

Safer Recruitment Policy

2026 - 2027

‘Because Children Deserve Better’

Reviewed By:	Sarah Howarth, Associate Director of Compliance
Approved By:	Kathryn Parkinson, Chief Operating Officer
Responsible Person:	Deborah Mitchell, Associate Director of People
Policy Number:	4:19 V10
Date:	August 2026
Next Review Date:	August 2027

Contents

- 1. Safer recruitment policy statement**
- 2. Pre-employment checks**
- 3. Roles and responsibilities**
- 4. Verification of identity and address**
- 5. The recruitment procedure**
- 6. Volunteers and work experience**
- 7. Contractors, agency and peripatetic staff**
- 8. Policy on recruitment of ex-offenders**
- 9. Assessment criteria**
- 10. Assessment procedure**
- 11. Retention and security of DBS disclosure information**
- 12. Record retention / data protection**
- 13. Single central register of recruitment vetting checks (SCR)**
- 14. Ongoing suitability**
- 15. Appendix 1: online search form**

1. Safer recruitment policy statement

The safe recruitment of staff in schools is the first step to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in education. As an organisation who recruits adults to work, or volunteer, with vulnerable children, young people and adults, we have a statutory duty to ensure we undertake all reasonable and sensible measures to ensure that they are kept safe from harm. This includes ensuring that staff and volunteers are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk. Pivot is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Pivot is also committed to providing a supportive and flexible working environment to all its members of staff. Pivot recognises that, to achieve these aims, it is of fundamental importance to attract, recruit and retain staff of the highest calibre who share this commitment. It is recognised that this can only be achieved through sound procedures, good inter-agency co-operation and the recruitment and retention of competent, motivated employees who are suited to, and fulfilled in the roles they undertake.

The aims of the Pivot safer recruitment policy are:

- To ensure that the best possible staff are recruited based on their merits, abilities and suitability for the position;
- To ensure compliance with all relevant legislation, recommendations and guidance including the statutory guidance published by the Department for Education (**DFE**), *Keeping Children Safe in Education (as updated annually) (KCSIE)* ('The Guidance') and any advice published by the Disclosure and Barring Service (**DBS**);
- To ensure that the Pivot meets its commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people by carrying out all necessary pre-employment checks.

All positions within Pivot are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and therefore all applicants will be required to declare spent and unspent convictions, cautions and bind-overs, including those regarded as spent and have an Enhanced Disclosure & Barring Service Check., but subject to the guidance on filtering which can be reviewed <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-filtering-guidance>

Pivot is committed to ensuring that people who have been convicted are treated fairly and given every opportunity to establish their suitability for positions. Having a criminal record will not necessarily be a bar to obtaining a position. This will depend on the background, nature and circumstances of the offence(s).

2. Pre-employment checks

In accordance with the recommendations set out in the Guidance, and the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, Pivot carries out a number of pre-employment checks in respect of all prospective employees.

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

- Completion of the Pivot application form, with clear and satisfactory records for reasons for any gaps in employment
- Certification of the applicant's identity in line with the requirements of The Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006

- Production of evidence of the right to work in the UK
- Receipt of at least two references which are satisfactory to Pivot, one of which will be from the applicant's most recent employer. Applicants will be informed that any previous employer may be contacted
- Confirmation that the applicant is not barred from working with children [and / or vulnerable adults]
- Confirmation that the applicant is not subject to a prohibition order issued by the Secretary of State
- The receipt of an enhanced disclosure from the DBS which Pivot considers to be satisfactory
- Verification of the applicant's medical fitness
- Verification of the applicant's qualifications
- Confirmation that the applicant is registered with the appropriate professional or regulatory body as required
- Obtain a Certificate of Good Conduct or other appropriate checks for applicants who were born or have worked abroad where the applicant has not worked in a school in the UK since moving from overseas
- Completion of a self-declaration to identify staff for whom 'by association' rule applies
- Completion of an online search and that there is no information in relation to the applicant that suggests the candidate is; unqualified for the role, possesses a potential safeguarding risk, and/or risks damaging the reputation of the school
- Interview, with written record of outcome. At least one panel member will have completed and been accredited with the Safer Recruitment training
- The school considers the applicant is suitable for the position

3. Roles and responsibilities

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

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher, and other managers involved in the recruitment process to:

- Ensure that the school operates safe recruitment procedures and carries out all appropriate checks on all staff and volunteers who work at the school;
- Monitor contractors' and agencies' compliance with this policy; and
- Promote the welfare of children and young people at every stage of the procedure.

It is the responsibility of all contractors and agencies that provide services to Pivot to comply with safer recruitment practices. It is the responsibility of Pivot's HR team and the Headteacher to ensure all pre-employment checks are complete before employment begins.

