



Thameside Primary School: Safer Recruitment Policy

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Policy reviewed by:	Vicki Lucas
Key Changes:	Thameside Primary School follows the statutory requirements set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026, Part 3: Safer Recruitment. The school adopts robust recruitment procedures that deter, prevent and identify individuals who are unsuitable to work with children. This policy also adopts the LAs internal R&S procedure. Key 2026 Changes Integrated into This Policy 1. Volunteer supervision exemption removed – most volunteers are now in regulated activity and require an Enhanced DBS with Children’s Barred List – changes on Page 30. 2. Online searches at shortlisting are mandatory and must be recorded – Page 13 & 14 Amended Paragraph. 3. All trainee teachers are considered to be in regulated activity; written confirmation of checks is required before placement – Page 30 4. SCR strengthened – must record who completed each check, the date, outcome and follow-up actions. No update, current SCR captures this requirement for volunteers. 5. Annex A removed – all staff must read Part One in full- noted here but not mentioned in the policy. 6. Expanded safeguarding themes must be explored at interview and induction – added to ‘Interviews’ section page 19. 7. Regulated Activity – definition updated page 22

1. Introduction

Thameside Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff, volunteers and visitors to share this commitment.

This policy sets out the school's approach to recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers. It follows statutory guidance in **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026**, Part 3: Safer Recruitment, and incorporates all updates introduced in September 2026.

The policy applies to all recruitment activity for staff, contractors, volunteers, governors and individuals working in school through third-party providers.

2. Part three: Safer recruitment (KCSIE 2026)

Part 3 of KCSIE sets out the legal requirements schools must follow when recruiting individuals to work with children. The DfE updates this guidance annually and changes are reflected in the school's Safer Recruitment Policy and in the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, which also applies to safer recruitment.

Part 3 of the Safer recruitment has four sections providing schools with the legal requirements of what they 'must do' and what is considered best practice:

- i. the recruitment and selection process;
- ii. pre-appointment and vetting checks, regulated activity and recording of information;
- iii. other checks that may be necessary for staff, volunteers and others, including the responsibilities on schools and colleges for children in other settings;
- iv. how to ensure the ongoing safeguarding of children and the legal reporting duties on employers

The Safer Recruitment policy lays out the model recruitment and selection process that Thameside will follow in all cases of recruiting and selecting staff to work in the school. This includes all staff regardless of status, contractors, and visitors.

The procedure outlined in this policy covers all recruitment in schools, other than for Headteachers.

As part of our safer recruitment procedures, we carry out all relevant prohibition checks prior to appointment. In line with the 2025 update to *Keeping Children Safe in Education*, we have strengthened our approach to ensure:

- **Prohibition from teaching checks** are completed for all teaching staff, including those with Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) and those without.
- **Section 128 checks** are conducted for individuals appointed to management positions in schools, including governors and trustees where applicable.
- **Childcare disqualification checks** are carried out for staff working in relevant early years or later years settings, in accordance with the Childcare Act 2006.

- All checks are **recorded clearly registered on the SCR**, including the date, outcome, and the person responsible for completing the check.

Thameside Primary School also incorporates all 2026 updates, including:

- Removal of the **volunteer supervision exemption (now treated as working as regulated activity)**
- Mandatory **online searches** at shortlisting (change from recommended to mandatory)
- All trainee teachers treated as now treated as working as **regulated activity**
- Strengthened **SCR recording requirements**
- All staff must read **Part One** (Annex A removed)
- Updated safeguarding themes for recruitment and induction

We remain committed to ensuring that no individual who is subject to a prohibition, restriction, or disqualification is employed in a role that contravenes safeguarding legislation or guidance.

3. Governing Body commitment to safer recruitment in schools

The governing body ensures a culture of safeguarding that prevents unsuitable individuals from working with children. As part of this culture, it is important that they adopt robust recruitment procedures that deter and prevent people who are unsuitable to work with children from applying for or securing employment, or volunteering opportunities in schools.

Governors will ensure:

- Robust safer recruitment procedures
- At least one panel member has completed safer recruitment training (The School Staffing (England) Regulations 2009)
- Recruitment processes comply with KCSIE 2026 and LA requirements
- The Single Central Record is accurate, complete and up-to-date

Governing bodies of maintained schools may choose appropriate training and may take advice from the LA on suitable training.

4. Role of the Local Authority in recruitment process

The LA is ultimately the employer of staff in Community Schools and has overall responsibility for the welfare of staff and pupils. The LA needs to satisfy itself that each new recruit is suitable to work with children, and this applies equally to paid staff and workers, and volunteers. These manifests via a number of pre-employment/background checks on new staff, including receipt of two satisfactory employment references, prohibition check, online searches and qualification checks and the enhanced DBS and barred list check.

In response to these points, the Local Authority has produced their own model Procedure to ensure recruitment and selection practices in schools are legally compliant, safe, fair, consistent and objective. The

school's Safer Recruitment policy is an adaptation of this policy which includes updated information from the KCSIE published document.

It should be noted that Ofsted inspections look at safeguarding which includes a school's recruitment and selection procedures and the school have an up to date Single Central Record.

The LA can refuse to appoint a member of staff selected by a community school on the grounds that they are either not suitably qualified, or that they are not deemed to be in appropriate health, or to have the necessary mental or physical capacity.

The LA can also refuse to appoint on the grounds that the person appears on the list of people barred from working with children or has a criminal record that would make them unsuitable for the post.

The school recognise the following steps that should be followed in the recruitment process to satisfy LA requirements:

- Schools must supply HR with a full set of appointment paperwork including completed pre-employment checks, offer letter and right to work documentation.
- No offer shall be made to a candidate 'subject to references.' Candidates shall be told they are the 'preferred' candidate pending satisfactory references.
- New or changed non-teaching job descriptions must be evaluated by HR, unless it fits into a pre-agreed framework, e.g. Teaching Assistants/Teacher.
- The LA, through HR, can only be satisfied that a candidate be approved to work once all documentation is received, the self-declaration form has been "cleared" by the LA, a correctly completed DBS disclosure application form has been received, a check under the Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2009 has been carried out, and medical clearance has been given.
- Schools will issue DBS Disclosure application forms, Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations forms, and Medical Pre-employment Questionnaires, and will be responsible for new recruits completing them.
- In some circumstances a new recruit can start work before full DBS clearance has been received by undergoing a risk assessment, provided other conditions are met.
- A statement of main terms and conditions cannot be issued until medical and DBS clearances are complete.
- Start dates for new recruits will be a period of time after the recruitment process is complete, as dictated by the DBS process.

- The clearance of staff who declare a caution or conviction, or who have a disclosure on their DBS certificate, remains the responsibility of the Headteacher, who will discuss each case with the applicant. If there is disagreement the matter will be referred to the Director of Children, Education, and Early Help Services.
- DBS clearances are not transferable from one LA or employer to another, unless the DBS Update Service has been used. Otherwise, RBC requires a new check for each new recruit.
- As part of the DBS check, applicants are required to provide a continuous address history covering the five years leading up to the present date.
- The DBS check cannot cover addresses and police records held in parts of Scotland and Ireland, or any overseas country. In these cases the DBS check itself may not be worthwhile or will only provide limited information. This will need to be supplemented by other checks, including asking for certificates of good conduct from the police force in the applicant's original country, or seeking references from those forces.
- Since September 2022, schools are required to complete online searches compliant with GDPR UK regulations to determine suitability to work in a school. This has been strengthened in 2026 to make this mandatory at shortlist stage.

Advice on the recruitment and selection procedure can be sought from the Payroll and Employment Services Team in Human Resources.

