

## **OUR POLICY STATEMENTS**

### **OUR AGENCY'S RESPONSE to STANDARD 1: VETTING**

#### **Summary of this agency's policy on vetting:**

In keeping with our absolute responsibilities to the public as well as our statutory legal obligations, this agency thoroughly vets all of its supply teachers by running exhaustive background, character, medical, criminal and professional checks. Such checks are made before an initial appointment and repeated during service. Any circumvention of our strict procedures is taken seriously and may result in instant dismissal of all parties concerned.

#### **Expansion of this agency's policy on vetting:**

All of our procedures comply fully with all relevant DfES / DCSF circulars, the Employment Agencies Act and EU guidance, as well as letters from the DES and Melvyn Barker mentioned in REC guidelines (of which we have copies available to all staff).

Our pre-employment checks are rigorous and in excess of those legally required. Teachers are not available for placement until all necessary pre-employment checks have been completed. Furthermore, we are committed to selecting and offering for placement employees who are suited to the placement stipulations given by the school. We are also committed to offering our teachers those placements that match the requirements they have of employers. This agency has developed its own computer database with a back-up system. It also uses spreadsheets and paper copies that accommodate all of the peculiarities of teacher selection including pre-employment checks. Our database utilizes many information categories that facilitate accurate candidate search and selection. We recognize that an employer and employee both need to feel 'suited' to each other and therefore we allow both parties a major part in the proceedings leading up to placement. We proactively seek and utilize evaluative information offered by schools and teachers and, where relevant, are committed to sharing this (subject to the provisions of Data Protection acts). All teachers are treated equally, regardless of age, disability, gender, nationality, race, religion and sexual orientation.

Ultimately this agency has a policy to err, if ever, on the side of caution. We take our responsibilities very seriously, as must all employers in this sector. If there is any question about a teacher's suitability then our response must be to not employ them.

## How this agency's policy on vetting is implemented:

- He agency has a written disclosure policy and disseminates this to all parties.
- We use Parenta list-99 checking.
- We also use [www.cataphract.co.uk](http://www.cataphract.co.uk)
- We are thoroughly practised in processing CRB checks including those via a 2<sup>nd</sup> agency, and for the moment we continue to use the portability scheme.
- If we receive no reply to a query under the portability scheme, we make our own CRB checks.
- Such checks are of the 'full enhanced disclosure' variety. This agency has a compact written disclosure policy and disseminates a version of this to all parties i.e. client schools and teachers.
- We of course use a 'full enhanced disclosure' process.
- This agency will accept a letter from a LEA confirming a teacher to be already on their supply teachers register and to be therefore CRB checked, providing the letter is less than 1 year old.
- Otherwise this agency has prospective teachers fill out and return the CRB disclosure form.
- The CRB charge us for processing this check but the teacher pays for it from their first pay.
- This agency has been operating since November 2003.
- We do not use online List 99 checking as we wait for the full CRB check including that.
- As a matter of policy we now make CRB check numbers available to clients.
- Such checks are being repeated every 3 years or sooner, and we are currently up to date on this score.
- We are thoroughly familiar with the nature and provenance of a broad range of proofs of status and ID, including teaching qualifications and Enhanced Disclosure documents.
- No document is assumed to be genuine or original. Sadly we are too well aware that technology allows the forgery of anything. We always verify if we have any worries about, for example, accepting a copy.
- This agency (which has perhaps 20% OQTs) is familiar with NARIC evaluations of overseas candidates' qualifications. The candidates themselves are not left to discharge this responsibility.
- In some circumstances a teacher cannot provide original certification. Copies are only acceptable if we can obtain a verification of authenticity. Confirmation of teacher or graduate status should be obtainable by telephone enquiry, and thereafter confirmed in writing, but this agency will obtain the telephone number itself and take all reasonable steps to avoid fraud.
- Records of documents seen at (or before and after) interview are made on files. Copies are kept. These are signed and dated by consultants,
- Proofs of address stretching back for 5 years and as recent as during the previous 3 months are required. Any breaks in documentation that cover longer than 3 months are investigated.
- We ensure that CRB checks are repeated every 3 years or sooner and are currently up-to-date on this score.
- We ensure that List 99 checks are repeated every 12 months or sooner and are currently up-to-date on this score.
- We do not use the portability scheme.
- We utilize a standard health declaration for all teachers and, where merited, a medical referral procedure / long-term illness query. All teachers must complete a medical form. We also have standard literature to use in the event of a subsequent concern over medical (including mental) health.
- In some circumstances we will actually ask a GP to provide a letter clarifying the candidate's fitness to teach (or otherwise).
- Teachers who are unemployed are advised that the costs of medical checks to gain employment are usually paid for by the state. Ordinarily doctors do not charge in any event.
- This agency will not offer work to teachers whose pre employment checks are unsatisfactory. This decision - what is and what is not satisfactory - rests with senior management.
- We have a system in place to notify schools of incomplete checks (itemized, it states clearly which checks – e.g. List 99 - are satisfactorily completed, and ensures a work permit is issued where relevant – obviously not by this agency!)
- Teachers are invariably seen on a face-to-face basis with photo ID (a passport, driving licence or other incontrovertible document) before they are employed.
- We interview overseas candidates only on arrival in the UK and before recommending such candidates to our client schools.

