

Protocol Education is a specialist education recruitment agency operating across England from 38 branches, with 3 international recruitment offices located overseas, in Australia, New Zealand and Canada. It provides teachers, nursery nurses, classroom assistants, one-to-one tutors and many different categories of support workers for client schools and nurseries nationwide.

The company is committed to a policy of equality of opportunity in its recruitment practices and opposes all forms of unlawful or unfair discrimination, direct or indirect - firstly, to ensure that no registering applicant is less fairly treated in any situation because of age, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marital and civil partnership status, race or any other condition not relevant to the performance of the job; and secondly, to ensure that our clients are offered the best candidates available in terms of skills, experience and approach.

Company policy therefore aims:

- to provide full confidence to both clients and candidates of our best intentions to ensure that we register and submit quality candidates to support the needs of all children
- to confirm our commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children
- To confirm our expectation for all staff and registering candidates to share this commitment.

As a corporate member of the Recruitment and Employment Confederation (REC), the company adheres to their 'Code of Professional Practice'. The company holds the REC Audited Education accreditation; this is the gold standard in recruitment and covers safeguarding, legal compliance and best practice. The current Quality Manager (Brian Todd) is a member of the Executive of the REC Education Sector Group. Protocol Education holds full certification with the Lloyds Registry Quality Assurance ISO9001:2008 Quality Management System, and is subject to external audits every six months. The company also holds the Investors in People standard.

**This document provides a summary of the checks carried out during the recruitment, registration and interview process.**

Each candidate registering with Protocol Education, regardless of origin or country of citizenship, is subject on first contact to a verbal vetting process using the company standard vetting form to ascertain whether the individual meets the company minimum requirements for registration and interview. The face-to-face interview ascertains if the candidate has the required skills and competencies to undertake the work for which they are making application.

During or after interview, the candidate is subject to a series of stringent quality checks:

- Identity and Proof of Address
- Qualification, if applicable
- Prohibition check through the National College of Teaching and Leadership's (NCTL) Teacher Services portal
- Criminal record check through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)
- DBS Barred Lists
- Disqualification by Association
- References
- Previous employment history, with gaps in employment history explored
- Permission to work in the United Kingdom
- Medical fitness to work
- Level of fluency in English

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If at any time a candidate is offered to a school before all the checks are completed, the client will be informed and a standard written communication issued seeking agreement to the interview or placement on these terms.

### **Identity**

Every candidate has a face to face interview / induction with a trained consultant where identity is checked. The consultant checks identity documentation following the DBS Route 1 listing of acceptable documents from Group 1 (Primary Identity Documents), Group 2a (Trusted Government Documents) and Group 2b (Financial and Social History Documents); the required number and combination of documents (3) must be produced without exception. This check includes proof of current address. Additional documentation may be requested if the candidate is unable to produce photo ID. All candidates are advised to take photo ID with them to assignments to allow clients to verify their identity.

### **Qualifications**

**(1) Teachers who have been awarded QTS** are checked against the National College of Teaching and Leadership's Teacher Services database of teachers holding QTS to verify the award, and the current induction status. This check also ensures that teachers who have failed their statutory induction or probation periods are not recruited for placement as teachers in maintained schools, pupil referral units and non-maintained special schools. The NCTL record is printed and stored on the candidate's electronic file. Teachers from Northern Ireland and Scotland are required to obtain QTS if this award is not held. Newly Qualified Teachers are also checked in relation to the volume of supply work they are able to undertake if their induction year has not been completed.

**(2) EU trained teachers** seeking registration with the agency are required to apply to the NCTL for the award of QTS; Protocol Education will proceed with the registration of these candidates as qualified teachers on receipt of confirmation of QTS, and an appropriate NCTL Teacher Services check.

**(3) Overseas trained teachers (OTTs)** who register through our overseas offices are fully checked locally, with teaching qualifications being confirmed directly with the awarding institution. All overseas-trained teachers must hold a teaching qualification equivalent to that of a British PGCE or B.Ed., checked through NARIC (The National Academic Records Information Centre). OTTs are also checked to ensure that they do not breach the 'four year rule' whereby they are able to teach for 4 years as a qualified teacher in the UK, after which time they must hold QTS. OTTs from Australia, New Zealand, Canada and USA may be eligible for the award of QTS; they are encouraged to confirm this on arrival in the UK; any such awards are then verified by the NCTL's Teacher Services portal.

**(4) Instructors** (unqualified teachers) are accepted in some shortage subject areas and / or with a lower grade overseas qualification at the discretion of the Branch Manager, and have their original certificates witnessed and copied.