5. Model recruitment and selection process – Procedure

5.1 Job Description and Person Specification

Regardless of how the post is to be filled, the Job Description and Personal Specification documents should be reviewed ahead of any recruitment process to ensure they are fit for purpose and follow the appropriate template. The Job Description provides key information regarding the role and should include:

- List of main duties; these will be the duties most often carried out and those of most importance. It is not necessary to list minor duties or use the phrase “and any other duties” as the job description is intended as a list of the main duties.
- Use of plain language, simple, clear, and no jargon which could be confusing for applicants and new recruits
- No potentially discriminatory language that could discourage certain groups from applying (e.g., disability, gender, race etc.)
- Concise information
- Information that supports the selection process, as well as facilitates performance reviews and the assessment of training needs for the appointed candidate
- References to specific responsibilities the holder has for ensuring equality of opportunity, health and safety, and commitment to customers. Level of DBS required, whether post is politically restricted.
- Information regarding reporting lines and the team responsibilities

An effective Person Specification is central to scoring applicants fairly during the recruitment process, but also for supporting future performance reviews and training needs analyses. It provides the key information regarding the post holder and should include:

- The skills, knowledge and experience needed to fulfil the duties listed in the Job Description; ensuring the standard required is clear and that they can be measured as part of the selection process.
- Only essential criteria; desirable criteria can produce inaccurate weightings and lead to discrimination

- Reference to your minimum criteria; the basic skills/competencies required for the role. This is especially relevant to observing RBC's commitments to the Disability Confident Scheme.
- Information regarding the level or standard of competence required
- No potentially discriminatory language that could discourage certain groups from applying (e.g. disability, gender, race etc.). If there are genuine requirements for the post that could place certain individuals or groups at a disadvantage, please contact HR to discuss.
- Details of required qualification - but only where it can be justified to avoid discriminating against certain groups, such as women returners or disabled people.
- If the role is public facing, identify the level of spoken English required.
- Criteria related to the knowledge, experience and understanding needed for the post holder to be effective, and to contribute to the school's overall aims to improve equality of opportunity and provide excellent services to its customers.
- Any other specific requirements for the role, i.e. professional registrations, appropriate level of Health & Safety, Food Hygiene training etc.

Where a job description and person specification are being created from scratch, or where the existing one is adjusted significantly, it will need to be evaluated by HR and the appropriate grade determined before the vacancy can be advertised.

5.2 Methods of filling a vacancy and adverts

It is important to consider the appropriate method for filling a vacancy. Alternative options may include:

- An internal only advert for staff at risk or seeking redeployment
- Progression for existing staff under a career grade structure or pathway
- Internal secondment opportunity or maternity cover
- Temporary acting up within the current team
- Short-term agency/interim cover
- Apprenticeship

The advert should be designed and listed in the relevant place(s) with the aim of reaching all potentially suitable applicants and giving them sufficient opportunity to apply. The content of the advert should flow from the Job Description & Person Specification and, as a minimum, contain details of:

- Job title
- Salary and contract information
- Key duties and functions
- Minimum criteria- skills, abilities, experience, attitude, and behaviours required for the post
- Closing date and how to apply
- *A statement outlining the school's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and make clear that safeguarding checks will be undertaken (see statement below)*

The adverts will be clear about what the job entails, concise but not to the point of including too little information, will show details of salary including any pro rata arrangements, and the hours of the post including any flexibility such as job share or flexibility over days worked.

The advert will also contain reference to the fact that a DBS check will be required, and the level of check required. The closing date will be clearly stated, and where possible the shortlist and interview dates will be included.

The advert will contain the following statement: **"This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment"**, and the level of DBS check required.

The advert (and Job Description and Person Specification) will not include any text or images that could directly or indirectly discriminate against someone with a Protected Characteristic as set out in the Equality Act 2010. However, there are circumstances where it is appropriate to be specific about the person needed for the job, if this is the case the school will take advice from HR.

In summary the advert will include:

- The school's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and make clear that safeguarding checks will be undertaken;
- The safeguarding responsibilities of the post as per the job description and personal specification; and
- Whether the post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and the amendments to the Exceptions Order 1975, 2013 and 2020. Which means that when applying for certain jobs and activities certain spent convictions and cautions are 'protected', so they do not need to be disclosed to employers, and if they are disclosed, employers cannot take them into account. Further information about filtering offences can be found in the DBS filtering guide.

5.3 Advert Approval

The school will ordinarily advertise in Greensheets publication and the Reading Borough Job website for support, admin and Teaching vacancies. They will also appear on free recruitment sites. For Teaching positions, adverts will be placed on the [Teaching, leadership and support jobs - Teaching Vacancies - GOV.UK \(teaching-vacancies.service.gov.uk\)](https://teaching-vacancies.service.gov.uk).

If the school is using a specialist publication the Council's appointed advertising agency, via HR staff, will place adverts, HR will send the advert to the advertising agency who will book the space with the identified publications, and set the advert into its final copy. This will be sent back to HR, who will send it on to the Headteacher via e-mail, for approval. The cost of the advert will be provided at the same time.

The agency will then place the advert, and the school will handle the rest of the administrative process, unless the advert is for a Headteacher.

Where the school is not working via HR to place adverts with the agency, the procedure for advert approval will be as agreed between the school and the publication.

Consideration will need to be given to when and where the advert should appear. Guidance on the best places to advertise can be obtained from HR, in liaison with the advertising agency.

It is advisable to advertise substantive Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher posts nationally. It is good practice to advertise any permanent posts externally unless there are specific reasons to ring fence vacancies to existing staff.

The closing date by which applications will be returned should, if possible, be at least two weeks after the first appearance of the advert to allow enough time for potential candidates to complete and return the forms.

The names of at least two panel members must be agreed early on. Please note that both the shortlist and interview panels must have the same membership. It is advised that all members of the panel attend RBC's Recruitment and Selection training course, or have been assessed as having suitable previous knowledge and experience in recruitment and selection. As a minimum the Chair of the panel must have attended. This assessment is available via HR.

At least one panel member will have attended/undertaken safer recruitment training.

The panel will meet in advance of shortlisting to agree the criteria to be used for shortlisting, including the minimum criteria, and to determine the standards required. The panel should also meet before the interviews to finalise the questions to be asked and who will be asking them, and to confirm the standards being sought during the interview.

The shortlisting date will be at least two working days after the closing date to allow time for shortlisting packs to be prepared for the panel by a member of school staff.

5.4 Application Pack

The application pack should be informative and act as a first impression of the job and school. The pack must contain the job description, person specification, application form, guidance on completing the application form, the convictions and cautions declaration form and the child care disqualification declaration. The declaration forms and the identification pages of the application will be removed at shortlisting stage so that the panel only see the employment history, qualifications and skills summary supporting statement. The purpose of a self-declaration is so that candidates will have the opportunity to share relevant information and allow this to be discussed and considered at interview before the DBS certificate is received.

In addition, the pack should contain a copy of the school's Equal Opportunities policy and the Child Protection Policy, or refer to a link on the school website.

Where a role involves engaging in regulated activity relevant to children, the school includes a statement in the application form or elsewhere in the information provided to applicants that it is an offence to apply for the role if the applicant is barred from engaging in regulated activity relevant to children.

Schools and colleges should require applicants to provide:

- personal details, current and former names, current address and national insurance number
- details of their present (or last) employment and reason for leaving
- full employment history, (since leaving school, including education, employment and voluntary work) including reasons for any gaps in employment
- qualifications, the awarding body and date of award
- details of at least two referees/references (preferably most recent employer and previous employer) and
- a statement of the personal qualities and experience that the applicant believes are relevant to their suitability for the post advertised and how they meet the person specification.

Thameside does not accept curriculum vitae to be considered for a position. A curriculum vitae on its own will not provide adequate information for the school to fulfil its safeguarding obligations. However, the school may need to vary the approach if a disabled person wishes to apply for a post.

The standard RBC application form will always be used to give consistency in the type of information being collected from each applicant.

Additional information can be added to the pack about the school and post available in order to appeal to the intended audience. Links to the school website and to RBC led on-line material are also valuable.

5.5 Record Keeping

As application packs are sent out the name and address of the caller should be logged by the school, along with the date the pack was sent, and the publication in which it was seen. As application forms are returned they should be logged back in and details of gender, ethnicity and disability kept against each person's name. This allows a profile to be built up of how many packs are sent out against how many are returned, and gives a profile of the applicants being attracted. Further logs should be kept of those candidates selected for interview, and the candidate finally selected for the job.

When set against information provided by applicants on where they saw the advert, and against the calibre of applicants, a picture can be built up of where the most effective recruitment is taking place.

No panel member can be involved in sending out or receiving application forms, or in the preparation of forms for shortlisting or interviewing.

When application forms are returned they should be checked to ensure the declaration form regarding convictions and cautions has been included and completed, if applicable. If not, this must be chased with the applicant.

If an applicant has made a declaration, this should be raised with HR for information immediately, but not yet notified to the panel.

5.6 Shortlisting

The shortlisting stage allows the recruiting manager(s) to review the applications received against a set of job-related criteria and select applicants to interview. It helps ensure the most suitable candidates progress to the next stage of the recruitment process and provides an objective method for reducing the pool of applications to a manageable level.

It is helpful to decide who will form the panel for shortlisting applications as early as possible to make suitable arrangements for shortlisting and interviewing. A panel consisting of three members is ideal for ensuring fairness and objectivity, and the panel members should be familiar with the role being interviewed for so questioning of candidates is meaningful. Please note the shortlisting and interview panels should have the same membership, and participants on the panel should have completed appropriate training, including that outlined above in accordance with KCSIE.

