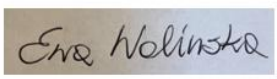
Safer Recruitment Policy

Approved by: **B.Suddhi**		**Date:**	September 2026
Last reviewed on:	September 2026		
Next review due by:	September 2027		

Signed by:



Headteacher Date: September 2026



Chair of governors Date: September 2026

Statement of intent

Pear Tree Infant and Nursery School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. We recognise that safer recruitment is an essential part of creating and maintaining a strong safeguarding culture.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that recruitment and selection processes are fair, consistent, transparent and effective, while taking all reasonable steps to deter, identify and prevent the appointment of individuals who may pose a risk to children.

The school will follow the requirements of current legislation, statutory guidance and Department for Education guidance, particularly *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (KCSIE).

Safer recruitment principles will apply to the appointment of permanent and temporary staff, supply staff, volunteers, contractors, agency workers, trainee teachers and other individuals who may work with or have contact with pupils.

The school will ensure that recruitment decisions are made fairly and without unlawful discrimination and that safeguarding considerations remain central throughout the recruitment process.

1. Legal framework and related guidance

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and guidance, including, but not limited to:

- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Children Act 1989
- Education Act 2002
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Children Act 2004
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Education and Skills Act 2008
- School Staffing (England) Regulations 2009
- Equality Act 2010
- Data Protection Act 2018
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Childcare Act 2006
- Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2009, as amended
- Crime and Policing Act 2026
- relevant DBS legislation and guidance.

The school will have regard to:

- DfE, *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026*
- DfE, *Working Together to Safeguard Children*
- DfE, *Working or volunteering in regulated activity with children*
- DfE, *Staffing and employment advice for schools*
- Home Office, *An employer's guide to right to work checks*
- Disclosure and Barring Service guidance
- Safer Recruitment Consortium guidance
- relevant Teaching Regulation Agency guidance.

The school will review this policy whenever relevant legislation or statutory guidance changes.

This policy should be read alongside:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
- Staff Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Records Management Policy
- Single Central Record arrangements
- DBS Policy
- Work Experience Policy
- Staff ICT and Electronic Devices Policy
- Complaints Procedure
- relevant employment and capability procedures.

2. Scope and definitions

Safer recruitment

Safer recruitment is the process of ensuring that appropriate procedures are followed to deter, identify and prevent unsuitable individuals from being appointed to work with children.

It includes:

- careful planning of recruitment;
- appropriate advertising;
- robust application and shortlisting procedures;
- appropriate references;
- safeguarding-focused interviews;
- appropriate pre-employment checks;
- DBS and barred list checks where required;
- verification of identity, qualifications and right to work;
- appropriate checks for individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK; and
- appropriate recording of checks.

Regulated activity

Regulated activity with children is defined in legislation and DfE/DBS guidance.

The school will determine whether a role involves regulated activity based on the duties undertaken, frequency and circumstances of the work.

From 1 September 2026, the previous supervision exemption has been removed. Consequently, certain activities involving teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervising children may constitute regulated activity even where the individual is supervised by another person, where the relevant frequency or period conditions are met.

The school will assess DBS eligibility for each role rather than assuming that supervision automatically means an individual is outside regulated activity.

Enhanced DBS check

An enhanced DBS check provides information about relevant convictions, cautions and other information held by the police which may be considered relevant for disclosure.

Enhanced DBS check with Children's Barred List information

Where an individual is undertaking regulated activity with children, the school will obtain an enhanced DBS check with Children's Barred List information where legally permitted and required.

Children's Barred List

The Children's Barred List contains information about individuals who are barred from engaging in regulated activity with children.

The school will not knowingly allow an individual who is barred from regulated activity with children to undertake regulated activity.

Section 128 direction

A section 128 direction prevents an individual from taking part in the management of an independent school. The relevant checks will be undertaken where required by law or statutory guidance.

Safer recruitment training

Safer recruitment training provides staff and governors involved in recruitment with the knowledge and skills required to identify and manage safeguarding risks during recruitment and selection.

