St John Henry Newman Catholic Primary School

Safer Recruitment and Selection Policy

Approved: September 2026
Review: September 2027

1. Introduction

St John Henry Newman Catholic Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people.

The school recognises that safer recruitment is an essential part of safeguarding. Recruitment procedures must ensure that the school appoints staff who are suitably qualified, experienced and appropriate to work with children.

The school will ensure that recruitment and selection processes:

- are fair, transparent and consistently applied;
- comply with employment and equality legislation;
- support the appointment of the best candidate for the role;
- appropriately assess candidates' suitability to work with children;
- include all required pre-employment safeguarding checks;
- provide appropriate scrutiny of employment history, references and qualifications;
- identify and explore gaps, discrepancies or concerns;
- maintain appropriate records of recruitment and safeguarding checks.

This policy should be read alongside the school's:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy;
- Equality Policy;
- Staff Code of Conduct;
- Low-Level Concerns Policy;
- Complaints Policy;
- Data Protection and Privacy arrangements;
- Whistleblowing Policy;
- Disciplinary Policy.

The policy reflects the requirements of **Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (KCSIE)** and other relevant legislation and statutory guidance. KCSIE 2026 came into force on 1 September 2026.

2. Principles of Safer Recruitment

The Governing Body and Headteacher are committed to ensuring that recruitment:

1. Promotes the safeguarding and welfare of children.
2. Is based on merit, qualifications, experience and suitability for the role.
3. Is fair and free from unlawful discrimination.
4. Is conducted consistently for all candidates.
5. Gives appropriate consideration to safeguarding throughout the process.
6. Includes appropriate scrutiny of candidates' employment history.
7. Includes robust reference checking.
8. Includes all required pre-employment checks before employment begins wherever possible.
9. Maintains appropriate records of the recruitment process.
10. Provides appropriate safeguarding induction for successful candidates.

The school will not appoint an individual simply because they appear to be suitable based on interview performance. Suitability to work with children must be considered alongside qualifications, experience, references and the outcome of all required pre-employment checks.

3. Responsibilities

3.1 Governing Body

The Governing Body is responsible for ensuring that the school has effective safer recruitment arrangements.

The Governing Body will:

- approve this policy;
- ensure that appropriate recruitment and safeguarding procedures are in place;
- ensure that required pre-employment checks are undertaken;
- ensure that the school maintains an accurate Single Central Record;
- provide appropriate oversight and challenge;
- ensure that governors involved in recruitment understand their responsibilities.

The Governing Body may delegate recruitment and appointment responsibilities in accordance with the school's agreed scheme of delegation and terms of reference.

3.2 Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for implementing this policy and ensuring that recruitment procedures are followed.

The Headteacher will:

- determine the appropriate recruitment process;
- ensure that job descriptions and person specifications are appropriate;
- ensure appropriate advertising;
- establish suitable selection panels;
- ensure safer recruitment procedures are followed;
- ensure references and checks are appropriately scrutinised;
- ensure that appointment decisions are properly recorded;
- ensure that required pre-employment checks are completed;
- ensure appropriate safeguarding induction for new staff.

3.3 Selection Panels

Selection panels will normally comprise at least two people and will include an appropriately trained member. At least one person involved in making the appointment decision will have completed appropriate **Safer Recruitment training**, in accordance with KCSIE.

Panel members will:

- maintain confidentiality;
- apply the agreed criteria consistently;
- consider safeguarding throughout the process;
- ask appropriate questions;
- record interview responses;
- explore gaps and discrepancies;
- make appointment recommendations based on evidence.

4. Safer Recruitment Training

The school will ensure that those involved in recruitment have access to appropriate safer recruitment training.

At least one member of the selection process will have completed recognised safer recruitment training.

The Headteacher will maintain oversight of the school's safer recruitment training arrangements and identify refresher training where required.

Governors involved in recruitment will be encouraged to undertake appropriate safer recruitment training.

5. Identifying a Vacancy

Before recruitment begins, the Headteacher will consider:

- whether the post is required;
- the purpose and responsibilities of the role;
- the appropriate job description;
- the person specification;
- required qualifications;
- safeguarding responsibilities;
- whether the role involves regulated activity with children;
- the level and type of DBS check required;
- whether any additional checks apply;
- salary and contractual arrangements;
- appropriate recruitment timescales.

The job description and person specification will clearly identify the skills, experience, qualifications and attributes required.