4. Verification of identity and address

All applicants who are invited to an interview will be required to bring the following evidence of identity, right to work in the UK, address and qualifications:

- Passport or photo-card driving licence and original birth certificate.

- One document, such as a utility bill or bank statement, no older than three months showing their name and current home address;
- Original documents confirming any educational and professional qualifications referred to in their application form;
- Where an applicant claims to have changed their name by deed poll or any other means (e.g. marriage, adoption, statutory declaration) they will be required to provide documentary evidence of the change.

5. The recruitment procedure

Advertising

To ensure equality of opportunity, Pivot will advertise all vacant posts externally on the website and other recruitment channels to encourage as wide a field of candidates as possible. However, where there is a reasonable expectation that there are sufficiently qualified internal candidates or where staff are at risk of redundancy, an internal advertisement may be considered appropriate.

Applications

Applicants will receive a job description for the role applied for. All applicants for employment will be required to complete an application form containing questions about their academic and employment history from the age of 16 and their suitability for the role. Incomplete application forms will be returned to the applicant where the deadline for completed application forms has not passed. Pivot does not accept a curriculum vitae in place of an application form.

Pivot will ensure that all job applicants are considered equally and consistently, giving due regard to protected characteristics.

If shortlisted, the applicant may then be invited to attend a formal interview at which their relevant skills and experience will be discussed in more detail.

Pivot requires applicants to account for any gaps or discrepancies in employment history on the application form. Where an applicant is shortlisted, any gaps will also be discussed at interview.

Applicants should be aware that providing false information may be an offence and could result in an application being rejected or summary dismissal if the applicant has been appointed. Where false information is provided in support of an application to work at Pivot, the school may be required to report the matter to the DBS, the police and other relevant professional bodies.

At least two staff are involved in the scrutiny and shortlisting of applicants for a role. Shortlisting is completed against role specific criteria and the person specification.

References

References for shortlisted applicants (to include the last employer the applicant worked for) will be requested immediately after short-listing. The only exception to this is where applicants have indicated on their application forms that they do not wish their current employer to be contacted, in which case this will be requested after appointment and cross checked with the application form.

Pivot require two referees for candidates as at least two references are requested, if these are not requested prior to interview (as there is a request not to do so) then after interview as a pre-employment check.

If the current/most recent employment does/did not involve work with children, then the second referee will be from the employer with whom the applicant most recently worked with children.

All referees will be asked whether they believe the applicant is suitable for the job for which they have applied. If the referee is a current or previous employer, they will also be asked to confirm the following:

- The applicant's dates of employment, position held, salary, reason for leaving, performance and disciplinary record;
- Their relationship to the applicant;
- Whether they have any reason to believe that the applicant is unsuitable to work with children;
- Whether the applicant has ever been the subject of disciplinary procedures involving issues related to the safety and welfare of children (including any in which the disciplinary sanction has expired);
- Whether any allegations or concerns have been raised about the applicant that relate to the safety and welfare of children or young people or behaviour towards children or young people.

Pivot will only accept references obtained directly from the referee and will not rely on references or testimonials provided by the applicant or open references or testimonials. Pivot will not accept references from relatives of the applicant or people writing solely in the capacity as a friend. Professional references will not be accepted from a personal email address.

References will be compared to the application form to ensure that the information provided is consistent. Any discrepancies will be taken up with the applicant and/or the referee before any appointment can be confirmed. Any information about past disciplinary action or allegations will be considered in the circumstances of the individual case.

All references are verified by the HR team.

Medical fitness

Pivot is required to verify the medical fitness of anyone to be appointed to a post at the school, after an offer of employment has been made. If appropriate, the school may arrange for the information contained in the Medical Questionnaire to be reviewed by Occupational Health. This information will be reviewed against the Job Description for the role, together with details of any other physical or mental requirements of the role i.e., proposed timetable, extra-curricular activities, layout of the school etc. If Occupational Health has any doubts about an applicant's fitness the school will consider reasonable adjustments in consultation with the applicant.

The school is aware of its duties under the Equality Act 2010. No job offer will be withdrawn without first consulting with the applicant, obtaining medical evidence and considering reasonable adjustments and suitable alternative employment.

Criminal records check and barred list check

All shortlisted candidates are required to declare any relevant convictions, adult cautions or

other matters which may affect their suitability to work with children, via a self-disclosure form. The form makes it clear that posts are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

Due to the nature of the work, Pivot applies for an enhanced disclosure from the DBS in respect of all prospective members of staff and volunteers.

An enhanced disclosure will contain details of all convictions on record (including those which are defined as “spent” under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974) together with details of any cautions, reprimands or warnings held on the Police National Computer. An enhanced disclosure will also reveal whether an applicant is barred from working with children or vulnerable adults by virtue of their inclusion on the lists of those considered unsuitable to work with children or vulnerable adults maintained by the DBS. An enhanced disclosure may also contain non-conviction information from local police records which a chief police officer thinks may be relevant in connection with the matter in question.