3. Roles and responsibilities

The governing board

The governing board will:

- ensure that the school operates effective safer recruitment procedures;
- ensure recruitment arrangements comply with relevant legislation and statutory guidance;
- ensure appropriate checks are completed before individuals commence employment where required;
- ensure that at least one person involved in each recruitment panel has completed appropriate safer recruitment training;
- ensure recruitment processes are fair and non-discriminatory;
- appoint an appropriate panel for senior appointments;
- monitor the effectiveness of recruitment arrangements;
- ensure appropriate records are maintained;
- ensure the Single Central Record is maintained appropriately;
- ensure the school has appropriate arrangements for contractors, volunteers, agency workers and other individuals working with pupils;
- ensure appropriate reasonable adjustments are made for candidates where required.

A governor will normally be involved in the appointment of a headteacher in accordance with the relevant staffing arrangements.

The headteacher

The headteacher will:

- have overall responsibility for ensuring safer recruitment procedures are followed;
- ensure appropriate recruitment panels are established;
- ensure at least one panel member has appropriate safer recruitment training;
- ensure appropriate pre-employment checks are completed;
- ensure safeguarding considerations are incorporated into recruitment;

- make or approve recruitment decisions in accordance with the school's delegation arrangements;
- ensure successful candidates receive appropriate safeguarding induction;
- seek HR or legal advice where necessary.

The recruitment panel

The recruitment panel will:

- agree the recruitment process;
- ensure the job description and person specification accurately reflect the role;
- ensure safeguarding responsibilities are included;
- shortlist candidates against agreed criteria;
- ensure the same criteria are applied consistently;
- explore gaps and inconsistencies in applications;
- participate in safeguarding-focused interviews;
- consider references and other recruitment information;
- make an evidence-based recommendation or decision;
- ensure appropriate records are retained.

Where practicable, the same individuals will undertake shortlisting and interviewing.

The appointing officer

The appointing officer (School Business Manager) will coordinate the recruitment process, including:

- advertising;
- issuing application information;
- arranging shortlisting;
- arranging interviews;
- communicating with candidates;
- coordinating references;
- coordinating pre-employment checks;
- maintaining recruitment records.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL will provide safeguarding advice where recruitment information raises safeguarding concerns, including concerns identified through references, disclosures or other due diligence.

The DSL will ensure that safeguarding concerns relating to applicants or existing staff are managed in accordance with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and KCSIE.

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4. Recruitment planning and approval

Before a vacancy is advertised, the school will:

- confirm that the post is required and appropriately funded;

- review the job description and person specification;
- identify the safeguarding responsibilities of the role;
- determine whether the role involves regulated activity;
- determine the appropriate DBS level;
- identify any other pre-employment checks required;
- identify whether a prohibition, restriction or section 128 check is required;
- consider whether the role involves work within the scope of childcare disqualification arrangements;
- determine the recruitment timetable;
- identify the recruitment panel;
- ensure an appropriately trained safer recruitment panel member is available.

Job descriptions and person specifications will clearly identify safeguarding responsibilities where relevant.

5. Advertising and application process

Job advertisements will contain a clear statement that the school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

Advertisements will make clear that:

- the successful candidate will be subject to appropriate pre-employment checks;
- an appropriate DBS check will be required where applicable;
- references will be sought;
- online searches may be undertaken as part of the school's due diligence process;
- the successful candidate will be required to provide evidence of their right to work in the UK;
- the school operates an equal opportunities policy.

The school may advertise vacancies through appropriate channels, including the school website, local authority recruitment services, DfE recruitment services and recognised recruitment platforms.

The school will consider the Equality Act 2010 when advertising and recruiting.

The school will normally require candidates to complete the school's application form. A CV alone will not normally be accepted as a substitute for the application form.

Application forms will require candidates to provide sufficient information to enable the school to assess their suitability, including:

- personal details;
- current and previous employment;
- full employment history;
- explanations for significant gaps in employment;
- relevant qualifications;
- relevant experience;
- referees;
- evidence against the person specification;

- relevant declarations.

Candidates will be reminded that it is an offence for a barred person to seek or undertake regulated activity from which they are barred.

