

Criminal Record (DBS) Checking Policy

Review by policy owners:	Vicky Elsworth, October 2021
Review by Trustees:	Adrian Phipps, October 2021 Doug Croucher, October 2021
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Within this policy the term Headteacher refers to the Headteacher of the school and the term CEO refers to the CEO of the Twynham Learning Academy Trust (the Trust).

The governors of the Trust are charity Trustees and company directors and for the purpose of this policy these terms are interchangeable.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy and procedure applies to all employees of Twynham Learning as well as workers, volunteers, LAB Members, Members and Trustees. The principles of the policy will also apply to agency staff, self-employed individuals, individuals working for any contractors/subcontractors (where the contract agreement specifies the requirement for a criminal record check) and anyone working with children at the school.
- 1.2 This policy has been consulted on with the Trade Unions and has been adopted by Trustees.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

- 2.1 The Trust is committed to fulfilling its duty to safeguard and protect the welfare of children and young people by ensuring the highest integrity of those appointed to positions within the Trust, as well as ensuring that appropriate checks are made in respect of agency staff, self-employed individuals, employees of contractors/sub-contractors, volunteers and those who come into contact with children and young people within the Trust or on long term work placements.
- 2.2 The Trust is also committed to the elimination of discrimination and to equal treatment in employment. This applies to prospective employment and all stages of employment and includes providing equal opportunities to both potential and existing employees, including ex-offenders, subject to the over-riding duty to protect children and young people. The policy and procedure has been developed to comply with legislation relevant to criminal record checking.
- 2.3 Twynham Learning can only ask an individual to provide details of convictions and cautions that the Trust is legally entitled to know about. Where a DBS certificate at enhanced level can legally be requested (where the position is one that is included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 as amended, and where appropriate Police Act Regulations as amended. Twynham Learning can only ask an individual about convictions and cautions that are not protected.

3 CRIMINAL RECORD (DBS) CHECKS

The Disclosure and Barring Service

- 3.1 The Disclosure and Barring Service is the body which provides the criminal record checks and makes the barring decisions where individuals are considered unsuitable to work with children or vulnerable adults. The DBS offers a confidential checking service for transgender applicants. This is known as the Sensitive Applications route. This route gives transgender applicants the choice not to have any gender or name information on their certificate that could reveal their previous identity.

- 3.2 DBS checks are available in cases where an employer is entitled to ask exempted questions under the Exceptions Order to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (ROA) 1974. This includes any organisation whose staff or volunteers work with children. In schools, checks, where undertaken, will either be Enhanced Checks or Enhanced Checks with a Barred List check. DBS checks can only be undertaken for individuals aged 16 or over.

3.3 Enhanced check with a Barred List check

This check is available to anyone employed in regulated activity i.e. regularly caring for, training, supervising or being in sole charge of children (unsupervised). It is important to request the check to be made for working with children as this may make a difference to the information that is disclosed. Such a check will show the criminal record of an individual including those convictions that are 'spent', any additional information from the Police and a check against the Children's Barred List. The Trust will carry out this type of check for all employed members of staff and any volunteer who: (a) is not fully supervised when working with children/young people and/or (b) undertakes personal care duties.

3.4 Enhanced check

This type of check is available to those who are working with children on a fully-supervised basis. The Trust is not entitled to check the Barred List for those who are under reasonable day-to-day supervision (as defined in section 4.1). The Trust will carry out this check for all volunteers who are fully supervised when working with children/young people.

3.5 Section 128 Direction

A section 128 direction prohibits or restricts a person from taking part in the management of an academy/trust. A person who is prohibited is unable to participate in any management of an academy/trust. A check for a section 128 direction will be carried out using the Teacher Services' system for all Members, Trustees, LAB members, and anyone working on the Senior Leadership Team within a school or the Core Services team.

3.6 Disclosure Certificates

It is the responsibility of the school to ensure that they have seen a copy of the applicant's disclosure certificate and recorded the disclosure certificate number on the Single Central Record.

