



WATERSIDE ACADEMY

SAFER RECRUITMENT POLICY

Policy Details	
Frequency of review:	Annual
Lead member of staff:	Elaine Oliver
Last reviewed:	September 2026
Next Review Date:	September 2027

1. Purpose and scope

Waterside Academy is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff, governors, volunteers, contractors and other adults working on behalf of the Academy to share this commitment. This policy sets out the Academy's safer recruitment and selection arrangements and should be read alongside the Academy's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and other relevant employment procedures.

The policy is based on Part 3 of the Department for Education's Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026 statutory guidance and will be reviewed at least annually, and sooner where statutory guidance or legislation changes.

2. Recruitment and selection

The Academy will ensure that those involved in the recruitment and employment of staff who work with children have received appropriate safer recruitment training. Recruitment processes will be designed to deter, reject or identify people who may pose a risk to children.

Advertising

- The Academy's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.
- That safeguarding checks will be undertaken.
- The safeguarding requirements and responsibilities of the role, including the extent of contact with children.
- Whether the post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and the relevant Exceptions Order, and the implications for disclosure.

Application forms

Application arrangements will:

- Include a statement that it is an offence to apply for a role involving regulated activity if the applicant is barred from engaging in regulated activity relevant to children.
- Include a copy of, or link to, the Academy's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and policy or statement on the recruitment of ex-offenders.
- Require a full employment history, with explanations for any gaps, and sufficient information to support safer recruitment checks.

Shortlisting and online searches

Shortlisting will normally involve at least two people. The panel will consider inconsistencies, gaps in employment and any other areas requiring clarification. Shortlisted candidates will be asked to complete a self-declaration of relevant criminal record and other information that may make them unsuitable to work with children, in accordance with the law and KCSIE.

As part of due diligence, the Academy will consider carrying out an online search on shortlisted candidates. The purpose is to identify any publicly available incidents or issues that the Academy may wish to explore with the applicant at interview. Searches will be proportionate and relevant to safeguarding and suitability.

References and employment history

Wherever possible, references will be obtained before interview. The Academy will:

- Not accept open references or testimonials in place of references obtained directly from referees.
- Seek references directly from the referee and verify relevant information where necessary.
- Seek a reference from the candidate's current employer and ensure it is completed by an appropriately senior person; for school-based employment, relevant safeguarding or disciplinary information will be appropriately verified.
- Obtain verification of the candidate's most recent relevant employment where the candidate is not currently employed.

- Seek a reference from the relevant employer from the last time the candidate worked with children where appropriate.
- Compare references with the application form and resolve discrepancies or concerns before appointment.

Interview and selection

- Explore gaps in employment and frequent changes of employment or location.
- Explore concerns relevant to the candidate's suitability to work with children.
- Assess the candidate's understanding of safeguarding and the responsibilities of the role.
- Keep an appropriate record of information considered and recruitment decisions.

3. Pre-appointment vetting checks

All offers of appointment will be conditional upon satisfactory completion of the checks required for the role. The Academy will record the required information on its Single Central Record (SCR) in accordance with KCSIE 2026 and the applicable statutory requirements.

For new staff, checks will include, as applicable:

- Verification of identity.
- An enhanced DBS certificate and, for those engaging in regulated activity with children, barred list information.
- A separate barred list check where a person is permitted to start regulated activity before the DBS certificate is available and the law permits this.
- Verification of the person's mental and physical fitness to carry out the responsibilities of the role, in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and other applicable law.
- Verification of the right to work in the UK.
- Verification of professional qualifications where required.
- A prohibition from teaching check for teaching posts and any other prohibition or restriction checks required for the role.
- Appropriate additional checks for individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK.
- Any other checks required by KCSIE, legislation, the Independent School Standards or the Academy's funding arrangements.

Copies and records of checks will be retained only where permitted and necessary. Where a copy of a DBS certificate is retained, it will not normally be kept for longer than six months. The Academy may retain a record that a check was undertaken, its outcome and the recruitment decision.

