Safer Recruitment 2026

For All Community, Community Special, Voluntary Controlled, Pupil Referral Units and LA Maintained Nursery Schools

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Introduction

This policy provides a consistent framework for use in Community, Community Special, Voluntary-Controlled, Pupil Referral Units and LA Maintained Nursery Schools in Birmingham for the provision of Safer Recruitment

While it has been developed to reflect the Council's guidance and local requirements, other schools may also adopt this policy where appropriate. Other schools choosing to adopt this policy should review the content to ensure that it aligns with their statutory responsibilities and governance

In line with School Staffing Regulations (2009), *Working Together 2026* and *Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2026)*, all schools are responsible for:

- Creating a culture of safeguarding, equality, and protection.
- Ensuring staff are competent and supported to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities.
- Providing mandatory induction and regular reviews of practice.
- Establishing clear whistleblowing procedures and escalation processes when concerns are not addressed.
- Maintaining safe recruitment and ongoing safer working practices for all individuals working with children.

1. The Governing Body of Weoley Castle Nursery School has adopted this Safer Recruitment policy in accordance with statutory guidance School Staffing Regulations (2009), Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE 2026) and Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2026)

2. The Governing Body is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. It recognises both its moral and legal responsibilities when recruiting, appointing and managing individuals who work with children. The Governing Body also recognises its responsibility to ensure that all employees have the legal right to work in the United Kingdom and are suitable to work with children.

3. The Governing Body has also adopted the Model Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy recommended by Birmingham City Council which sits alongside this policy and strengthens it.

4. The Governing Body will ensure that all employees are made aware of this policy, the Model Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Data Protection Policy. It will ensure that the policies are published and reviewed at least annually.

5. This policy is entitled Safer Recruitment to reflect the importance of maintaining ongoing vigilance after appointment. Recruitment is only one aspect of safeguarding children and young people. Schools must also ensure effective induction, supervision, professional conduct, ongoing suitability and the management of concerns throughout an individual's employment or engagement.

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Safer Recruitment

6. Two fundamental principles of effective safer recruitment and employment are that schools should not rely on any one process in order to safeguard children; and that effective safeguarding requires robust policies for the management and supervision of staff after the recruitment phase. A comprehensive and systematic approach must therefore include policies and practices designed to:

    - **Deter** unsuitable people from seeking employment or opportunities to volunteer to work with children and young people.]
    - **Reject** applications from unsuitable people.
    - **Prevent** abuse and neglect of children by staff and volunteers.
    - **Identify** incidents of abuse and neglect by staff and volunteers.
    - **Respond** to concerns in an open and positive way.
    - **Manage** allegations made against staff in accordance with school/academy procedures

7. Safer recruitment and employment should be applied at all stages of the recruitment and employment process: It involves four key stages:

    i. Preparation and Advertisement ii. Application form iii. Shortlisting iv. Interview/Selection v. Employment history and references vi. Pre-employment Checks

i. Preparation and Advertisement

- Job descriptions and person specifications must reflect safeguarding responsibilities for all posts, with specialist roles including detailed duties
- Recruitment and safeguarding policies should be up to date and referenced in candidate packs. Where applicable, this can also be referenced in adverts too.
- All advertisements include a statement to the effect that the school "is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all employees and volunteers to share this commitment" and a statement that the successful applicant will require an enhanced disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service and an online search will be carried out on short-listed candidates to help identify and incidents or issues that can be discussed at interview
- All advertisements should also include a statement to state that the post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

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- Every job description includes a statement that the employee is responsible for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children for whom he or she is responsible or comes into contact

ii. Application Form

- All candidates are required to complete an application form. CV should not be accepted nor be considered as an application form unless it is requested alongside the application form. The application should include a statement of their personal qualities and experience relevant to their suitability for the post and how they meet the person specification.
- Where the role involves regulated activity, it should also include a statement that will inform the applicant that it is an offence to apply for a role if they are barred in engaging in activity relevant to children.
- As part of the application process, schools should make available their child protection and safeguarding policies, together with their policy on the employment of ex-offenders, either by including them in the application pack or by directing applicants to the relevant section of their website.
- Schools should require applicants to provide detailed information about their suitability to work with children including personal details, work history, qualifications etc
- Unless the Governing Body has adopted another application form complying with the statutory guidance, the school uses the current standard application forms prepared by the local authority.

