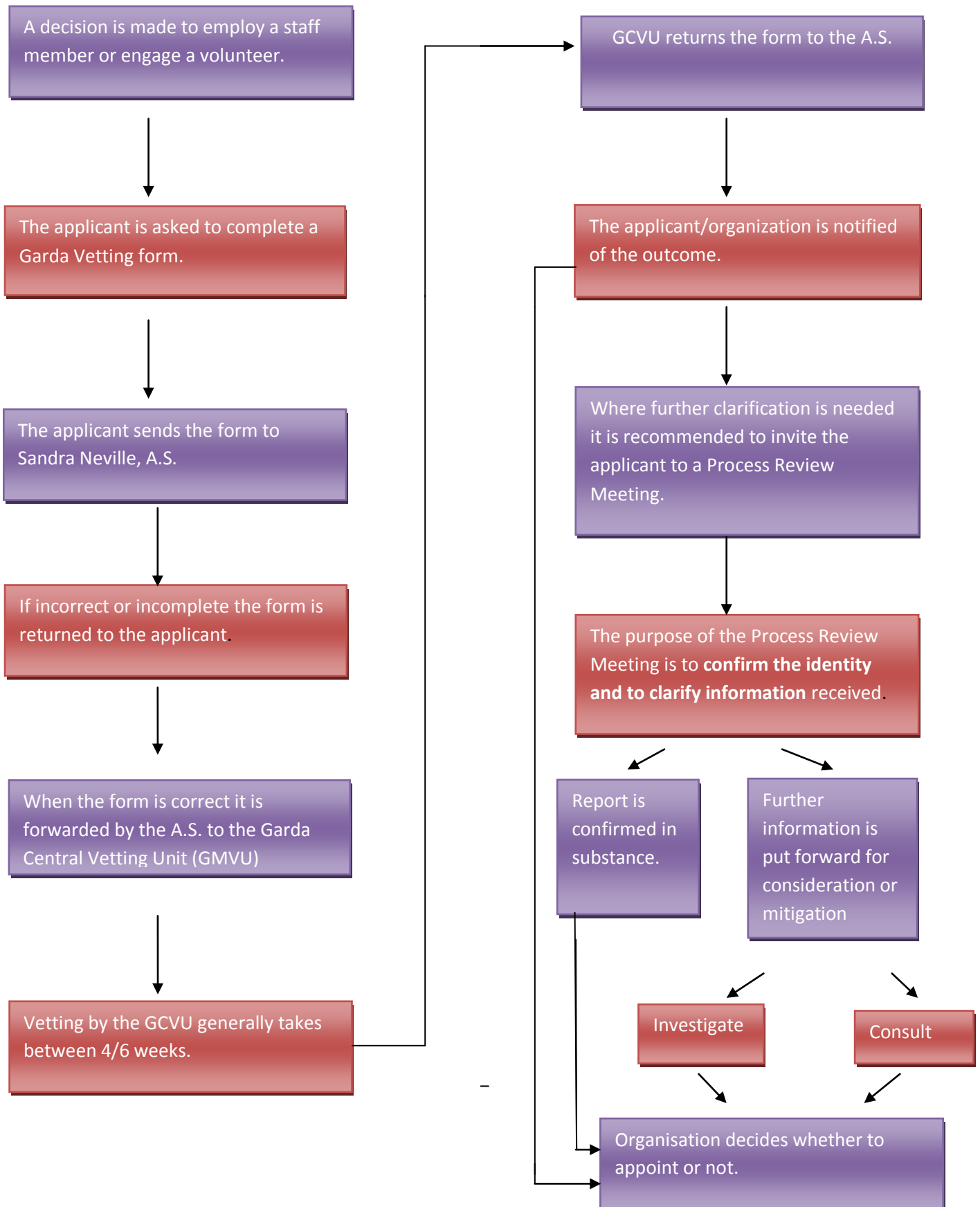


Summary of Vetting Process



Notes on Garda Vetting for School Staff in Catholic Primary Schools under the patronage of Bishop Michael Smith