Safeguarding responsibilities will be reflected in job descriptions where appropriate.

6. Advertising
Vacancies will normally be advertised in a manner that provides equality of opportunity and attracts an appropriate field of candidates.
The Headteacher will determine the most appropriate advertising arrangements.
All recruitment advertisements will include an appropriate statement confirming the school's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.
Where appropriate, advertisements will state that:
St John Henry Newman Catholic Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. The successful candidate will be subject to enhanced DBS and other appropriate pre-employment checks. The post is exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 where applicable.
Advertisements will make clear where an enhanced DBS check and barred list check are required.

7. Candidate Information
Candidates will be provided with appropriate information about:

- the school;
- the role;
- the job description;
- the person specification;
- salary and terms of employment;
- the recruitment timetable;
- safeguarding expectations;
- the school's commitment to safeguarding;
- the requirement for appropriate pre-employment checks;
- the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy;
- any relevant information concerning the Catholic nature of the school and its mission.

The school will normally use an appropriate application form rather than relying solely on CVs.
CVs may be accepted as supplementary information where appropriate, but a complete application form will be required for posts where the school determines that this is necessary for safer recruitment.
Application forms will provide sufficient information to allow the school to assess the candidate's employment history, qualifications and suitability.

8. Application Forms
Applicants will be required to provide:

- personal details;
- employment history;
- relevant qualifications;
- relevant experience;
- details of current and previous employment;
- reasons for leaving previous employment where requested;
- appropriate declarations;
- information required to undertake relevant pre-employment checks.

Applicants will be required to account for significant gaps in employment history.
Any gaps or inconsistencies identified during shortlisting or interview will be explored with the candidate.

9. Shortlisting
Candidates will be shortlisted against the agreed person specification.
Shortlisting will:

- be systematic;
- be based on evidence provided by candidates;
- apply the same criteria to all candidates;
- be recorded;
- identify gaps in employment history;
- identify discrepancies or areas requiring clarification.

The school will make reasonable adjustments for candidates with disabilities in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.
The school will not discriminate unlawfully against any candidate on the basis of a protected characteristic.
Where a candidate has declared a disability, reasonable adjustments will be considered throughout the recruitment process.

10. References
References are an important part of safer recruitment.
The school will normally seek at least **two satisfactory references** for the successful candidate and, where appropriate, before interview.
References will normally include the candidate's current or most recent employer.
For candidates applying for posts involving work with children, particular attention will be given to their previous experience of working with children and young people.
Reference requests will seek confirmation of:

- the referee's relationship with the candidate;
- the candidate's employment dates;
- the candidate's role and responsibilities;
- performance and conduct;
- suitability to work with children;
- disciplinary matters relevant to safeguarding;
- substantiated safeguarding concerns or allegations, where appropriate and lawfully shareable;
- reasons for leaving employment;
- any concerns about the candidate's suitability for the post.

References will be obtained directly from the referee or employing organisation wherever possible.
References provided by the candidate, such as "to whom it may concern" references, will not normally be accepted as satisfactory employment references.
References from relatives or individuals acting solely as friends of the candidate will not be accepted as employment references.
References will be scrutinised and any discrepancies will be investigated.
The school may contact the referee for clarification where necessary.

11. Interviews
All candidates will be assessed against the job description and person specification.
The selection panel will agree the interview arrangements before interviews take place.
Questions will:

- relate to the requirements of the role;
- be consistently applied to candidates;
- explore relevant skills and experience;
- explore safeguarding understanding where appropriate;
- provide opportunities to explore employment gaps;
- provide opportunities to clarify information provided on the application form.

The interview process will include appropriate questions to establish the candidate's understanding of safeguarding and their suitability to work with children.
The panel will consider:

- the candidate's responses;
- evidence of professional conduct;
- their understanding of safeguarding;
- their approach to children and young people;
- their understanding of professional boundaries;
- their ability to contribute positively to the school community;
- any concerns arising from the application or references.

Questions will not discriminate unlawfully against candidates.

Interview notes will be recorded and retained in accordance with the school's recruitment records and data retention arrangements.

12. Exploring Employment Gaps and Discrepancies

The school will scrutinise the candidate's employment history.

Any:

- unexplained gaps;
- inconsistencies;
- unexplained changes in employment;
- discrepancies between the application and references;
- concerns raised through references;
- differences between information provided at application and interview

will be explored with the candidate.