iii. Shortlisting

- Any gaps in education or employment, or discrepancies between information on the application form and references should be explored.
- Panels (minimum two members, at least one trained in safer recruitment) must plan timelines carefully, scrutinise applications thoroughly, and apply criteria consistently.
- In the case of headteacher interviews, in accordance with the School Staffing Regulations, the interview panel must consist of at least three members of the Governing body other than a governor who is the Headteacher or deputy headteacher. At least one panel member must be safer recruitment trained.
- Self-disclosures of criminal history should be obtained at shortlisting stage, in line with Ministry of Justice and DBS filtering guidance, allowing any issues to be discussed before DBS results are received.
- Shortlisted applicants will be asked to complete and sign a self-declaration form confirming whether they have any criminal convictions or other information that may affect their suitability to work with children.
- This declaration will only be requested after shortlisting. It should not be included in the application stage or used as part of the shortlisting process.
- Shortlisted applicants should sign the declaration confirming that the information they have provided is accurate and complete. Where the applicant has signed electronically, this must be physically signed again at interview stage.

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- Online searches should be obtained once the candidate has been shortlisted and prior to being interviewed.

iv. Interview and Selection

- Interviews must follow a structured framework linked to the person specification and explore safeguarding attitudes and behaviours through at least two valuebased questions which should include finding out what attracted the candidate to the post and their motivation for working with children The questions should also explore their skills and ask for examples of working with children relevant to the role and probing any gaps in employment identified or where there has been frequent changes in employment or location.
- Concerns such as vague responses, poor understanding of children's needs, inappropriate boundaries, or unwillingness to work within safeguarding systems should be treated as red flags.
- Additional selection tools (e.g., observed tasks or group exercises) may be used, but all processes must remain safe, consistent, and documented.
- Any information about past disciplinary action or substantiated allegations should be considered in the circumstances of the individual case.
- Notes, scoring, and panel decisions must be fully recorded.

v. Employment history and references.

- At least two job-related written references, including one from the current employer or most recent employer (or training establishment in the case of a newly qualified teacher or school for a young person with no previous employment experience) or most recent employer in respect of employment with children, are to be obtained where possible before interviews take place so that relevant questions are asked of the referee and employee in accordance with statutory guidance and any discrepancies are investigated that the assessment of candidates during selection process is properly recorded against the person specification and criteria set for the assessment
- Schools should adopt a robust approach to pre-employment referencing by ensuring that open references, such as those addressed "To Whom It May Concern", are not accepted. References should be obtained directly by the school rather than relying on applicants to provide them.
- The school must establish the reason for the candidate leaving their current position or recent post.
- Wherever possible, references should be sought from the applicant's current employer and completed by a senior individual with the appropriate authority. For references provided by a school, the headteacher or principal should confirm their accuracy, including details of any disciplinary investigations.
- All references should be independently verified with the referee, and schools should ensure that electronic references originate from a legitimate and identifiable source. Referees should be contacted where information is unclear, incomplete, or requires further clarification.
- Periods of unemployment or career breaks are not a barrier to employment where a valid explanation is provided. Applicants must give a clear and honest account of any gaps in their employment history as part of the application or interview process and may be asked to provide

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supporting documentation. The school is responsible for identifying, exploring, and recording explanations for all gaps as part of safeguarding and due diligence.

- Schools must ensure that any concerns are resolved satisfactory before appointment is confirmed

vi. Pre- employment checks

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2026) requires schools to undertake appropriate pre-employment checks to help ensure that individuals appointed to work with children are suitable to do so.
- The school will ensure that all required checks are completed before an individual commences employment, unless a specific exception permitted by statutory guidance applies.
- All offers of employment should be conditional until the successful completion of the pre-employment checks.

a) Identity Verification

The school will verify the identity of all applicants. This will normally be undertaken using current photographic identification and proof of address. Wherever available, schools should also seek to verify an applicant's full name, date of birth and other identifying information against official documentation.

Identity checking guidance can be found at:
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-identity-checking-guidelines

b) Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks

The school will obtain an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate for all staff who are appointed to work in the school.

Schools will need to obtain an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service certificate for all new starters prior to commencing employment. Risk assessments will no longer be permitted

Portability will no longer be accepted for any new candidates. A new Enhanced DBS certificate must be in obtained prior to commencing employment

Where an individual will be engaging in regulated activity with children, the Enhanced DBS check will include a Children's Barred List check. In the event that the post/role also involves work with vulnerable adults, a request for a Vulnerable Adults Barred List check would also be necessary.

All Enhanced DBS certificates must be renewed every three years for all school employees, Governors and volunteers.

The Council also advise that all schools obtain DBS renewals for all agency staff and contractors every three years.

DBS also undertakes enhanced checks **without** checks of the Barred List and Standard checks, which are checks of the Police National Computer (PNC) records of convictions, cautions, reprimands and warnings only. More information is available

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on the DBS website at https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-andbarring-service/about

When the DBS has completed its check of an applicant's PNC record and, if appropriate, whether they are on the Barred List, the relevant information will be recorded on a certificate (the DBS certificate) that is sent to the applicant. The applicant must show the DBS certificate to their potential employer before they take up post.

c) Right to Work in the United Kingdom

The school will verify that all applicants have the legal right to work in the United Kingdom before employment commences and for the duration of the employment.