**(5) Early Years Practitioners at Level 3 or above (e.g. Nursery Nurses)** are required to present as a mandatory requirement the relevant industry qualification to confirm that their early education / childcare qualification meets the full and relevant criteria to be counted in the statutory Level 3 ratios in the early years setting. Where possible, these qualifications are verified directly with the awarding institution.

### **Prohibitions and Sanctions**

All candidates are checked via the NCTL Teacher Services portal to ensure:

- that they do not have a disciplinary sanction which prohibits them from working in the teaching profession
- that they are no longer still subject to disciplinary sanctions from the GTCE

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- that they have not been identified by the NCTL as having a current EEA member state restriction / sanction imposed upon them
  - That they have not been barred from taking part in the management of any independent school (including academies and free schools) under the terms of the s128 barring directions made by the Secretary of State.

### **Criminal Record**

Protocol Education requires all candidates to have either a current enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate which has been issued directly through Protocol Education, or an enhanced DBS certificate issued by a third party which can be verified as current through the DBS Update Service. Protocol Education checks DBS certificates annually.

Protocol Education is a Registered Body and an Umbrella Organisation with the Disclosure and Barring Service, and complies with the DBS Code of Practice. All supply staff who are placed into a school environment by Protocol Education are required to have a current Enhanced DBS certificate applicable to the Children's Workforce. For settings where candidates are working with vulnerable adults, these candidate will require a DBS certificate applicable to the Adult Workforce.

Protocol Education uses the DBS eBulk Service to obtain DBS certificates for candidates. The eBulk process confirms electronically to Protocol Education if the individual's new disclosure certificate is clear or not clear. If a disclosure certificate obtained by Protocol Education is not clear, that is, it contains information, the original certificate must be sighted and the standard company risk assessment completed to determine suitability for registration.

Protocol Education will undertake a check using the Update Service for DBS certificates obtained by the candidate through another employer. If the Update Service check indicates a change to the disclosure certificate presented by a candidate, a new disclosure certificate is required.

Protocol Education shares information noted on individuals' disclosure certificates with clients as required by the DfE. All candidates are advised to take their police check document with them to all assignments to allow clients to record the details in the school's Single Central Register.

#### **(1) British candidates:**

Anyone applying to work with children is exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and the supporting regulations. This means every applicant must provide details of all convictions, cautions, and warnings which are not subject to current filtering rules. Written Risk Assessments are conducted by Protocol Education when a DBS certificate contains any information, to determine that candidate's suitability for registration.

Candidates are given three opportunities to declare any information which may be contained on a DBS certificate: (1) at the verbal vetting stage; (2) on the application form; and (3) at interview. If something comes up later that has not been declared, the candidate will be required to explain, and a decision taken at senior level as to whether to accept that candidate for placement.

Candidates may be offered to a client once a DBS application has been lodged (and confirmed by the DBS on-line tracking service) but before the disclosure certificate is returned. These candidates are only booked at the client's discretion, and when written confirmation has been received from the client indicating acceptance of the candidate. Clients will be informed once the Disclosure certificate is received.

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If a candidate who has recently worked abroad for a period of time wishes to register, s/he must provide a police check or certificate of good conduct from that country to ensure the period spent working out of the UK is covered. A DBS certificate is also completed, as well as any overseas police check / references that may be necessary, to ensure we have complete criminal record history of the candidate. The police checks / references must cover all the countries worked in during the candidate's time abroad.

A new DBS certificate, or the relevant check through the DBS Update Service if the candidate is registered) is required if the candidate has a break in service of three months or more in education, or if there are concerns about the candidate's suitability to work with children.

**(2) EU and Non-EU (foreign) candidates:**

All EU and foreign candidates must provide a relevant current and original police check from their main country of residence. Written Risk Assessments are conducted on candidates with disclosures. Further, if a candidate has worked in other countries during their recent employment history, additional police clearances will be required. If the candidate needs a police check from Australia, New Zealand or Canada, this can be arranged through overseas offices.

Where a local police check is not available, or cannot be validated, the consultant must rely heavily on a thorough face to face interview and references. At least one more character reference must be sought from a person in a position of authority and known to the candidate whilst working abroad, to gain reassurance that the candidate had no convictions that would preclude working with children or vulnerable adults. This additional reference must contain a written statement which confirms that, to the referee's knowledge, the candidate was not involved in any illegal or unlawful activity whilst in the referee's employ.

All overseas candidates will be asked to complete a DBS certificate application form at interview / induction.

**Barred Lists' Checks**

A nominated person in each branch has access to the DBS Barred Lists checking portal. Checks on all known names used are carried out at registration (prior to the candidate commencing work) and annually thereafter on all available and working candidates. Overseas arrivals are checked at induction in the United Kingdom.

