency to know and express a preference for a candidate from within the school. Success of a candidate must depend on the criteria relating to the job description and an evaluation of the current and future management needs of the school.

10 SCHOOL MANAGEMENT ASPECTS OF WHICH CANDIDATES SHOULD BE AWARE

- 10.1 Secondary school candidates should be aware of communication issues and have strategies for supporting departments and monitoring their

effectiveness (e.g. through grouping them and linking each group to a member of the Senior Management Team).

- 10.2 Primary school candidates should be aware of supporting staff at different stages, to plan, implement and monitor classroom work within a whole school framework. Policies are therefore important as well as a system to ensure all plans are checked, agreed and evaluated for their success.
- 10.3 In both sectors the following aspects of school management apply:
- Development Planning
 - Monitoring, Evaluating and promoting Quality – linked to school review
 - Staff Development and Staff Review
 - Managing links with other schools, the community and world of work
 - Managing change and development
 - Devolved School Management (DSM)

11. CURRICULUM ASPECTS OF WHICH CANDIDATES SHOULD BE AWARE

- 11.1 Attainment and National Qualifications.
- 11.2 The Curriculum (the 3-18 Curriculum for Excellence).
- 11.3 Equal Opportunities.
- 11.4 Assessment, recording and reporting achievement
- 11.5 Pupil Support, including support for learning, pupil guidance and youth strategy.
- 11.6 Nursery/Primary and Primary/Secondary liaison
- 11.7 School evaluation

12. KEY FACTORS THAT CANDIDATES SHOULD DEMONSTRATE

- 12.1 Promoting effective learning and teaching and achievement for pupils of all abilities.
- 12.2 Involving parents and the work of the school and Authority in the education of their children.

13 ASSESSING THE CANDIDATES AND TAKING THE DECISION

- 13.1 To help panel members keep a record of their impressions of each candidate an assessment checklist can be used. These can be drawn up for the panel by Education staff based on sections 9, 10 and 11 above.

- 13.2 Candidates are not assessed against each other, they are assessed against the criteria in the person specification. Standard procedure for making the final decision is that the Chairperson gives his/her assessment of the candidates against the selection criteria, and in turn, invites each member of the panel to do likewise. Panel members are not asked to state their preference at this stage - they are given an opportunity to comment on the assessments of their fellow panel members, and a period of debate will take place. The Chairperson will then invite each panel member to, independently, state his/her preference. Withdrawal of some panel members to consider as a group is not permitted.
- 13.3 Appointment will be made by majority decision. The Chairperson has a casting vote in the case of equality of votes.
- 13.4 To guard against unfair discrimination, a record of how the decision was reached should be kept using the assessment checklists, selection notes etc. If an unsuccessful candidate challenges the decision, evidence is available to show that the decision is fair.

14. COMMUNICATING THE DECISION

- 14.1 Head Teacher appointments – the Education officer advises the successful candidate, usually on the same day as the interview.
- 14.2 Depute Head Teacher appointments – the interview panel Chairperson (Head Teacher) advises the successful candidate.
- 14.3 References are taken up for the successful candidate at this stage, as validation of the successful candidate, and registration with the Protecting Vulnerable Groups scheme checked. Pre-employment health screening will be undertaken in line with the Council's Recruitment and Selection policy. The offer of employment will be conditional on the outcome of pre-employment checks.
- 14.3 On acceptance of the offer, feedback is available to the unsuccessful candidates.

EQUALITY AND LEGISLATION

1. West Lothian Council is committed to promoting equality of opportunity.
2. Selection is based on fitness or suitability of the person to perform the duties expressed or implied in the contract. Interviewees must ensure that candidates are not discarded on criteria unrelated to the requirements of the job.
3. Discrimination can be described as direct or indirect:
 - **Direct discrimination** occurs when two individuals are treated differently in the same or not materially different circumstances.
 - **Indirect discrimination** occurs when an unjustifiable requirement or condition is applied equally when it is likely to favour one of the two individuals concerned (e.g. all qualifying experience must be in Britain).
4. All appointments must be made in line with the Equalities Act 2010, which brought together and extended existing equalities legislation.

The Act introduced protected characteristics for which discrimination is unlawful.

The protected characteristics are:-

- age,
- disability,
- gender reassignment,
- marriage and civil partnership,
- pregnancy and maternity,
- race,
- religion or belief (including lack of belief),
- sex and
- sexual orientation.

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, makes it unlawful, to refuse employment on the basis of spent convictions. A conviction of less than thirty months imprisonment may become rehabilitated if the offender commits no further serious offence during the rehabilitation period. The rehabilitation periods vary with sentences imposed and the age of the offender. Exemption from the Act includes those in a profession where there is substantial unsupervised access to children. All teaching and most non-teaching posts in schools are therefore exempt and applicants may legitimately be asked to declare any relevant spent convictions.

The Trade Union Reform and Employment Rights Act 1993 (TURER) makes it automatically unfair to dismiss a woman on the grounds of pregnancy. From the first day of employment, women have a statutory right to maternity leave and to return to work after the birth.

The Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation Act) 1992 makes it unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of union membership - subject to the provisions of any union membership.

- 4.8 The strategy of the European Community has been to ensure freedom of movement of workers within the community. This requires that law and practice in member states does not discriminate against non-nationals by the use of quotas, ring fencing and the like and that there is 'mutual recognition of vocational qualifications'. There are, for example, specific articles and directives covering:
- freedom of movement of workers;
 - right to set up businesses in member states;
 - specific qualifications – especially the medical profession;
 - recognition of professional and vocational training of three years or more.

APPOINTMENT OF TEACHERS – DENOMINATIONAL SCHOOLS

- 1) According to the Education (Scotland) Act 1980, any teacher appointed to any post on the staff of a denominational school by the education authority shall be required to be approved as regards religious belief and character by representatives of the church or denominational body in whose interest the school has been conducted.
- 2) In West Lothian, denominational schools are conducted in the interest of the Roman Catholic Church.
- 3) Accordingly, all applicants for teaching posts at Roman Catholic Schools within West Lothian shall be required to hold approval (or be eligible for approval) to teach in a Roman Catholic School from the Archdiocese of St Andrews and Edinburgh

Note – the above is required for all temporary posts of over 4 weeks in duration.

- 4) It is the applicant's responsibility to apply for this approval. Applications for approval should be made promptly by the applicant and forms are available on-line at:- www.sces.uk.com/approval.html
- 5) No appointment to a teaching post at a Roman Catholic School within West Lothian shall be processed until approval has been confirmed by the Head Teacher or in the case of a Head Teacher appointment, the Education Officer.
- 6) Fresh approval must be sought for each post that a teacher applies for whether promoted, acting, transfer or moving from a temporary to a permanent contract.

Customers with Special Requirements

Information is available in Braille, on tape, in large print and community languages.

Please contact the Interpretation and Translation Service on 0131 242 8181.

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