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Purpose. Passion. Success.

Safer Recruitment Policy 2026-27

Effective from 1 September 2026

1. Purpose and scope

Pattishall CE Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. Safer recruitment is an integral part of that safeguarding culture and applies from the point a role is defined through to appointment, induction and ongoing employment or volunteering.

This policy applies, as relevant, to the recruitment and engagement of employees, supply and agency staff, contractors, trainee teachers, volunteers and governors. Its aims are to:

- deter people who are unsuitable to work with children from applying for roles at the school;
- identify and reject applicants who are unsuitable to work with children;
- ensure fair, consistent and legally compliant recruitment decisions;
- complete and record the correct pre-appointment checks before a person starts work or regulated activity; and
- maintain an ongoing culture in which safeguarding suitability is considered throughout employment and volunteering.

2. Statutory and regulatory framework

The Governing Body and Headteacher will have regard to current legislation and statutory guidance, including:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, in particular Part three: Safer recruitment;
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026;
- the Education Act 2002, including section 175;
- the School Staffing (England) Regulations 2009 (as amended);
- the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 and the Crime and Policing Act 2026;
- the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and the Exceptions Order 1975 (as amended);
- the Equality Act 2010, including restrictions on pre-employment health questions;
- the Teachers' Disciplinary (England) Regulations 2012 and DfE teacher prohibition arrangements;
- the Childcare Act 2006, the Childcare Disqualification Regulations 2018 and associated statutory guidance;
- right-to-work legislation and current Home Office employer guidance; and
- the UK GDPR, Data Protection Act 2018 and Data (Use and Access) Act 2025.

Where legislation or statutory guidance changes, the current legal requirement takes precedence over this policy and the policy will be reviewed as soon as practicable.

3. Responsibilities and safer recruitment training

The Governing Body is responsible for ensuring that robust safer recruitment procedures are in place, embedded and effective. The Headteacher is responsible for their day-to-day implementation and for ensuring recruitment records and the Single Central Record (SCR) are accurate.

Those involved in recruitment will receive appropriate safer recruitment training covering, as a minimum, Part three of KCSIE. As Pattishall is a maintained school, at least one person who conducts an interview must have completed safer recruitment training.

Appointments of a Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher will also follow the specific requirements of the School Staffing (England) Regulations 2009 and applicable local authority/diocesan procedures.

4. Defining the role, job description and advertisement

Before advertising a vacancy, the school will define the role clearly. The job description and person specification will set out the skills, abilities, experience, attitudes and behaviours required, together with the safeguarding responsibilities of the post and whether the role is expected to involve regulated activity with children.

Advertisements will state:

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- the school’s commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and that safeguarding checks will be undertaken;
- the safeguarding responsibilities of the post; and
- whether the post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and is therefore subject to the applicable disclosure rules.

Where the role is regulated activity, applicants will be told that it is an offence for a person who is barred from regulated activity with children to apply for the role.

5. Application process

Applicants must complete the school’s application form in full. A curriculum vitae may be accepted only alongside a completed application form; a CV alone will not be accepted.

The application process will require sufficient information to establish the applicant’s identity and employment history, including current and former names, current address, National Insurance number, present/last employment and reason for leaving, a full history since leaving school (including education, employment and voluntary work), reasons for gaps, relevant qualifications, referees and evidence of how the applicant meets the person specification.

The application pack will include, or provide links to, the school’s Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy and this policy, including the school’s approach to the employment of ex-offenders.

6. Shortlisting and self-declaration

At least two people will carry out the shortlisting exercise. Wherever possible, those who shortlist will also form part of the interview panel to support consistency. Shortlisting decisions will be based on the published person specification and recorded.

The panel will identify and explore gaps, inconsistencies, frequent changes of employment or location, and any other potential safeguarding concerns. Shortlisted candidates will be asked to complete a criminal-record/self-declaration of information that may make them unsuitable to work with children, in accordance with Ministry of Justice disclosure rules. This information will not be requested at application stage for the purpose of deciding who should be shortlisted.

Candidates will be required to confirm that the information they have provided is true. Where an electronic application/signature has been used, the school will obtain an appropriately signed confirmation at interview or by another secure method.

7. Online searches

As part of due diligence, the school will normally undertake a proportionate online search on shortlisted candidates using publicly available information and an online search engine. Shortlisted candidates will be informed that this may take place.

The purpose is to identify publicly available incidents or issues that may be relevant to safeguarding or suitability and that may need to be explored at interview. Searches will be proportionate, relevant to the role and handled in accordance with data protection, equality and human-rights law. The school will not seek access to private social-media accounts. Where practicable, the person conducting the search will report only relevant factual findings to the selection panel.