**Disqualification by Association:**

In accordance with the Childcare Act 2006 and the Childcare (Disqualification) regulations 2009, all candidates must declare in writing that they have read the relevant DfE guidance regarding disqualification, that they are not disqualified on any grounds as set out in the DfE guidance, that to the best of their knowledge they do not live with anyone who is disqualified on any of the grounds set out in the guidance, and that they understand their specific responsibilities to safeguard children.

**References**

A minimum of two satisfactory and current references is required for registration of all candidates; at least one reference should be from a school / child care / vulnerable adult care environment, covering a minimum period of four weeks work at one establishment which can be confirmed by a credible referee. The most recent reference is always be sourced, and any gaps evidenced. Referees are asked to provide information which relates to concerns about the candidate working with children, if the candidate has been dismissed from a childcare position, and if the referee is aware of

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any issues in relation to safeguarding and child protection. References for all working candidates are updated frequently through verbal and written assessment feedback forms sent to clients.

### **Previous Employment History**

Consultants are trained to recognise a candidate's skills, experience and competency, as well as to identify gaps in their employment history on the CV or application form. They ask probing questions to satisfy themselves of the reasons for the gaps and seek evidence for the period of unemployment (maternity leave, illness, travel etc.). Gaps in employment history, and the reason for the gaps, are noted on the candidate profile.

Protocol Education contacts candidates regularly, and work availability diaries are kept updated. Short gaps in employment history are always explored, and additional references sourced, as circumstances may have changed and issues may have arisen which can unexpectedly affect the candidate's suitability for work.

### **Permission to work in the United Kingdom**

All candidates must prove that they have the right to work in the United Kingdom, in line with the document requirements outlined in the Home Office directive: *An employer's guide to right to work checks (July 2016)*.

Several members of staff are trained in immigration issues and act as a resource for consultants, to ensure that any foreign candidate does not work illegally.

All foreign candidates have their passports and relevant entry clearance vignettes or biometric residence permits witnessed and copied at their induction / interview. The database prevents any candidate whose visa has expired, or about to expire, from being placed in a booking.

### **Medical Fitness**

In line with the Education (Health Standards) (England) Regulations 2003, it is a mandatory requirement of Protocol Education for candidates to declare themselves fit to work in an education setting, and to advise Protocol Education if they have any health issues or disability relevant to the day-to-day activities associated with teaching or child care. Any issues raised by candidates are discussed at interview, and if necessary candidates may be asked to provide a "Fitness to Work" certificate from a General Practitioner.

### **Fluency of English**

Protocol Education requires all candidates to demonstrate a level of fluency sufficient to be able to support pupils to GCSE level. This is assessed at the verbal vetting stage and rejections may happen here if the applicant's English is too poor to understand on the telephone. The candidate may be rejected after interview on the same grounds, as ability to cope in the classroom and support pupils is paramount. It is the consultant's responsibility to make the judgement based on the candidate's interview responses.

### **Rejections**

Protocol Education reserves the right to decline applicants at the telephone vetting stage or after the interview if the candidate does not meet company requirements.

### **Complaints**

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Protocol Education has a formal complaints policy. All concerns raised by clients about a candidate are discussed fully with both the client and candidate, and appropriate action taken. This information is recorded on both the candidate and client profiles. If necessary, candidates may be excluded from a particular school if the client requests this; our electronic booking system will prevent the candidate from being placed into that school again.

Candidates are given constructive advice from trained personnel to help overcome issues which have been raised by clients, and are referred to appropriate professional development courses. Candidates who receive four or more school exclusions, for whatever reason, will be formally advised that Protocol Education will no longer be seeking placements for them. Candidates involved in complaints of a child protection nature are immediately prevented from undertaking further placements, and remain suspended until the issue has been satisfactorily resolved. Protocol Education works closely with schools and the Local Authority LADO, and will fulfil its duty of referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service.

**Duty of Referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service and the National College of Teaching and Leadership**

Protocol Education is committed to undertaking fully our duty of referral to the DBS when a worker is dismissed or removed from working with children and / or vulnerable adults because they have harmed or intended to harm a child or vulnerable adult, as outline in the DBS Referral Guidance. Senior members of staff at Protocol Education are familiar with the process of referral, and have received specific training with this process from a Local Authority Child Protection training officer. Protocol Education works closely with LADOs and police, if necessary, to ensure that complaints of a child protection nature are handled fairly and appropriately. Similarly, any incidence of serious professional misconduct will be reported to the NCTL.

**Any further queries about our vetting processes may be forwarded to:  
Brian Todd (Quality Manager), at [btodd@protocol-education.com](mailto:btodd@protocol-education.com)**