If there is any uncertainty regarding an individual's immigration status or entitlement to work in the UK, the school will follow current Home Office guidance.

Further information is available at: https://www.gov.uk/check-job-applicant-right-to-work

d) Professional Qualifications, Prohibition and Section 128 Checks

The school will verify any qualifications that are legally required or considered essential for the post.

For teaching posts, the school will:

- verify Qualified Teacher Status (QTS), where applicable;
- verify completion of statutory induction or probation where relevant;
- undertake any required prohibition checks through the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) Employer Access Service;
- undertake any additional checks required by Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026).

The school will ensure that any individual appointed to carry out teaching work is not subject to:

- a prohibition order issued by the Secretary of State;
- an interim prohibition order;
- any sanction or restriction imposed by the General Teaching Council for England (GTCE) that remains in force; or
- any other restriction that prevents the individual from carrying out teaching work.

In accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026), a Section 128 direction also disqualifies an individual from holding or continuing to hold office as a governor of a maintained school.

For the purposes of prohibition checks, "teaching work" has the meaning set out in the Teachers' Disciplinary (England) Regulations 2012 and includes:

- planning and preparing lessons and courses for pupils;

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- delivering lessons to pupils;
- assessing the development, progress and attainment of pupils; and
- reporting on the development, progress and attainment of pupils.

These activities do not constitute teaching work for the purposes of the Regulations where the individual carries them out, other than during induction, under the direction and supervision of a qualified teacher or another person nominated by the Headteacher to provide such direction and supervision.

e) Online Searches of Shortlisted Candidates

In line with Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026), the school will undertake an online search of all shortlisted candidates as part of its due diligence process. Online searches will be undertaken consistently for all shortlisted candidates for a particular post and will be limited to information that may be relevant to an individual's suitability to work with children. Any concerns identified will be explored with the applicant during the recruitment process and considered as part of the overall assessment of suitability.

f) Applicants Who Have Lived or Worked Overseas

Where an applicant has lived or worked outside the United Kingdom, or is recruited directly from overseas, the school will ensure that equivalent safeguarding and suitability checks are undertaken so far as reasonably practicable.

The school will:

- obtain criminal record information from the relevant country or countries where such checks are available; Criminal records checks for overseas applicants - GOV.UK
- obtain any additional safeguarding checks considered necessary;
- verify professional qualifications and professional status;
- obtain a minimum of two professional references, including, wherever possible, a reference from the current or most recent employer;
- scrutinise all references for any concerns relating to suitability to work with children.
- An enhanced DBS certificate (including children's barred list information, for those who will be engaging in regulated activity) even if the individual has never been to the UK

Obtain a letter from the relevant teaching regulator in any country where they have worked. The letter should confirm that no sanctions or restrictions have been placed on them and that there are no known reasons why they would be unsuitable to teach. This information can be considered alongside other pre-employment checks when assessing suitability. Applicants can find contact details of regulatory bodies in the EU/EEA and Switzerland on the Regulated Professions database.

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Where overseas criminal record information or other checks cannot be obtained, the school will undertake and record a risk assessment to determine whether the individual can be safely appointed and whether any additional safeguards are required.

No individual will commence employment until the school is satisfied that all appropriate pre-employment checks have been completed and that the individual is suitable to work with children.

All relevant checks and decisions will be appropriately recorded, including on the school's Single Central Record. Further guidance is available at:

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/recruit-teachers-from-overseas

Fitness to work

8. Verification of candidates' mental and physical fitness to do the job should not take place until after the job offer has been made. Schools will need to decide how this will be undertaken, e.g. completion of a health questionnaire to be considered by the occupational health medical adviser, letter from medical practitioner. However, the key principle is that only candidates selected as suitable for employment subject to pre-employment checks should be asked to participate in this process.

Childcare Disqualification Regulations 2018

9. Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 states 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.

For staff working in childcare settings with children under 5 including reception classes and those working in wraparound care up the age of 8, or those directly involved in managing such provision, employers must ensure that appropriate checks are undertaken to confirm that individuals are not disqualified under the Childcare Disqualification Regulations 2018.