The outcome of these discussions will be recorded.

13. Safeguarding Questions

All appointments involving work with children will include appropriate consideration of safeguarding.

Questions may explore:

- the candidate's understanding of safeguarding;
- professional boundaries;
- responding to concerns raised by children;
- appropriate relationships with children;
- responding to allegations or concerns;
- online professional conduct;
- equality, dignity and respect;
- recognising signs that a child may be at risk.

The school will consider whether the candidate's responses demonstrate an appropriate understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities.

14. Selection and Appointment

The selection panel will make an appointment decision based on:

- the application;
- shortlisting evidence;
- interview performance;
- references;
- qualifications;
- relevant experience;
- safeguarding considerations;
- required pre-employment checks.

The successful candidate will receive a conditional offer of employment.

The offer will be subject to satisfactory completion of all relevant pre-employment checks.

No candidate will be permitted to commence regulated activity with children where a required barred list check has not been completed.

15. Pre-Employment Checks

The school will undertake all checks required by current legislation and KCSIE.

Depending on the nature of the role, these may include:

- verification of identity;
- right to work in the UK;
- verification of qualifications;
- appropriate DBS check;
- children's barred list check where required;
- prohibition checks for teachers where applicable;

- appropriate checks relating to childcare disqualification where applicable;
- overseas criminal record or other suitability checks where required;
- references;
- professional registration where applicable;
- appropriate health or occupational requirements.

The level of DBS check will be determined by the duties of the role.
The school will not undertake checks simply because an individual is employed in a school; the appropriate level of check will depend on the nature of the role and the relevant statutory requirements.

16. DBS and Barred List Checks

Where the role constitutes regulated activity with children, the appropriate enhanced DBS check and children's barred list check will be undertaken.
A person must not undertake regulated activity with children if they are barred from doing so.
The school will follow current DBS and KCSIE requirements when determining the appropriate checks.
For the majority of school employees, an enhanced DBS check will be required. Governing bodies have responsibility for ensuring that appropriate suitability checks have been undertaken.

17. Teacher Prohibition Checks

For teaching appointments, the school will undertake the appropriate prohibition check to establish whether the individual is prohibited from teaching.
Where a prohibition check identifies a concern, the appointment will not proceed until the matter has been appropriately considered and resolved.
The outcome of the check will be recorded on the school's Single Central Record.

18. Overseas Checks

Where a candidate has lived or worked outside the UK, the school will consider whether additional checks are required.
The school will follow current KCSIE requirements regarding overseas criminal record checks and other evidence of suitability.
The absence of an overseas criminal record certificate will not automatically prevent an appointment where such a certificate cannot reasonably be obtained. In such circumstances, the school will consider what alternative evidence and risk assessment are appropriate.

19. Right to Work

The school will undertake the appropriate right-to-work checks before employment begins.
The school will retain appropriate evidence of the check in accordance with its employment records and data protection arrangements.
Where an individual has time-limited permission to work in the UK, the school will undertake any required follow-up checks.

20. Qualifications

The school will verify relevant qualifications where they are required for the role.
For teaching appointments, the school will undertake the appropriate checks to confirm qualifications and professional status.
Where a qualification is essential to a post, employment will remain conditional upon satisfactory verification.

21. Recruitment of Ex-Offenders

The school will comply with relevant legislation concerning the recruitment of people with criminal records.
A criminal record will not automatically prevent an individual from being appointed.
Where information concerning convictions, cautions or other relevant matters is disclosed, the school will consider:

- the nature of the offence;
- the circumstances;

- the relevance to the role;
- the time elapsed;
- any pattern of behaviour;
- information provided by the candidate;
- the safeguarding implications;
- any relevant legal requirements.

Only information that the school is legally entitled to consider will be requested or taken into account.
The school will provide candidates with an opportunity to explain relevant information where appropriate.

22. Childcare Disqualification

Where the Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations apply to a particular role, the school will undertake the appropriate declaration and checks.
The school will ensure that only individuals legally permitted to undertake relevant childcare activity are employed in such roles.
The requirements will be reviewed against current statutory guidance.

23. Single Central Record

The school will maintain a **Single Central Record (SCR)** in accordance with KCSIE.
The SCR will record the required pre-employment checks for:

- employees;
- relevant governors;
- agency and third-party staff;
- trainee teachers and other individuals where required;
- volunteers where the relevant checks apply;
- contractors where required.