- Garda vetting is necessary for the appointment of all Special Needs Assistants, secretaries and caretakers, appointed since May 2007 (new primary school teachers are vetted through the Teaching Council). The onus is on Chairpersons/Principals to ensure that this procedure is carried out.
 - Garda vetting takes place following interviews and checking of references etc. The checking of references is a most important part of the appointment process. Only at this final stage is the successful candidate vetted by the Gardai. All appointments are strictly subject to Garda vetting; no contract can be agreed until Garda vetting has been completed.
 - Applicants for Garda Vetting must be over 18 years of age.
 - It is the responsibility of the Chairperson of the Board of Management to request Garda vetting of the successful candidate. This means that the Chairperson asks applicant to complete the '*Garda Vetting Application Form*'. The Application Form is available from the Authorised Signatories.
 - The three Authorised Signatories are –
Meath, Louth & Cavan schools in this diocese under the Bishop's patronage:
Mr John McMahon, Powderlough, Dunshaughlin, Co. Meath
Westmeath & Longford schools in this diocese under the Bishop's patronage:
Mr John O'Reilly, Ashe Road, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath
Offaly schools in this diocese under the Bishop's patronage:
Ms Noeleen Harding, Parochial House, Tullamore, Co. Offaly.
 - When the Form is correctly and legibly completed, the Chairperson sends the Form to the local Authorised Signatories. **UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD NAME OF AUTHORISED SIGNATORIES BE GIVEN TO APPLICANTS.** All correspondence shall be strictly between Chairperson/Principal and Authorised Signatory only.
 - The Authorised Signatory will check all the details, validate against the CV and ensure that there are no incomplete sections in the Form.
 - The Gardai will check the details against the Criminal Records Database.
- /cont...
- Due to the number of applications received by the Gardai, this process now takes up to four months to complete.
 - Afterwards the Gardai will send a '*Garda Vetting Disclosure*' to the Authorised Signatory.
 - This disclosure has three possible outcomes:

1. 'no match' (there is nothing on record)
 2. 'exact match' (an offence/conviction is recorded)
 3. 'possible match' (eg there is a record relating to 'John Smith' at the same address but the applicants name or date of birth may be slightly different so further clarification is required).
- If the information is an 'exact match', the Authorised Signatory will send the relevant excerpt from the disclosure to the Chairperson.
 - Confidentiality is an absolute priority and information is disclosed on a strict 'need to know' basis.
 - When the Authorised Signatory sends the information to the Chairperson of the Board of Management, it is to be noted and returned immediately to the Authorised Signatory. Noting the information must be done in a manner that ensures the maximum safeguards of confidentiality.
 - The information should then be brought to the attention of the applicant. If the applicant has a previous conviction, the matter should be discussed with care. Two members of the Board should make the disclosure and allow the applicant an opportunity to reply, noting the response.
 - In the unlikely event of an applicant disputing the information contained in the Gardai files, a '*dispute handling mechanism*' begins. The Board will return the Application Form to the Authorised Signatory, together with a report on what basis the disclosure is contested. Re-checks will receive priority attention from the Garda Vetting Unit.
 - Not all disclosures carry the same gravity and the Board needs to consider carefully the significance or otherwise of the conviction recorded, eg. conviction for 'no light on bicycle'. Consideration should be given to the applicant's self disclosure, or lack thereof or repeat offending.
 - The principles of natural justice must apply in the decision making process. This is not the forum for passing judgement on the applicant's behaviour as a member of society but rather on the person's suitability for undertaking this work in the school environment.
 - The function of the Garda vetting process is to provide information on the applicant (if available); the function of the Authorised Signatory is to act as a link between the Garda Vetting Unit and the school; the function of the Board of Management is to make the final decision on who gets the job. It is important to emphasise that this process relates to Garda vetting (ie does this person have a Garda record?) – it does not give Garda clearance (ie a clear record does not itself confirm suitability for appointment). This vetting procedure is only one aspect of the decision making process.

Sample Garda Vetting Form

Please give to all Primary School Chairpersons and Principals

All sections must be legible and complete, particularly the previous addresses of the job applicants. Dates should be in chronological order.

The three Authorised Signatories are –

Meath, Louth & Cavan schools in this diocese under the Bishop's patronage:

Mr John McMahon, Powderlough, Dunshaughlin, Co. Meath

Westmeath & Longford schools in this diocese under the Bishop's patronage:

Mr John O'Reilly, Ashe Road, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath

Offaly schools in this diocese under the Bishop's patronage:

Ms Noeleen Harding, Parochial House, Tullamore, Co. Offaly

**UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD NAME OF
AUTHORISED SIGNATORIES BE GIVEN TO APPLICANTS.**