If there is a delay in receiving a DBS disclosure the Headteacher has the discretion to allow an individual to begin work pending receipt of the disclosure. This will only be allowed if all other checks, including a check of the Children’s Barred List, have been completed and once a Risk Assessment has been completed and appropriate supervision has been put in place. These measures are recorded on the Single Central Register (SCR) and evidence is maintained in the employee’s HR file.

DBS checks will be requested for applicants with recent periods of overseas residence and those with little or no previous UK residence. These applicants may also be asked to provide further information, including the equivalent of a DBS disclosure (Certificate of Good Conduct), from the relevant jurisdiction(s).

Original DBS certificates are verified in person by a member of the HR or admin team.

Where a DBS contains information, a discussion with the Headteacher will take place to obtain information on the disclosure. A meeting record will be kept on the individual’s personnel file.

Online searches

An online search will be undertaken for all shortlisted candidates. The purpose of this search is to look for evidence of the candidate being who they state they are and to determine suitability to work with children and keep them safe. The search will be carried out by a member of the HR team. Any concerns highlighted by the search, including a lack of information on the candidate, will be referred to the interviewing panel. The HR team member will complete the online searches form (Appendix 1) following an online search and the completed form will be stored in the candidates HR file alongside references etc.

Interviews

The selection process will include the following:

- A face-to-face professional interview including questions related to safeguarding children; and
- A task suitable to the position applied for e.g., lesson observation for teaching staff

All recruitment will be undertaken with at least one member of the panel having undertaken Safer Recruitment Training. A panel will always consist of at least two people, preferably three.

Questions will be agreed in advance by the panel.

The panel will undertake a regular review of safer recruitment procedures. Full notes of the interview will be taken.

Verification of qualifications and/or professional status

Short-listed applicants will be required to provide proof of their qualifications and professional status by producing original documentation. Pivot will verify that applicants have obtained any qualifications legally required or deemed essential for the job and claimed in their application by asking to see the relevant original certificate, or a letter of confirmation from the awarding body / institution. If the original documents are not available, the school will require sight of a properly certified copy. Where applicants have obtained qualifications abroad, a certified comparability check by NARIC will also be requested if there is any query over the qualification.

Section 128 and Teacher Regulation agency (TRA) checks

Once a conditional offer of employment has been made, Pivot will complete all relevant Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) checks where required. For teaching posts, the school will verify that candidates are not subject to a prohibition order, interim prohibition order or other restriction.

For management positions, a Section 128 direction check will be completed.

Staff training on safer recruitment

Key staff involved in the recruitment of new personnel, including undertaking shortlisting and interviewing candidates, will undertake Safer Recruitment training.

Certificates of qualification are held on the individual's personnel file.

6. Volunteers and work experience

Pivot recognises the contribution of volunteers and work experience students. Appropriate risk assessments will determine supervision and whether DBS checks are required. Volunteers undertaking regulated activity will be subject to the appropriate checks. Relevant safeguarding information will be provided and records maintained.

7. Contractors, agency and peripatetic staff

Contractors engaged by Pivot must complete the same checks for their employees that the school is required to complete for its staff. The school requires confirmation that these checks have been completed before employees, or the contractor can commence work at the school.

Agencies who supply staff to Pivot must also complete the pre-employment checks which the school would otherwise complete for its staff. Written confirmation of all required checks will be obtained from the agency and retained prior to the individual beginning work.

Peripatetic staff will complete the same checks the school is required to take for all other staff.

The school will independently verify the identity of staff supplied by contractors or an agency.

8. Policy on recruitment of ex-offenders

Pivot will not unfairly discriminate against any applicant for employment based on conviction

or other details revealed. The school makes appointment decisions based on merit and ability. If an applicant has a criminal record this will not automatically bar them from employment within the school. Instead, each case will be decided on its merits in accordance with the objective assessment criteria set out below.

All positions within Pivot are exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. All applicants must therefore declare all previous convictions, including those which would normally be considered “spent”, when applying for a position at the school. Save for those that minor offences as outlined in the DBS filtering guidance <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-filtering-guidance>

A failure to disclose a previous conviction may lead to an application being rejected or, if the failure to disclose is discovered after employment has started, may lead to summary dismissal on the grounds of gross misconduct. A failure to disclose a previous conviction may also amount to a criminal offence.

It is unlawful for the school to employ anyone who is barred from working with children. It is a criminal offence for any person who is barred from working with children to attempt to apply for a position at the school. The school will make a report to the Police and/or the DBS if:

- It receives an application from a barred person;
- It is provided with false information in, or in support of an applicant’s application; or
- It has serious concerns about an applicant’s suitability to work with children.