The Lead Officer will be responsible for working with the panel to set the criteria from the person specification which is to be used for shortlisting. They must also ensure the panel is agreed on the information applicants must provide to demonstrate they have met the criteria (the "indicators") and the minimum requirements for the post (please see points below regarding applications from redeployees and candidates with a disability).

Schools should:

- ensure that at least two people carry out the shortlisting exercise (it is recommended that those who shortlist carry out the interview for a consistent approach)
- consider any inconsistencies and look for gaps in employment and reasons given for them, and,
- explore all potential concerns.

In addition, as part of the shortlisting process the Online Searches (Mandatory 2026 Requirement)

Thameside conducts online searches for all shortlisted candidates to identify publicly available information relevant to safeguarding or suitability. Outcomes are recorded and explored at interview. The school will inform shortlisted candidates that online searches may be done as part of due diligence checks. See Part two - Legislation and the Law for information on data protection and UK GDPR, the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equality Act 2010.

The Shortlisting Pack

The shortlisting pack provided to panel member should contain the following –

- The Job Description/Person Specification;
- Individual shortlist scoring grids;
- Consensus shortlist scoring grid(s);
- An interview pro-forma template;
- A copy of all applications received for this post with the application number placed in the header (personal details have been removed to avoid potential bias, although date of birth will be included for posts requiring a DBS check).

Disabled Applicants

In accordance with the school's commitment as a Disability Confident employer, disabled candidates need to be shortlisted if they meet the minimum criteria for the role – please see the Applicants with a Disability section later in this policy for more detailed guidance. The candidates who have disclosed a disability will be indicated in the shortlist pack email.

Scoring

Applications should be scored against chosen criteria from the person specification. Use shortlist scoring grids to record scores using a Met/Part Met/Not Met system (i.e. 2 points for criteria met, 1 point for criteria part met, 0 points for criteria not met). It may be decided that some criteria cannot be evidenced at shortlisting stage (e.g. typing speed), and as such will not be assessed until the interview stage (e.g. via a practical test or specific questioning). It may be possible to introduce a weighting to chosen criteria which relate to the most frequent duties, or those that have most impact on job performance. The panel should be careful to ensure such criteria are applied consistently across applicants.

Once each panel member has completed shortlisting the panel must decide which applicant(s) should be taken forward to interview. Any disagreement between panel members should be reviewed collectively to reach a consensus, and any assumptions not based on fact should be challenged and considered objectively. It is helpful to record the reasons for not shortlisting a candidate, should an unsuccessful candidate request feedback or later challenge the decision.

5.7 Safer Recruitment Checks

The shortlisting and interview panel have a key role to play in ensuring safer recruitment practices are applied robustly. The panel should review application forms thoroughly to highlight any gap(s) in education or

employment history. Gaps can appear at any stage in the chronology although points where gaps may occur are between finishing school and starting further/higher education, between further/higher education and starting the first job, and during employment.

Any such gaps need to be accounted for and, where they are not explained, explored at interview. This approach supports the need to form as full a picture of the applicant as possible and sits alongside the other key elements – the answers to the interview questions themselves, the results of any practical assessments, the declaration of convictions completed within the application form, references, and later the DBS disclosure.

To assist panels with this process, the date of birth of the applicant must be visible on the application form at shortlist stage. Panel members should be aware that the date of birth is provided only for the purpose of ensuring that no gaps on the application form remain unexplained. Assessments based on the age of the applicant should always be avoided as this could be discriminatory under the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.

Shortlisted candidates should also be asked to complete a self-declaration of their criminal record or information that would make them unsuitable to work with children. Self-declaration is subject to Ministry of Justice guidance on the disclosure of criminal records, further information can be found on GOV.UK. For example:

- if they have a criminal history
 - if they are included on the children's barred list
 - if they are prohibited from teaching
 - information about any criminal offences committed in any country in line with the law as applicable in England and Wales, not the law in their country of origin or where they were convicted
 - if they are known to the police and children's local authority social care
 - if they have been disqualified from providing childcare (KCSIE see paras 268-272),
- and,
- any relevant overseas information.

This information should only be requested from applicants who have been shortlisted. The information should not be requested in the application form to decide who should be shortlisted.

Applicants should be asked to sign a declaration confirming the information they have provided is true. Where there is an electronic signature, the shortlisted candidate should physically sign a hard copy of the application at point of interview.

The purpose of a self-declaration is so that candidates will have the opportunity to share relevant information and allow this to be discussed and considered at interview before the DBS certificate is received.

In addition, the Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) guidance on pre-recruitment checks, indicate that schools must carry out online searches for prospective employees.

KCSIE 2026 guidance states:

- Online searches are now an **expected part of due diligence**, not optional.
- Searches must be completed **for all shortlisted candidates**.
- Schools must record:
 - What was searched

- Any concerns identified
- How concerns were explored at interview

To do these checks appropriately, without breaching data protection laws, the school will:

- Ensure that whatever we search is necessary for the purpose and not excessive - for example if the candidate has different political opinions to the interviewer, this may not be relevant to their job role.
- Ensure that we remember that there is a difference between private life and professional life. The school will only use information they find out which might be relevant to the job role. For example, if there is a news article about a road traffic incident and a potential candidate was mentioned in this, it may not necessarily be relevant to their potential job role.
- Carry out online searches as part of your pre-employment checks, as opposed to the interview stage. Although KCSIE insists carrying out the online searches prior to interview, Judicium (our Data Protection Officer) would recommend that this is done at the stage when the school offers the candidate a job. This is to minimise the number of individuals searched, limit suggestions of bias and strengthen the rationale to carry out the search as we have agreed for them to take the post.
- State that we search online content in our privacy notice for job applicants.
- Be transparent with candidates before searching - seek permission from candidates at the point of job offer to carryout online searches using this wording, as suggested by Judicium (our Data Protection Officer).

Online search

As part of our continuing safeguarding obligations, we are required to carry out online searches on you as part of due diligence as part of the formal recruitment and selection process. In doing this, we will only be looking at information which might potentially impact your ability to carry out the role, and we recognise that there is a difference between your public and private life. We would like to make you aware that searching an individuals' name will often bring up their social media channels.

We will carry out this search only at the point of interview selection.

If you have any objections to us carrying out online searches, including social media channels, please do provide comment below as to your reasons for doing so. We can then consider this as part of the process. This may however affect us being able to continue with the recruitment process in respect of your application.

We use the template form, where the parameters of what they're searching for are recorded, to ensure there is consistency in the range of what is searched for with each candidate. Should a School have any queries regarding this process they should contact HR. The SBM or headteacher will usually complete these searches.

Teacher prohibition and interim prohibition orders prevent a person from carrying out teaching work as defined in the Teachers' Disciplinary (England) Regulations 2012 in schools. All schools **must** ensure that an applicant to be employed to carry out teaching work is not subject to a prohibition order issued by the Secretary of State. Schools can use the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA's) Employer Access service to make prohibition, direction, restriction, and children's barred list checks. The service is free to use and is available via the [Teaching Regulation Agency \(education.gov.uk\)](https://www.teachingregulationagency.gov.uk).

The school will check a teacher's record before they start working for you in England as part of its safeguarding checks. Where the school hires teaching staff from a supply agency, the school will get confirmation from the agency that they have completed the safeguarding checks.

Prohibition from teaching checks are completed for all teaching staff, including those with Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) and those without.

The school can check a record for anyone with a teacher reference number (TRN), including:

- teachers and former teachers

A teacher's record tells you whether they have:

- qualified teacher status (QTS) or early years teacher status (EYTS)
- passed their induction
- national professional qualifications (NPQ) or mandatory qualifications for teaching pupils with sensory impairments
- been prohibited from teaching by the Teaching Regulation Agency
- had sanctions or restrictions placed on them by the General Teaching Council for England (GTCE)
- been found guilty of serious misconduct but not prohibited from teaching

It will not tell a school whether someone:

- has qualified teacher learning and skills (QTLS) status – they need to check the [Society for Education and Training professional register](#)
- is allowed to manage or govern schools – you need to [check the section 128 list](#)
- is barred from working with children – regulated employers can check the DBS's children's barred list using the [check the children's barred list service](#)

You should only [check the children's barred list](#) if a candidate:

- will start working with children while waiting for the [result of an enhanced DBS check](#)
- does not need an enhanced DBS check because they've worked with children in a school or college within the last 3 months

Childcare disqualification is an additional requirement to the general child safeguarding arrangements provided under the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) regime, which apply to all children. The childcare disqualification arrangements apply to staff working with young children in childcare settings, including primary schools and nurseries. The arrangements predominantly apply to individuals working with children aged 5 and under, including reception classes, but also apply to those working in wraparound care for children up to the age of 8, such as breakfast clubs and after school care.

