

Mercia Primary Academy Trust



Safer Recruitment Policy

Policy Status and Review

Date:	July 2026
Review Date:	September 2027
Signed by Director:	Garry Hirons
Date Signed:	08/07/2026

1. Introduction and Statement of Intent

Mercia Primary Academy Trust (MPAT) is committed to providing the highest level of education and care to its pupils and to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. This policy establishes a robust, unified framework that embeds safer recruitment practices at every stage of the selection process.

2. Aims and Objectives

- **Deterrence and Rejection:** To deter, reject, or identify individuals who are unsuitable to work with pupils through rigorous selection and appointment procedures.
- **Merit-Based Selection:** To ensure the best staff are recruited based on suitability, merit, and ability as measured against job descriptions and person specifications.
- **Statutory Compliance:** To maintain full compliance with the Equality Act 2010, current employment legislation, and the DfE statutory guidance "Keeping Children Safe in Education" (KCSIE).
- **Safer Culture:** To promote a "safer culture" that extends beyond the point of appointment through continued vigilance, induction, and supervision.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

Governing Body and Academy Trust

The Governing Body is responsible for ensuring effective policies and procedures are in place for the recruitment of all staff and volunteers in line with DfE guidance. The Governing Body shall:

- Monitor fair and safe recruitment practices and maintain oversight of legal compliance.

Headteacher

The Governing Body/Academy Trust delegates responsibility for all staff appointments to the Headteacher. The Headteacher **shall**:

- **Ensure Safe Procedures:** Oversee the operation of safe recruitment and ensure all required checks are completed for staff, volunteers, contractors, and agencies.
- **Monitor Third Parties:** Audit the compliance of contractors and agencies with Trust policy.
- **Supervision:** Organise appropriate supervision for employees and volunteers where necessary.
- **Promote Wellbeing:** Maintain the safety and wellbeing of pupils throughout the recruitment and onboarding process.

4. Recruitment and Selection Procedure

4.1 The Selection Panel

The recruitment panel shall comprise an "appointing officer" responsible for process management. Panels shall typically consist of two to four selectors.

- **Safer Recruitment Training:** At least one member of the selection panel **must** have successfully completed accredited safer recruitment training.
- **Declaration of Interests:** Any person with a **personal or pecuniary interest** in a candidate must declare it immediately and withdraw from the recruitment process.

4.2 Job Descriptions and Person Specifications

The Trust mandates that all recruitment documentation explicitly reference the post holder's responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. Person specifications shall include specific requirements regarding suitability to work with children.

4.3 Advertising

Adverts for all posts will include the school's commitment to Safeguarding and the fact the post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act i.e;

- This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. This position is subject to a criminal records check from the Disclosure & Barring Service. Please view our policies via <http://www.mpatrust.co.uk/policies/policies/>
- Any offer of employment will be subject to satisfactory references and an enhanced DBS check. Please also note that if you are shortlisted for the role, we may conduct online searches as part of our diligence on shortlisted candidates. This may help identify any incidents or issues that have happened, and are publicly available online, which may indicate you are unsuitable to work with children, and that we may want to explore with you in or after the interview process

4.4 Application Process

- **Prohibition of CVs:** Candidates must complete the official Trust application form in full. CVs or general letters of application are strictly prohibited.
- **Mandatory Fields:** Forms must include current/former names, address, National Insurance number, full employment history (since leaving school, including reasons for gaps), qualifications, and referee details.
- **Signatures:** Candidates must certify that the information provided is true. Shortlisted candidates who submitted electronic signatures **must** physically sign a hard copy at the point of interview.

5. Shortlisting and Pre-Interview Diligence

5.1 Shortlisting Process

At least two people shall carry out the shortlisting exercise. Selectors must scrutinize applications for inconsistencies, employment gaps, or anomalies to be explored at interview.

5.2 Self-Declaration of Criminal Record

Shortlisted candidates **must** complete a self-declaration regarding their criminal record and suitability to work with children at interview. This allows candidates to share relevant information for discussion at interview before the DBS certificate is received.

5.3 Online Searches

Online Searches (new in KCSIE) - As part of the shortlisting process we will carry out an online search as part of our due diligence on the shortlisted candidates. This search will be conducted by an external HR provider or senior leader who is not involved in the recruitment process. A consistent approach will be taken, and the result will be recorded in the online search record form. The purpose of the online search is to help identify any incidents or issues relevant to suitability to work with children, that have happened and are publicly available online, which may want to explore with the candidate at interview.