- Teachers are asked at interview if they are registered with the GTC. They are told that registration is ordinarily a legal obligation (on them, not us) but that a short period of grace is allowed. We have a system to chase teachers to ensure they join. But we operate no compulsory or putative system.
- This agency recognizes the dangers of allowing anybody who has not been fully checked into a school. We will not send any candidate into any school before it has had the all-clear in respect of List 99 and CRB checks, except for interview and in such cases the school is told in writing of this situation prior to the visit. We expect a written confirmation of that warning before the interview takes place.
- We also never assume that a candidate who claims to be a new arrival in the UK has genuinely done this. On the basis that full CRB and List 99 checks should be made in case the candidate has been in the UK before or for some time, and that checks would show this to be the case, we do them anyway.
- We always have the clear List 99 checks, at least 2 references and the medical check completed satisfactorily, with the CRB check under way, before we use a teacher. Even then schools are clearly told about any unfinished process. We have to be flexible if process delays continue to compromise safety and trading.
- 'Clean' Disclosures enable prioritization of candidates. Those which feature spent or unspent convictions, police cautions or other information provided by the police are referred to our MD, who will ordinarily refuse the application on the grounds that our policy is to err only on the side of caution. Nevertheless, we are mindful of our responsibilities regarding the rehabilitation of offenders – providing offences are in no way related to the suitability of candidates for teaching.
- Following recent advice for the CRB, we are prepared to exclude teachers from short-listing if a client has already expressed a wish that candidates must have entirely clear enhanced disclosures or similar.
- This agency requires prospective employees to show us their passports. UK residents present no problems. Clearly EU residents have the right to work here (and, as our map shows, we are aware of those countries which are currently member states). Otherwise we require a valid (and verifiable) working visa or permit. On the occasions when UK residents have no passport, then they should have a National Insurance number. This will be required anyway for the payroll.
- Our responsibility to maintain confidentiality is invariably outweighed by our answerability in respect of public interest. This agency considers public interest, and public relations, to be intrinsic to its commercial success. Any concerns are therefore promptly reported to the appropriate authorities, whether or not the matter involves an embarrassing revelation for it as an organization or for a member of its staff.

## **OUR AGENCY'S RESPONSE to STANDARD 2: INTERVIEWS**

### **Summary of this agency's policy on interviews:**

It is this agency's policy to utilize only suitably-trained and sector-experienced staff, who are able to properly ascertain applicant potential and explain this agency's modus operandi as well as our expectations, to conduct and document face-to-face interviews with supply teachers prior to their appointment.

At this agency we will continue, as we grow, to make a clear distinction within the organization between those who are trained in recruitment and selection to the level that qualifies them to interview and those who are restricted to a non-interviewing administrative support role.

All of our staff, regardless of their role, are trained and monitored in the use of the company's hardware and software systems, our policies and processes. Nobody is given responsibilities and left unchecked in their execution without proper supervision to ascertain their competence and reliability. Newly-recruited office staff are thus gradually induced and trained on the job, with their duties never exceeding their competence.

We have in effect adopted our Quality Mark application (which we accept will need to be modified before the process is complete) as a training and operations manual – as well as a sales-tool. Thus existing staff and newcomers are made aware of the conventions by which we are expected to operate. Newcomers will be supervised on work that is contained within just one standard at a time, allowing induction within bounds that can be easily monitored by fully-experienced colleagues.

### **Expansion of this agency's policy on interviews:**

This agency aims to hold informative, useful teacher recruitment interviews reflecting the beginning of a successful professional working relationship between teacher, agency and school. Interviews have four main purposes:

- Examination of evidence, namely identity, certification and qualification, permission to work in the UK, health history
- Gain a clear understanding of the teacher's career history - namely experience, skills, knowledge, strengths, training record.
- Formulate a clear picture of the teachers' desires, specifications and areas of possible professional development for future work opportunities.
- Share ethos of agency and our procedures.

### How this agency's policy on interviews is implemented:

- Interviews are only conducted by qualified and experienced interviewers; administrative staff are not allowed to conduct interviews.
- We make a distinction (see CVs) between staff who can – and those who cannot – conduct interviews.
- Each interviewer we use has, and will continue to have, the appropriate qualifications and/or training they need in order to become a skilled interviewer.
- Interviews are conducted face-to-face. No alternative is permissible.
- This agency has overcome the logistical problems of interviewing all candidates face-to face. We travel ourselves whenever necessary.
- Interviews are not always pre-arranged. When a candidate arrives without a prior arrangement to be interviewed, we would only proceed if they were presenting themselves with all of their documents. In practice this seldom happens, but subject to documents being in order we have no reason to turn a candidate away at that stage
- Proper written records (which utilize standard and non-standard questions in 'open' and 'closed' form) are kept of all interviews (and we are looking at the implications of voice-recording all interviews).
- Employment gaps are raised with candidates and their responses documented and verified.
- Interviewers are required to interview together occasionally and to discuss teacher performance on a regular basis in order to achieve a standard of quality within the agency.
- Candidates and consultants are made aware of our policy on discrimination, and this agency is intrinsically ethnically enlightened. We have a form to fill in and these are occasionally collated and reviewed by senior management to ensure that we have been, on the balance, even-handed.
- Any questions asked which may be construed as 'personal' (e.g. concerning dependent children or finances) are posed in conjunction with a rider which confirms that it is only raised in the best interests of matching the candidate with a suitable post in which they will be happy and content.
- Referees named by the teacher are contacted by the interviewer and references used to support information gleaned during interview
- Teachers are required to name recent professional referees
- Interviewers are required to evaluate teacher performance with our client schools and debrief teachers working for the first time
- Client visits to schools are also used to inform our interviewing process

## **OUR AGENCY'S RESPONSE to STANDARD 3: INDUCTION MATERIALS**

### **Summary of this agency's policy on induction materials:**

This agency undertakes to provide its staff at induction with an unambiguous contract which fully documents in respect of pay, terms and conditions as well as other entitlements, the compensation package that its supply teachers receive in exchange for pre-agreed professional services.