For staff who work in childcare provision, or who are directly concerned with the management of such provision, employers need to ensure that appropriate checks are carried out to ensure that individuals are not disqualified under the [Childcare Disqualification Regulations 2018](#). Further information on the staff to whom these Regulations apply, the checks that should be carried out, and the recording of those checks can be

found in statutory guidance [Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006](#).

All checks are recorded clearly in the schools Single Central Register (SCR), including the date, outcome, and the person responsible for completing the check

5.8 Inviting for Interview

The letter (or e-mail) inviting a candidate for interview must provide the date, time, and venue of the interview, and a map should be provided if necessary. Any test details such as presentations must also be included.

The letter must also ask that if the candidate has any special requirements for the interview day, such as access requirements, that these be made known to the school in advance.

The letter must state that the interview will be used to explore the candidate's suitability to work with children, should outline the need for a DBS check as appropriate, and must give details of the ID documentation and qualification certificates the candidate is required to bring with them. ID documentation is also required for all new recruits to comply with the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996.

5.9 References

Reference requests must be sent out at the same time as the invite for interview letters to ensure all references are returned in time for the interviews. References must be chased if timely responses are not received. The candidate can be asked to chase their referees if necessary.

The only exception is where the candidate has indicated on their application form that their referee cannot be approached. In these cases, the panel should explain that if they are successful at interview references will still need to be sought and may need to be discussed prior to any offer of employment.

Please note that an offer of employment will only be made when there are two satisfactory references available for the preferred candidate.

The purpose of seeking references is to allow employers to obtain factual information to support appointment decisions. Schools should obtain references before interview, where possible, this allows any concerns raised to be explored further with the referee and taken up with the candidate at interview.

The school will always send a copy of the job description and person specification with the reference request as this gives the referee a better opportunity to provide an accurate reference. Ask the referee for feedback on specific areas of work you are interested in, and try to elicit objective comment through the way you word your request.

The school will not accept verbal and open references/testimonials, as these are far less reliable than those you request yourself. The school will write to the individual/organisation in order to verify the information.

One reference should be from the most recent employer where the candidate worked with children, and from one other source so that you have two references. References are not acceptable from partners/spouses, family or friends.

The references should address the candidate's suitability to work with children. The most recent / current

referee must be asked to comment on any disciplinary offences (not unproven allegations) relating to children, and any child protection concerns including the outcomes of any enquiries and disciplinary proceedings. The referee must be informed that the reference they provide may be discussed with the candidate at interview.

The references must be made available to the Chair of the panel prior to interview as any relevant issues raised in the references must be shared with the interview panel and explored with the candidate during the interview. Legitimate areas of concern are related to the agreed Person Specification for the post. The panel should also cross check the references with the application form to satisfy themselves they have the appropriate referees' responses, and that there is no miss-match of information.

Any other queries arising from the references should be followed up with the referees.

If references are obtained after the interview because the candidate did not wish for them to be taken up beforehand, or if they had not been received before interview, any issues raised in the references must still be pursued with the candidate and/or referee as necessary.

Additional references can be requested with the candidate's permission if, for example, the references do not cover a reasonable period of employment, or there is a relevant period of employment that has not been covered.

In summary schools should:

- not accept open references e.g. to whom it may concern
- not rely on applicants to obtain their reference
- ensure any references are from the candidate's current employer and have been completed by a senior person with appropriate authority (if the referee is school or college based, the reference should be confirmed by the headteacher/principal as accurate in respect of any disciplinary investigations)
 - obtain verification of the individual's most recent relevant period of employment where the applicant is not currently employed
- secure a reference from the relevant employer from the last time the applicant worked with children (if not currently working with children), if the applicant has never worked with children, then ensure a reference from their current employer
- always verify any information with the person who provided the reference
- ensure electronic references originate from a legitimate source
- contact referees to clarify content where information is vague or insufficient information is provided
- compare the information on the application form with that in the reference and take up any discrepancies with the candidate
 - establish the reason for the candidate leaving their current or most recent post, and,
- ensure any concerns are resolved satisfactorily before appointment is confirmed.

When asked to provide references, schools and colleges should ensure the information confirms whether they are 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. They should not include information about concerns/allegations which are unsubstantiated, unfounded, false, or malicious. References are an important part of the recruitment process and should be provided in a timely manner and not hold up proceedings. Any repeated concerns or allegations which do not meet the harm threshold which have all been found to be false, unfounded, unsubstantiated or malicious should not be included in any reference.

5.10 Interviewing

Interviews should take place far enough after shortlisting to allow time for references to be requested and received. The interview pack should be ready two to three days before the interview date to allow the panel to read through the applications. At this stage the front page is re-attached to the application form, but the equal opportunities monitoring form is still not included.

If any candidate has a disability, the panel must be made aware of the nature of this, in advance, so that any reasonable adjustments can be made to the room, access, practical assessments, etc.

If any candidate is a redeployee the panel will be made aware of this, and will need to consider the redeployee against the minimum criteria for the post, with a view to giving the redeployee prior consideration for the post.

If a declaration has been made by any candidate that reveals they have any convictions or cautions then the candidate's declaration should be included with the application form in the interview pack. This will allow for discussion around this declaration at interview.

Copies of original identity documents (as listed in DBS guidance) must be taken by the school at the start or end of the interview for the DBS check, and the originals should be examined to check they are genuine. The ID must also cover the required check under the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006. The copies of the ID must be good, clear copies to ensure that photo ID, in particular, can stand up to scrutiny and the likeness to the employee can be clearly seen. The copies will need to be submitted to HR along with the DBS Application Form.

Candidates should be told what the checking process entails, the likely timescales involved, as well as the fact that clearances are needed before the LA can approve any appointment.

Copies of any relevant qualifications' certificates, as stated on the Person Specification, should also be taken having checked they appear genuine.

The shortlisting and interview panels should have the same membership, and participants on the panel must have undergone appropriate training, including that outlined above in accordance with KCSIE.

The interview questions and any practical assessments must be designed to test whether the applicant is suitable for the role, and this will include their motivations, and suitability to work with children.

These should include:

- finding out what attracted the candidate to the post being applied for and their motivation for working with children
- exploring their skills and asking for examples of experience of working with children which are relevant to the role, and,
- probing any gaps in employment or where the candidate has changed employment or location frequently, asking about the reasons for this.

The interviews should be used to explore potential areas of concern and to determine the applicant's suitability to work with children.

Areas that may be concerning and lead to further probing include:

- implication that adults and children are equal

- lack of recognition and/or understanding of the vulnerability of children
- inappropriate idealisation of children
- inadequate understanding of appropriate boundaries between adults and children, and,
- indicators of negative safeguarding behaviours
- exploring concerns seen via online searches
- views undermining fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

In addition, KCSIE 2026 requires schools to ensure that interview questions explore the applicant's understanding of safeguarding risks relevant to the role, for example of:

- Gender-questioning children guidance
- Online harms, including AI-generated content
- Harmful sexual behaviour
- Mental-health indicators
- Mobile-phone misuse and digital safeguarding

Interview questions and induction content will be updated to reflect these themes so that a robust assessment can be made of a candidate's safeguarding knowledge.

It is important to ensure fairness and consistency through the interview process, and each candidate should be asked the same core questions to explore the skills and abilities needed for the role. In designing the questions, consider:

- the criteria being tested from the person specification (ensuring the minimum criteria are sufficiently covered)
- the answers, or indicators, you are hoping to elicit
- using an open style of questioning (e.g. what, where, how)
- avoiding leading questions, or questions that could discriminate against certain individuals or groups
- avoiding questions that are too long, complicated or include multiple questions
- asking questions that allow the candidate to refer to examples of their previous experience/behaviours, as these provide the best indicators of future behaviours
- targeted questions that will make the best use of the time available
- trialing the questions on colleagues beforehand – do they understand them? Do they evoke the expected response?
- the skills or experience of the panel members involved, and which member will ask each question
- who will be taking notes (ideally the person asking the question will concentrate on the conversation with the candidate, whilst the other panel members take notes)
- finding out what attracted the candidate to the post being applied for and their motivation for working with children
- exploring their skills and asking for examples of experience of working with children which are relevant to the role, and,
- probing any gaps in employment or where the candidate has changed employment or location frequently, asking about the reasons for this.

Any information about past disciplinary action or allegations should be considered in the circumstances of the individual case. Each core question could be followed up by appropriate probing questions to help draw answers out of the candidates or explore a vague response. It is acceptable to vary these questions depending on the candidate's answers or to refer to specific points from their application.