6. References

The Trust adheres to a strict protocol regarding references:

- **Quantity:** A minimum of two references must be received and scrutinised.
- **Educational Setting Mandate:** If a candidate currently works in a school, the reference **must** be sought from the **Headteacher** (or Chair of Governors for Headteacher appointments).
- **Historical Checks:** If a candidate is not currently in a school but has been in the past, the Trust **shall** contact that previous school/college or the **Local Authority** to confirm employment details and reasons for leaving.
- **Direct Receipt:** References must be obtained directly from the referee. "Open" testimonials or candidate-provided references are not permitted.
- **Content:** Referees must answer specific questions regarding suitability to work with children and any disciplinary history related to safeguarding.

7. Interviews

All shortlisted candidates must undergo a face-to-face interview.

- **Mandatory Exploration:** Panels **shall** explore employment gaps, motives for working with children, and values regarding safeguarding.
- **Documentation:** Candidates must bring original documents for identity verification, proof of address, and qualifications.
- **Pupils/Students:** Pupils/students may be involved in the recruitment process in a meaningful way. Observing short listed candidates and appropriately supervised interaction with pupils/students is common and recognised as good practice.
- **Decision Making:** All information considered in decision making will be clearly recorded along with decisions made.

8. Comprehensive Pre-Employment Checks

All offers of appointment are conditional upon the satisfactory completion of the following:

- **Identity Verification:** Verified via photographic ID and address. **Best practice involves checking the name on the candidate's birth certificate**, where available, to account for potential name changes.
- **Enhanced DBS with Barred List:** Required for all "Regulated Activity."
 - *Regulated Activity Nuance:* "Personal Care" (helping with eating, toileting, or health care) is **always** regulated activity regardless of frequency. Other activities (teaching, supervising) are regulated if done regularly.
- **Prohibition from Teaching:** Checked via the **DfE Sign-in Teacher Services website**.
- **Section 128 Check:** Required for SLT, Governors, and Trustees via the **gov.uk website**.
- **Fitness to Work:** Verification of mental and physical fitness.
- **Right to Work:** Verification of the legal right to work in the UK.
- **Overseas Checks:** Including criminal records checks and letters of professional standing from relevant regulatory authorities.

9. Specific Protocols for Non-Standard Staff

9.1 Volunteers

- **Regulated Activity:** Requires an Enhanced DBS with Barred List check.
- **Non-Regulated Activity:** Requires an Enhanced DBS check and a recorded risk assessment.

9.2 Agency and Third-Party Staff

The Trust must receive written confirmation that the agency has carried out all necessary checks.

- **Disclosures:** If an agency's DBS check **discloses any matter or information**, the Trust **must obtain a copy of the certificate** from the agency for review.
- **Identity:** Identity must be verified upon arrival via photographic ID.

9.3 Contractors and Visitors

- **Contractors:** Safeguarding requirements must be embedded in contracts. Identity must be verified on arrival.
- **Visitors:** Professional visitors must sign in/out and provide ID.

9.4 Trainee Teachers

- **Salaried Trainees:** The Trust is responsible for Enhanced DBS and Barred List checks.
- **Fee-Funded Trainees:** The ITT provider is responsible for these checks.

10. Governance and Alternative Provision

10.1 Governors and Trustees

All Governors and Trustees must have an Enhanced DBS check and a Section 128 check.

10.2 Alternative Provision

The Trust remains responsible for the safeguarding of any pupil placed with an external provider and must obtain written confirmation that all appropriate checks have been conducted on the provider's staff.

11. The Single Central Record (SCR) and Data Management

The Trust maintains an SCR covering staff, supply staff, regular volunteers, and Governors.

- **Data Points:** Identity, Barred List, Enhanced DBS, Prohibition, S128, Right to Work, and Online Searches.
- **Governance:** A designated Governor **shall** audit the SCR at least annually.
- **Retention:** Copies of DBS certificates **shall not** be retained. Interview notes for unsuccessful candidates are destroyed after 6 months.

12. Induction and Continued Vigilance

All new employees must complete a safeguarding induction, covering the Child Protection policy, Behaviour policy, Staff Code of Conduct, DSL identity, and mandatory reading of KCSIE Part 1.

13. Annex: Recruitment of Ex-Offenders

Exemption from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

School-based roles are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Candidates must disclose all spent and unspent, unfiltered convictions.

Assessment Criteria

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A criminal record is not an automatic bar to employment. The Trust assesses relevance based on the seriousness of the offence, time elapsed, patterns of behaviour, and the candidate's explanation. The Trust complies fully with the DBS Code of Practice.

14. Accessibility and Alternative Formats

This document and associated application materials can be made available in alternative formats, including Braille and large print, via the Directorate HR Unit. A signed copy is available from the school office.

Version Control

Version	Date Approved	Changes	Reasons for Alterations
V1	July 2026	Creation of policy	Combined previous Safer Recruitment & Recruitment Policy into one document
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