4. POSTS SUBJECT TO CRIMINAL RECORD CHECKS

- 4.1 In schools, under the Protection of Freedoms Act of May 2012, the requirement for a DBS check is that:

Employees – must have an Enhanced Check plus a check of the Barred List

Volunteers – must have an Enhanced Check plus a check of the Barred List if they:

- a) Have unsupervised contact with children
- b) Undertake personal care

Where volunteers are supervised by another adult they can (rather than must) be DBS checked if they are working regularly with children BUT are not eligible for a check of the Barred List. For a person to be considered supervised, the supervision must be:

- by a person who is in regulated activity relating to children;
- regular and day to day; and
- reasonable in all the circumstances to ensure the protection of children.

4.2 Trust Employees

The School Staffing (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 make it mandatory for an enhanced DBS with a barred list check to be obtained for all newly appointed school staff. This includes workers who do not work directly with children such as caretakers, administrative and other ancillary staff. These checks must have been carried out by Dorset Council (our DBS checking partner) no more than 3 months before the candidate's actual start date. There is no requirement for existing staff who were recruited prior to the establishment of the DBS (previously the Criminal Records Bureau) in March 2002 and who have continuity of service (i.e. no break longer than 3 months) to be DBS checked. The only requirement for these staff is to have been checked against the Children's Barred List (List 99) which was done as part of the Police check at the time.

4.3 Designated Safeguarding Lead

Any individual, including an existing member of staff, taking up this post will be subject to an enhanced DBS check. The only exception to this is in the case of existing employees within the Trust who have been subject to a criminal record check in the previous 3 months.

4.4 Members, Trustees and LAB members

In line with new updated legislation all Members, Trustees and LAB members are required to undergo an enhanced DBS check. The Trust must apply for such a certificate in respect of that Member/Trustee/LAB member within 21 days after his or her appointment or election.

4.5 Chair of Trustees

Regardless of whether or not the Chair of Trustees is in regulated activity, an enhanced DBS certificate, countersigned by the Secretary of State, or a responsible counter-signatory of a registered body organisation, will need to be provided.

4.6 Volunteers

It is recognised that many parents and other volunteers help regularly in the classroom and with activities associated with the Trust. Some will require a DBS check because of the frequency of their volunteering activity and the contact they have with children, others will not.

4.6.1 Determining whether volunteer DBS checking is required

The DfE does not expect schools to check existing volunteers continuing with their old duties, unless they have cause for concern. For new volunteers, where the volunteering is frequent,

intensive or overnight, involves contact with children and is not supervised, or where they undertake personal care (including assistance with changing), Executive Headteachers/CEOs should obtain an enhanced DBS check with a check of the Barred List. Statutory guidance states that frequent means once a week or more; intensive means four or more times in a thirty day period and overnight is from 2am to 6am.

Where individuals are supervised by another person in Regulated Activity the CEO will refer to the DfE statutory guidance on supervision of activity and the DfE factual note on regulated activity in relation to children when coming to a decision about whether a DBS check is necessary. In such circumstances, the eligibility is for an Enhanced check without a check of the Barred List. Where a DBS check is requested for a volunteer, form SER1 should be completed.

4.6.2 School exchange host families

UK host families providing accommodation for foreign students in organised school exchange visits for less than 28 days must have an enhanced DBS check. This check will include all adults living at the address of the lead family member. The Trust will also give host families basic awareness of child protection issues and the contact details of the Designated Safeguarding Lead for Child Protection in the school. If the visit is longer than 28 days it will be treated in the same way as a private fostering arrangement and advice on the required level of check should be sought.

4.6.3 Contractors and sub-contractors

Contracted staff who come into regular contact with children such as cleaning, caretaking and kitchen staff must be checked by the contractor in the same way as Trust employees, including having an enhanced DBS with barred list check and such requirements form part of the contract. The outcome of such checks must be notified to the Trust and included on the single central record. The contractor is also responsible for ensuring that the same procedures are followed by any sub-contractors. The contractor must provide the school with a list of its direct employees and those of any sub-contractors at least 20 days before they start work on site.