Pupils/students should be involved in the recruitment process in a meaningful way. Observing short listed candidates and appropriately supervised interaction with pupils/students is common and recognised as good practice. All information considered in decision making should be clearly recorded along with decisions made.

Any apparent gaps in employment history, education, qualifications, etc. should be identified by the Chair of the panel and explored with the candidate at interview, as should any anomalies in the information provided on the application form. Frequent or sudden job changes should be questioned.

The content of references should be explored, particularly if there are any causes for concern in the references. If references are not available, the candidate must be asked if there is anything likely to come up in their reference that they feel should be discussed.

If the declaration for the preferred candidate contains information about convictions or cautions the matter must be discussed with HR and referred to the appropriate Head of Service for schools, using a standard form held by HR. The Head of Service will discuss the case with the Headteacher and decide whether or not the person is suitable to appoint. All interview packs and grids should be returned to the person handling the recruitment process in the school.

If a reference is unsatisfactory, it may be necessary to follow this up with the referee before making a decision.

In some cases, it may not be possible to appoint the preferred candidate due to unsatisfactory references or declaration. In such cases it may be possible to appoint the second placed candidate, subject to the same reference and disclosure checks already outlined. If the second placed candidate is not suitable a re-advertisement may be required.

5.11 Practical Assessments

Using practical assessments or other practical activities as part of the selection process can provide a valuable method of assessing skills or aptitude. Examples could include typing or data exercises, case study activities or delivering a presentation to the panel. It is important that any practical activity is relevant to criteria from the person specification and is an objective and valid form of assessment. Furthermore, the activity should not unfairly disadvantage certain groups or individuals, and it may be that suitable reasonable adjustments are needed if a candidate has a disability. School should contact the Resourcing Team if they require any advice regarding the use of practical assessments in the selection process.

5.12 Preferred Candidate – Good References and Declaration

If the references and convictions declaration for the preferred candidate are satisfactory, all interview packs should be returned to the school's recruitment administrator, with interview and consensus grids fully completed by all three panel members, signed, and clearly indicating the preferred candidate, along with the ID document copies (if copied by the panel), and appointment details, e.g. salary, hours. The preferred candidate can be contacted to tell them they are the 'preferred' candidate, but no offer can be made at this stage.

5.13 Preferred Candidate(s) - Poor References or Declaration

If one or both references for the preferred candidate are unsatisfactory, refer back to HR for advice. In most cases further investigation is required before a candidate can be accepted or rejected. All interview

packs and grids should be returned to the person handling the recruitment process.

If the declaration for the preferred candidate contains information about convictions or cautions the matter must be discussed with HR and referred to the appropriate Head of Service for schools, using a standard form held by HR. The Head of Service will discuss the case with the Headteacher and decide whether or not the person is suitable to appoint. All interview packs and grids should be returned to the person handling the recruitment process in the school.

If a reference is unsatisfactory, it may be necessary to follow this up with the referee before making a decision.

In some cases, it may not be possible to appoint the preferred candidate due to unsatisfactory references or declaration. In such cases it may be possible to appoint the second placed candidate, subject to the same reference and disclosure checks already outlined. If the second placed candidate is not suitable a readvertisement may be required.

5.14 Unsuccessful Candidates

Candidates who have been unsuccessful at interview should be notified of this as soon as possible, either by the Chair of the panel, the Headteacher, or the person handling the recruitment administration in the school. Candidates should be offered the opportunity for feedback from either the Chair or a member of the panel.

All papers relating to the recruitment exercise should be kept confidentially and securely for six months, in case of query, and then confidentially destroyed. This includes the ID papers and qualification certificates copied from candidates at interview.

If a migrant worker has been appointed, the recruitment paperwork for all applicants must be kept for the duration of the appointee's employment plus two years to satisfy Home Office requirements.

The recruitment statistics being kept for equal opportunities monitoring should be updated to ensure it can be tracked from advert to appointment.

In some cases, there may be a preferred candidate plus a candidate in a close second place. It may then be prudent that the second placed candidate isn't immediately rejected in case the preferred candidate cannot be appointed for some reason, or rejects the offer. The second placed candidate may then become the preferred candidate, at which point references and the declaration must be checked.

5.15 Appointment Process

Once a preferred candidate has been selected, the school must issue them with the online DBS disclosure application form will be issued to them to complete their personal details sections and with the medical questionnaire and envelope. The candidate must complete these and provide copies of their ID (if not already done so at interview stage) to the school for verifying. The school will verify ID and complete the information required on the DBS online application and submit online to the DBS.

This section provides the legal requirements that schools need to understand (and which **must** be carried out) when appointing individuals to engage in regulated activity (see below for 'Regulated Activity' definition) relating to children.

Regulated activity

A person will be engaging in regulated activity with children if they work on a frequent basis in a specified establishment, such as a school, or in connection with the purposes of the establishment, where the work gives opportunity for contact with children.

A person will also be in regulated activity if, as a result of their work or volunteering, they:

- will be responsible, on a frequent basis in a school or college, for teaching, training instructing, caring for or supervising children, providing advice or guidance on physical, emotional or educational wellbeing, or driving a vehicle only for children, or
- engage in intimate or personal care or healthcare or any overnight activity, even if this happens only once.

Further details on regulated activity are below.

*The **full legal definition** of regulated activity is set out in Schedule 4 of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 and The Crime and Policing Act 2026.*

Regulated activity includes:

- a) paid and unpaid work that involves teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervising children, or providing advice or guidance on physical, emotional or educational well-being, or driving a vehicle only for children;*
- b) any other type of paid work for a limited range of establishments (known as 'specified places', which include schools and colleges), with the opportunity for contact with children.*

Work under (a) or (b) is regulated activity only if done frequently, on more than 3 days in a 30-day period or overnight. Some activities are always regulated activities, regardless of frequency. This includes:

- c) relevant personal care, or health care provided by or provided under the supervision of a health care professional (personal care includes helping a child with eating and drinking for reasons of illness or disability or in connection with toileting, washing, bathing and dressing for reasons of age, illness or disability. Health care means care for children provided by, or under the direction or supervision of, a regulated health care professional.)*

Regulated activity will not be paid work in specified places which is occasional and temporary and does not involve any of the activities in (a) above.

It covers the importance of ensuring the correct pre-appointment checks are carried out. These 63 checks will help identify whether a person may be unsuitable to work with children (and in some cases is legally prohibited from working with children and/or working as a teacher). These checks should be seen as part of the wider whole school or college safeguarding regime, which will continue following appointment. This section also explains what information schools and colleges must record on the single central record.

The following pre-employment checks are required to help identify whether a person may be unsuitable to work with children (and in some cases is legally prohibited from working with children and/or working as a teacher). They should be seen as the part of a wider safeguarding regime which will carry on following appointment. This section also explains what information schools **must** record on the single central record.

When appointing individuals to engage in regulated activity relating to children, all offers of appointment should be conditional until satisfactory completion of the mandatory pre-employment checks.

- Verify a candidate's identity, it is important to be sure that the person is who they claim to be, this includes being aware of the potential for individuals changing their name. Best practice is checking the name on their birth certificate, where this is available.
- Obtain an enhanced DBS check (including children's barred list information, for those who will be engaging in regulated activity with children). Note that when using the DBS update service, you still need to obtain the original physical certificate.
***Note that when using the DBS update service, you still need to obtain the original physical certificate.**
- verify the candidate's mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities via a Medical Screening form. A job applicant can be asked relevant questions about disability and health in order to establish whether they have the physical and mental capacity for the specific role;
- verify the person's right to work in the UK, including EU nationals - schools **can also check legitimacy of working in the UK by accessing:** <https://www.gov.uk/view-right-to-work> .
- if the person has lived or worked outside the UK, make any further checks the school consider appropriate;
- Schools can use the **DfE's Check a teacher's record** to make prohibition, direction, restriction, and children's barred list checks. The service is free to use and is available via the DfE's webpage. Users will require a DfE Sign-in account to log onto the service. Further information about obtaining a DfE Sign-in account and using Check a teacher's record to carry out a range of 'teacher status checks' including verification of qualified teacher status (QTS) and the completion of teacher induction or teacher probation can be found on GOV.UK <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/check-a-teachers-record>
- All individuals appointed to Senior Leadership or financial roles and Governors of the school should be subject to a section 128 check via the Teaching Regulation Agency's Employer Access service.
- Obtain a separate children's barred list check if an individual will start work in regulated activity with children before the DBS certificate is available.
- All schools **must** ensure that an applicant to be employed to carry out teaching work is not subject to a prohibition or restriction imposed (that remains current) by the GTCE before its abolition in

March 2012.

