



Safer Recruitment Policy

Pathways Skills Academy

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INTRODUCTION

The safe recruitment of staff is the first step to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in education. Pathways Skills Academy (PSA) is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all pupils in its care. As an employer, PSA expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aims of the Safer Recruitment policy are to help deter, reject, or identify people who might abuse pupils or are otherwise unsuited to collaborating with them by having appropriate procedures for appointing staff.

The aims of the recruitment policy are as follows:

- to ensure that the best possible staff are recruited based on their merits, abilities, and suitability for the position.
- to ensure that all job applicants are considered equally and consistently.
- to ensure that no job applicant is treated unfairly on any grounds including race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or religious belief, sex, or sexual orientation, marital or civil partner status, disability, or age.
- to ensure compliance with all relevant legislation, recommendations and guidance including the statutory guidance published by the Department for Education (DfE), Keeping Children Safe in Education - September 2026 (KCSIE), the Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales 2023 (the Prevent Duty Guidance) and any guidance or code of practice published by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS); and
- to ensure that PSA meets its commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people by conducting all necessary pre-employment checks.

Employees involved in the recruitment and selection of staff are responsible for familiarising themselves with and complying with the provisions of this policy.

PSA has a principle of open competition in its approach to recruitment and will seek to recruit the best applicant for the job. The recruitment and selection process should ensure the identification of the person best suited to the job at the PSA based on the applicant's abilities, qualification, experience, and merit as measured against the job description and person specification using a selection matrix to fairly identify who the best candidates may be.

The recruitment and selection of staff will be conducted in a professional, timely and responsive manner and in compliance with current employment legislation, and relevant safeguarding legislation and statutory guidance (including KCSIE 2026 and Prevent Duty Guidance).

If a member of staff involved in the recruitment process has a close personal or familial relationship with an applicant, they must declare it as soon as they are aware of the individual's application and avoid any involvement in the recruitment and selection decision-making process.

PSA aims to operate this procedure consistently and thoroughly while obtaining, collating, analysing, and evaluating information from and about applicants applying for job vacancies.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the responsibility of the manager to:

- Ensure PSA has effective policies and procedures in place for recruitment of all staff and volunteers in accordance with DfE guidance and legal requirements and monitor PSA's compliance with them.

It is the responsibility of the manager and support staff involved in recruitment to:

- Ensure that PSA operates safer recruitment procedures and makes sure all appropriate checks are conducted on all staff and volunteers who collaborate with us
- Monitor contractors' and agencies' compliance with this document
- Promote welfare of children and young people at every stage of the procedure.

Definition of Regulated Activity and Frequency

Any position undertaken at, or on behalf of PSA will amount to "regulated activity" if it is conducted:

- Frequently, meaning once a week or more; or
- Overnight, meaning between 2.00 am and 6.00 am or
- Satisfies the "period condition", meaning four times or more in a 30-day period; and
- Provides the opportunity for contact with children.

Roles which are conducted on an unpaid / voluntary basis will only amount to regulated activity if, in addition to the above, they are conducted on an unsupervised basis.

PSA is not permitted to check the Children's Barred List unless an individual will be engaging in "regulated activity". PSA is required to conduct an enhanced DBS check for all staff who will be engaging in regulated activity. However, the PSA can also conduct an enhanced DBS check on a person who would be conducting regulated activity but for the fact that they do not perform their duties frequently enough i.e., roles which would amount to regulated activity if conducted more frequently.

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCEDURE

Advertising

To ensure equality of opportunity, PSA will advertise all vacant posts to encourage as wide a field of applicant as possible; normally this entails an external advertisement.

Any advertisement will make clear PSA's commitment to Safer Recruitment, safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

All documentation relating to applicants will be treated confidentially in accordance with GDPR 2018.

Application Forms

All applicants for employment will be required to complete an application outlining questions about their academic and full employment history and their suitability for the role

(in addition all applicants are required to account for any gaps or discrepancies in employment history). Incomplete applications will not be shortlisted.

The offer of employment will include the applicant's declaration regarding convictions and working with children and will make it clear that the post is exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

It is unlawful for PSA to employ anyone who is barred from working with children. It is a criminal offence for any person who is barred from working with children to apply for a position at PSA. All applicants will be made aware that providing false information is an offence and could result in the application being rejected or summary dismissal if the applicant has been selected, and referral to the police and/or the DBS. Candidates will complete a self-disclosure form.

Job Descriptions and Person Specifications

A job description is a key document in the recruitment process and must be finalised prior to taking any other steps in the recruitment process. It will clearly and accurately set out the duties and responsibilities of the job role.