4.7 Agency supply staff

Staff supplied to the Trust via an agency will be subject to checks by the agency itself. In all cases the Trust will obtain written confirmation from the agency that appropriate checks have been completed and will record the details on their single central record. The Trust is not required to see evidence that the checks have been completed, although it can have sight of a DBS check where relevant information is recorded.

4.8 Work experience students placed with the Trust

Work Experience students placed with the Trust are not required to obtain clearance from the DBS because it is not expected that they will at any time be left unsupervised whilst working with children. Note that it is not possible to obtain an enhanced check or barred list check for anyone under the age of 16.

4.9 Teaching trainees or graduates placed with the Trust

Student (placements) or Teaching Graduate Trainees placed with the Trust should have an Enhanced DBS with barred list check which will be undertaken by the initial teacher training provider so that disclosures are received prior to the trainee commencing training with the Trust. The Trust will ensure that this is in place prior to the trainee commencing at the Trust but are not entitled to view a copy.

4.10 Checks required for the self-employed

The DBS recommends that self-employed persons should be subject to an enhanced disclosure (carried out by the Trust but paid for by the individual) prior to commencing a role in circumstances where there is likely to be unsupervised access to children (in a school setting this may include music tutors for example). The normal vetting checks such as identity checking should also be conducted.

The Trust can obtain DBS checks for self-employed people who will be working on Trust premises as long as the disclosure is intended to be used to consider their suitability for undertaking a particular role. It is normal practice for the self-employed person to pay for any DBS check undertaken by the school. Self-employed individuals are not able to obtain their own personal checks via the DBS.

4.11 Overseas staff to be checked

Newly appointed staff and staff recruited since 2002 who have lived outside the United Kingdom must undergo the same checks as for all other staff in the Trust. This includes an Enhanced DBS with a barred list check.

DBS checks will not generally show offences committed by individuals whilst living abroad (except in the case of service personnel and their families). Therefore, in addition to an enhanced DBS with barred list check, additional checks such as obtaining certificates of good conduct from relevant embassies or police forces are necessary. The candidate will be required to initiate, manage and meet any costs of this process. Further details are available [here](#).

The level of information contained in these certificates varies from country to country: some are complete extracts from the criminal record; others are partial. Extra care should, therefore, be taken in ensuring that references are taken up and that other background checks are conducted. Such information should be recorded on the Single Central Record.

5. People who are not required to obtain a DBS check

It is not necessary to obtain a DBS check for:-

- staff appointed before 2002 who have continuity of service and who have not previously been DBS checked unless moving roles into posts with closer contact with children or where there are concerns about suitability to work with children. The exception to this is workers from overseas.
- public sector staff such as psychologists, nurses, dentists and centrally employed teachers (because they will have been checked by their own organisations). However, the Trust

should check the identity of such staff on arrival to ensure impostors do not gain access to children;

- visitors who have business with the CEO, Headteacher or other senior staff who have brief contact with children with a member of staff present;
- volunteers or parents who only accompany staff and children on occasional outings or trips that do not involve overnight stays, or who only help at or attend events such as a sports day, school fête, school concerts etc;
- Key Stage 5 or sixth form pupils in connection with a short careers or subject placement. In these cases the school placing the pupil should ensure that s/he is suitable for the placement in question;
- people who are on site before or after Trust hours and when children are not present, e.g. local groups who hire premises for community or leisure activities, contract cleaners who only come in after children have gone home, or before they arrive.

6. Portability of checks

- 6.1** Where Dorset Council has carried out a check on an employee who joins the Trust within the last three months, a new check is not required although one may be undertaken at the discretion of the CEO.
- 6.2** Where an employee already employed with the Trust is being considered for another position with the Trust a new check is not required.

7. Ongoing DBS Checking

- 7.1** It is an Ofsted requirement / recommendation that all DBS checks for staff are renewed every 3 years, however this is at the discretion of the CEO. Where staff have had a break in service for 3 months or more, staff will be required to undergo a new DBS check. The Trust reserves the right to carry out a DBS for any existing employee at any time, with or without notice.

