



TWO RIVERS
HIGH SCHOOL



Online Searches Guidance and Recording Sheet

All Endeavour Multi Academy Trust's Schools

DOCUMENT CONTROL		
Approved for operation within	All Endeavour Multi Academy Trust Schools	
Version number	1	
Approved by	Trust's Policy Oversight Committee	
Date approved	03.07.2024	
Date of review	Summer 2024	
Review period	Annually	
Location published	Internal	
Owner	Executive Board	
DOCUMENT HISTORY DATE	DOCUMENT VERSION	DOCUMENT HISTORY

Safeguarding

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 states that schools “should consider” carrying out an online search as part of due diligence on shortlisted candidates. You should also inform shortlisted candidates that you may carry out online searches (see paragraph 226 of KCSIE).

We are **not required** to carry out an online search by KCSIE but we should consider whether or not it would be useful to identify any safeguarding or suitability issues. Endeavour Multi Academy Trust considers it necessary to carry out these checks with shortlisted candidates. We consider this necessary for every role at school, including checks on members, trustees and local governors. Within schools, checks will be made by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and at a Trust and member, trustee and local governor level these checks will be made by the Trust’s DSL.

An online search is not a replacement or an alternative for other recruitment checks, but we consider it necessary as one of the checks to be carried out. KCSIE expects that online searches should form part of the pre-employment checks from 1 September 2022. If a school or academy trust decides not to adopt this change, it needs to be in a position to show a good reason for that decision.

Data Protection

Data protection law applies to online searches the same as any other part of the application process.

Searching for and collecting information about a candidate counts as a data processing activity. This means we need to comply with the 7 principles of data processing set out under the UK GDPR.

Every piece of personal data that our organisation holds must be:

- Processed lawfully, fairly and transparently
- Collected for specific, explicit and legitimate purposes
- Adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary to achieve your purpose with it
- Accurate and kept up to date
- Processed and held securely
- Only retained for as long as is necessary to achieve your purpose with it

The 7th principle is that:

- Endeavour Multi Academy Trust and its schools are responsible for complying with these principles, and must be able to show that they are complying

We also need to meet at least 1 of the 6 lawful bases for processing personal data.

We consider the most suitable basis for carrying out an online search is: **public task**, because we are processing the data to carry out our duty of safeguarding and safer recruitment, which is in the public interest.

Equality and Fair Hiring Practices

The [2010 Equality Act protects](#) people from discrimination in the hiring process. We will not discriminate between candidates on the basis of the 9 protected characteristics.

Conducting an online search can increase your risk of being accused of bias in the hiring process, because you could find out this additional personal information. Therefore, we ensure we don't make decisions about hiring based solely on the personal information we find in online searches and we will always allow candidates the opportunity to address any inconsistencies located.

This will follow the same process we have for carrying out interviews/risk assessment with the CEO/Headteacher if information is returned following the DBS check.

As part of the recruitment information the following statement is included on our application forms: I understand that an online search will be conducted on my name(s) if I am shortlisted for the above role, I am also aware that the school and Trust may want to explore anything they find with me at interview stage.

Conducting a search

The Trust will ensure that the same search will be conducted on every shortlisted candidate for a role.

The scope of the search – The search will be carried out as follows:

Google search:

The following terms, looking at the first page of results:

- ‘Candidate name’
- ‘Candidate name’ + ‘current school/employment’
- ‘Candidate name’ + ‘previous school/employment’
- ‘Candidate name’ + ‘educational institution’
- ‘Candidate name’ + ‘job title’

Social media profiles are most likely to contain irrelevant personal information, including protected characteristics, and risk accusations of bias in the hiring process. Therefore the Trust have an approach that they follow as below:

- A policy of only looking at public profiles - accounts that anyone can view - and never trying to connect with candidates in order to access restricted profiles.
- A limit on the number of profiles you'll look at to try and find the correct candidate.
- A consistent response to any internet filtering system that the Trust has. For example, Facebook is blocked at school level, therefore we will not look at Facebook profiles for any candidates. For example, if Facebook is blocked on the school network, you shouldn't look at Facebook profiles for any candidates.

You won't be able to guarantee that you find the same amount of information on every candidate. Different people will have different privacy settings and online presences. However, our Trust believe that by carrying out the same checks on every candidate, we are treating each of them the same way.

Shortlisted candidates will be informed that the search isn't part of the shortlisting process itself, and that they will have a chance to address any issues of concern that come up during the search at an arranged interview.

What to look for?

Use an online search to confirm a candidate's eligibility and identify any potential safeguarding concerns or risks to your school's reputation. For example, it might reveal:

- A work history that doesn't match the CV and references provided (for example on LinkedIn).
- An education history that doesn't match the stated qualifications.
- Attitudes that suggest the candidate is unsuitable for the role or risks damaging your school's reputation, for example posting pictures of/with students or expressing discriminatory opinions.

However, be cautious, because the results of an online search may be misleading. Be aware that any information you find may be:

- Out of date
- Out of context or untrue
- Relating to someone else

Keeping a Record

The school should keep an online search record on the employee's file, including the below information:

- Who carried out the search
- Which search terms were used and which sites were looked at
- The date and time of the search
- Details of any concerns raised

It shouldn't include any irrelevant personal information, the school is not required to keep a record of online searches on the single central record (SCR).

Who will carry out the online search?

Finding out personal information about a candidate can lead to unconscious bias. Therefore, we will keep a consistent member of staff and process around each search. Within schools, checks will be made by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and at a Trust and member, trustee and local governor level these checks will be made by the Trust's DSL

This will ensure that the searcher doesn't share any irrelevant personal information from the search with the interviewers. They will only share information that suggests the candidate:

- Is unqualified for the role
- Poses a potential safeguarding risk
- Risks damaging the reputation of the school or trust.

Online Search Form

Candidate name:

Role shortlisted for:

Searcher name:

Date and time of online search:

SEARCH PARAMETERS	CONCERNS RAISED
<p>Google search: The following terms, looking at the first page of results:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Candidate name' • 'Candidate name' + 'current school/employment' • 'Candidate name' + 'previous school/employment' • 'Candidate name' + 'educational institution' • 'Candidate name' + 'job title' <p>Websites: The candidate's name was typed into the search function of the following websites:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LinkedIn • Their current school's website 	<p>Only record information that suggests the candidate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is unqualified for the role • Poses a potential safeguarding risk • Risks damaging the reputation of your school/trust <p>Don't include any irrelevant personal information.</p> <p>CONCERNS:</p>

Signed:

Print Name: