

Federation of St Charles and St Mary's Catholic Primary Schools



Safer Recruitment Policy

Date policy adopted by the Governing Body: Autumn 2026

Date policy to be reviewed: Autumn 2027



The School Governors Federation Ethos Statement

As Governors we acknowledge our responsibilities as strategic leaders to ensure every child, in St Charles' and St Mary's Schools, are given the best possible opportunities to reach their full potential, spiritually and academically. We do this by promoting high standards of educational achievement, pastoral care and by modelling of the Gospel values in both communities.

We are strongly committed to building and strengthening the shared Catholic ethos of both schools whilst maintaining their individual identities.

We strive to build on the foundations of faith started at home and seek to provide an environment where beliefs and values of the Catholic faith are taught, explored, developed and nurtured. We aim for all our children to believe in their own potential, in an environment where they can flourish, succeed and achieve.

As a governing body we have a strong focus on three core strategic functions:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction which aim to deliver high expectations and to improve the lives and outcomes of all students.
- Holding the Executive Head Teacher and both Heads of School, to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and for ensuring excellent quality of teaching.
- Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

As governors, we bring a wide variety of experience and expertise to the schools, and this ensures that both schools move forward and standards are constantly raised in a way that is in line with the overarching ethos and vision of the schools, along with the statutory directives from the Department for Education and The Archdiocese of Westminster.

St Charles and St Mary's Federation

Safer Recruitment Policy

1. Introduction

This Safer Recruitment Policy has been reviewed and updated in line with the Department for Education statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (KCSIE 2026), in force from 1 September 2026, together with the School Staffing (England) Regulations 2009, the Equality Act 2010, the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions Order 1975, as amended), the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (as amended), the Childcare (Disqualification) and Childcare (Early Years Provision Free of Charge) (Extended Entitlement) (Amendment) Regulations 2018, and other relevant legislation and guidance.

The Federation is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. Robust safer recruitment is an essential part of our whole-school safeguarding culture and is intended to deter, identify and prevent people who are unsuitable to work with children from securing employment, volunteering opportunities or other roles within our schools.

2. Recruitment and selection policy statement

St Charles and St Mary's Catholic Primary Schools are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expect all staff, volunteers, governors, agency workers and contractors to share this commitment. Recruitment and selection will be fair, transparent and consistent, while ensuring that safeguarding is considered at every stage.

The Federation seeks to attract, select and retain people with the knowledge, skills, experience, values, attitudes and behaviours required for their role and who will contribute positively to the Catholic ethos and safeguarding culture of both schools.

3. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that recruitment is safe, fair, effective and compliant with statutory requirements. Those responsible for recruitment will act professionally, honestly, efficiently and equitably and will maintain clear records of recruitment decisions and safeguarding checks.

4. Scope and responsibility

This policy applies to all employees and governors involved in recruitment and selection and, where relevant, to the appointment or engagement of volunteers, agency and third-party staff, contractors, trainee teachers and other adults working in or on behalf of the Federation.

The Governing Body retains overall responsibility for ensuring appropriate safer recruitment arrangements. Recruitment responsibilities are delegated to the Executive Headteacher in accordance with the Federation's governance arrangements and applicable staffing regulations.

5. Aims and objectives

- Ensure safeguarding and the welfare of children are central at every stage of recruitment and appointment.
- Ensure a consistent, equitable and evidence-based approach to appointments.
- Comply with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty, including making reasonable adjustments for disabled applicants.
- Ensure applicants are assessed against the requirements of the role and that all mandatory pre-appointment checks are completed and recorded.
- Maintain a robust Single Central Record (SCR) and appropriate recruitment records.

6. Safer recruitment principles

- All applicants will receive fair treatment and decisions will be based on the requirements of the role.
- Job descriptions and person specifications will state the safeguarding responsibilities of the post, the extent of contact with children and whether the role involves regulated activity.
- Advertisements will state the Federation's commitment to safeguarding and promoting children's welfare, that safeguarding checks will be undertaken, the safeguarding responsibilities of the post and, where applicable, that the post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- Where a role involves regulated activity with children, applicant information will make clear that it is an offence for a person who is barred from regulated activity with children to apply for the role.
- Applicant information will include or signpost the Federation's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and its policy/practice on the employment of ex-offenders.
- The Federation will use application forms rather than accepting a curriculum vitae on its own. Applicants will be required to provide a full history since leaving school, including education, employment and voluntary work, with reasons for gaps.
- Selection will normally be undertaken by a panel of at least two people. At least one person conducting an interview will have completed appropriate safer recruitment training.
- A range of selection techniques may be used, and pupils may be meaningfully involved in recruitment where appropriate and safely supervised.
- All information considered and decisions made will be clearly recorded.

7. Equal opportunities and reasonable adjustments

The Federation is committed to equality of opportunity and to ensuring that recruitment and selection are fair and non-discriminatory. Protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 will be respected. Reasonable adjustments will be made throughout the recruitment process where required. Health or disability questions before an offer will only be asked where permitted by law, for example to establish whether an adjustment is needed for the recruitment process or whether an applicant can carry out an intrinsic function of the role.

8. Safer Recruitment Training

Those involved in recruitment and employment of staff who work with children will receive appropriate safer recruitment training. The substance of that training will, as a minimum, cover Part three of KCSIE 2026. In accordance with the School Staffing (England) Regulations 2009, at least one person who conducts an interview will have completed safer recruitment training. The Federation will maintain records of relevant training and refresher activity.

9. Pre-recruitment process

Application form

The CES (Catholic Education Service) application form will be used where appropriate. Applicants will be required to provide personal details, current and former names, current address and National Insurance number; present or last employment and reason for leaving; a full history since leaving school, including education, employment and voluntary work and

reasons for gaps; qualifications; referee details; and information demonstrating how they meet the person specification.

Job description and person specification

A job description and person specification, or appropriate volunteer role profile, will be issued for each role. It will set out safeguarding responsibilities, expected skills, abilities, experience, attitudes and behaviours, the extent of contact with children and whether the role is regulated activity.

Shortlisting and self-disclosure

Shortlisting will be undertaken consistently against the published criteria, normally by at least two people. Shortlisted candidates will be asked to complete an appropriate self-disclosure of relevant criminal history and other information that they are legally required to disclose. Protected convictions and cautions that are filtered under the DBS rules must not be taken into account.

Online searches

As part of due diligence, the Federation will consider carrying out an online search on shortlisted candidates. Candidates will be informed that this may take place. The purpose is to identify publicly available information that may need to be explored with the candidate at interview; it is not a substitute for statutory vetting checks. Searches will be proportionate, relevant to suitability to work with children, and undertaken in accordance with data protection, equality and human rights obligations.

Employment history and references

References will be obtained before interview where possible so that concerns can be explored with the referee and candidate. The Federation will not accept open references or rely on an applicant to obtain references. References will normally include the current employer and, where the applicant is not currently working with children, the relevant employer from the last time they worked with children. References from schools or colleges will be completed by a senior person with appropriate authority and, where appropriate, confirmed by the headteacher or principal in relation to disciplinary investigations.

References will be verified with the person who provided them. Electronic references will be checked to ensure they originate from a legitimate source. Vague or insufficient information will be clarified, application information will be compared with references, discrepancies will be followed up, the reason for leaving the current or most recent post will be established, and concerns will be resolved satisfactorily before appointment is confirmed.

When the Federation provides a reference, it will provide factual information relevant to suitability to work with children and facts concerning substantiated safeguarding concerns or allegations that met the harm threshold. It will not include allegations or concerns found to be false, unfounded, unsubstantiated or malicious.

10. Interviews and selection

Interviews will assess the candidate's suitability for the role and to work with children.

Interviewers will agree structured questions and will explore the candidate's motivation for working with children, relevant skills and experience, safeguarding understanding, professional boundaries, employment gaps or frequent changes of employment/location, and any concerns or discrepancies arising from the application, references, self-disclosure or online search.

Potential areas requiring further probing may include a lack of understanding of children's vulnerability, inappropriate idealisation of children, inadequate understanding of adult-child boundaries, or indicators of negative safeguarding behaviours. Past disciplinary action or substantiated allegations will be considered in the circumstances of the individual case.

Where a candidate is personally known to a panel member, this will be declared before shortlisting and any conflict of interest will be managed appropriately.

11. Conditional offer and pre-appointment checks

All offers of appointment will remain conditional until all mandatory and relevant checks have been completed satisfactorily. Depending on the role, the Federation will:

- verify identity, including awareness of current and former names;
- obtain an enhanced DBS certificate and, for those engaging in regulated activity with children, children's barred list information;
- verify the person's right to work in the UK;
- verify mental and physical fitness to carry out the work responsibilities, in accordance with the Equality Act 2010;
- make appropriate further checks where the person has lived or worked outside the UK;
- verify professional qualifications, including QTS and completion of teacher induction/probation where relevant, using the DfE Check a teacher's record service;
- ensure a person appointed to carry out teaching work is not subject to a prohibition order, interim prohibition order, or a relevant historic GTCE sanction or restriction;
- complete childcare disqualification checks for relevant staff working in reception classes or wraparound care for children up to the age of eight;
- obtain and satisfactorily verify references and resolve discrepancies before appointment is confirmed; and
- complete any other check required by law or considered appropriate to the role.

Where an individual will start work in regulated activity before the enhanced DBS certificate is available, the Federation may only use a separate children's barred list check where legally permitted and must put appropriate safeguards and supervision in place. Importantly, where the work is within provision subject to the Early Years Foundation Stage framework, including Reception, an individual must not begin regulated activity until the school has received the enhanced DBS certificate including barred list information.

A barred list check must not be requested for a person who is not engaging in, or seeking to engage in, regulated activity.