8. The DBS Update Service

- 8.1** The DBS Update Service allows individuals to keep information on their DBS disclosure certificate up to date on payment of an annual subscription (free for volunteers). This only applies where they have had a DBS check within the last 14 days.
- 8.2** Where an individual has subscribed to the Update Service the Trust will be able to carry out a status check, free of charge, which will indicate whether there have been any changes since the last full DBS check but not what they are. Where there are changes noted, the Trust will be advised to obtain another DBS check. Disclosure certificates can therefore be portable ONLY in the following circumstances and at the discretion of the CEO:
- The applicant (employee or volunteer) has subscribed to the Update Service and
 - The applicant has given consent to carry out a Status Check and
 - The certificate is the same type and level that the Trust is legally entitled to see, e.g. Enhanced with Children's Barred List check

Otherwise a new check will need to be obtained.

9. CONSIDERING THE RELEVANCE OF CONVICTIONS

9.1 Ensuring equal treatment

The Trust are required to ensure that applicants and existing employees who are subject to a DBS check and where there is a criminal record are treated fairly and in accordance with the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (ROA) 1974.

9.2 Convictions where working in a school is banned

Receipt of a positive disclosure will not automatically make an applicant or existing employee unsuitable for a position unless stipulated by statute/guidance. Under the Protection of Children Act 1999 and the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000 certain persons are banned for life from working with children. These are those registered on Information held under Section 142 of the Education Act 2002 [previously known as List 99], those registered on the DH list, those listed on the register maintained by the National Assembly of Wales, and those aged 18 years or older convicted of a schedule 4 offence.

It is an offence for a disqualified person to apply for, offer to do, accept or do any work in any of the regulated positions (including those in school settings) set out in the Act. It is also an offence for an employer to knowingly offer work in a regulated position, or to procure work in a regulated position for an individual who is disqualified from working with children, or to fail to remove such an individual from such work.

9.3 Assessing positive disclosures where no statutory ban is in place

In assessing the suitability of a person with a criminal record for employment or voluntary work the CEO needs to consider both the nature of the job and the details and circumstances of any convictions.

As an organisation assessing applicants' suitability for positions which are included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order using criminal record checks processed through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), the Trust complies fully with the [code of practice](#) and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly. Twynham Learning undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a criminal record check on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed

At interview, or in a separate discussion, Twynham Learning ensures that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matter that might be relevant to the position. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment

Twynham Learning undertakes to discuss any matter revealed on a DBS certificate with the individual seeking the position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.

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

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

If the post involved access to money or budget responsibility, it is the Trust'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 responsibility, it is the Trust's normal policy to consider it a high risk to employ anyone who has been convicted of drink driving within the last ten years.

The over-riding consideration, however, will be the duty to safeguard children and young people.

9.4 Considering the circumstances against the risks identified

Assessing the risk of employing a person with a criminal record means comparing the applicant's skills, experience and conviction circumstances against risk criteria identified for the job. Whilst it will not be possible to carry out a thorough risk assessment on each individual, the CEO may consult with the Trust's HR department and take the following matters into account when considering clearance:

- the seriousness of the offence;
- the length of time since the offence occurred, and the age at which it occurred (e.g. juvenile);
- any relevant information offered by the individual about the circumstances which led to the offence being committed;
- whether the offence was one-off or part of a history of offending;
- whether the individual's circumstances have changed since the offence was committed;
- the country in which the offence was committed (e.g. some activities are offences in Scotland but not England and Wales and vice versa);
- whether the offence has since been decriminalised by Parliament;
- the explanation, degree of remorse, rehabilitation or otherwise, expressed by the individual and the motivation to change.

Where it is deemed to be necessary, a full risk assessment may be carried out.

9.5 Handling positive disclosures of existing staff

Employees are required to declare any cautions, convictions or reprimands (including judgements or investigations pending) that they receive during the course of their employment. The relevance of such disclosures will be considered as set out above.

