



Apple Tree Farm Services CIC

Staff Recruitment Policy



Policy Statement

Apple Tree Farm uses thorough and rigorous recruitment and selection processes focussed on making sure that only people who have the appropriate skills and knowledge, and who are suitable to provide social care, can enter our workforce.

Before confirming appointments, Apple Tree Farm checks criminal records, relevant registers, and indexes through the Enhanced Criminal Records Bureau Disclosure Service procedure; and assess whether people can carry out the duties of the job they have been selected for. Apple Tree Farm services CIC has a commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, and it is recognised that every individual in our organisation is responsible for realising this commitment.

- Apple Tree Farm seeks and provides reliable references for all staff members.
- Apple Tree Farm provides staff with clear information about their roles and responsibilities, and the organisational policies and procedures they must follow in their work.
- Apple Tree Farm continually manages the performance of staff, as well as the organisation, to ensure high quality services and care.

Apple Tree Farm is committed to:

- Providing continuous support towards staff development to ensure its service users and staff are benefitting from their engagement with the farm
- Ensuring only the highest quality of staff work at the farm
- Maintaining clarity and honesty during its recruitment and staff training process
- Treating its employees always fairly and respectfully.
- Ensuring all employee benefits are handed out fairly and in accordance with the law

Equality

Alongside our commitment to safeguarding, we are committed to equality of opportunity, and value diversity and the different contributions that the people who are part of our staff team can make. All staff will be selected based on their knowledge, experience, skills, abilities and potential, and will be chosen because they will successfully and positively add value, raise standards and bring Apple Tree Farm Services CIC's values to life. Our safer recruitment and selection practices will be fair and implemented with due regard to the Equality Duty; they will contribute to engaging a staff team that reflects the diversity of the communities we serve.



Purpose and Aims

The purpose of this policy is to safeguard children and young people attending our service by ensuring that our safer recruitment and selection practices deter, identify and reject people who are unsuitable to work with children and young people. This policy will help to ensure that the best possible individuals are attracted, recruited and retained. The policy provides people who wish to work for us, an overview of the safer recruitment and selection processes that they can expect. To support managers and guide them through the recruitment and selection of staff.

Scope

This policy concerns the recruitment and selection of employees, trainees, casual workers, volunteers, agency and third-party staff.

Responsibility and Accountability

Farm Manager, Brenda Pedroni is responsible for the development and update of policies relating to recruitment and selection ensuring they are compliant, fair and safe.

Links to other policies

Other policies with links to this Policy include:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Equality Policy
- Whistleblowing policy
- Data Protection Policy

This policy, and those listed above, are compliant with the statutory Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance, The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, the Disclosure and Barring Service Code of Practice, The Equality Act 2010 and the Equality Duty.

Planning the Recruitment and Selection Process

Planning is critical to running a safe and successful process. The timescales and resources required to run each part of the process are planned, with care taken to ensure that all safeguarding activities can be rigorously implemented. This includes planning who will be involved in the process and when, dates on which communications will be sent and will take place and how candidates will be assessed.

Recruitment Process and Documentation

Before the role becomes a live vacancy the requirements of the farm will be reviewed in the context of the farm's aims and objectives, staffing requirements and budgetary constraints. When a vacancy is identified the following parts of the process are prepared:



Job Description and Person Specification

Where a vacancy is identified, the job description and person specification will be written or reviewed to ensure that they reflect the requirements for the role. A job description summarises the main duties and responsibilities of a role, whilst the person specification details the attributes and behaviours needed to be able to successfully perform them.

Job descriptions and person specifications will always state the relevant duties, responsibilities and attributes in relation to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. Care will also be taken to ensure that attributes stated on the person specification are objective, do not inadvertently discriminate and enable potential applicants to assess whether they may be suitable for the role.