We also seek, at this point, to remind teachers of their obligations in respect of the professional services they are expected to render in return for their remuneration.

### **Expansion of this agency's policy on induction materials:**

Our induction pack contains a broad raft of materials that is designed to be readily identifiable, not so onerous that it will not be read, and so that it broadly complies with what teachers need to know. The Induction Pack is given to teachers at the time of their face-to-face interview, and its contents explained. Moves are afoot to provide all of this information on a CD to be given to all of our teachers and revamped on an annual basis.

## How this agency's policy on induction materials is implemented:

- This agency is mindful of the statutory requirement under the Conduct of Employment Agencies and Employment Business Regulations 2003 that we state the type of work we seek for our temporary workers, and we define this as teaching, supervision within the classroom and outside where duties (e.g. physical education and field-trips) require it, to include preparation and marking, to include playground and dinnertime supervision as and when required, and to comply with any reasonable request in keeping with best practice made by the school or education authority as employers.
- This agency is an 'Employment Agency' rather than an 'Employment Business'.
- The contents of our induction pack are regularly updated and upgraded in keeping with developments (e.g. the recent changes regarding legal entitlement to paid vacations, for which we have identified, following advices from within the REC, 1/12<sup>th</sup> of pay as being an appropriate sum to be taken in lieu of holiday entitlements).
- This pack is given at interview (unless it is clear - or likely - that the candidate will not be employed).
- Currently our contents include (but are not restricted to) the following: Terms and Conditions of Engagement, Time-Sheets (which we expect to have returned though we realize this is not a legal requirement), Term Dates, Time-Sheet Deadlines & Pay Dates, an Induction Checklist, Useful Addresses, Tax Information, a copy Circular 10/98 (Section 550A of the Education Act 1996: The Use of Force to Control or Restrain Pupils) and timesheet envelopes. It is anticipated that these will largely be delivered on disk, with specimen hard copies provided for reference, in the near future.
- Pension arrangements are to be made by teachers, but we do provide some information and advice.
- Teachers are told that they are entitled to paid leave under the Working Time Regulations 1998. But that leave is restricted to the weeks ordinarily reserved for school holidays. This messaging appears on pay-packets, along with the notification that *'This agency pays its entire staff well above the minimum wage, and in compliance with their legal obligation it includes a component within the gross wage (which can vary from employee to employee) that, at 10.17%, is in lieu of holiday pay. This rate will rise in April 2009'*

## **OUR AGENCY'S RESPONSE to STANDARD 4: REFERENCES**

### **Summary of this agency's policy on references:**

It is this agency's absolute responsibility to not only take up professional references and weigh them thoroughly but to also ascertain the validity of their provenance by ensuring that referees themselves are reliable professionals who can genuinely and objectively vouch for candidates' abilities and good character.

Where testimonials are employed in lieu of references, as is occasionally the case and for good reason, similarly stringent safeguards are employed.

### **Expansion of this agency's policy on references:**

This agency operates what we consider to be a thorough and seamless system, reliant on a computer system which is fully-integrated with our paperwork and administration, to ensure that every reasonable professional care is taken to filter out unsuitable applicants. In the event of any employee subsequently proving to be unsuitable, we re-examine our procedures to ensure the same event will not recur.

### How this agency's policy on references is implemented:

- We ensure that the nominated referees are themselves qualified and suitable professionals, usually by contacting them at their own place of work (in the case of retired teachers, or for any other *bona fide* reason, this agency uses its discretion whilst safeguarding standards).
- We ensure that referees are able to comment with authority on the teacher's professional abilities and have recent knowledge of that teacher's performance.
- References may be taken over the telephone, and a positive response can drive a candidate forward quickly, but this agency is well aware that it risks catastrophe by not ensuring that verbal references are followed up in writing. Nothing can happen until such references are secured.
- Ordinarily a referee is expected to be senior to a candidate, but consultants will use their discretion in unusual circumstances (e.g. a semi-retired headmaster may call on his long-serving former deputy head for a reference rather than ask the incoming headteacher who doesn't know him). Common sense should prevail!
- In the instance of a 'nil return' from a referee, where a 'nil return' is a contact failure rather than a poor reference, the teacher is contacted for an alternative referee.
- In the instance of just one of the references being marginally sub-standard, then a 3<sup>rd</sup> referee will be contacted.
- Ordinarily testimonials will be acceptable but the same vetting process applies. Provenance and validity as a gauge of candidate suitability must be established.
- When an applicant is genuinely unable to provide two or more professional teaching referees for a reason which precludes a poor teaching record (most commonly they have only recently entered the profession) then this agency will ordinarily accept other professional referees supported by character referees and/or verifiable testimonials.
- The information revealed by the referees is used in conjunction with other pre-employment checks in deciding which sort of work to offer the teacher.
- We investigate any shortfall in reference provision.
- Ordinarily references are, of course, subject to Data Protection legislation. So they are not shared directly. But this may be necessary (if, for example, it is in the public interest).
- Once in service for our agency placement references are of course usually available, and this agency will then use these as gauges of its teachers' performance.

## **OUR AGENCY'S RESPONSE to STANDARD 5: OVERSEAS RECRUITMENT**

### **Summary of this agency's policy on overseas recruitment:**

In respect of overseas recruitment, this agency has expanded its recruitment activities overseas and actively recruits OQTs.

We employ teachers who are overseas born / trained / citizens - providing that they are already in the UK and have the necessary documentation (residence permits, work visas etc.) OQTs must go through CRB checks here (though the merits of that soon after arrival are dubious). And we endeavor to ascertain that they have the equivalent clearance in their countries of origin as well as wherever else they may have worked. This agency is well aware that migrant teachers can pose a heightened risk and acts accordingly.