9. Assessment criteria

In the event that relevant information (whether in relation to previous convictions or otherwise) is volunteered by an applicant during the recruitment process or obtained through a disclosure check, Pivot will consider the following factors before reaching a recruitment decision:

- Whether the conviction or other matter revealed is relevant to the position in question;
- The seriousness of any offence or other matter revealed;
- The length of time since the offence or other matter occurred;
- Whether the applicant has a pattern of offending behaviour or other relevant matters;
- Whether the applicant’s circumstances have changed since the offending behaviour or other relevant matters;
- The circumstances surrounding the offence and the explanation(s) offered by the convicted person.

If the post involves regular contact with children, it is the school’s normal policy to consider it a high risk to employ anyone who has been convicted at any time of any the following offences:

- Murder, manslaughter, rape, other serious sexual offences, grievous bodily harm or other serious acts of violence; or
- Serious class A drug related offences, robbery, burglary, theft, deception or fraud.

If the post involves access to money or budget responsibility, it is the school’s normal policy to consider it a high risk to employ anyone who has been convicted at any time of robbery, burglary, theft, deception or fraud.

If the post involves some driving responsibilities, it is the school’s normal policy to consider it

a high risk to employ anyone who has been convicted of driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs within the last ten years.

10. Assessment procedure

In the event that relevant information (whether in relation to previous convictions or otherwise) is volunteered by an applicant during the recruitment process or obtained through a disclosure check, Pivot will carry out a risk assessment by reference to the criteria set out above. Such convictions will also be discussed with the applicant at interview.

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

11. Retention and security of DBS disclosure information

Pivot's policy is to observe the guidance issued or supported by the DBS on the use of disclosure information.

In particular, the school will:

- Store disclosure information and other confidential documents issued by the DBS in electronic files, access to which will be restricted to members of the HR team;
- Not retain disclosure information or any associated correspondence for longer than six months. The school will keep a record of the date of a disclosure, the name of the subject, the type of disclosure, the position in question and the unique number issued by the DBS.

12. Record retention / data protection

If an applicant is appointed, the school will retain any relevant information provided on their application form, together with any attachments and evidence of the pre-employment checks completed on their personnel file. If the application is unsuccessful, all documentation relating to the application will normally be confidentially destroyed after six months.

13. Single central register of recruitment vetting checks (SCR)

In line with DFE requirements, Pivot will keep and maintain a SCR. The SCR will list all staff who are employed at the school, including casual staff, agency staff, volunteers and those who provide additional teaching or instruction for learners but who are not employed by the school e.g., specialist sports coach. The SCR will indicate whether the required pre-employment checks have been completed, what documents have been checked, when and by whom.

14. Ongoing suitability

Staff must immediately inform Pivot of any criminal investigations, cautions, convictions, barring decisions, prohibition orders or other circumstances that may affect suitability to work with children. The school may undertake further checks where concerns arise.

15. Appendix 1 – Online search form

Candidate name:

Role shortlisted for:

Searcher name:

Date and time of online search:

Platform	Search Terms Entered	Result
Google – Search first 2 pages	“Full Name”	
	“Full Name” + town/city of their current address	
	“Full Name” + Profession/Position Title	
	“Full Name” + Current Employer	
	“Full Name” + Previous Employer	
	“Full Name” + arrest / convicted / investigation	
	“Previous Name”	
Linkedin	Full Name	
Facebook	Full Name	
Instagram	Full Name	
TikTok	Full Name	
Youtube	Full Name	
School Website if applicable	Full Name	

Guidelines:

You are not expected to search every possible variation of a common name.

KCSIE requires *reasonable and proportionate* checks, not exhaustive or speculative searching.

What to record as the result:

- Concerns – (if there are concerns take a screenshot of the information with a clear name/and or picture of the candidate to be used at interview)
 - Concerns may be linked to: safeguarding risks, reputational damage, information that differs to their application, or shows the applicant is unqualified for the role.
- Safeguarding concerns may be but are not limited to:
 - extremism and hate speech.
 - violent images.
 - discriminatory behaviour
 - nudity

- toxic language, swearing and profanity
- No concerns (if the information found is the applicant and does not show any safeguarding concerns)
- No consistent results found (if the information found is not related or it is not clear it is the applicant)
- No results found (if there is no information or account under the candidate's name)

You should **stop searching** when:

- Results become clearly unrelated (different age, country, profession)
- Results repeat the same information
- No safeguarding-relevant material is identified within the reasonable limits above
- Identity cannot be confidently matched
- Do not exceed information 5 years or older

Schools **should not**:

- ✗ Attempt to search *all* people with the same name
- ✗ Scroll indefinitely “just in case”
- ✗ Use speculation or “possible matches”
- ✗ Record unverified assumptions
- ✗ Attempt to identify private accounts
- ✗ Use online search findings to replace DBS, references, or barred list checks
- ✗ The person conducting the search should not be involved in the recruitment process for the applicant