Regulated activity and volunteers

The Federation will determine whether a role constitutes regulated activity in accordance with KCSIE 2026 and the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 as amended by the Crime and Policing Act 2026. KCSIE 2026 removes the previous supervision exemption from the regulated activity framework. Volunteers who will be working in regulated activity must have an enhanced DBS check including children's barred list information. The appropriate level of check will be determined by the activity undertaken and the legal eligibility for the check.

Individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK

Individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK will undergo the same checks as other staff. In addition, the Federation will make any further checks it considers appropriate so that relevant events outside the UK can be considered. This may include overseas criminal record checks and, for teaching roles, information from the relevant overseas professional regulating authority.

Where information is unavailable, alternative checks and/or a documented risk assessment will be considered before proceeding.

12. Single Central Record (SCR) and record keeping

The Federation will maintain a Single Central Record in accordance with KCSIE 2026. It will cover all staff, including salaried trainee teachers, and agency and third-party supply staff even where they work for only one day. Checks on volunteers and governors will also be recorded as required or considered appropriate.

For staff, the SCR will record whether the required checks have been carried out or certificates obtained and the date of each check, including identity; standalone children's barred list check where applicable; enhanced DBS check/certificate; prohibition from teaching; further overseas checks; professional qualifications where required; and right to work in the UK. The Federation may also record childcare disqualification information, volunteer and governor checks, safeguarding/safer recruitment training dates, and the name of the person who carried out each check.

For agency and third-party supply staff, the SCR will record whether written confirmation has been received that the supplier has completed the relevant checks and obtained appropriate certificates, the date confirmation was received, and whether enhanced DBS certificate details have been provided where relevant. Individuals will be removed from the SCR when they no longer work at the school.

Copies of documents used to verify identity, right to work and required qualifications will be retained on the personnel file in accordance with applicable requirements. The Federation does not need to retain a copy of a DBS certificate to meet the SCR duty. If a copy is retained, there must be a valid reason and it will not normally be kept for longer than six months, in line with data protection requirements.

13. Agency, third-party and supply staff

Before an agency or third-party worker begins, the Federation will obtain written notification that the supplier has carried out the same checks the school would otherwise perform and has obtained the appropriate certificates. Where the role requires a children's barred list check, the agency must have obtained an enhanced DBS certificate with barred list information before appointment. If an enhanced DBS certificate contains information, the Federation will obtain a copy from the agency as required. On arrival, the school will verify that the person presenting for work is the person on whom the checks were made, and the required SCR information will be recorded.

14. Contractors and self-employed persons

Safeguarding requirements will be included in contracts where appropriate. Contractors engaging in regulated activity will require an enhanced DBS check including children's barred list information. Other contractors with an opportunity for regular contact with children will require the appropriate level of enhanced DBS check without barred list information. A contractor for whom required checks have not been obtained will not be allowed to work unsupervised or engage in regulated activity. Identity will be checked on arrival. For self-employed persons, the Federation will obtain the appropriate DBS check or inspect an eligible certificate and ensure it is at the required level.

15. Trainee teachers, governors, volunteers and visitors

For salaried trainee teachers, the Federation will complete the required pre-appointment checks. For fee-funded trainees, the initial teacher training provider is responsible for the checks and the Federation will obtain written confirmation that they have been completed. Governors and volunteers will be subject to the checks required for their role and activity. Visitors will be managed according to the nature and purpose of their visit, the frequency and opportunity for

contact with children, and KCSIE 2026; visitors will not be given unsupervised access to children unless the required checks and arrangements are in place.

16. Post-appointment induction and ongoing safeguarding

All new staff and volunteers will receive safeguarding and child protection training at induction, including online safety and the expectations, roles and responsibilities relating to filtering and monitoring. Induction will include the Federation's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Behaviour Policy, Staff Code of Conduct/Staff Behaviour Policy, safeguarding response to children who are absent from education, and the role and identity of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and deputies. All staff must be provided with Part one of KCSIE 2026 at induction and must read it in full.

Safer recruitment is part of an ongoing safeguarding culture. The Federation will respond appropriately to concerns or allegations about staff, volunteers, supply staff, contractors and trainee teachers, including low-level concerns, in accordance with KCSIE 2026 and the Federation's safeguarding procedures. Where the legal criteria are met, referrals will be made to the Disclosure and Barring Service and/or Teaching Regulation Agency, and the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) will be consulted where appropriate.

17. Monitoring and review

The Governing Body will monitor implementation of this policy and the effectiveness of safer recruitment arrangements, including the accuracy of the Single Central Record. The policy will be reviewed at least annually and sooner where there are changes to legislation, statutory guidance or local safeguarding procedures.

Key statutory guidance and legislation

- Department for Education, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (September 2026), particularly Part three: Safer recruitment.
- School Staffing (England) Regulations 2009 (as amended).
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (as amended, including by the Crime and Policing Act 2026).
- Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty.
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and Exceptions Order 1975 (as amended).
- Childcare (Disqualification) and Childcare (Early Years Provision Free of Charge) (Extended Entitlement) (Amendment) Regulations 2018.
- Data Protection Act 2018, UK GDPR and Data (Use and Access) Act 2025.