8. References and employment history

References will be obtained before interview where possible so that concerns can be clarified with the referee and explored with the candidate. The school will:

- not accept open references or testimonials and will not rely on an applicant to obtain their own reference;
- seek a reference from the candidate’s current employer, completed by a senior person with appropriate authority, and verify school/college references as appropriate;
- where the applicant is not currently employed, verify the most recent relevant period of employment;
- where the applicant is not currently working with children, seek a reference from the relevant employer from the last time they worked with children; if they have never worked with children, obtain a reference from the current employer;

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- verify that electronic references originate from a legitimate source and contact referees where information is vague or insufficient;
- compare references with the application form, explore discrepancies and establish the reason for leaving current or most recent employment; and
- resolve concerns satisfactorily before confirming an appointment.

Reference requests will ask for factual information relevant to suitability to work with children and the post. In line with KCSIE, the school will seek/provide factual information about substantiated safeguarding concerns or allegations that meet the harm threshold. Unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious allegations will not be included. References and recruitment information will be handled confidentially in accordance with data protection law.

9. Selection and interview

The school will use a range of proportionate selection methods appropriate to the role. Structured interview questions will be agreed in advance and will include safeguarding questions. The panel will explore:

- the candidate's motivation for working with children;
- relevant skills and experience;
- employment gaps, discrepancies or frequent changes of employment/location;
- understanding of children's vulnerability, professional boundaries and safeguarding responsibilities;
- information arising from references, self-declaration or online due-diligence checks; and
- any past disciplinary action or substantiated safeguarding allegation in its proper context.

Where appropriate, pupils may be involved meaningfully in the recruitment process, for example through an observed activity or appropriately supervised interaction. All information considered and the reasons for the appointment decision will be recorded.

10. Conditional offer and mandatory pre-appointment checks

All offers of appointment are conditional on satisfactory completion of the checks required for the role. The school will not treat a DBS certificate as a simple “pass/fail”; any information disclosed will be assessed lawfully, fairly and in the context of the role and safeguarding risk.

Before appointment, the school will complete and record, as applicable:

Check	School requirement
Identity	verify identity, including current/former names; best practice includes checking the birth certificate where available.
DBS	obtain the appropriate enhanced DBS certificate; where the person will engage in regulated activity, this will include children's barred-list information.
Barred list	where KCSIE permits a person to start regulated activity before the DBS certificate is available, obtain a separate barred-list check and complete all other required checks; any such start must be expressly authorised, risk assessed, supervised as appropriate and recorded.
Right to work	verify the person's right to work in the United Kingdom using current Home Office requirements.
Qualifications	verify required professional and academic qualifications.

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Check	School requirement
Teacher prohibition	for anyone employed to carry out teaching work, check that the person is not subject to a teacher prohibition/interim prohibition order or relevant historic sanction using DfE’s Check a teacher’s record service.
Health and fitness	verify mental and physical fitness to carry out the role. Health/disability questions before an offer will be asked only where permitted by section 60 of the Equality Act 2010; routine fitness checks will therefore take place after a conditional offer.
Childcare disqualification	where the regulations apply (including relevant staff working in Reception or wraparound care for children up to age 8, and relevant managers), complete the required disqualification checks/declarations.
Overseas checks	for anyone who has lived or worked outside the UK, complete the same checks as other staff plus any further checks considered appropriate so relevant overseas events can be considered.

11. DBS Update Service

Where the DBS Update Service is used, the school will obtain the individual’s consent, confirm that the existing certificate belongs to them, examine the original certificate and confirm that it is for the correct workforce and at the correct level before carrying out the online status check. The school may encourage or require eligible new staff/volunteers to subscribe to the Update Service where this is reflected in the relevant arrangements.

12. Regulated activity and the 2026 change for volunteers

Important change from 1 September 2026: the Crime and Policing Act 2026 removes the previous “supervision exemption” from regulated activity for relevant volunteer roles. Supervision no longer automatically prevents a volunteer role from being regulated activity.

A person will be in regulated activity where the statutory definition is met, including frequent work in a specified establishment such as a school with opportunity for contact with children, or frequent teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervising children, relevant advice/guidance, driving a vehicle only for children, or specified personal care/healthcare/overnight activity.

For volunteers, a role involving teaching, training, instructing or supervising children frequently, on more than three days in a 30-day period, or overnight is regulated activity. The school will obtain an enhanced DBS check with children’s barred-list information for such volunteers.

For existing volunteers whose role becomes regulated activity from 1 September 2026 because of the legal change, the school will ensure their children’s barred-list status is checked in accordance with KCSIE 2026.

For volunteers who are not in regulated activity, the school will complete and record a written risk assessment to determine what checks are appropriate. A volunteer on whom no checks have been obtained will never be left unsupervised or permitted to carry out regulated activity.

13. Supply staff, contractors, trainee teachers and visitors

Agency and third-party staff: the school will obtain written confirmation that the agency has carried out the checks the school would otherwise be required to undertake, including the appropriate DBS/barred-list check. The school will verify that the person who arrives is the person on whom the checks were completed. Where a DBS certificate disclosed information, the school will obtain a copy from the agency as required by KCSIE.

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Contractors: safeguarding requirements will be built into contracts. Contractors in regulated activity require an enhanced DBS check with barred-list information; those with regular contact but not regulated activity require the appropriate enhanced check. A contractor on whom required checks have not been obtained will not work unsupervised or undertake regulated activity. Identity will be checked on arrival.