- Schools providing childcare must ensure that appropriate checks are carried out to ensure that individuals employed to work in reception classes, or in wraparound care for children up to the age of 8, are not disqualified from working in these settings under the 2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations.
- The Childcare Disqualification declaration form must be retained by the school and the outcome notified to RBC HR. If the applicant has declared something that may disqualify them from working please contact HR. If they are clear the information will need to be recorded on the SCR.

Applicant moving from previous post and DBS requirements

Most staff in a school working with children will be engaging in regulated activity relating to children, in which case an enhanced DBS check which includes children's barred list information, will be required.

There is no requirement for a school to obtain an enhanced DBS certificate or carry out checks for events that may have occurred outside the UK if, during a period which ended not more than three months before the person's appointment, the applicant has worked, in a school in England, in a post:

- which brought the person regularly into contact with children, or
- to which the person was appointed on or after 12th May 2006 and which did not bring the person regularly into contact with children or young persons, or
- in another institution within the further education sector in England, or in a 16- 19 academy, in a post which involved the provision of education which brought the person regularly into contact with children or young persons.

If the person has lived or worked outside the UK, make any further checks the school consider appropriate and, individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK must undergo the same checks as all other staff in schools. This includes obtaining (via the applicant) an enhanced DBS certificate (including barred list information, for those who will be engaging in regulated activity) even if the individual has never been to the UK. In addition, schools and colleges must make any further checks they think appropriate so that any relevant events that occurred outside the UK can be considered. Following the UK's exit from the EU, schools and colleges should apply the same approach for any individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK regardless of whether or not it was in an EEA country or the rest of the world. These checks could include, where available:

- a) Criminal records checks for overseas applicants -
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-records-checks-for-overseas-applicants>
Not all countries provide criminal record information, and where they do, the nature and detail of the information provided varies from country to country. Schools and colleges should also be mindful that the criteria for disclosing offences in other countries often have a different threshold than those in the UK
- b) Obtaining a letter (via the applicant) from the professional regulating authority in the country (or countries) in which the applicant has worked confirming that they have not imposed any sanctions or restrictions, and or that they are aware of any reason why they may be unsuitable to teach. Applicants can find contact details of regulatory bodies in the EU/EEA and Switzerland on the Regulated Professions database. Applicants can also contact the UK Centre for Professional Qualifications who will signpost them to the appropriate EEA regulatory body.

Where this information is not available, the school should seek alternative methods of checking suitability and or undertake a risk assessment that supports informed decision making on whether to proceed with the appointment.

Once the checks are complete, the DBS will send a DBS certificate to the applicant. The applicant must show the original paper DBS certificate to their potential employer before they take up post, or as soon as practicable afterwards. Schools and colleges will be able to compare any information disclosed on the certificate with any information shared by the applicant during the recruitment process.

The school will assess cases fairly, on an individual basis. A decision not to appoint somebody because of their conviction(s) should be clearly documented, so if challenged the school can defend its decision, in line with its policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders.

When assessing any disclosure information on a DBS certificate, schools and colleges should take into consideration the explanation from the applicant, including for example:

- the seriousness of any offence and relevance to the post applied for
- how long ago the offence occurred
- whether it was a one-off incident or a history of incidents
- the circumstances around the incident, and,
- whether the individual accepted responsibility for their actions.

The school should also consider the incident in the context of the Teachers' standards and Teacher misconduct guidance, if the applicant is applying for a teaching post. Where a school or college allows an individual to start work in regulated activity relating to children before the DBS certificate is available, it should ensure that the individual is appropriately supervised and that they carry out all other checks, including a separate children's barred list check.

Separate barred list checks must only be carried out in the following circumstances:

- for newly appointed staff who are engaging in regulated activity, pending the receipt of an Enhanced Certificate with Barred List information from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) (and where all other relevant checks have been carried out), or
- where an individual has worked in a post in a school or college that brought them into regular contact with children or young persons which ended not more than three months prior to that person's appointment to the organisation (and where all other relevant checks have been carried out).

DBS Update Service

Individuals can join the DBS Update Service at the point that an application for a new DBS check is made. Subscription to the service enables future status checks to be carried out by employers to confirm that no new information has been added to the check since its issue.

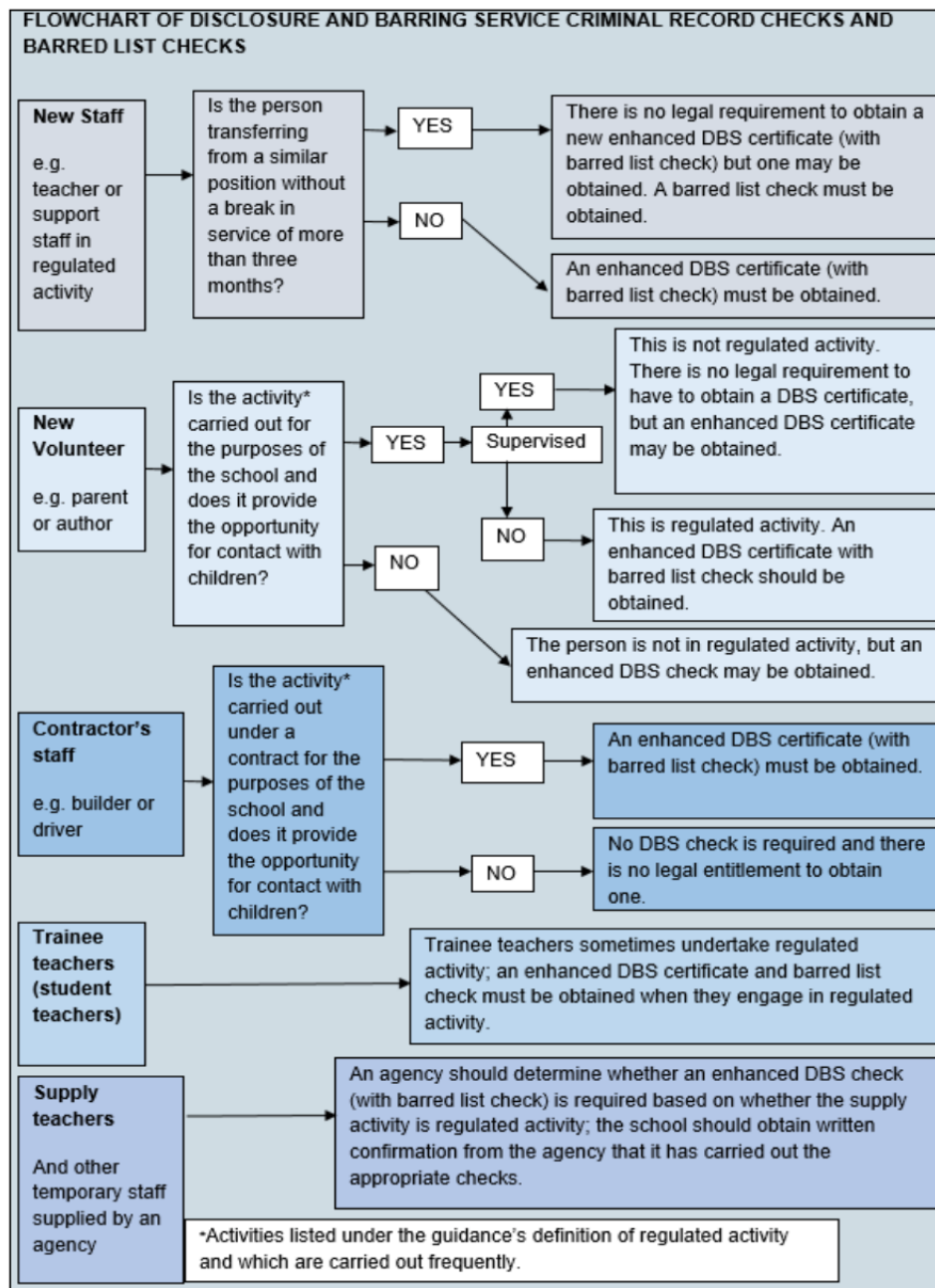
As good practice, the school will recommend that staff in receipt of a new DBS join the Update Service. The benefits of joining the Update Service are:

- portability of a DBS check across employers
- free online checks to identify whether there has been any change to the information recorded, since the initial certificate was issued and advice whether the individual should apply for a new DBS check, and,
- that individuals will be able to see a full list of those organisations that have carried out a status check on their account.