Where relevant, application information will explain that shortlisted candidates may be subject to an online search.

6. Shortlisting

Shortlisting will be undertaken by at least two people wherever practicable.

Candidates will be assessed against the same agreed criteria.

The panel will consider:

- essential and desirable criteria;
- relevant experience;
- employment history;
- gaps in employment;
- inconsistencies in the application;
- reasons for changes in employment;
- safeguarding considerations;
- information provided by the candidate.

Any unexplained gaps, inconsistencies or concerns will be explored with the candidate before an appointment is confirmed.

Only shortlisted candidates will normally be asked to complete the school's criminal record/self-declaration documentation.

The school will provide shortlisted candidates with an opportunity to disclose relevant information where required.

7. Pre-interview checks and online searches

In accordance with KCSIE, the school may conduct an online search of shortlisted candidates as part of its due diligence.

Candidates will be informed in advance that an online search may be undertaken.

The purpose of an online search is to identify publicly available information which may raise safeguarding or suitability concerns and which may need to be explored with the candidate.

Online searches will:

- be undertaken only on shortlisted candidates;
- use publicly available information;
- not involve accessing private accounts;
- not involve sending friend or connection requests;
- be recorded appropriately;
- be conducted consistently;

- be handled in a way that minimises unnecessary discrimination or bias.

Where possible, the online search will be undertaken by someone who is not directly involved in selecting between candidates.

Information identified through an online search will not automatically result in a candidate being rejected. The candidate will normally be given an opportunity to explain relevant information.

The school will distinguish between factual information, allegations, opinion and information which cannot reasonably be verified.

8. References

References will normally be requested for shortlisted candidates.

The school will normally seek at least two references, including, wherever possible, a reference from the candidate's current or most recent employer and, where relevant, an employer through which the candidate worked with children.

References will be requested directly from the referee and, wherever possible, from an appropriate senior person with authority to provide the reference.

References will not normally be accepted from:

- friends;
- family members;
- unverified individuals;
- open testimonials such as "to whom it may concern".

Electronic references will be checked to ensure that they originate from a legitimate source.

Where a candidate has never worked with children, the school will obtain an appropriate reference from their current or most recent employer.

Where appropriate, the school may seek a character reference, particularly where an applicant has limited employment history.

For teaching posts, the school will request information about relevant capability procedures and the reasons for them where required by current statutory guidance and employment arrangements.

References will be checked against the application form and any discrepancies or concerns will be explored.

The school may contact the referee for clarification where information is incomplete, vague or contradictory.

The school will not rely on a reference simply because it has been received. The content will be scrutinised as part of the overall suitability assessment.

9. Providing references

References provided by the school will be factual, accurate and based on information that can reasonably be verified.

References will not contain:

- speculation;
- unsupported allegations;
- personal opinions presented as fact;
- discriminatory information;
- information which is knowingly false or misleading.

Safeguarding information will be provided where the school has a lawful and appropriate basis for doing so and where it is relevant to the prospective employer's assessment of the individual's suitability to work with children.

Where there is uncertainty about whether information should be disclosed, the school will seek appropriate HR or legal advice.

A staff member providing a personal reference will make clear that the reference is personal and is not provided on behalf of the school.

10. Interviews and selection

All candidates will normally be assessed against the same agreed selection criteria.

Interviews will explore:

- the candidate's experience;
- motivation for the role;
- suitability to work with children;
- understanding of safeguarding;
- professional boundaries;
- behaviour management where relevant;
- teamwork and communication;
- relevant knowledge and skills;
- any gaps or inconsistencies identified during recruitment.

Safeguarding questions will be appropriate to the role.

The panel will consider whether candidates demonstrate:

- an understanding of children's vulnerability;
- appropriate professional boundaries;
- a child-centred approach;
- appropriate attitudes towards safeguarding;
- an understanding of the importance of reporting concerns;
- an appropriate understanding of confidentiality and information sharing.

Additional selection activities may be used where appropriate, including:

- presentations;
- written tasks;
- practical tasks;
- teaching or sample lessons;
- role-specific exercises.