A job description for a vacant position will specify the safeguarding requirements i.e. to what extent the role will involve contact with children and will they be engaging in regulated activity relevant to children. We welcome applications from people who have disabilities and will make all reasonable adjustments to help support them through a recruitment and selection process. All vacancies will be advertised on the Apple Tree Farm Services CIC website and through social media channels. All adverts will include our stated commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. The advert will also state that all successful applicants will be required to undergo an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. The salary range for the role, the number of working hours and weeks, the closing date for applications and key aspects of the person specification will also be stated.

Application Information

Application information is made available on the Apple Tree Farm Services CIC website, hard copies of the job description and person specification are also available on request.

The information available to applicants will always include:

- Information about Apple Tree Farm Services CIC, the farm and the role
- Job description and person specification
- Application form and self-declaration form

To ensure that the farm's expectations of applicants are clear and that the required checks can be carried out, the farm's application forms set out key information in relation to safeguarding and notifies applicants of/requests the following:

- Providing false information – this will result in the application being disqualified, a withdrawal of any offer of employment or summary dismissal if the candidate is in post. This could lead to referral to the Police. Checks will be carried out to verify the content of the application form.
- Full chronological history – a full history is required of each applicant in date order, most recent first, since leaving secondary education, including periods of any post-secondary education or training, part-time work and voluntary work as well as full-time employment. Start and end dates must be given, reasons for leaving employment and explanations for periods not in employment, education or training.



- References – candidates are required to give details of two people whom the farm can obtain a reference from. The first referee will normally be the candidate's present or most recent employer. If the candidate is not currently working with children, they will be required to give a referee from their most recent employment with children. Candidates are required to give referees from two different employers/organisations wherever possible, unless the candidate has not worked for or volunteered with more than one.
- Convictions/investigations – in the application, candidates will be asked whether they have ever been subject to a conviction, caution, bind-over or if they are subject to a police investigation or have criminal proceedings pending against them. This applies to current and spent convictions and cautions.
- Applicant declaration – candidates are required to certify that the information they give is true and accurate. If submitted electronically, the applicant must sign the application when attending for interview.

Selection Process and Documentation

Shortlisting applications

Once a vacancy has been advertised and applications received, shortlisting packs are prepared and distributed to the people with responsibility for shortlisting and interviewing. A minimum of two people must be on the shortlisting and interview panel, one of which will always be the senior leader with designated responsibility. Sensitive information relating to the candidate will be removed before shortlisting in order that the process is unbiased, transparent and fair. The panel will assess candidate-based information given by candidates concerning their qualifications, experience, professional knowledge and skills, professional attributes and attitudes.

Invitation to interview and assessment

Depending on timescales between shortlisting and a planned interview date, a shortlisted applicant may be contacted by telephone in the first instance. All shortlisted candidates who have supplied an email address on their application form will be contacted by email.

Where an applicant does not have access to email, a letter will be sent to their home address. Interview invites will always contain the following:

- Date, time/s and venue for interview and assessment
- Directions to the venue
- The names and positions of the panel members / assessors
- An outline of what to expect and details of any preparatory work that may need to be undertaken
- A request that a named person is notified within a specified timescale if the candidate requires any reasonable adjustments to be made, to enable them to attend and fully participate in the interview and assessment process
- Date, time/s and venue for interview and assessment
- Directions to the venue
- The names and positions of the panel members / assessors



- An outline of what to expect and details of any preparatory work that may need to be undertaken
- A request that a named person is notified within a specified timescale if the candidate requires any reasonable adjustments to be made, to enable them to attend and fully participate in the interview and assessment process

A request that the following documentation be brought to interview:

- Original copies of qualifications declared as part of the application if applicable
- Two of the following: Birth Certificate, valid passport or driving licence; and
- A recent utilities bill or other form of verification of current address

All shortlisted candidates will be subject to a search to identify any incidents or issues that have happened, or are publicly available, on-line. Checks will not be carried out by the appointing officer. Only relevant information relating to safeguarding or reputational concerns will be highlighted to the appointing officer. This search is to help establish a candidate's suitability for the role and assess any transferable risk.