The SCR will record the appropriate checks and the dates on which they were completed.
The Headteacher and designated staff will ensure that the SCR is kept accurate and up to date.
The Governing Body will provide appropriate oversight of the school's SCR arrangements.

24. Agency and Supply Staff

Where the school uses agency or supply staff, the school will obtain appropriate confirmation from the supplying organisation that the required checks have been completed.
The school will ensure that appropriate information is recorded on its SCR where required.
The school will not rely solely on verbal assurances.
Where appropriate, the school will seek confirmation of:

- identity;
- DBS status;
- barred list checks;
- prohibition checks;
- qualifications;
- right to work;
- relevant safeguarding checks.

25. Volunteers

The school will determine the appropriate level of safeguarding checks for volunteers based on the nature of their role and whether they will undertake regulated activity.
The school will ensure that volunteers understand:

- safeguarding expectations;
- professional boundaries;
- confidentiality;
- reporting procedures;
- behaviour expectations.

Volunteers will receive an appropriate safeguarding induction.

26. Contractors and Visitors
The school will determine the appropriate safeguarding checks for contractors and other third parties in accordance with their role and level of access to children.
Contractors undertaking regulated activity with children will be subject to the appropriate checks.
Where contractors are not subject to such checks, the school will ensure appropriate supervision and control of their access to children.
Visitors will follow the school's visitor procedures.

27. Governors
Governors will be subject to the appropriate safeguarding and suitability checks required by legislation and KCSIE.
The school will ensure that governors receive appropriate safeguarding information and understand their responsibilities.
Governors involved in recruitment will be expected to follow this policy and maintain confidentiality.

28. Conditional Offers and Starting Employment
Employment offers will clearly state that the appointment is conditional upon satisfactory completion of required pre-employment checks.
The school will aim to complete all required checks before the employee starts work.
Where exceptional circumstances mean that an individual must start before all checks have been completed, the Headteacher will ensure that:

- the relevant legal requirements are satisfied;
- the individual is not permitted to undertake activity for which a required check has not been completed;
- appropriate safeguards are put in place;
- a written risk assessment is completed where necessary;
- appropriate supervision is provided.

A barred list check must be completed before an individual undertakes regulated activity where the check is required.

29. Induction
All new employees will receive an appropriate induction.
Safeguarding will be a central part of induction.
New staff will be made aware of:

- the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy;
- the school's safeguarding procedures;
- the identity and role of the DSL and DDSLs;
- procedures for reporting concerns;
- the Staff Code of Conduct;
- the school's behaviour expectations;
- low-level concerns procedures;
- whistleblowing arrangements;
- online safety requirements;
- professional boundaries;
- confidentiality;
- Prevent responsibilities where appropriate.

All staff will be required to read the relevant safeguarding information specified by KCSIE.
KCSIE 2026 confirms that all staff, including those who do not work directly with children, are expected to follow the same safeguarding expectations and that governing bodies should ensure staff read Part One.

30. Recruitment Records and Data Protection

The school will retain recruitment information securely and in accordance with data protection legislation and the school's retention schedule.
For unsuccessful candidates, recruitment information will normally be retained only for the period necessary to manage the recruitment process and any associated legal or employment matters.
The school will securely dispose of recruitment information when the applicable retention period expires.
For successful candidates, relevant recruitment documentation will form part of the employee's personnel record.
Candidates have rights concerning their personal information under applicable data protection legislation.
Access to recruitment information will be restricted to those with a legitimate need to access it.

31. Equality and Diversity
St John Henry Newman Catholic Primary School is committed to equality of opportunity.
Recruitment decisions will be based on:

- skills;
- qualifications;
- experience;
- suitability;
- evidence against the person specification;
- safeguarding considerations.

The school will not unlawfully discriminate against candidates on the basis of a protected characteristic.
Reasonable adjustments will be made where required.
The school's Catholic character and mission will be appropriately reflected in recruitment for roles where this is relevant and lawful.

32. Catholic Character
St John Henry Newman Catholic Primary School is a Catholic school with the mission of **Inspiring Lives**.
Recruitment will seek staff who understand and support the school's commitment to:

- the dignity of every person;
- respect and compassion;
- service to others;
- the common good;
- Catholic education;
- the spiritual and moral development of children;
- partnership with parents and families.

Where a role has a specific religious or Catholic requirement, the school will apply the relevant requirements of the school's governing arrangements, employment law and Catholic education guidance.