The person specification is of equal importance and informs the selection decision. It details the skills, experience, abilities, and expertise that are required to do the job. The person specification will include a specific reference to suitability to work with children in a boarding environment.

References

All offers of employment will be subject to the receipt of a minimum of two references which are considered satisfactory by PSA. One of the references must be from the applicant's current or most recent employer. If the current / most recent employment does / did not involve work with children, then the second reference should be from the employer with whom the applicant most recently worked with children. The referee should not be a relative. References will always be sought and obtained directly from the referee and their purpose is to provide objective information to support appointment decisions.

All referees will be asked whether they believe the applicant is suitable for the job for which they have applied and whether they have any reason to believe that the applicant is unsuitable to work with children. Referees will also be asked to confirm that the applicant has not been radicalised so that they do not support terrorism or any form of "extremism".

Please note that no questions will be asked about health or medical fitness prior to any offer of employment being made.

Any discrepancies or anomalies will be followed up. Direct contact by phone will be undertaken with each referee to verify the reference.

PSA does not accept open references, testimonials, or references from relatives.

Interviews

There will be a face-to-face interview wherever possible, and a minimum of two interviewers will see the applicants for the vacant position. The interview process will explore the applicant's ability to conduct the job description and meet the person specification. It will enable the panel to explore any anomalies or gaps that have been identified.

to satisfy themselves that the chosen applicant can meet the safeguarding criteria (in line with Safer Recruitment Training). All candidates will be asked the same set of questions and scored against their answers, to promote equality and inclusion in the selection process.

Any information regarding past disciplinary action or allegations, cautions or convictions will be discussed and considered in the circumstance of the individual case during the interview process, if it has not been disclosed on the application form.

At least one member of any interviewing panel will have undertaken Safer Recruitment. For PSA this is to be the Manager who will undertake training or refresher training as applicable. Questions for learner facing roles will be asked value-based questions to illicit their attitude toward others and safeguarding.

All applicants who are invited to an interview will be required to bring evidence of their identity, address, and qualifications and right to work in the UK will be satisfied by these documents. Original document will only be accepted, and photocopies will be taken. Unsuccessful applicant documents will be destroyed six months after the recruitment programme.

OFFER OF APPOINTMENT AND NEW EMPLOYEE PROCESS

In accordance with the recommendations set out in KCSIE 2026 and the requirements of the Education (Independent PSA Standards) Regulations 2014 and the Boarding PSA's: national minimum standards, the PSA conducts several pre-employment checks in respect of all prospective employees.

If it is decided to make an offer of employment following the formal interview, any such offer will be conditional on the following:

- The agreement of a mutually acceptable start date and the signing of a contract incorporating PSA's standard terms and conditions of employment.
- Verification of the applicant's identity (where that has not previously been verified).
- The receipt of two references (one of which must be from the applicant's most recent employer) which PSA considers to be satisfactory.
- For positions which involve "teaching work":
 - i. PSA being satisfied that the applicant is not, and has never been, the subject of a sanction, restriction or prohibition issued by the National College for Teaching and Leadership, or any predecessor or successor body, or by a regulator of the teaching profession in any other European Economic Area country which prevents the applicant working with children.
 - ii. PSA being satisfied that the applicant is not, and has never been, the subject of any proceedings before a professional conduct panel or equivalent body in the UK or any other country for any reason which prevents the applicant working at PSA
- Where the position amounts to "regulated activity" the receipt of an enhanced disclosure from the DBS which PSA considers to be satisfactory.
- Where the position amounts to "regulated activity" confirmation that the applicant is not named on the Children's Barred List*.
- Confirmation that the applicant is not subject to a direction under section 142 of the Education Act 2002 which prohibits, disqualifies, or restricts them from providing education

at an PSA, taking part in the management of an independent PSA or working in a position which involves regular contact with children.

- Confirmation that the applicant is not subject to a direction under section 128 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 which prohibits, disqualifies, or restricts them from being involved in the management of an independent PSA.
- Verification of the applicant's right to work in the UK.
- Any further checks which are necessary because of the applicant having lived or worked outside of the UK; and
- Verification of professional qualifications which PSA deems a requirement for the post, or which the applicant otherwise cites in support of their application (where they have not been previously verified).

*The PSA is not permitted to check the Children's Barred List unless an individual will be engaging in "regulated activity". The PSA is required to conduct an enhanced DBS check for all staff, supply staff and governors who will be engaging in regulated activity. However, the PSA can also conduct an enhanced DBS check on a person who would be conducting regulated activity but for the fact that they do not perform their duties frequently enough i.e., roles which would amount to regulated activity if conducted more frequently.