Trainee teachers: for salaried trainees, the school will complete the required checks. For fee-funded trainees, the training provider is responsible for checks and the school will obtain written confirmation that these have been carried out and that the trainee is suitable to work with children.

Visitors: routine visitors such as parents attending events will not be subject to unnecessary DBS checks. Professional visitors will have their identity checked and the school will seek assurance that appropriate checks have been undertaken for the activity. The Headteacher will determine whether escort/supervision is required.

14. Governors

As a maintained school, Pattishall will ensure that all governors have an enhanced DBS check. Governance alone is not regulated activity, so a barred-list check is not required unless the governor also undertakes regulated activity. The school will also carry out a section 128 check for proposed governors, because a section 128 direction disqualifies a person from being a governor of a maintained school.

15. Single Central Record

The school will maintain an accurate Single Central Record of pre-appointment checks. It will cover all staff, including salaried trainee teachers, and agency/third-party supply staff even if they work for one day. The school may also record additional checks on volunteers and governors as permitted by KCSIE.

For staff, the SCR will record whether the required checks have been carried out/certificates obtained and the date of each check, including identity, barred-list information where applicable, enhanced DBS, teacher prohibition, overseas checks where applicable, professional qualifications and right to work. For agency/third-party staff, the SCR will include the required written confirmation and relevant dates. The school will keep the SCR in a form that can be inspected promptly and will remove individuals when they no longer work at the school, in line with KCSIE.

16. Records, DBS information and data protection

Recruitment records will be processed lawfully, fairly and securely and retained in accordance with the school's retention schedule and data-protection responsibilities. Copies of documents used to verify identity, right to work and required qualifications will be kept on the personnel file where required.

The school does not need to retain a copy of a DBS certificate to meet the SCR duty. If a copy of a DBS certificate or criminal-record information is retained, there must be a valid reason and it will not be kept for longer than six months, after which it will be securely destroyed. The school may retain a record that the check was completed, the outcome and the recruitment decision.

17. Existing staff and volunteers

New checks on existing staff or volunteers are not routinely required. The school will carry out appropriate new checks where a person moves into regulated activity, where there has been a break in service of 12 weeks or more, or where there are concerns about the individual's suitability to work with children. The specific 2026 transition requirement for existing volunteers who newly fall within regulated activity is set out in section 12 above.

18. Induction and ongoing safeguarding culture

All new staff will receive safeguarding induction before or at the start of employment. This will include the Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy, staff behaviour/code of conduct (including low-level concerns, allegations and whistleblowing), behaviour expectations, the safeguarding response to children absent from education, the identity and role of the DSL/deputies, online-safety expectations and KCSIE Part one.

In line with KCSIE 2026, all staff, including those who do not work directly with children, will read Part one. Safeguarding and child-protection training, including online safety, will be provided at induction and updated in accordance with statutory guidance. Appropriate supervision/probation and review arrangements will be used to confirm that safeguarding expectations are understood and applied.

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19. Duty to refer and concerns after appointment

Safer recruitment does not end on appointment. Concerns or allegations about staff, supply staff, trainee teachers, volunteers or contractors will be managed under the school's safeguarding/child-protection and managing-allegations procedures, including referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) where appropriate.

The school will make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service where the statutory referral criteria are met, including where a person is removed from regulated activity (or would have been removed had they not left) and the relevant conduct/harm/offence criteria are satisfied. This duty applies to paid staff and volunteers engaged in regulated activity. The school will also consider and make referrals to the Teaching Regulation Agency where the relevant criteria are met.

20. Recruitment of ex-offenders and equality

The school welcomes applications from a diverse range of candidates and will make recruitment decisions fairly and lawfully. Having a criminal record does not automatically prevent appointment. Where disclosure information is legally available, it will be considered only where relevant to the role, the safeguarding of children and the applicable statutory framework. Protected cautions/convictions that do not need to be disclosed will not be taken into account.

Reasonable adjustments will be made throughout the recruitment process for disabled candidates. Health/disability information will not be sought before a conditional offer except for the limited purposes permitted by the Equality Act 2010, such as establishing whether an adjustment is needed for the recruitment process or whether an intrinsic function of the role can be carried out.

21. Monitoring and review

The Headteacher will monitor implementation of this policy, the quality of recruitment records and the SCR. The Governing Body will receive assurance that safer recruitment arrangements are effective. This policy will be reviewed at least annually and sooner if KCSIE, legislation or local procedures change.

Key sources used for this 2026 update

- Department for Education: Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (effective 1 September 2026), especially Part three and Annex C summary of changes.
- Department for Education: Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026.
- Department for Education: Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 - statutory guidance.
- Home Office / Disclosure and Barring Service: current DBS eligibility, identity checking, Update Service, handling and referral guidance.
- Department for Education: Check a teacher's record and teacher prohibition guidance.
- GOV.UK: right to work checks and criminal-record checks for overseas applicants.