Before using the Update Service, schools must:

- obtain consent from the individual to carry out an online check to view the status of an existing standard or enhanced DBS check
- confirm the DBS certificate matches the individual's identity
- examine the original certificate to ensure that it is valid for employment with the children's workforce, and,
- ensure that the level of the check is appropriate to the job they are applying for, e.g. enhanced DBS check/enhanced DBS check including with barred list information.

The school will use the basis in the following flow diagram to decide if a new DBS disclosure is required:



6. Applicants with a Disability

To comply with the RBC Equal Opportunities Policy Statement, the Equality Act 2010, and their commitments under the “Disability Confident” scheme, it is necessary to follow some good practice principles when shortlisting and interviewing disabled applicants.

The information in this guide is designed as a brief reminder of the points to consider when an applicant has declared a disability and making reasonable adjustments.

Shortlisting

The reference number of any applicants who have declared a disability will be stated in the shortlisting pack. As part of the school’s commitment to the ‘Disability Confident’ scheme, an applicant who has declared a disability will be assessed against the minimum criteria for the job and will be shortlisted for interview if those criteria are met.

The minimum requirements for the post should have been identified prior to advertising the post, and the panel should ensure each panel member is aware of them and understands them before you commence shortlisting. The nature of the disability is not relevant at this stage and therefore would not be provided to the panel during shortlisting. It is important that the panel make no assumptions about the impact a disability may have.

If a disabled applicant is not shortlisted, the panel will need to provide clear feedback on why they did not meet the minimum requirements for the post.

Interviewing

If a candidate with a disability has been shortlisted for interview, it will be important to consider if any adjustments may be needed prior to the interview. In most cases the candidate will have provided some information about any needs when they made their application, and HR will be able to advise of these. In other cases, these needs may need to be explored further with the candidate and it will be for the recruiting manager and HR to have appropriate discussions with the candidates regarding the recruitment process.

There is a duty upon the panel to make reasonable adjustments to the conduct of the interview. This may include adjusting or allowing extra time for any test, arranging an interview slot at a certain time of day, or providing other appropriate assistance. All interviews should be held in suitably accessible venues.

On starting the interview, the Lead Officer should ensure the candidate is happy with the arrangements and make any further adjustments as necessary. This may be as simple as adjusting the blinds to remove direct sunlight, for example. The interview should otherwise proceed as it would for any other candidate, ensuring all the questions are covered. It is usually possible to design interview questions that explore the relevant competencies without reference to the specific impairment.

Appointing a Preferred Candidate

All candidates are scored in the same way – according to their skills, abilities, knowledge, and experience.

Once an offer of employment is made, the legislation permits the employer to ask for more information regarding health. Steps should be taken to fully explore what adjustments may enable the candidate to be fully productive in the role, and care should be taken to assess whether such adjustments are reasonable to implement.

It is important to fully engage the candidate in exploring possible options and not make assumptions about what may be needed or is appropriate. Advice from Occupational Health or other specialist sources will also feed into this process. An employer is legally obliged to make reasonable adjustments and therefore

any concerns over the feasibility of making adjustments should be discussed with HR.

7. Notifying the LA HR team of a new appointment

The school must submit to HR copies of: the candidate's application form and any letter of application, the declaration of convictions and cautions form, both/all references, qualification certificates, the ID documents taken at interview, copies of any visas or work permits, DBS clearance, the graded job description and the person specification, a copy of the job advert, and a fully completed new starter PRS1 and ED form. This includes schools not using the RBC HR service as, although the school handles the recruitment, in Community schools the staff remain employees of the LA.

Once the DBS application has been processed by the DBS, the disclosure certificate is issued by the DBS to the employee. Confirmation that this is clear (or not) must be e-mailed to HR by the school. If there is a positive disclosure, please contact RBC HR with the details.

At this stage a **Risk Assessment** can be carried out if there is a need for the new recruit to start in post before the DBS disclosure has been received, and clearance given. The considerations are: How much is known about the individual? Have they declared any cautions or convictions and have these been explored with the individual? If allowed to work prior to clearance, can s/he be given full supervision during work time? HR will issue a form for this purpose to the school, a completed copy of which must be sent back to HR.

For a risk assessment to be valid, the declaration of convictions form must have been reviewed, the employee not disqualified from childcare if applicable, both references received, the DBS form correctly completed and sent off to the DBS, and medical clearance given.

Where an applicant declares a conviction, or where something is revealed on the disclosure certificate, HR will contact the appropriate Head of Service. S/he will liaise with HR and the school to come to a decision over whether the applicant is suitable to work with children.

Once medical and DBS disclosures have come back to HR and clearance is given and confirmation of the Childcare Disqualification check, the appointment will be confirmed to the Headteacher / Bursar, and the Statement of Main Terms and Conditions will be issued. The school must either arrange a start date with the employee and let HR know this for inclusion in the Main Terms and Conditions or, if the employee is already working under a risk assessment, confirm that they can now work unsupervised.

In the event that the person selected for appointment is not suitable on the grounds of health, mental or physical capacity, qualifications, childcare disqualification or an inappropriate criminal record, the school will be contacted by HR as soon as possible. Full advice will be given as to the most appropriate way forward, which may include re-advertising and termination of the recruit's contract.

On appointment it is the line manager's responsibility to ensure a first day induction is carried out (either by the Headteacher or the line manager), and that the probation process is established and followed if applicable. The probation period for Newly Qualified Teachers is statutory and spans one year, and for non-teaching staff it is the six-month RBC probation scheme.

Induction should include general orientation early on, then policies and procedures, expectations in the area of conduct, and safeguarding practices in place within the school.

8. Recording information- Single central record (SCR)

Schools **must** maintain a single central record of pre-appointment and vetting checks, referred to in the Regulations as the register and more commonly known as the single central record. It is a statutory safeguarding requirement for all schools and colleges in England, as outlined in the Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) guidance.

The single central record **must** cover the following people:

The SCR must include checks for:

All staff (teachers, TAs, admin, cleaners, etc.)
Trainee teachers on salaried routes
Supply staff (even if for one day)
All Volunteers in regular contact with children
Governors
Contractors who visit frequently or intensively
Peripatetic staff (e.g. music tutors, sports coaches)
Proprietor body members (for independent schools, academies, and free schools)

Below sets out the minimum information that **must** be recorded in respect of staff members. The single central record **must** indicate whether the following checks have been carried out or certificates obtained, and the date on which each check was completed or certificate obtained:

- an identity check, (identification checking guidelines can be found on the GOV.UK website)
- a standalone children's barred list check (if DBS is pending)
- an enhanced DBS check (with children's barred list check) requested/certificate provided
- a prohibition from teaching check
- further checks on people who have lived or worked outside the UK – Right to work in the UK
- a check of professional qualifications, where required, and,
- the section 128 check undertaken for those in leadership and management positions, financial responsibility and Governors of a maintained school.
- Confirmation / assurance letter from agencies (e.g. supply or third party contractors)

All checks are recorded clearly, including the date, outcome, and the person responsible for completing the check.

The details of an individual should be removed from the single central record once they no longer work at the school or college.

9. Retention of documents

Copies of documents used to verify the successful candidate's identity, right to work and required qualifications should be kept on their personnel file.

Copies of DBS certificates and records of criminal information disclosed by the candidate are covered by UK GDPR/DPA 2018 Article 10. To help schools and colleges comply with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018, when a school or college chooses to retain a copy, there should be a valid reason for doing so and it

should not be kept for longer than six months. When the information is destroyed a school may keep a record of the fact that vetting was carried out, the result and the recruitment decision taken if they choose to.

Schools do not have to keep copies of DBS certificates, in order to fulfil the duty of maintaining the single central record.

10. When appointing a person to work in the school via an agency or third-party provider supply staff)

Schools and colleges must obtain written notification from any agency, or third party organisation, that they have carried out the same checks as the school or college would otherwise perform on any individual who will be working at the school or college (or who will be providing education on the school or college's behalf, including through online delivery). In respect of the enhanced DBS check, schools and colleges must ensure that written notification confirms the certificate has been obtained by either the employment business or another such business.

Where the agency or organisation has obtained an enhanced DBS certificate before the person is due to begin work at the school, which has disclosed any matter or information, or any information was provided to the employment business, the school or college must obtain a copy of the certificate from the agency.

Where the position requires a children's barred list check, this must be obtained by the agency or third party by obtaining an enhanced DBS certificate with children's barred list information, prior to appointing the individual.

The school or college should also check that the person presenting themselves for work is the same person on whom the checks have been made.

11. Recruiting Volunteers and Trainee/student Teachers

The school must maintain a list of the volunteers used in the school, and the checks that have been undertaken.