### **We also travel to interview candidates overseas.**

We ensure that such candidates are fully screened and interviewed on a face-to-face basis which establishes their credentials and competence to teach the UK's National Curriculum as well as familiarity with the relevant Key Stage standards. Shortfalls of experience will be discussed with potential employers, but as professionals we expect that such deficiencies will be addressed without chivvying and particularly since we direct OQTs to the relevant resources (online and in the office) to enable rapid induction in respect of the National Curriculum.

In essence, our overseas reference policy is the same for all teachers, whatever their origins. All reasonable precautions must be taken, and no reliance is put on any non-verifiable source.

However, in view of recent guidance from the REC, the agency is now adapting its policy for OQTs and especially those from Commonwealth countries.

From now on, recruited teachers will not be required to leave their current posts during term-time in the source county, especially where they have contractual commitments to honour. If the source country requires it, a clearance certificate will be obtained before an individual leaves.

OQTs recruited overseas, should that occur, will be provided with accurate information about the agency and their role within it and/or for a long-term employer before they leave their country of origin. They will also receive their conditions of service, will receive a detailed explanation of the recruitment process, and be told that if they have a problem that they can and should approach the REC to whom complaints may be directed. Contact details would, in any event, be always provided to OQTs as to their UK-trained peers.

The agency reiterates that it is committed to providing catch-up familiarization with Key Stages and the National Curriculum, and that it will ensure the schools concerned are aware of and share this responsibility.

Such obligations will be relayed to and assumed by 3<sup>rd</sup> parties, ordinarily the schools, in such circumstances.

Furthermore, the numbers of teachers recruited from each country will be provided annually (on request) to the REC.

Lastly, where (and if) organized recruitment campaigns are planned, prior notice will be given to the authorities in the target country. When such a campaign is complete, those authorities would be advised of the number of teachers recruited. We, as an agency, will be willing to produce and sign, on request, a statement and established reporting procedure for supplying teacher numbers.

## **How this agency's policy on the employment of overseas born / trained / citizens is implemented:**

Our document 'Guidance for taking initial enquiry calls from Overseas Trained Teachers' reads:

- Ascertain the new teacher's status for supply; do they have a recognized teaching qualification?
- Ascertain where they qualified. (Which country?)
- Ascertain when they last taught? (How long ago?)
- Ascertain if they have already taught in schools in the UK.
- Ascertain if they require / possess a work permit to work in the UK. (If they have a work permit we need to see it at interview.)
- Ascertain if they possess a 'Certificate of Good Conduct' or a Police Check from the country they have just left to come to the UK. (It is essential that they do, or else we cannot offer them work.)
- Remember to tell Overseas Trained Teachers that all interviews are conducted face-to-face, so they have to be here to be interviewed and offered work.
- If there is to be an interview, then the candidate will have to have originals of all documents. They should be aware of this and Immigration may well have insisted on seeing proof of status. But clarify!
- Remember that all qualifications achieved overseas need to be verified as acceptable. We go to the National Academic Recognition Information Centre List of qualifications as being equivalent to UK NARIC Standards.
- Be positive but realistic. Emphasize our willingness to assist but our total obligation to adhere to the regulations. Make no promises. Treat these potential applicants like any other i.e. ensure they are subject to absolutely no discrimination.

**OUR AGENCY'S RESPONSE to STANDARD 6:  
SOLICITING SCHOOL FEEDBACK**

**Summary of this agency's policy on soliciting school feedback:**

As an essential part of its TQM program, this agency actively solicits feedback from schools in respect of the performance of the supply teachers and those on long-term contracts employed on their premises. Complimentary and constructive comments are passed on whilst complaints are responsibly processed and acted on. Recurrent nil returns trigger our follow-up mechanism.

**Expansion of this agency's policy on soliciting school feedback:**

This agency is ever-mindful of the necessity to uphold standards and, indeed, to test them in keeping with our broader philosophy of the best tenets of learning and examination. Without performance data teachers cannot be evaluated, and we therefore proactively solicit and chase returns from client-employers.

**How this agency's policy on soliciting school feedback is implemented:**

- We employ feedback forms for all teachers – on short or long-term placements.
- These forms are posted out, unless we happen to be in the schools when we organize the mailing.
- We employ a determined chase system to ensure that feedback materializes.
- We still temper this zeal for feedback with the need not to annoy our client schools.
- We aim to have teachers generate a positive evaluation every term.
- We have a system, and complementary literature, to inform teachers of the feedback which pertains to them.
- As with all of this agency's procedures, all parties are provided with hard copies of the relevant documentation. Forms are in the process of being saved to systems disks which will generate feedback that, where possible, is returned and relayed electronically to the teachers and those within this agency who are responsible for their supervision.

## **OUR AGENCY'S RESPONSE to STANDARD 7: EMPLOYING SCHOOL FEEDBACK**

### **Summary of this agency's policy on employing school feedback**

This agency's policy is to rapidly pass all feedback from schools to at least one appropriate party, allowing it to be usefully employed to either reinforce good practice or to halt, or otherwise remedy through sanctions or staff development, any unsatisfactory performance.

### **Expansion of this agency's policy on employing school feedback:**

This agency actively reviews all feedback, believing that performance testing is as important for teachers as it is for their pupils. Data does not lie unused; it is usefully employed as promptly as is practicable, and where urgency is appropriate we will immediately refer the matter to our MD.

Data is collected on a regular basis i.e. at least once a term from each school, but often more frequently. Certainly consultants will informally seek feedback during every call to a school once a sale of supply days has been made. Broadly speaking we distinguish between positive and negative feedback. Key comments are relayed in writing to our teachers on a standard form.

