

# REFERENCE POLICY

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### 1 POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1. In line with guidance set out within Keeping Children Safe in Education, the purpose of providing references is to allow employers to obtain factual information to support appointment decisions.
- 1.2. Line managers can expect to be asked to act as referees for current or former employees. This policy provides guidance on how to respond to such a request.

### 2 RECEIVING A REQUEST FOR A REFERENCE

- 2.1. It is the Federation's policy that references for a former or current employee must either be written, or checked and countersigned, by the Executive Principal. If the reference is for the Executive Principal, this should be checked and signed by the Chair of Trustees.
- 2.2. In order to ensure a fair and accurate reference, the Federation reference template form must be used, as opposed to any pro formas sent by the prospective employer.
- 2.3. If line managers receive reference requests to provide a reference, they must complete the Federation reference template form and send it to the Assistant to the Executive Principal to arrange checking and countersigning.

### 3 PERSONAL REFERENCES

- 3.1. Whilst it is not advisable to do so, line managers may provide personal references, however these must not be on Federation letterheaded paper, nor supplied with a Federation compliment slip and must not be sent from a Federation email address. The referee must make it clear that they are not responding on behalf of the Federation.

3.2. Colleagues who provide personal references take on the risk and responsibility for their content, should it be challenged by their current/former colleague or the requesting employer.

#### 4 PROVIDING THE INFORMATION REQUESTED

4.1. The individual dealing with the reference request should ensure that the individual to whom the request for the reference relates has consented to a reference being provided. If the person dealing with the request has any doubts about whether or not the individual has given their consent, they must contact the individual to check whether or not they want a reference to be provided.

4.2. Any references provided will be in writing on the Federation outgoing reference template, and will explain that it is the Federation's policy to respond to requests for information in a standard format.

4.3. The only information that will be provided is:

- The employee's job title.
- Employment start date.
- Employment end date (if applicable).
- Any jobs that the employee held within the Federation prior to the job held at the date of termination (or the current job), and for how long they performed these jobs.
- Reason for leaving (for example, resignation, redundancy, or the expiry of a fixed-term contract).
- Whether or not any disciplinary or capability warnings have been issued to the employee during the last 12 months or, if the reference is for a former employee, in the 12 months prior to their leaving the Federation.
- A statement confirming whether the Federation is satisfied with the applicant's suitability to work with children, and provide the facts (not opinions) of any substantiated safeguarding concerns/allegations that meet the harm threshold.

4.4. The form also provides the opportunity for some further comments to be made; these are to be copied from the employee's most recent performance review summary comment, if relevant.

4.5. It is the responsibility of the author of the reference to ensure that the information provided is true, accurate, fair and not misleading.

4.6. If there is an ongoing process such as a disciplinary investigation, or the employee resigns before the investigation reaches a conclusion, the Executive Principal may wish to disclose it. They will refer to guidance within KCSIE and may seek legal advice.

4.7. References should not include information about concerns/allegations which are unsubstantiated, unfounded, false, or malicious.

- 4.8. All outgoing references must be marked as confidential.
- 4.9. A disclaimer should be included in the reference making it clear that, while the information provided is, to the best of the Federation's knowledge, completely accurate, the Federation cannot accept any responsibility or liability for decisions based on it.
- 4.10. Where a significant period of time has passed between employment and the request, the reference should be accompanied by an email that makes it clear that it was true at the time of writing, although some time has now elapsed and a more up-to-date referee should be sought.
- 4.11. If such a significant time has passed that the former colleague's employment record is no longer available, the Federation will not be able to provide a reference, and will inform the prospective employer accordingly.

## 5 DEALING WITH ENQUIRIES RAISED BY THE PROSPECTIVE EMPLOYER

- 5.1. If the author of the reference receives an enquiry from the prospective employer for clarification of information given in the reference, the author must ensure that they do not go beyond the content of the reference in the information provided. Any such enquiry should, where possible, be dealt with in writing to avoid any subsequent confusion. If the enquiry is dealt with over the telephone, a written record of the information provided must be made at the time of the conversation.

## 6 REFERENCE REQUESTS FOR SUPPLEMENTARY JOBS

- 6.1. Occasionally, the Federation may receive reference requests from staff who wish to undertake a supplementary role that compliments their role as teacher, for example, to conduct marking for exam boards. In these cases, it is acceptable for Senior Leaders to complete references on behalf of the Federation, again following the criteria set out within this policy.

## 7 STUDENT REFERENCES

- 7.1. From time to time, colleagues may receive reference requests on behalf of students who are applying for casual work, to support college/university applications or summer camps. It is appropriate for school leaders to complete these, ensuring they are factual and, whenever possible, based upon recent tutor reports.