References

References are requested using the farm's reference proforma and are thoroughly scrutinised. The job description and person specification for the role are sent with the reference request, and referees informed that the farm is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. The farm will never accept an open reference or testimonial addressed "to whom it may concern".

Referees are required to sign the reference and are reminded that:

- They have a responsibility to ensure that the reference provided is accurate and does not contain any incorrect information or omissions.
 - The relevant factual content of the reference may be discussed with the applicant
- References will not be accepted from relatives or from people writing solely in the capacity of friends. Further references may be sought if deemed necessary by the farm management.

Interview

At interview, identify documents and qualifications will be verified and the completed Disclosure of Criminal Record form examined. Following interview, the completed forms and photocopies of documents belonging to the successful candidate/s will be retained; all other copies will be immediately and securely destroyed. Any information revealed in the online search about the candidate will be discussed with the applicant and a risk assessment completed. The interview will assess the candidates against the criteria stated on the person specification, and relevant questions will be asked in relation to safeguarding to assess candidate's suitability to work with children and young people.

Candidates can expect the interview to be fair and consistent. The same question framework will be used for each candidate and notes will be taken of the responses provided. Supplementary, individual questions will be asked of each candidate depending on information given in their application and their responses to the original generic



framework question. In line with Keeping Children Safe in Education legislation, candidates might be asked about their mental and/or physical fitness to undertake the role for which they have applied as well as questions regarding their relationships with children and motivation for working with them. At every interview, candidates will have the opportunity to ask questions of the interview panel.

Assessment

Any assessment activities will be relevant to the requirements for the role and candidates will be informed of what to expect when they are invited to attend. Whenever possible, activities will include elements directly relevant to assessing suitability to work with children and young people.

Document Retention

Application forms, interview notes and assessment outcomes for candidates who are not appointed will be retained on file for a period of six months and then securely destroyed. All documentation from the recruitment and selection process, relating to the successful candidate will be placed on the appointee's personnel file.

Conditional offers of employment/engagement and pre-employment checks

All offers of employment/engagement are conditional and subject to:

- Verification of identify using photo ID and proof of address
- Verification of right to work in the UK

- The receipt of at least two references which are satisfactory to Apple Tree Farm Services CIC. We reserve the right to request further or alternative references from applicants to verify their suitability of employment.

Delays in obtaining Criminal Record Disclosure or overseas checks

In wholly exceptional circumstances as determined by Brenda Pedroni, farm manager, a prospective employee or worker may be allowed to commence work prior to satisfactory Criminal Record Disclosure having been received and/or where relevant overseas checks have not been received. No prospective employee or worker will be allowed to commence work before all other employment checks have been completed, and where it is identified that a prospective employee or worker will commence work prior to the above, this must be thoroughly justified and:

- A risk assessment must be undertaken for staff starting work pending a DBS disclosure form (the risk assessment will be held on the employee's file to evidence that this was undertaken prior to the receipt of the DBS certificate) and
- The prospective employee or worker must be appropriately always supervised.



Induction and Probation

On-going vigilance and training are critical to establishing a robust safeguarding culture. There is an induction programme for all staff appointed, regardless of previous experience, which includes child protection and safeguarding training.

The purpose of the induction is to:

- Provide training and information about our policies and procedures including those in relation to the safeguarding of children and young people
- Establish clear expectations regarding the standards of conduct, behaviour and performance required
- Ensure staff know when and how to raise any safeguarding concerns
- Facilitate the identification of any concerns regarding conduct, behaviour or performance and enable support to be provided to achieve the standards required
- Provide opportunities for staff to discuss any issues or concerns they may have regarding their role or responsibilities.

This policy was last reviewed on: 21/01/2025

Signed: 
Farm Manager

Date: 21/01/2025