



Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy & Statement

Updated: December 2022

Approved by: Executive Leadership Team

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Elston Hall Learning Trust will not unfairly discriminate against any applicant for employment based on conviction or other details disclosed. Elston Hall Learning Trust makes appointment decisions based on merit and ability. If an applicant has a criminal record this will not automatically bar them from employment with the Trust. Each case will be decided on its merits in accordance with the objective assessment criteria.

All positions within the school are exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. All applicants must therefore declare all previous convictions and cautions, including those which would normally be considered "spent" except those received for an offence committed in the United Kingdom if it has been filtered in accordance with the DBS filtering rules.

A failure to disclose a previous conviction (which should be declared) may lead to an application being rejected or, if the failure to disclose is discovered after employment has started, may lead to summary dismissal on the grounds of gross misconduct. A failure to disclose a previous conviction may also amount to a criminal offence.

It is unlawful for the Trust to employ anyone who is barred from working with children. It is a criminal offence for any person who is barred from working with children to apply for a position at the Trust or any of its schools.

The Trust/school will make a report to the Police and / or the DBS if:

- it receives an application from a barred person;
- it is provided with false information in, or in support of an applicant's application; or
- it has serious concerns about an applicant's suitability to work with children.

Assessment criteria

If relevant information (whether in relation to previous convictions or otherwise) is volunteered by an applicant during the recruitment process or obtained through the self-disclosure and declaration form, the school will consider the following factors before reaching a recruitment decision:

- whether the conviction or other matter revealed is relevant to the position in question;
- the seriousness of any offence or other matter revealed;
- the length of time since the offence or other matter occurred;
- whether the applicant has a pattern of offending behaviour or other relevant matters;
- whether the applicant's circumstances have changed since the offending behaviour or other relevant matters; and the circumstances surrounding the offence and the explanation(s) offered by the applicant.

If the post involves regular contact with children, it is the school's normal policy to consider it a high risk to employ anyone who has been convicted at any time of any the following offences:

murder, manslaughter, rape, other serious sexual offences, grievous bodily harm or other serious acts of violence; or serious class A drug related offences, robbery, burglary, theft, deception or fraud. If the post involves access to money or budget responsibility, it is the school's normal policy to consider it a high risk to employ anyone who has been convicted at any time of robbery, burglary, theft, deception or fraud.

If the post involves some driving responsibilities, it is the school's normal policy to consider it a high risk to employ anyone who has been convicted of drink driving [within the last ten years].

Assessment procedure

If relevant information (whether in relation to previous convictions or otherwise) is volunteered by an applicant during the recruitment process or obtained through a disclosure check, the school will carry out a risk assessment by reference to the criteria set out above. The assessment form must be signed by the Chief Executive / Headteacher before a position is offered or confirmed.

If an applicant wishes to dispute any information contained in a disclosure, they may do so by contacting the DBS. In cases where the applicant would otherwise be offered a position were it not for the disputed information, the school may, where practicable and at its discretion, defer a final decision about the appointment until the applicant has had a reasonable opportunity to challenge the disclosure information.

Retention and security of disclosure information

The Trust's policy is to observe the guidance issued or supported by the DBS on the use of disclosure information.

In particular, the Trust / school will:

- store disclosure information and other confidential documents issued by the DBS in locked, non-portable storage containers, access to which will be restricted;
- not retain disclosure information or any associated correspondence for longer than is necessary, and for a maximum of six months.
- The school will keep a record of the date of a disclosure, the name of the subject, the type of disclosure, the position in question, the unique number issued by the DBS and the recruitment decision taken;
- ensure that any disclosure information is destroyed by suitably secure means such as shredding; and prohibit the photocopying or scanning of any disclosure information without the express permission of the individual to whom the disclosure relates.

If a DBS Certificate reveals any convictions, the person concerned will be invited to attend an interview with the Chief Executive / Headteacher to discuss the conviction(s) and circumstances. Following this meeting a risk assessment will be carried out and a decision made and communicated back to the person concerned. For safer recruitment purposes, until this decision has been made the applicant should not commence employment.

Policy Statement on the Recruitment of Ex-offenders

This policy is available to all DBS applicants from the outset of the recruitment process.

- As an organisation assessing applicants' suitability for positions which are included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order using criminal record checks processed through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), Elston Hall Learning Trust comply fully with the Code of Practice and undertake to treat all applicants for positions fairly.
- Elston Hall Learning Trust undertake not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a DBS check based on a conviction or other information revealed.
- Elston Hall Learning Trust can only ask an individual to provide details of convictions and cautions that we are legally entitled to know about. Where a DBS certificate at either standard or enhanced level can legally be requested (where the position is one that is included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 as amended, and where appropriate Police Act Regulations as amended)
- Elston Hall Learning Trust will only ask about convictions and cautions that are not protected.
- Elston Hall Learning Trust are committed to the fair treatment of its staff, potential staff, and users of its services, regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependents, age, physical/mental disability or offending background.
- Elston Hall Learning Trust actively promote equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills, and potential and welcome applications from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records. We select all candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications, and experience.
- An application for a criminal record check is only submitted to DBS after a thorough risk assessment has indicated that one is both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned. For those positions where a criminal record check is identified as necessary, all application forms, job adverts and recruitment briefs will contain a statement that an application for a DBS certificate will be submitted in the event of the individual being offered the position.
- Elston Hall Learning Trust ensures that all those in the school who are involved in the recruitment process have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of offences.
- Elston Hall Learning Trust also ensures that they have received appropriate guidance and training in the relevant legislation relating to the employment of ex-offenders, e.g., the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

- At interview, or in a separate discussion, Elston Hall Learning Trust ensures that an open and measured discussion takes place about any offences or other matter that might be relevant to the position.
- Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment.
- Elston Hall Learning Trust makes every subject of a criminal record check submitted to DBS aware of the existence of the code of practice and makes a copy available on request.
- We undertake to discuss any matter revealed in a DBS check with the person seeking the position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.