Further guidance on who these Regulations apply to, the checks that should be completed, and how those checks should be recorded is available in the statutory guidance *Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006*

Regulated Activity

10. 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. HM Government have produced a *factual note on Regulated Activity in relation to Children: scope* at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/550197/Regulated_activity_in_relation_to_children.pdf

Regulated Activity includes:

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a) Teaching, training, instructing, caring for (see (c) below) or supervising children if the person is unsupervised, or providing advice or guidance on well-being, or driving a vehicle only for children.

b) Work for a limited range of establishments (known as 'specified places,' which include childcare settings, schools and colleges), with the opportunity for contact with children, but not including work done by supervised volunteers.

c) Work under (a) or (b) is regulated activity only if done regularly, i.e. once per week or four times in a 30-day period. In addition, work under (a) is always regulated activity if it is ever undertaken between 2.00 a.m. and 6.00a.m. Some activities are always regulated activities, regardless of their frequency or whether they are supervised or not. These include:

    i. relevant personal care, or health care provided by or provided under the supervision of a health care professional:
    ii. p*ersonal care* includes helping a child - for reasons of age, illness or disability - with eating or drinking; or in connection with toileting, washing, bathing and dressing; *health care* means care for children provided by, or under the direction or supervision of, a regulated health care professional.

11. If an employer knows or has reason to believe that an individual is on the Children's Barred List, it is a criminal offence to allow the individual to carry out any form of Regulated Activity. There are penalties of up to five years in prison if an individual who is on the barred is convicted of attempting to engage or is engaging in such work.

Volunteers and Regulated Activity

12. Under no circumstances should a volunteer for whom appropriate checks have not been completed, be permitted to undertake regulated activity.

13. Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 state that *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. Details of the risk assessment should be recorded*

14. Any volunteer role in a school that gives the individual undertaking the role contact with children is deemed to be Regulated Activity and should therefore be subject to the same level of pre-employment checks including DBS checks with a Barred List check as an employed role.

15. In accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, Where an existing volunteer becomes engaged in regulated activity with children from 1 September 2026 as a result of the removal of the supervision exemption under the Crime and Policing Act 2026, the school will ensure that the individual's Children's Barred List status is checked. This will normally be achieved by obtaining an Enhanced DBS

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check with Children's Barred List information. A standalone Children's Barred List check may be used where appropriate

Regulated activity: removal of the supervision exemption (comes into force 1 September 2026) - GOV.UK

They may do this where either:

i. The school wishes to allow the volunteer to undertake regulated activity prior to obtaining the enhanced DBS check certificate;
ii. or the school has recently obtained an enhanced DBS check without children's barred list information, and there has been no break in service since that certificate was issued.

16. All volunteers who help on an overnight school trip are now in regulated activity. They will need to apply for an enhanced DBS check with children's barred list information.

17. Parents or carers who help occasionally will not need to get an enhanced DBS check with children's barred list information.

18. Parents or carers who help on a less frequent basis will not be affected, for example, parents helping out at school daytrip (not overnight) They will be able get an enhanced or basic DBS check without children's barred list information, if requested by the school.

Governors

19. All governors must have an Enhanced DBS check. A Barred List check should only be included where the governor is undertaking Regulated Activity alongside Section 128 check.

Agency and third-party staff

20. Schools that allow staff from third-party organisations (e.g. health professionals, peripatetic specialist teachers) to have regular direct contact with children on their premises and/or use the services of staff who are employed by external agencies (e.g. bank staff, supply teacher agencies) to care for or teach children must obtain **written notification** from the third-party organisation or agency that it:

- operates a safer recruitment policy and
- has carried out the checks on the individual who will be working at the setting/school/college that the setting/school/college would otherwise perform. Those checks must include a Barred List check prior to the individual commencing work at the setting/school/college.
- Where the agency or organisation has obtained an enhanced DBS certificate before the person is due to begin work at the school or college, which has disclosed any matter or information, or any information was provided to the employment business, the school must obtain a copy of the certificate from the agency

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21. Schools must also check that the person presenting themselves for work is the same person on whom the checks have been made.

    NB: click on link to access the local authorities written notification that all Birmingham Children's Trust Social Workers, Family Support Workers and BCC Education Services staff who visit a school have been through comprehensive pre-employment checks DBS checks for BCC-BCT visiting professionals

Contractors

22. Schools should set out their safeguarding requirements in the contract between the organisation/contractor and the school.

23. Schools who commission contractors to undertake work on site when children are present must ensure that any contractor, or any employee of the contractor, has been subject to the appropriate level of DBS check.

24. Schools will first need to determine whether the contractor and/or the contractor's employees will be engaging in Regulated Activity in order to decide what checks are required. Contractors engaging in Regulated Activity will require an enhanced DBS certificate (including Barred List information).

25. For all other contractors who are not engaging in Regulated Activity, but whose work provides them with an opportunity for regular contact with children, an enhanced DBS check (not including Barred List information) will be required.