Whether a position amounts to "regulated activity" must therefore be considered by the PSA to decide which checks are appropriate. It is however likely that in all cases the PSA will be able to conduct an enhanced DBS check and a Children's Barred List check.

A personal file checklist will be used to track and audit paperwork obtained in accordance with Safer Recruitment Training and recorded on the Single Central Record. The checklist will be retained on personal files.

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 does not apply to positions which involve working with or having access to pupils. Therefore, any convictions and cautions that would normally be considered 'SPENT' **must be** declared when applying for any position at Shrewsbury PSA.

DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) Certificate (formerly known as CRB Disclosure)

The PSA applies for an enhanced disclosure from the DBS and a check of the Children's Barred List (now known as an Enhanced Check for Regulated Activity) in respect of all positions at the PSA which amount to "regulated activity" as defined in the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (as amended). The purpose of conducting an Enhanced Check for Regulated Activity is to identify whether an applicant is barred from working with children by inclusion on the Children's Barred List and to obtain other relevant suitability information.

It is the PSA's policy that the DBS disclosure **must be** obtained before the commencement of employment of **any** new employee.

Members of staff at PSA are aware of their obligation to inform the Bursar or the HR Department of any cautions or convictions that arise between these checks taking place.

DBS checks will still be requested for applicants with recent periods of overseas residence and those with little or no previous UK residence.

Portability of DBS Certificates Checks

PSA is subscribed to the DBS update service. It is the PSA's policy to re-check employee's DBS Certificates every three years and in addition any employee that takes leave for more than three months (i.e.: maternity leave, career break etc) must be re-checked before they return to work.

DBS Certificate

The DBS no longer issue Disclosure Certificates to employers; therefore employees/applicants should bring their Certificate to the Human Resources Department, (for employees within 7 days of issue or applicants before they commence work or any project involving regulated activity).

Dealing with convictions

The PSA operates a formal procedure if a DBS Certificate is returned with details of convictions. Consideration will be given to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and:

- the nature, seriousness, and relevance of the offence.
- how long ago the offence occurred.
- one-off or history of offences.
- changes in circumstances,
- desistance and remorse.

A formal meeting will take place face-to-face to establish the facts with the Human Resources Manager. A decision will be made following this meeting. If relevant information (whether in relation to previous convictions or otherwise) is volunteered by an applicant during the recruitment process or obtained through a disclosure check, the Human Resources Manager will evaluate all the risk factors above before a position is offered or confirmed.

If an applicant wishes to dispute any information contained in a disclosure, they may do so by contacting the DBS. In cases where the applicant would otherwise be offered a position were it not for the disputed information, the PSA may, where practicable and at its discretion, defer a final decision about the appointment until the applicant has had a reasonable opportunity to challenge the disclosure information.

Secretary of State Prohibition Orders (Teaching & Management roles)

In all cases where an applicant is to undertake a teaching role of any kind, a Prohibition Order check will be made using the Employer Access Online Service. It is anticipated that this will be performed at offer stage. A person who is prohibited from teaching must not be appointed to work as a teacher in such a setting.

Prohibition orders are made by the Secretary of State following consideration by a professional conduct panel convened by the National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL). Pending such consideration, the Secretary of State may issue an interim prohibition order if it is in the public interest to do so. A section 128 direction thirty-nine prohibits or restricts a person from taking part in the management of an independent PSA.

A person who is prohibited is unable to participate in any management of an independent PSA, a governor on any governing body in an independent PSA, or a management position that retains or has been delegated any management responsibilities. A check for a section 128 direction will be conducted using the Teacher Services' system. Where the person will be engaging in regulated activity, a DBS barred list check will also identify any section 128 direction.

Proof of identity, Right to Work in the UK & Verification of Qualifications and/or professional status

All applicants invited to attend an interview at the PSA will be required to bring their identification documentation such as passport, birth certificate, driving licence etc. with them as proof of identity/eligibility to work in UK in accordance with those set out in the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006 and DBS identity checking guidelines. The PSA does not discriminate on the grounds of age.

Where an applicant claims to have changed their name by deed poll or any other means (e.g., marriage, adoption, statutory declaration) they will be required to provide documentary evidence of the change.

In addition, applicants must be able to demonstrate that they have obtained any academic or vocational qualification legally required for the position and claimed in their application form.

Induction Programme

All new employees will be given an induction programme which will clearly identify PSA policies and procedures, including the Child Protection Policy, the Code of Conduct and Part One of KCSIE 2026, and make clear the expectations which will govern how staff conduct their roles and responsibilities.

New employees will also undergo a 3-month probationary period where they will be monitored on suitability and performance. This will include how new employees engage with children attending the centre and that they demonstrate a commitment to Safeguarding and Prevent by completing mandatory training, reading the identified policies and undergoing the face-to-face training on systems and processes that Safeguard children at PSA.