In recognition that most teachers have identifiable weaknesses that correlate with development needs, we will where necessary / possible recommend remedial action that might (for example) include a change of school or INSET training.

Where appropriate we will take sanctions with an under-performing teacher, and should that underperformance merit dismissal and/or referral to a 3<sup>rd</sup> party then we will do so without hesitation. In the main, we have few sanctions available and cannot discipline supply teachers.

**How this agency's policy on employing school feedback is implemented:**

- Feedback regularly solicited i.e. at least termly via standard forms.
- Feedback likewise referred to teachers, in +ve and –ve form, with recommendations where appropriate.
- Worrying feedback must be reported immediately to our MD.
- INSET or other professional training is recommended, and provided if possible, where appropriate as a remedial action.
- School changes are considered as a remedy where a better match of school and teacher is envisaged elsewhere (as in, for instance, problems which are put down to a personality clash in the staffroom).
- Any feedback that has implications for health and safety, or for the physical and emotional welfare of children, is referred without delay by this agency to those it deems to be the appropriate 3<sup>rd</sup> parties – at the discretion of our MD but erring on the side of caution.

## **OUR AGENCY'S RESPONSE to STANDARD 8: TERMINATIONS**

### **Summary of this agency's policy on terminations:**

In the event of a supply teacher clearly failing to perform to the high standards set by this agency even should that performance failure not necessitate the involvement of the GTC, the DCSF or the police, it is our policy to discipline and/or terminate employment where necessary under the provisions stipulated within the contract.

### **Expansion of this agency's policy on terminations:**

It is obviously necessary to have in place procedures for terminating the engagement of teachers where appropriate. Provisions in the teacher's contract deal with termination. We also deal with complaints about a teacher or complaints from a teacher discipline of a teacher and child protection including procedures for reporting and referring matters to the General Teaching Council, the Department for Education and Skills and the police where there has been a case of professional incompetence or misconduct.

## How this agency's policy on terminations is implemented:

The contract clearly states that: 'The Teacher is not obliged to accept any Assignment offered by this agency but if he or she does so, during the Assignment and afterwards, as appropriate, he or she will:

- At all times act in a professional manner.
- Co-operate with the school staff and accept the direction, supervision and instruction of any responsible person in the school.
- Observe any rules and regulations of the school to which attention has been drawn or which the teacher might reasonably be expected to be aware of or ascertain.
- Unless arrangements have been made to the contrary, conform to the normal hours of work currently in force at the school.
- Take all reasonable steps to safeguard her/his own safety and the safety of any other person who may be present or affected by his/her actions on the assignment and comply with the health and safety policy of the school.
- Not engage in any conduct detrimental to the interest of this agency and/or the school'.
- Notwithstanding these provisions, and the presence of an 'errors and omissions' clause at the conclusion of the contract, this agency also provides its teachers with an incontrovertible Code of Discipline, a Policy on Misconduct, and Contractual Provisions for Terminations. All of these reflect what is broadly agreed to be best practice and an approach that upholds exemplary professional standards. Copies of these documents are available to employers too, and will be provided in electronic form on indexed CD in the near future.
- In the event of a termination, this agency has an absolute duty to inform the police, the GTC, the Secretary of State at the DCSF, and the school concerned.
- Likewise this agency has an unequivocal duty to inform the same parties in the event of any instances of what might be termed 'professional misconduct'.
- In keeping with this agency's unequivocal responsibility to follow the guidance of the National Network of Investigation and Referral Support Co-ordinators we are required to properly manage allegations of child abuse against supply workers in schools. In the event of misconduct that prompts immediate intervention, we are obliged to promptly provide:
  - A statement of reasons for ceasing to use the teacher's services
  - Records relating to the cessation of the use of a teacher's services or any contemplated cessation, including notes, minutes or meetings, interview notes, and evidence supplied to or obtained by the agency
  - Records relating to the conduct that eventually led to the cessation of the use of the teacher's services
  - Information in support of your decision to engage the teacher any relevant information that can demonstrate that at the time of engagement there was no reason to believe the teacher was unsuitable for the position to which they were supplied
  - Investigative confidentiality since it is not always appropriate to make a teacher aware of an accusation.

**OUR AGENCY'S RESPONSE to STANDARD 9:**

Not applicable

## **OUR AGENCY'S RESPONSE to STANDARD 10: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **Summary of this agency's policy on professional development:**

Wherever practicable it is this agency's policy to provide in-house professional development. We are also committed to liaising with professional clients and colleagues to enhance our own awareness of opportunities for in-service training, and we pledge to keep our supply teachers aware of such events and the benefits of availing themselves of them. We have recently discussed collaborative arrangements, at the instigation of our consultants, which will involve our cost-sharing with other supply agencies.

### **Expansion of this agency's policy on professional development:**

All teachers recognize that delivering education is a challenging responsibility and that professional development is a continual process that begins with initial teacher training and necessarily continues through INSET during the course of their careers.

This agency is committed to these principles and to playing a part in the maintenance of high standards in education. We are therefore dedicated to the ongoing and accredited professional development of our teachers as part of our responsibilities as an employer.