26. In considering whether the contact is regular, it is irrelevant whether the contractor works on a single site or across several sites.

27. The key questions to ask in order to ascertain whether checks are required are:

    - Does the activity give the opportunity for contact with children?
    - Is the activity carried out regularly or frequently (i.e. once per week or more or on more than three days in a 30 day period)?

28. Schools must obtain the Enhanced DBS certificate from the contractor that they have carried out DBS checks at the appropriate level and that of the contractor's employees 's DBS certificates.

29. For all other contractors who are not engaging in regulated activity relating to children, but whose work provides them with an opportunity for regular contact with children, an enhanced DBS check (not including children's barred list information) will be required

30. Where the contractor does not have opportunity for regular contact with children, schools should decide on whether a basic DBS check would be appropriate.

31. Schools must not allow contractors to work unsupervised or engage in regulated activity without obtaining the relevant checks.

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32. Schools should always check the identity of contractors and their employees on arrival at the school.

33. If an individual working at a school is self-employed, the school should either obtain the DBS check, or request to see the certificate if the self-employed person has obtained their own check and ensure that the DBS check is at the level required by the school.

Trainee/Student teachers

34. Schools must complete all the required safer recruitment checks including an enhanced DBS for all trainee teachers paid by the school.

35. For trainee teachers who are paid for by their training provider, the provider is responsible for completing all checks. The school must obtain written confirmation that the checks have been completed and that the trainee is suitable to work with children

36. Fee-funded trainees do not have to be added to the Single Central Record but schools may choose to record their details.

Visitors

- Schools have different types of visitors such as professionals, guest speakers, contractors, family members and people attending school events

- Visitors such as parents, family members or guests at school events do not usually need a DBS or barred list check. School leaders should however decide whether these visitors need to be supervised or escorted

- Professional visitors including third party visitors should have their ID checked and the school to make sure that correct safeguarding checks have been completed such as assurances from the visitor or the visitor's employer that a DBS has been completed in relation to the activity required at the school.

Positive DBS panel

***Note this section applies to Community, Community Special, VoluntaryControlled, Pupil Referral Units and LA Maintained Nursery Schools only**

37. Birmingham City Council is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, while ensuring fair and equitable treatment of all applicants, including those with criminal records.

38. Where a positive disclosure is received, the Council's Positive DBS Panel will assess the information to determine the level of risk associated with the applicant's or employee's engagement in the role and identify any necessary safeguards to manage and minimise that risk. All positive disclosures are treated in strict confidence and stored securely in accordance with data protection legislation. The process is

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conducted in line with the ***Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974*****, the *Equality Act 2010***, and the ***DBS Code of Practice*****,** ensuring no unlawful discrimination occurs.

39. Schools are required to engage with the Council's Positive DBS Panel process to ensure corporate oversight and consistency of safeguarding decisions across all Birmingham City Council educational settings. While schools may commission their own HR services, any positive DBS disclosures for schools must be referred through the Council's process to ensure appropriate risk assessment and oversight.

40. When considering criminal records, the Council will take into account:
    - The nature and seriousness of the offence.
    - Relevance to the role applied for.
    - Whether the applicant disclosed the information during recruitment.
    - Any pattern of offending behaviour.
    - The country in which the offence occurred. • Remorse and acceptance of responsibility.
    - Whether the offence was isolated or part of a history.
    - Potential risk to children and vulnerable adults.
    - The length of time since the offence and any evidence of rehabilitation.

41. Decisions will be based on a balanced assessment of risk, role relevance, and safeguarding considerations. Where the Council is the employer and the risks cannot be adequately mitigated, the Council may decide not to progress the application or to restrict duties. Applicants or employees will be informed of the outcome in writing and, where appropriate, given the opportunity to appeal.

Single Central Record

42. Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 specifies that schools must maintain a single central record (SCR) of pre-appointment checks. Referred to in the Regulations as "the register" and more commonly known as "the single central record."

43. The single central record must cover the following people:

    - for schools, all staff, including teacher trainees on salaried routes, agency and third-party supply staff, even if they work for one day

44. The minimum information that must be recorded in respect of staff members is:

    - an identity check, (identification checking guidelines can be found on the GOV.UK website)
    - a standalone children's barred list check
    - 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
    - a check of professional qualifications, where required, and,
    - a check to establish the person's right to work in the United Kingdom.

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

46. Schools are required to include the following in their single central record for agency and third-party supply staff:

- **Written Confirmation of Checks**: A record of whether written confirmation has been received from the employment business supplying the staff member, confirming that all relevant checks have been carried out and appropriate certificates obtained.
- **Date of Confirmation**: The date on which this written confirmation was received.
- **Enhanced DBS Certificate**: Indication of whether an enhanced DBS certificate has been provided in respect of the staff member.