Where an employee does not declare any caution, conviction or reprimand but a DBS check reveals information which results in an existing employee being considered as potentially unsuitable for their position, action will be taken in accordance with our Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

10 Starting work pending a DBS check

In circumstances where it is deemed necessary to start someone pending a DBS check the following steps should be taken:

- the CEO must give written approval in advance. In any event, approval will not be given unless the new employee's Barred List check has been checked (and is clear); a risk assessment has been undertaken by the Headteacher/line manager, and
- all other relevant pre-start checks have been completed in full to the Trust's satisfaction (see the Recruitment, Selection and Probation Policy for a full list of pre-start checks), and
- the individual should not be allowed any unsupervised access to children.

Where an individual has been allowed to start work without a DBS certificate being seen by the school, and the DBS certificate is not produced in a timely way, the school will need to liaise with the Registered Body to see whether any information can be provided about whether the DBS certificate has been issued. Otherwise, consideration will need to be given as to whether any formal action will need to be taken against the individual and whether they can continue to work in the school without producing the DBS certificate.

10.1 Single Central Record

The DfE requires all schools to be able to demonstrate that they have robust and accurate records of all recruitment and vetting checks carried out. This information must be compiled into a Single Central Record (SCR) of completed checks in each school. The SCR is often the first document an Ofsted Inspector will ask to see and failure to produce an SCR evidencing that all the appropriate checks have been made will have an immediate and serious impact on the outcome of the inspection

10.2 People to be included on the single central record

- all staff who are employed to work at the Trust;
- all staff who are employed as supply staff to the Trust, whether employed directly by the Trust or through an agency;
- all others who have been chosen by the Trust to work in regular contact with children (volunteers and Members/Trustees/LAB members who also work as volunteers);
- people brought into the Trust to provide additional teaching or instruction for pupil but who are not staff members, such as specialist sports coaches, music tutors or artists;
- all others who are brought into the Trust and have regular contact with the children in the Trust.

10.3 Checks to be included on the central record

The single central record must indicate whether or not the following have been completed:

- identity checks;
- qualification checks for any qualifications legally required for the job e.g. those posts where a person must have QTS or NPQH;
- checks of right to work in the United Kingdom for all staff;
- checks on information held under the Children's Barred List;
- DBS Enhanced Check and number;
- further overseas records checks where appropriate;
- Prohibition from teaching check
- Supply staff - written confirmation that the agency supplying the member of supply staff has carried out the relevant checks and obtained the appropriate certificates, whether

any enhanced DBS check certificate has been provided in respect of the member of supply staff, and the date that confirmation was received (from April 2015 onwards)

The information needs to be recorded on the SCR by the person in the school with the responsibility for doing so. That person should sign and date the record to verify that they have checked the employee's (or volunteer's) details. The record needs to show the date on which the check was completed or the relevant certificate obtained and should show who carried out the check

11. RETENTION OF INFORMATION

11.1 Confidentiality of information

Information disclosed as part of a recruitment process, via self-declaration during the course of employment, or as part of a DBS checking process will be treated as highly confidential. It is an offence for information in a disclosure to be passed to anyone who does not need it in the course of their duties.

11.2 Compliance with DBS standards

Disclosure information will be managed in accordance with DBS guidance on the security and retention of disclosures and disclosure information (see www.homeoffice.gov.uk/agencies-public-bodies/db). The key provisions are:-

- A copy of the DBS disclosure can only be made with the applicant's permission.
- A copy of the DBS Certificate can only be retained with the applicant's permission.
- Any copies of DBS Certificates must be kept securely.
- Copies of DBS certificates will be destroyed securely when no longer required.

11.3 Records to be retained

Records need to be kept by the Trust detailing:-

- the date the disclosure was seen and by whom;
- the unique reference number on the disclosure certificate.

The Trust will also keep:-

- a note of what other information was used to assess suitability including a note of any discussions with the individual;
- Any correspondence sent to the individual confirming their clearance.