Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust

Guidance - Online Searching of shortlisted candidates

Context: The Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 document states in paragraph 301

> *301*. In addition, as part of the shortlisting process schools and colleges should consider carrying out a search (via an online search engine) as part of their due diligence on the shortlisted candidates. This may help identify any incidents or issues that have happened, and are publicly available online, which the school or college might want to explore with the applicant at interview. Schools and colleges should inform shortlisted candidates that online searches may be done as part of due diligence checks.
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Information to share with applicants:

In line with KCSiE 2026, all BBCET schools conduct online searches of shortlisted candidates in order to identify candidates who may not be suitable to work alongside children. These searches are only used to check the suitability of shortlisted candidates for working with children and are not used to investigate other areas of a person's life. Shortlisted candidates will be informed (in writing) prior to interview that an online search may be conducted as part of due diligence checks.

Some of the information we look for during these searches include evidence of offensive or inappropriate behaviour, jokes or language, discriminatory comments, inappropriate photos, drug or alcohol misuse and anything that suggests a candidate may not be suitable to work with children.

Searches are conducted in line with set parameters to ensure there is consistency in the range of what is searched for with each candidate. Searches will be carried out in a consistent manner for all shortlisted candidates and recorded regardless of outcome. These searches include:

- A basic 'Google' search
- A search of professional/career site: LinkedIn

Online searches shall only review information that is publicly available (e.g. search engine results, public professional profiles) and shall not involve accessing private accounts or requesting candidate credentials.

The online review is completed by a person in the school who does not sit on the selection panel for recruitment and who only feeds in information to the recruiting process any information found in the online review which impacts safeguarding or reputation. The nominated person ensures that no information which can be deemed as irrelevant to the recruiting process such as age, gender or race is passed to the selection panel.

Any information deemed to be relevant which is uncovered during the online search process is reviewed and if appropriate then raised with the candidate by a member(s) of the interview panel to allow them to address any concerns the school may have.

All data and information is held and treated in line with the Trust's Data Protection Policy and all relevant government legislation relating to use of personal data.

If a candidate has any concerns or question regarding the online search process, they are asked to contact the Trust via Joanne.smith@bishopbewickcet.org

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