Induction

47. Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2026) highlights that:

a) All staff should be aware of systems within their school or college which support safeguarding, and these must be explained to them as part of induction.

b) As part of induction, all staff should be made aware of and trained in the following:

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- Safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety, filtering and monitoring), with regular updates.
- Safeguarding and child protection updates (e.g., via emails, bulletins, staff meetings) at least annually, and as required.
- The identity of the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and any deputies, and how to contact them.
- What to do if a child discloses abuse, neglect, or exploitation, including the importance of not promising confidentiality.
- How to reassure victims that they are taken seriously, supported, and kept safe, and that they are never made to feel ashamed or at fault for reporting.
- Awareness that technology is a significant factor in safeguarding risks; abuse often occurs both online and offline.
- Recognition that children can abuse other children online, including through harassing messages, misogynistic/misandrist content, non-consensual sharing of indecent images, and distribution of abusive images or pornography.
- Governing bodies and proprietors must ensure that **all** *staff should receive and read Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 as part of induction. Governing Bodies should ensure mechanisms are in place to support staff to understand and discharge their safeguarding responsibilities.*
- All staff have a responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children can learn.

- Staff should maintain an attitude of *"it could happen here"* and always act in the best interests of the child.
- Any concerns about a child's welfare must be acted upon immediately.
- Headteachers and principals should ensure that safeguarding policies and procedures adopted by governing bodies and proprietors, particularly around referrals of suspected abuse and neglect, are followed by all staff.
- Staff in schools play a critical role in identifying concerns early, providing help, and preventing escalation.
- Governing bodies should appoint a senior leader as DSL, with safeguarding and child protection responsibilities explicitly set out in their job description.
- Governing bodies must ensure all staff receive safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety) at induction, with updates in line with advice from the local safeguarding partnership.
- All staff should be aware of their local early help process and their role within it.
- All staff should know the referral process to children's social care and statutory assessments under the Children Act 1989 (section 17 and section 47), and their potential role in these assessments.
- All staff should be aware of indicators of abuse, neglect, and specific safeguarding issues (as set out in paragraphs 19–48 of *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026*), and should speak to the DSL (or deputy) if unsure.
- All staff should understand the school's policy and procedures on child-on-child abuse.
- Teachers, including headteachers, must safeguard children's wellbeing and maintain public trust in the profession in line with the Teacher Standards 2012.
- All staff should be aware of the schools Code of Conduct, how to raise concerns and allegations against staff in accordance with the whistleblowing procedure

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48. *Working Together 2026*, stipulates that all schools should have arrangements that reflect the importance of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, including:

    A culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, both in individual decisions and in service development.

- Clear whistleblowing procedures, aligned with the *Freedom to Speak Up Review*, referenced in training and codes of conduct, and supported by a culture where safeguarding concerns can be raised.
- Clear escalation policies for staff to follow when safeguarding concerns are not being addressed.
- Safe recruitment and ongoing safe working practices for anyone working regularly with children, including guidance on criminal record checks.
- Appropriate supervision and support for staff, including safeguarding training.
- A culture of safety, equality, and protection in all services provided.

In addition, Working Together 2026 states that:

- employers are responsible for ensuring that their staff are competent to carry out their responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and creating an environment where staff feel able to raise concerns and feel supported in their safeguarding role;

- staff should be given a mandatory induction, which includes familiarisation with child protection responsibilities and the procedures to be followed if anyone has any concerns about a child's safety or welfare;

- all practitioners should have regular reviews of their own practice to ensure they have knowledge, skills and expertise that improve over time.

49. The application of robust processes for induction, probationary periods, supervision, training and appraisal is therefore essential. The importance of safeguarding should continue to be highlighted throughout the cycle of an individual's employment.

50. Empowering and encouraging members of staff and volunteers to report concerns or allegations about the behaviour of others is essential in order to tackle inappropriate or abusive behaviour. Schools should therefore develop policies and practices that minimise opportunities for abuse and ensure its prompt reporting by promoting and maintaining an ongoing culture of vigilance and openness within the organisation.

    Features of a safer culture

    - Open, no secrets
    - Belief that 'it could happen here'
    - Clear procedures for reporting concerns
    - Support in raising concerns and commitment to take action
    - Setting acceptable standards of behaviour
    - Policies and procedures put into practice
    - Induction and probationary periods
    - Commitment to safeguarding and an ongoing culture of vigilance

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51. Before any staff member or volunteer undertakes unsupervised work with children, mandatory induction must include familiarisation with safeguarding and child protection responsibilities, specifically:

    - Recognising signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect (noting that children may be abused by parents/carers as well as by adults working or volunteering with them).
      How to respond appropriately to a disclosure of abuse or neglect.
    - Procedures for raising concerns about a child's safety or welfare, including the identity of the designated safeguarding lead and the organisation's whistleblowing procedure.
    - The school staff behaviour policy or code of conduct, which sets out the standards of behaviour required to safeguard children.