33. Concerns Identified During Recruitment
Where information arises during recruitment that causes concern about a candidate's suitability to work with children, the Headteacher will determine the appropriate response.
This may include:

- seeking further information;
- obtaining clarification from a referee;
- undertaking additional checks;
- discussing information with the candidate;
- seeking HR or legal advice;
- undertaking a safeguarding risk assessment;
- withdrawing a conditional offer.

Where information raises a safeguarding concern, the Headteacher will consult the DSL and take appropriate action.

34. Canvassing
Candidates must not attempt to influence members of the Governing Body, selection panel or school staff in relation to an appointment.
Any attempt to improperly influence the recruitment process may result in an application being withdrawn from consideration.

35. Feedback to Candidates
Unsuccessful candidates will normally be informed as soon as reasonably practicable following the appointment decision.
Where appropriate, feedback may be provided.
Feedback will be based on evidence from the recruitment process.

36. Monitoring and Review
The Headteacher will monitor the effectiveness of the school's safer recruitment arrangements.
This will include consideration of:

- recruitment records;
- SCR accuracy;
- DBS and other pre-employment checks;
- safer recruitment training;
- recruitment audit activity;
- safeguarding incidents involving staff;
- feedback from governors;
- changes to statutory guidance.

Appendix 1 – Safer Recruitment Checklist

Before Advertising

☐ Confirm vacancy and staffing requirement
☐ Review job description
☐ Review person specification
☐ Identify safeguarding responsibilities
☐ Determine appropriate DBS level
☐ Determine whether barred list check is required
☐ Determine whether prohibition or other checks are required
☐ Agree recruitment timetable
☐ Identify selection panel
☐ Confirm at least one panel member has safer recruitment training

Advertising

☐ Include safeguarding statement
☐ Include required DBS information
☐ Provide job description
☐ Provide person specification
☐ Provide appropriate application form
☐ Provide relevant safeguarding information

Applications and Shortlisting

☐ Applications received securely
☐ Shortlisting criteria agreed
☐ Applications assessed consistently
☐ Employment history considered
☐ Gaps identified
☐ Discrepancies identified
☐ Shortlisting record completed
☐ Reasonable adjustments considered

References

☐ At least two references sought where appropriate
☐ References obtained directly
☐ Current/most recent employer reference obtained
☐ Safeguarding questions included
☐ Employment dates checked
☐ Reasons for leaving checked where appropriate
☐ Concerns or discrepancies followed up
☐ References recorded securely

Interview

☐ Interview questions agreed
☐ Candidates assessed against person specification
☐ Safeguarding questions included
☐ Employment gaps explored
☐ Discrepancies explored
☐ Qualifications considered
☐ Interview notes completed
☐ Appointment decision recorded

Pre-Employment Checks

☐ Identity verified
☐ Right to work verified
☐ Qualifications verified
☐ References satisfactory
☐ Appropriate DBS check completed
☐ Barred list check completed where required
☐ Teacher prohibition check completed where applicable
☐ Overseas checks completed where required
☐ Childcare disqualification check completed where applicable
☐ Other role-specific checks completed
☐ Single Central Record updated

Before Starting

☐ Conditional offer confirmed in writing
☐ Contract/statement of particulars issued
☐ All required checks completed
☐ Any exceptional outstanding checks appropriately risk assessed
☐ Safeguarding induction arranged
☐ Staff Code of Conduct provided
☐ Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy provided
☐ DSL/DDSL information provided

After Appointment

☐ Personnel file established
☐ Recruitment records securely retained
☐ Staff member completes safeguarding induction
☐ Required training completed
☐ Appropriate supervision established
☐ SCR reviewed and updated

Appendix 2 – Key Recruitment Principles

The following principles should guide every recruitment exercise at St John Henry Newman Catholic Primary School:

Safeguarding first

Every appointment must consider the individual's suitability to work with children.

Evidence-based selection

Appointments must be based on evidence against the requirements of the role.

Consistency

Candidates must be treated fairly and assessed using consistent criteria.

Professional curiosity

Gaps, discrepancies and concerns must be explored rather than overlooked.

Robust checks

References and pre-employment checks must be completed and scrutinised.

Appropriate challenge

Selection panels should challenge assumptions and avoid appointing simply because a candidate performed well at interview.

Good induction

Safer recruitment continues beyond appointment through effective safeguarding induction, supervision and ongoing professional expectations.