The Crime and Policing Act 2026 made changes to regulated activity, meaning that any person volunteering in a school or college in a role that involves teaching, training, instructing or supervising children frequently or on more than 3 days in a 30-day period or overnight is now in regulated activity. Where this applies, schools should obtain an enhanced DBS check with children's barred list information.

Under no circumstances should a volunteer on whom no checks have been obtained be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

Where an individual meets the period condition (more than 3 days in a 30 day period) by volunteering at multiple settings, the school or college should work with the other settings to decide who should apply for the enhanced DBS check with barred list information, and that information should then be supplied by the individual to each setting. Volunteers may also choose to join the DBS Update Service at the point that a DBS check is applied for. This is free for volunteers and allows portability of a DBS check across different education settings.

Existing volunteers in regulated activity

Where a school or college has an existing volunteer who will now be in regulated activity from 1 September

2026 because of the changes brought in by the Crime and Policing Act 2026, they must check their children's barred list status. This should be done by obtaining an enhanced DBS check with children's barred list.

Whilst volunteers play an important role and are often seen by children as being safe and trustworthy adults, the nature of voluntary roles varies, so schools and colleges should undertake a written risk assessment and use their professional judgement and experience when deciding what checks, if any, are required.

The risk assessment should consider:

- the nature of the work with children, especially if it will constitute regulated activity, including the level of supervision
- what the establishment knows about the volunteer, including formal or informal information offered by staff, parents and other volunteers
- whether the volunteer has other employment or undertakes voluntary activities where referees can advise on their suitability, and
- where the role is not regulated activity, whether another level of DBS check, might be appropriate regulated activity such as:
 - an enhanced DBS check without barred list information, for volunteers who would be in regulated activity but do not volunteer frequently, or
 - a basic DBS check for any other volunteer who may have access to children.

Where applicants for initial teacher training are salaried by the school or college, the school or college must ensure that all necessary checks are carried out including an enhanced DBS check (including children's barred list information). Where trainee teachers are fee-funded, it is the responsibility of the initial teacher training provider to carry out the necessary checks. Schools should obtain written confirmation from the provider that it has carried out all pre-appointment checks that the school would otherwise be required to perform, and that the trainee has been judged by the provider to be suitable to work with children. There is no requirement for the school or college to record details of fee funded trainees on the single central record.

12. Maintained school governors

Governors in maintained schools are required to have an enhanced DBS check. It is the responsibility of the governing body to apply for the certificate for any governors who do not already have one. Governance is not a regulated activity relating to children, so governors do not need a children's barred list check unless, in addition to their governance duties, they also engage in regulated activity.

Schools should also carry out a section 128 check for school governors, because a person prevented from participating in the management of an independent school by a section 128 direction, is also disqualified from being a governor of a maintained school. Using the free Employer Secure Access sign-in portal via the DFE Teacher Services web page, schools can check if a person they propose to recruit as a governor is barred as a result of being subject to a section 128 direction.

13. Alternative provision

It is vital to remember that when a school sends a child to AP, it is **not** handing over responsibility for the safeguarding of that pupil to the provider.

KCSIE is clear: “Where a school places a pupil with an alternative provision provider, **the school continues to be responsible for the safeguarding of that pupil** and should be satisfied that the provider meets the needs of the pupil.”

The school retains responsibility for the safeguarding of that pupil. It is not solely down to the AP to safeguard them, and the school needs to work together to ensure that they are kept safe. The young people sent to AP are often some of the most vulnerable pupils at school, so schools need to be extra vigilant in ensuring their safety. DfE guidance states that pupils should remain dual-registered when attending AP, even if they are attending AP for most or all their school day.

What must schools do ensure pupils in AP are safe?

Schools should obtain written confirmation from the alternative provision provider that appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out on individuals working at the establishment, i.e. those checks that the school would otherwise perform in respect of its own staff. This includes written confirmation that the alternative provider will inform the commissioning school of any arrangements that may put the child at risk (i.e. staff changes), so that the commissioning school can assure itself that appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out on new staff.

You should have this written confirmation **before** any pupils begin attending. If the provision is not complying with this request, or if they cannot provide confirmation of these basic checks, they should not be used as a AP placement.

The school will also complete further best practice safeguarding checks take place before agreeing to send pupils to AP:

- **Written confirmation of checks.**

Ensure that this written confirmation is saved in a location accessible to relevant members of staff.

- **Physically visiting the provision and conducting your own safeguarding quality assurance process**

At the very least, check its registration status (and whether it needs to be registered), its Child Protection policy and assessments of hazardous activity that the pupil may potentially be involved in (e.g. if it is a garage, are the Health and Safety arrangements suitable).

- **Agree an attendance policy.**

You should know the location of your pupil every single day and have an agreed, established procedure to follow if the pupil does not attend the AP as expected.

- **Establish a contact plan.**

Outline when you will visit the pupil at the AP, how you will keep in touch with the provider and who will oversee contact with the child’s parents or carers

14. Headteacher Recruitment

The recruitment and selection process for a new Headteacher must follow the key stages laid out in this guidance. However, there are two key additional requirements to consider.

It is the preference of Reading Borough Council that any new Headteacher being recruited to his/her first headship, or his/her first headship in a maintained school, must have achieved, or be working towards, the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH).

The Director of Children, Education, and Early Help Services is entitled to take part in the recruitment and selection process for Headteachers, including taking part in shortlisting and interviewing. The Director can nominate another officer to undertake this on his/her behalf. It is important that the Director is informed of any recruitment exercises for Headteachers to ensure he/she has the opportunity to take part.

15. Confidentiality

During the recruitment and selection process the school will find itself in possession of a great deal of personal information, both for the successful candidate and for the unsuccessful applicants. This information must be stored securely, released to only authorised persons, and confidentially destroyed at the appropriate time, in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998/UK GDPR.

16. Ongoing safeguarding of children and the legal reporting duties on employers

This section explains the importance of safeguarding vigilance beyond the recruitment process and as part of the whole school or college approach to safeguarding.

Safer recruitment is not just about carrying out the right DBS checks. Similarly safeguarding should not be limited to recruitment procedures. Good safeguarding requires a continuing commitment from governing bodies, proprietors, and all staff to ensure the safety and welfare of children is embedded in all of the organisation's processes and procedures, and consequentially enshrined in its ethos.

17. Ongoing vigilance for all staff

The Governing body will ensure they have processes in place for continuous vigilance, maintaining an environment that deters and prevents abuse and challenges inappropriate behaviour. To support this, it is important that school and college leaders create the right culture and environment so that staff feel comfortable to discuss matters both within, and where it is appropriate, outside of the workplace (including online), which may have implications for the safeguarding of children. As set out in KCSIE, 2026 guidance, it is important that all staff understand the process and procedures to follow if they have a safeguarding concern about another staff member. This can assist employers to support staff, where there is a need, and help them manage children's safety and welfare, potentially providing them with information that will help them consider whether there are further measures or changes to procedures that need to be put in place to safeguard children in their care.

18. Completing checks on existing staff

There are limited circumstances where the school will need to carry out new checks on existing staff or volunteers. These are when:

- an individual working or volunteering at the school or college moves from a post that was not regulated activity with children into work which is considered to be regulated activity with children. In such circumstances, the relevant checks for that regulated activity must be carried out
- there has been a break in service of 12 weeks or more, or
- there are concerns about an individual's suitability to work with children.

The school will as a matter of being vigilant, request all staff employed by the school to complete an annual declaration to disclose if they have had any cautions or convictions since their last DBS check.

19. Duty to refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service

When an allegation is made (see Part four of the KCSIE guidance), an investigation should be carried out to gather enough evidence to establish if it has foundation, and employers should ensure they have sufficient information to meet the referral duty criteria explained in the DBS referral guidance, which can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/dbs-referrals-guidance--2>

There is a legal requirement for schools to make a referral to the DBS where they remove an individual from regulated activity (or would have removed an individual had they not left), and they believe the individual has:

- engaged in relevant conduct in relation to children and/or adults, and/or
- satisfied the harm test in relation to children and/or vulnerable adults, and/or
- been cautioned or convicted of a relevant (automatic barring either with or without the right to make representations) offence. This duty applies equally to paid staff and volunteers where they were engaged in regulated activity. The DBS will consider whether to bar the person.

20. Duty to consider referral to the Teaching Regulation Agency

Where a school dismisses or ceases to use the services of a teacher because of serious misconduct, or might have dismissed them or ceased to use their services had they not left first, they must consider whether to refer the case to the Secretary of State, as required by sections of the Education Act 2002. The Secretary of State may investigate the case, and if there is a case to answer, must then decide whether to make a prohibition order in respect of the person.

V Lucas, SBM September 2026