52. Best practice is for schools to provide applicants with a copy of the safeguarding and child protection policy before application. All new starters must receive both the safeguarding and child protection policy and the staff behaviour/code of conduct policy with their offer of employment or volunteering, with a clear expectation that these are read before starting work.

53. On their first day, before having any contact with children, new starters should be given the opportunity to discuss and clarify any issues arising from these policies and should sign to confirm they have read, understood, and agree to comply with them.

54. Schools must also ensure that all staff working with children, regardless of role, are provided with and informed about other relevant safeguarding policies and procedures, including:

    - Behaviour management (including guidance on physical intervention and use of force).
    - Online safety.
    - Staff use of social media.
    - Whistleblowing (raising concerns about staff/volunteer conduct that risks or undermines safeguarding).
    - Tackling bullying.
    - Intimate care.
    - Health and safety.

Schools must also ensure that safeguarding training is provided as part of induction and refreshed regularly thereafter

Training

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55. Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 states that the designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) should undergo training to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out the role; and that this training should be updated at least every two years. In addition to formal training, the DSLs' knowledge and skills should be refreshed via e-bulletins, meeting other designated safeguarding leads or via reading about safeguarding developments at regular intervals, as required, and at least annually, to allow them to understand and keep up with any developments relevant to their role.

56. In order to highlight the importance of safeguarding to all staff and volunteers in all roles, Birmingham City Council Education Safeguarding Service advises that focused training should be provided in different ways on an ongoing basis, possibly including thematic training sessions, discussions in staff team meetings, material provided on

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the school's online learning and resources platform for staff and the provision of guidance documents with a requirement that staff read them by identified dates.

57. Schools are encouraged to facilitate staff and volunteers accessing inter-agency training provided by Birmingham City Council, Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership and other reputable organisations in addition to single agency training.

Establishing and maintaining an ongoing culture of vigilance

58. Staff training should include regular reminders of the principles set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, including the importance of a culture where safeguarding concerns are everyone's responsibility, where staff maintain the mindset that 'it could happen here', and where all staff and volunteers feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the school's safeguarding arrangements. Such reminders help establish and maintain a culture of vigilance and professional curiosity and reinforce the importance of reporting concerns in accordance with the school's staff behaviour (code of conduct), safeguarding and whistleblowing procedures.

59. Training should address both how staff should record and report concerns regarding poor or unsafe practice, breaches of the staff behaviour (code of conduct), and safeguarding concerns about adults working in the school, and to whom such reports should be made. In accordance with the school's safeguarding arrangements and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, staff must be made aware of the appropriate reporting routes, including arrangements for reporting concerns to the headteacher, senior leadership team, chair of governors or other nominated individual where appropriate. Where responsibility has been delegated to another leader, this must be clearly identified within induction, safeguarding training, the safeguarding and child protection policy, the staff behaviour policy (code of conduct) and any whistleblowing procedures.

60. Schools should also identify by name the individual to whom staff and volunteers should report any concerns in the absence of the headteacher or in the event that their concerns are about the headteacher. That named individual would ordinarily be the chair of governors, but it could also be the safeguarding governor.

61. Furthermore, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 states that 'Where a staff member feels unable to raise an issue with their employer or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, other whistleblowing channels may be open to them'. Whistleblowing plays an important role in maintaining transparency, accountability, and safeguarding within schools. It provides staff with a safe and confidential way to raise concerns about wrongdoing, unsafe practices, or breaches of policy that may place children, young people, or colleagues at risk. All staff have a duty to speak up if they witness or suspect any conduct that could compromise the safety or integrity of the school environment. Birmingham City Council (BCC) has a Whistleblowing Policy which offers clear guidance and protection for individuals who raise genuine concerns. Staff are encouraged to familiarise themselves with this policy and to use the procedures outlined within it to report any concerns without fear of reprisal.

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62. Where the relevant threshold is met, the school will make referrals to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and, where applicable, the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA), in accordance with statutory requirements. Failure to make a required referral may constitute a breach of legal obligations.

63. For staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally or who have concerns about the way a concern is being handled by their school, advice about raising such concerns is available from the NSPCC at https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-you-can-do/report-abuse/dedicated-helplines/whistleblowing-advice-line/. Staff can phone the NSPCC helpline on 0800 028 0285 from 8:00a.m.to 8:00p.m., Monday to Friday, or Email help@nspcc.org.uk.