Candidates will be assessed consistently and interview notes will be retained securely.

11. Conditional offers and pre-employment checks

All offers of employment will normally be conditional upon satisfactory completion of the checks appropriate to the post.

The school will complete, where applicable:

- verification of identity;
- enhanced DBS check;
- Children's Barred List check where required;
- prohibition from teaching check for teaching posts;
- section 128 check where required;
- right to work check;
- verification of qualifications;
- appropriate overseas checks;
- professional registration checks where applicable;
- childcare disqualification checks where applicable;
- appropriate references;
- any other checks required by law or statutory guidance.

The school will not knowingly allow a person to begin regulated activity where they are barred from undertaking that activity.

Where a person is permitted to begin work before a DBS certificate is available, the school will ensure that all legally required checks have been completed and that appropriate safeguards, including supervision where required, are in place.

Any decision to appoint a candidate where disclosed information raises concerns will be considered on an individual basis and recorded appropriately.

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12. DBS and barred list checks

The level of DBS check required will depend on the duties and eligibility of the post.

The school will assess DBS eligibility in accordance with current DBS and DfE guidance.

From 1 September 2026, the removal of the previous supervision exemption means that the school will review roles involving frequent or qualifying activity with children to determine whether the role constitutes regulated activity.

Where a role involves regulated activity with children, the school will obtain an enhanced DBS check with Children's Barred List information where permitted and required.

A separate Children's Barred List check may be obtained where permitted and required before the DBS certificate is available.

The school will not request a barred list check where the role is not eligible for one.

The school will retain appropriate evidence that DBS and barred list checks have been completed.

DBS certificates will not normally be retained by the school. Where a copy is retained, this will be in accordance with current DBS guidance and the school's Data Protection and Records Management Policies.

The school will consider disclosed information fairly and individually, taking account of relevant factors including:

- the nature of the offence;
- relevance to the role;
- seriousness;
- how long ago the matter occurred;
- circumstances;
- whether it represents a pattern;
- any evidence of rehabilitation;
- the safeguarding responsibilities of the post.

13. Right to work and identity checks

The school will ensure that all employees have the right to work in the UK before employment commences.

Right-to-work checks will be carried out consistently for all candidates and will not be based on assumptions about nationality, ethnicity, race or appearance.

The school may use:

- the Home Office online right-to-work checking service;
- a prescribed manual document check;
- an approved digital verification service where permitted.

The school will follow the current Home Office employer guidance when completing right-to-work checks. **The guidance was updated on 11 September 2026.**

Where a manual check is undertaken, the school will:

1. obtain the required original documents;
2. check that the documents are genuine and relate to the person presenting them;
3. check photographs and relevant information;
4. make and retain the required copy;
5. record the date on which the check was undertaken.

Where a right to work is time limited, the school will conduct a follow-up check as required.

The school will maintain records of right-to-work checks securely for the required period.

14. Overseas checks and professional qualifications

Where a candidate has lived or worked outside the UK, the school will undertake any further checks considered appropriate and proportionate to the role.

The school will follow current KCSIE and DfE guidance when determining what checks are required.

Depending on the role, this may include:

- overseas criminal record information;
- confirmation of professional conduct;
- confirmation of teaching qualifications;
- checks with overseas professional regulatory bodies;
- verification of employment history.

The absence of a directly equivalent overseas criminal record check will not automatically prevent appointment. The school will assess the available evidence and consider any alternative checks that may reasonably be obtained.

For teaching posts, the school will complete the required prohibition from teaching and other professional checks.

15. Volunteers, contractors, agency workers and trainees

Volunteers

The school will determine the appropriate checks for volunteers based on the activities they undertake, the frequency of their involvement and whether the activity constitutes regulated activity.

Following the changes that came into force on 1 September 2026, the school will not assume that a supervised volunteer is automatically outside regulated activity. The relevant duties and frequency/period conditions will be assessed for each arrangement.

The school will complete a written risk assessment where appropriate.

Volunteers will not be permitted to undertake regulated activity until the required checks have been completed.