## How this agency's policy on professional development is implemented:

- Our supply teachers can expect access to a range of training and development opportunities from a range of sources during their supply-teaching career.
- We see it as our responsibility to seek out information on courses which our teachers would be welcome to attend, and to relay that information to our teachers in writing; to that end we have utilized the resources of Ads Infinitum as consultants, and they have made approaches to the OU, the British Council and local LEAs for information which they are sharing with us.
- We are looking at mounting our own professional development courses in conjunction with other rival agencies, pooling resource in order to guarantee numbers and improve provision as well as the incidence of such training days.
- This agency offers its teachers full use of its Teacher Desk facilities - including Internet access - and office machinery within normal working hours.
- Experienced consultants offer free advice as well as practical help in the preparation of materials and lesson-plans (we are developing a Lesson Plan Bank which will ultimately go online) on request.
- Our teachers are offered free copies of the National Curriculum and advised of its availability and location online.
- We aim to facilitate training opportunities for teachers within their placement schools as well as the provision of documents and access to information.
- We aim to identify INSET opportunities as part of our teacher evaluation programme and to address these issues appropriately.
- Written feedback on courses attended is actively solicited and intelligently utilized.
- Teachers are asked which courses they would like to be able to attend, and where possible provision is made accordingly.
- Teachers not on this agency's books are made welcome at our training days (it's good PR to be facilitators, and such occasions anyway provide recruitment opportunities).
- All of these training, appraisals, assessments and qualifications are recorded in each teacher's personnel information folder.
- Teachers are offered a bonus payment for every day's service subsequent to each training day they attend.
- As this agency develops its Teachers CDs and website, we anticipate improving this provision. In particular we are actively working on the development of a 'Course Noticeboard' on the website; when this becomes available all teachers and employers will be notified (and reminded on a regular basis) of its presence and purpose.

**OUR AGENCY'S RESPONSE to STANDARD 11:  
TEACHER PREPARATION**

**Summary of this agency's policy on teacher preparation:**

As part and parcel of the professional support of our supply teachers, we provide them with ready access to an array of essential resources including the National Curriculum, PCs, photocopiers and other office machinery, as well as assistance on request with the preparation of teaching materials.

**Expansion of this agency's policy on teacher preparation:**

This agency is the first to recognize its responsibility to assist and support teachers' preparation, and provides access to CPD and curriculum materials and equipment as required.

### **How this agency's policy on teacher preparation is implemented:**

- Supply teachers are given access, on request, to relevant core materials through the company.
- They are offered copies of the National Curriculum (which they may collect, by prior arrangement, from our offices).
- Equipment (PCs, laminators, binders and photocopiers as well as desktop items like staplers and hole-punches) are likewise available during office hours. On occasion items may be loaned to teachers. We also advise teachers who may not be able to access our facilities, perhaps because of reasons of time or distance, where they should seek assistance. If we can help we do!
- Within reason, consumables such as paper, files, pens, paperclips, staples and tape are also freely available from our offices.
- As our document bank illustrates, we do have circulars that are sent out, from time to time, along with routine mailings to teachers. In due course we intend to put such notifications on disk (i.e. teacher-side CDs).
- This agency tries to ensure that our teachers can prepare adequately for their placements. To facilitate this we offer the administrative know-how provided by support staff. Although we are not educators ourselves, we are within reason happy to assist with not only lesson-plans but with creating materials and in teaching skills such as spreadsheet use.
- In the case of NQTs and OQTs, we advise these teachers and their mentors that they should work together. Both teachers and mentors are free to use our facilities.
- This agency has begun to build a Lesson Plan Bank which will be indexed in accordance with the National Curriculum and Key Stage references, offering incentives for contributors, and pouring resource into developing this in electronic form for the company website as well as putting it onto our Teacher CD.
- Teachers are clearly told of these facilities in writing. They are actively encouraged to use them (we love to see our teachers so they're made welcome!) And they are reminded of the availability of these facilities from time to time. Such details are also to be accommodated on our Teacher CD.

**OUR AGENCY'S RESPONSE to STANDARD 12:  
ASSIGNMENT BRIEFINGS**

**Summary of this agency's policy on assignment briefings:**

Wherever possible our teachers are, as a matter of policy, thoroughly briefed before they depart for their assignments. They should therefore be aware of where the school is, to whom they are to report, what they are to teach and when, as well as how to solicit assistance if necessary during the teaching day.

**Expansion of this agency's policy on assignment briefings:**

Long-Term Placement teachers almost invariably receive written assignment briefings. However, as a general rule this is not practicable for Daily Supply teachers (no agency can, during the morning rush, document everything in writing). Nevertheless, verbal briefings are given and on request teachers are sent faxed and/or emailed information. This information is supplemented as soon as possible, if only on arrival, by the school. Ultimately it will include details of:

- The timetable
- Directions
- Details of classes to be taught
- Information about any pupils with special educational needs
- Other adults (i.e. teaching assistants)
- Line management arrangements

### **How this agency's policy on assignment briefings is implemented:**

- At the outset this agency actively solicits travel directions from all of its client schools, where possible in email form to enable them to be quickly forwarded to teachers on request. Emanating from the school, this is an incontrovertible source and thus saves time for all those concerned whilst reducing the scope for errors or omissions
- Such travel directions can also be faxed and/or relayed verbally over the telephone by this agency's support staff.
- This agency also actively solicits induction information from all of its schools, likewise where possible in email form to enable them to be quickly forwarded to teachers on request. Emanating from the school, this is an incontrovertible source and thus saves time for all those concerned whilst reducing the scope for errors or omissions.
- Such induction information can also be faxed and/or relayed verbally over the telephone by this agency's support staff.
- If this agency has advanced notice of a placement then it is of course possible – and reduces stress during the morning rush – to forward travel and induction briefings as and when they are required.
- Long-Term Placement teachers receive a full assignment briefing in writing.
- This agency has flow-charts which clearly document the processes involved for teachers on both daily supply and long-term placement.

**OUR AGENCY'S RESPONSE to STANDARD 13:  
CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

**Summary of this agency's policy on continuous professional development:**

In common with their full-time colleagues, supply teachers need to be provided with opportunities to undertake reckonable further training. It is this agency's policy to facilitate that training and associated test programs, and to maintain proper records of each member of its teaching supply staff's continuous professional development.