The new employee will meet with their line manager after the first day, first week and then at monthly intervals until their suitability is confirmed and they become a permanent member of staff.

The managing Director will have the final say on suitability and will confirm this transferring the new employees' contract from probationary to permanent employee status.

Record Retention / Data Protection

The PSA is legally required to undertake the above pre-employment checks. Therefore, if an applicant is successful in their application, the PSA will retain on their personnel file any relevant information provided as part of the application process. This will include copies of documents used to verify identity, right to work in the UK, medical fitness, and qualifications. Medical information may be used to help the PSA to discharge its obligations

as an employer e.g., so that the PSA may consider reasonable adjustments if an employee suffers from a disability or to assist with any other workplace issue.

This documentation will be retained by the PSA for the duration of the successful applicant's employment with the PSA. All information retained on employees is kept centrally in the Human Resources Office in a locked and secure cabinet.

The same policy applies to any suitability information obtained about volunteers involved with PSA activities.

PSA will retain all interview notes on all unsuccessful applicants for a period of 6 months, after which time the notes will be confidentially destroyed (i.e.: shredded). The 6-month retention period is in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

Ongoing Employment

PSA recognises that safer recruitment and selection is not just about the start of employment but should be part of a larger policy framework for all staff. The PSA will therefore provide ongoing training and support for all staff, as identified through the Annual Review/appraisal procedure.

Leaving Employment at PSA

Despite the best efforts to recruit safely there may be occasions when allegations of serious misconduct or abuse against children and young people are raised. This policy is primarily concerned with the promotion of safer recruitment and details the pre-employment checks that will be undertaken prior to employment being confirmed. Whilst these are pre-employment checks PSA also has a legal duty to make a referral to the DBS in circumstances where an individual:

- has applied for a position at PSA despite being barred from working with children; or
- has been removed by PSA from working in regulated activity (whether paid or unpaid), or has resigned prior to being removed, because they have harmed, or pose a risk of harm to, a child.

If the individual referred to the DBS is a teacher, the PSA may also decide to make a referral to the Teaching Regulation Agency.

Contractors and agency staff

Contractors engaged by the PSA must complete the same checks for their employees that the PSA is required to complete for its staff. The PSA requires confirmation that these checks have been completed before employees of the Contractor can commence work at the PSA.

Agencies who supply staff to the PSA must also complete the pre-employment checks which the PSA would otherwise complete for its staff. Again, the PSA requires confirmation that these checks have been completed before an individual can commence work at the PSA.

The PSA will independently verify the identity of staff supplied by contractors or an agency in and will require the provision of the original DBS certificate before contractors or agency staff can commence work at the PSA.

Visiting Speakers (and Prevent Duty)

The Prevent Duty Guidance requires PSA to have clear protocols for ensuring that any visiting speakers, whether invited by staff or by pupils, are suitable and appropriately supervised.

The PSA is not permitted to obtain a DBS disclosure or Children's Barred List information on any visiting speaker who does not engage in regulated activity at PSA or perform any other regular duties for or on behalf of PSA.

All visiting speakers will be subject to PSA's usual visitors signing in protocol. [Security on Site Policy] This will include signing in and out at Reception, the wearing of a visitor's badge always and being escorted by a fully vetted member of staff between appointments.

PSA will also obtain such formal or informal background information about a visiting speaker as is reasonable in the circumstances to decide whether to invite and/or permit a speaker to attend PSA. In doing so PSA will always have regard to the [Visitors and Security Policy], the Prevent Duty Guidance and the definition of "extremism" set out in KCSIE which states:

"'Extremism' is vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also include in our definition of extremism calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas. Terrorist groups very often draw on extremist ideas developed by extremist organisations."

In fulfilling its Prevent Duty obligations PSA does not discriminate on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or religious belief, sex, or sexual orientation, marital or civil partner status, disability, or age.

Volunteers

PSA will request an enhanced DBS disclosure and Children's Barred List information on any volunteers undertaking regulated activity with pupils.

Under no circumstances will PSA permit an unchecked volunteer to have unsupervised contact with pupils.

In addition, PSA will seek to obtain such further suitability information about a volunteer as it considers appropriate in the circumstances. This may include (but is not limited to) the following:

- formal or informal information provided by staff, parents, and other volunteers.
- character references from the volunteer's place of work or any other relevant source; and
- an informal safer recruitment interview.
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Monitoring and Evaluation

The Manager will be responsible for ensuring that this policy is monitored and evaluated throughout PSA. This will be undertaken through formal audits of job vacancies and a yearly Safer Recruitment Evaluation audit.