64. All staff and volunteers should therefore be provided with those contact numbers and addresses. They should also be provided with contact details for the locality support network in the Local Authority including the Education Safeguarding Service.

Referrals to relevant regulated bodies

68. There is a legal requirement for schools and the Council to make a referral to Disclosure and Barring Service and Teaching Regulations Agency in a timely manner where the threshold is met.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) referral

69. If the threshold has been met, referrals to the DBS should be made as soon as an individual is removed from regulated activity, whether through suspension, redeployment, dismissal, resignation, or ceasing to volunteer. Schools should provide all relevant information to support the DBS in making an informed decision

Teaching Regulations Agency (TRA)

70. The school and the Council must consider referring a teacher to TRA where they are dismissed for serious misconduct or would have been dismissed had they not left first. Employers should also continue to meet their duties under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED).

Managing allegations

71. The management of allegations is a critical part of safeguarding. All schools have a statutory duty to report any allegation that an employee, volunteer, or contractor has harmed, or may have harmed, a child; possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm.

72. Where there is an immediate risk to a child, or the concern indicates potential abuse, the matter must also be reported to the relevant Children's Social Care team and, where appropriate, the police.

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73. The Headteacher or senior manager has a statutory duty to notify the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within one working day. The LADO is responsible for overseeing the management and resolution of allegations against adults working with children. Schools should also ensure that concerns which do not meet the harm threshold are managed in accordance with the school's low-level concerns procedures.

Supervision

74. Education professionals, and DSLs in particular, are managing increasingly complex, challenging, and emotionally demanding situations to fulfil their statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Consistent, regular, and high-quality supervision is therefore essential.

75. In order to fulfil the requirements of Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, schools should develop a policy for the supervision and appraisal of staff with specific reference to their safeguarding responsibilities.

76. Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 requires governing bodies to appoint a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), who should be 'an appropriate senior member of staff from the school or college leadership team'; and states that the DSL should take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety), that this should be explicit in the role holder's job description, that the DSL should have the appropriate status and authority within the school to carry out the duties of the post and that they should be given the time, funding, training, resources and support to provide advice and support to other staff on child welfare and child protection matters.

    Refer to DSL Model Supervision Policy and Guidance for Schools| Birmingham City Council for further guidance

Ongoing Suitability and Professional Conduct

77. The Governing Body recognises that safer recruitment does not end once an individual has been appointed. Maintaining the ongoing suitability of staff, volunteers and governors is an essential part of creating and sustaining a safe culture within the school. The school will take all reasonable steps to satisfy itself that those working with children remain suitable to do so throughout the period of their employment or engagement.

78. All staff, volunteers and governors are expected to maintain high standards of personal and professional conduct and to act in a manner that safeguards and promotes the welfare of children. Individuals must comply with the school's safeguarding procedures, Staff Behaviour Policy (Code of Conduct), and any professional standards relevant to their role.

79. Staff must notify the Headteacher, without unreasonable delay, of any matter that may affect their suitability to work with children. This includes, but is not limited to:

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- Any arrest, caution, conviction or criminal investigation.
- Any circumstance that may result in consideration being given to barring the individual from working with children.
- Any allegation, investigation or finding relating to the safety or welfare of a child.
- Any prohibition, restriction or sanction imposed by a professional or regulatory body.
- Any other matter that could reasonably be considered relevant to their suitability to work with children or young people.
- The school reserves the right to undertake an appropriate risk assessment where information becomes known that may affect an individual's suitability to continue working with children. Any concerns will be managed in accordance with statutory guidance, safeguarding procedures and employment policies.

Low-Level Concerns

80. A culture of openness and transparency is essential in promoting safeguarding and maintaining public confidence. The school will ensure that all staff understand their responsibility to share any low-level concern about the behaviour of an adult working in or on behalf of the school, where that behaviour may be inconsistent with the Staff Behaviour Policy (Code of Conduct), even if it does not meet the threshold for managing an allegation.

81. Low-level concerns will be recorded, reviewed and managed appropriately to help identify patterns of concerning behaviour, support staff to maintain professional boundaries and strengthen the school's safeguarding culture. Staff should feel confident that concerns will be taken seriously, handled sensitively and addressed proportionately.

Useful Links

- DBS checks for BCC visiting professionals
- Birmingham Schools Noticeboard
- BCC Education Safeguarding Service documents updated 2026 version of the *Model Safeguarding & CP Policy for schools, colleges and ed establishments published September 2026*
- Corporate Safeguarding Policy | Birmingham City Council
- Birmingham Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

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- Birmingham Children's Trust
- Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership Procedures

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