4. Existing staff

The Academy may carry out relevant checks on an existing member of staff where there are concerns about their suitability to work with children, where they move into regulated activity, following a relevant break in service, or where another legal or safeguarding requirement makes a new check necessary.

Where the legal referral criteria are met, the Academy will make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service. It will also make referrals to other relevant bodies where required.

5. Agency and third-party staff

For agency and third-party staff, the Academy will obtain written notification that the required checks have been completed and will check that the person presenting for work is the person to whom those checks relate. Required information will be recorded on the SCR.

6. Contractors

The Academy will ensure that contractors and their employees have the appropriate level of DBS check for the work they undertake. Contractors engaging in regulated activity will require the checks applicable to regulated activity. Where work does not constitute regulated activity, the Academy will apply the requirements of KCSIE and assess the level of check and supervision required.

Unchecked contractors will not be permitted to work unsupervised where this would create a safeguarding risk and will not be permitted to engage in regulated activity. The identity of contractors and their staff will be checked on arrival. The Academy will obtain the DBS check for self-employed contractors where it is responsible for doing so.

7. Trainee and student teachers

Where an initial teacher training applicant is salaried by the Academy, the Academy will carry out the necessary checks. For fee-funded trainees, the Academy will obtain written confirmation from the training provider that the required checks have been completed and that the trainee has been judged suitable to work with children.

8. Volunteers

The Academy will:

- Not permit an unchecked volunteer to work unsupervised where checks are required or to undertake regulated activity.
- Obtain an enhanced DBS certificate with barred list information for a volunteer who will engage in regulated activity where the statutory criteria are met.
- Undertake a written risk assessment when deciding whether an enhanced DBS certificate without barred list information should be sought for a volunteer who is not engaging in regulated activity.
- Ensure that barred list information is only requested where there is a lawful entitlement to obtain it.

9. Governors and academy trust governance

The Academy/Trust will ensure that governors, trustees, members and committee members are subject to the checks required by the Independent School Standards, KCSIE and the Academy Trust Handbook. Academy trust members, trustees and committee members, including local governing bodies or committees, must have an enhanced DBS certificate without barred list information unless they also engage in regulated activity. Section 128 checks will be undertaken where required for the person's role.

Governance checks will be recorded appropriately and the Academy/Trust will ensure that any additional identity, overseas or other checks required by law or applicable governance arrangements are completed.

10. Alternative provision

Where the Academy places a pupil with an alternative provision provider, it will obtain written confirmation from the provider that appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out on individuals working at the provision, in accordance with KCSIE.

11. Work experience

The Academy will ensure that arrangements for work experience protect children from harm. It will not routinely request DBS checks from employers or workplace supervisors where the circumstances do not meet the statutory criteria for regulated activity. Whether a person supervising a child on work experience is engaging in regulated activity will be determined by the nature, frequency and circumstances of the supervision and the applicable legal definition. Barred list information will only be sought where the Academy is legally entitled to request it.

12. Pupils staying with host families

Where the Academy arranges for a pupil to be provided with care and accommodation by a host family to whom they are not related, the Academy will follow KCSIE requirements regarding enhanced DBS and barred list checks where applicable. For overseas hosting arrangements, the Academy will work with partner organisations or schools to obtain equivalent assurances as far as reasonably practicable.

13. Single Central Record

The Academy will maintain an SCR containing the information required by KCSIE 2026 and the relevant statutory framework. The SCR will be kept accurate and up to date and will include the required checks for staff and other individuals where applicable. The Academy will use the KCSIE 2026 SCR requirements and template as a reference point when reviewing its record.

14. Monitoring and review

Responsibility for the implementation of this policy rests with the Headteacher/Principal and those with delegated responsibility for recruitment, under the oversight of the governing body/trust. The policy will be reviewed annually and whenever there is a relevant change to legislation, statutory guidance or Academy arrangements.

Key references

Department for Education, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.
Academy Trust Handbook 2026 (effective 1 October 2026) and the handbook in force at the relevant date.
Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and applicable Exceptions Orders.
Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006.
Equality Act 2010.