**Expansion of this agency's policy on continuous professional development:**

This agency has forms to record further training that are kept in the teacher's individual files. Training, assessments, qualifications and appraisals are all noted.

Non-teaching staff likewise have records kept of their CPD.

**How this agency's policy on continuous professional development is implemented:**

- Teachers are actively encouraged to take part in CPD.
- Teachers are encouraged to inform us of CPD because it makes them more marketable.
- In some cases teachers are rewarded, through increased rates, for their CPD.
- Records are maintained to facilitate monitoring – there is an individual qualification, training and feedback form which needs to be upgraded on an annual basis.
- Data on CPD is periodically collected and used, because this agency is enthusiastic in respect of its encouragement, for marketing purposes.
- Non-teaching employees who extend their expertise are similarly rewarded and their achievements noted.

**OUR AGENCY'S RESPONSE to STANDARD 14:  
EDUCATIONAL INITIATIVES**

**Summary of this agency's policy on educational initiatives:**

Keeping abreast of change is vital to good educational delivery, and this agency has a firm policy commitment to regularly advising its supply staff of developments in the curriculum as well as innovations in respect of materials and new thoughts on best practice.

We are acutely aware that this should be the case for both teachers (on supply or on longer-term contracts) and for office staff. In the case of the latter, we deem it important that they have at least a passing familiarity with the changing world of those for whom they're acting as consultants.

**Expansion of this agency's policy on educational initiatives:**

This agency is, to an extent, acquainted with classroom practice and educational initiatives. Nevertheless, we take a number of practical steps in order to foster contemporary awareness.

### **How this agency's policy on educational initiatives is implemented:**

- Our Managing Director shows an interest in any instructions or feedback from the REC.
- The company purchases and makes available copies of the Times Educational Supplement, using these as sources for news on educational initiatives that may have a direct impact on our teachers or responsibilities.
- Copies of critical articles are sent out to teachers with pay advices
- The General Manager liaises with many of this agency's clients, employing those professional links to keep us advised of important changes; such initiatives are conveyed to those teaching and non-teaching staff on a need-to-know basis.
- The company offers its teachers free copies of the National Curriculum (by prior arrangement since stock may need to be ordered in).
- Returning teachers are identified at interview and offered help in the form of 'catch-up' sessions if need be.
- This agency as a general rule is willing to reward, via an incremental rise in daily rate, any teacher who attends a recognized course – whether or not it has been organized by or is under the auspices of this agency – which improves that teacher's marketability. Awareness of contemporary initiatives in education is recognized as part and parcel of that marketability.

**OUR AGENCY'S RESPONSE to STANDARD 15:  
NEWLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS (NQTs)**

**Summary of this agency's policy on newly qualified teachers:**

This agency takes every effort to give effective professional support to both newly qualified teachers and immigrant teachers for whom the UK's National Curriculum is unfamiliar, making induction as smooth as possible and thereafter easing entry into the profession.

**Expansion of this agency's policy on newly qualified teachers:**

Although this agency does not at present mount its own induction courses for NQTs and OQTs (Overseas Qualified Teachers) it does nevertheless proactively liaise with client organizations to encourage them to take all practicable steps to make induction into the profession a pleasant learning experience, and one which will encourage their retention for long service.

Clearly it is in this agency's best interests to foster successful induction of teachers for whom the working environment is very new, demanding, often stressful and occasionally frightening. We aim to reduce churn and, ideally, facilitate either a lengthy supply career or to manage a long-term placement.

**How this agency's policy on newly qualified teachers is implemented:**

- NQTs and OQTs are identified at interview, and notes are made on their CVs (both hard copies which go into their personal files and electronic notes within the computerized system).
- NQTs and OQTs are, wherever possible, put into long-term placements (a little less stressful than daily supply).
- NQTs are treated as an important asset; they do, after all, have potentially the longest careers in front of them.
- NQTs are, to a great extent, protected from induction in underperforming schools.
- We provide support for NQTs in respect of mentoring in tandem / through liaison with schools.
- This agency offers easy access to advice within its offices
- We have a policy statement for dissemination amongst NQTs and OQTs, and those who deal with them.

**OUR AGENCY'S RESPONSE to STANDARD 16:  
TEACHER PROFILES**

**Summary of this agency's policy on teacher profiles:**

This agency undertakes to provide client schools with comprehensive, up-to-date and accurate profiles of the supply staff in their employ, matching the most appropriate personnel with the assignment in hand.

**Expansion of this agency's policy on teacher profiles:**

This information is automatically supplied, for long-term assignments, in the form of a standardized CV generated from this agency's own database. In the case of daily supply this is likewise provided on request.

### **How this agency's policy on teacher profiles is implemented:**

- All staff profiles are regularly updated and that information is retained both on the computerized system – which drives selection using client-driven criteria – and within personnel files.
- We create back-up copies of data as a precaution.
- Teachers are asked to keep this agency aware of any changes to the information on their profiles, as such information affects their employability.
- Teachers are asked to keep this agency aware of any changes to the information on their profiles, as such information affects their employability.
- The computerized system generates requests for updates if information is absent.
- Clients who are booking teachers on long-term placements are sent the computer-generated CV of prospective employees on request.
- Clients who are booking teachers for daily supply will be sent the computer-generated CVs of prospective employees on request.
- The database matches candidates with schools according to an array of criteria. This agency's pool of teachers enables a good match to be made in most cases. The system is as objective as is practicable, and this is borne out by the high levels of customer satisfaction it achieves.
- Out-of-date / due List 99 Status will be chased as required.

**OUR AGENCY'S RESPONSE to STANDARD 17:  
OPERATIONAL TRANSPARENCY**

**Summary of this agency's policy on operational transparency:**

This agency is committed to communicating its policies and modus operandi to its clients, providing regular reassurance that its recruitment and vetting procedures are seamlessly professional in their execution.

**Expansion of this agency's policy on operational transparency:**

This agency has a clear and incontrovertible document, distributed to all clients, which states the vetting procedures which we undertake before, after and during periods of service. The same information is likewise included in direct mailings in which we reiterate our commitment to upholding the standards set by the REC.

All of our documents are divided into S, A and T (i.e. school-side, agency-side and teacher-side documents). This enables distribution - via the packing list at the point of induction - to those who should receive them. However, our manual (put together for the purposes of the Quality Mark, and to allow us to keep on top of standards for the biannual audits, but also compiled for the purposes of day-to-day operational efficiency, training and sales) is also shown to schools to reinforce the perception that the systems which we have in place are wholly compliant with all legal and professional obligations.

All of our documents are stored electronically on disk in folders marked as S, A and T (i.e. school-side, agency-side and teacher-side documents). This agency is gradually moving to systems which will involve distribution of disk-based packs which will be mirrored by our website.

### **How this agency's policy on operational transparency is implemented:**

- We have a procedural statement for vetting which states the checks we make before, during and after periods of service.
- Those checks are indeed all carried out, very visibly so, and transparently. Checks on our procedures to ascertain thoroughness are invited.
- Clients are aware from the point-of-sale that this agency is committed to satisfy every legal and professional obligation.
- At latest, on the morning of arrival every school has the opportunity to have a copy of all of the information on file for the teacher(s) they will employ on that day.
- Sales literature such as direct mail carries unequivocal guarantees of these procedures being rigorously adhered to.
- Clients are invited to ascertain that any procedure has been carried out in accordance with all current regulations.
- Schools have access to the CRB reference number for the teacher concerned.
- These procedures are clearly set out in the School-Side CD currently in development.

**OUR AGENCY'S RESPONSE to STANDARD 18:  
FINANCIAL TRANSPARENCY**

**Summary of this agency's policy on financial transparency:**

Here at this agency our commitment to openness in respect of all financial transactions is absolute and designed to make us above reproach, with any potential changes to contracts and/or remuneration being discussed and documented from the outset with teachers and schools alike.

**Expansion of this agency's policy on financial transparency:**

This agency recognizes that transparency in dealing with schools is important, especially in relation to charges. We agree charges with schools in advance. We agree pay with teachers in advance. We inform schools in advance of any significant changes to previous rates.

**How this agency's policy on financial transparency is implemented:**

- We provide clients with a rate-card on which scales of charges are clearly listed.
- These cards are clearly time-sensitive and replaced on an annual basis.
- Schools are likewise provided with our Terms and Conditions at the point of induction, when all documents beginning with an 'S' should be within their pack. On occasions this will have to follow a teacher – where our first use as an agency is in an emergency. Nevertheless we operate to all industry-wide best practices, so a dispute over terms is unlikely and would in any case not be worth the loss of goodwill.
- We agree charges in advance and have had a dispute-free trading history (no court cases).
- We likewise provide teachers with a rate-card which is clearly time-sensitive and on which fees are clearly listed.
- Teacher remuneration is also clearly stipulated on their contract.
- We inform all our supply teachers and schools alike about temporary-to-permanent conversion fees charged to the school should they be employed directly by the school either during or following an assignment.

**OUR AGENCY'S RESPONSE to STANDARD 19:  
COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES**

**Summary of this agency's policy on complaints procedures:**

This agency has a policy of investigating each and every complaint, logging its progress and keeping every party fully informed of the procedures and outcome including the results of any appeal.

**Expansion of this agency's policy on complaints procedures:**

We recognize the need to promptly, formally and methodically follow up complaints and concerns (from schools and teachers alike).

A copy of our complaints policy is given to both school clients and supply teachers. That policy shows how complaints are responded to, investigated and dealt with. It also details how the complainant is kept informed throughout the process, and explains how dissatisfied parties can take the matter further if not satisfied with the outcome.

We do make provision for an escalated dispute to be settled by 3<sup>rd</sup> party arbitration, and have a general policy to err on the side of fairness.

### **How this agency's policy on complaints procedures is implemented:**

It is our steadfast intention to work pro-actively and communicate effectively with clients in order to proactively avoid the development of unsatisfactory situations and, failing that, to reactively resolve them. We have defined two types of negative feedback:

- A complaint about our service
- A complaint about a teacher's performance.

There are three main categories of serious complaint about a teacher's performance:

- A serious incompetence/error of judgment
- A less serious incompetence/error of judgment made repeatedly
- A child protection issue

All complaints are dealt with by our MD and the process followed is detailed on the relevant flow-chart. Comments from clients are taken seriously and always referred to the MD, even if resolved. The number of complaints is a key performance indicator, and can illuminate a deficiency (or success) in an area of organizational or professional development. This information is utilized and shared with teachers alongside other feedback.

This agency will not continue to offer work to teachers whose performance is deemed unsatisfactory. In cases of serious complaint/negative feedback about a teacher, this agency adheres to and follows advice given by the DCSF and GTC colleagues.

Teachers are informed of the appeals procedure which we operate. In the first instance that involves referral to our MD. But thereafter, if agreement is not forthcoming, we have clearly set out in writing a further mechanism which involves 3<sup>rd</sup> party arbitration. This agency is committed to accepting the recommendations / judgments emanating from such independent arbitration.

As with other policies and procedures, the way in which this agency deals with complaints is unequivocally documented on its new School-Side and Teacher-Side CDs.