Contractors

The school will ensure that appropriate safeguarding requirements are included in contracts with contractors.

Contractors whose duties require DBS checks will be subject to the appropriate level of checking.

Contractors will not be permitted to undertake regulated activity where the required checks have not been completed.

The identity of contractors and their staff will be verified when they attend the school.

Agency and supply staff

Before agency or supply staff commence work, the school will obtain written confirmation from the supplying organisation that the appropriate checks have been completed.

The school will also verify the identity of the individual supplied.

Where required, the school will obtain confirmation of the relevant DBS check and any other statutory checks.

Trainee teachers

For salaried trainee teachers, the employing school is responsible for ensuring the required DBS and other checks are completed.

For fee-funded trainee teachers, the school will obtain confirmation from the training provider that the required checks have been completed.

16. Governors and management checks

Governors will be subject to the checks required by current legislation and KCSIE.

Governance itself is not regulated activity with children. However, where a governor also undertakes activities which constitute regulated activity, the appropriate DBS and barred list checks will be completed.

Where required, section 128 checks will be undertaken for individuals in relevant management positions.

Associate members will be subject to appropriate checks based on their role and responsibilities.

17. Single Central Record

The school will maintain an up-to-date Single Central Record (SCR).

The SCR will record the required recruitment checks for:

- all staff;
- supply staff;
- trainee teachers where applicable;
- other individuals who work in regular contact with children where required;
- volunteers where the relevant checks are undertaken.

The SCR will record the required checks and the date each check was completed or certificate obtained.

The school will ensure that the SCR includes the checks required by current KCSIE, including, where applicable:

- identity;
- enhanced DBS;
- Children's Barred List;
- prohibition from teaching;
- right to work;
- professional qualifications;
- relevant overseas checks;
- section 128 checks where applicable.

For agency and supply staff, the SCR will record the appropriate written confirmation received from the supplying organisation.

The SCR will be reviewed regularly and discrepancies will be addressed promptly.

Individual records will be removed from the SCR when the individual no longer works at the school, in accordance with current KCSIE requirements.

18. Recruitment records, confidentiality and data protection

All recruitment information will be handled securely and confidentially.

The school will comply with the UK GDPR, Data Protection Act 2018, Data Protection Policy and Records Management Policy.

Recruitment information will only be accessed by individuals who have a legitimate need to access it.

The school will retain recruitment records for the appropriate period in accordance with its Records Management Policy.

Information obtained during recruitment will not be disclosed unnecessarily.

Interview notes, shortlisting records, references and other recruitment documents will be stored securely.

The school will ensure that information concerning criminal convictions, safeguarding concerns and other sensitive information is handled in accordance with data protection law.

19. Safer recruitment training

At least one member of each recruitment panel will have completed appropriate safer recruitment training.

The school will maintain a record of safer recruitment training undertaken by relevant staff and governors.

The school will provide refresher training at appropriate intervals, taking account of changes to statutory guidance and local authority/HR advice.

Staff involved in recruitment will be expected to understand:

- safer recruitment principles;
- the recruitment and selection process;
- DBS eligibility;
- regulated activity;
- pre-employment checks;
- references;
- online searches;
- safeguarding considerations;
- equality and non-discrimination;
- data protection;
- relevant reporting and referral duties.

20. Safeguarding considerations

Safeguarding is a central consideration throughout recruitment.

The school will remain alert to information which may indicate that a candidate is unsuitable to work with children.

Concerns may include:

- inappropriate attitudes towards children;
- poor understanding of professional boundaries;
- inappropriate language or behaviour;
- lack of understanding of children's vulnerability;
- inappropriate attitudes towards safeguarding;
- unexplained gaps in employment;
- contradictory information;
- concerns raised by referees;
- relevant information identified through online searches;
- disclosures made during the recruitment process.

The presence of a concern will not automatically determine the outcome of recruitment. The school will consider relevant information fairly, objectively and proportionately.

Where safeguarding information is disclosed, the DSL and/or headteacher will be consulted as appropriate.

Where a safeguarding allegation relating to a previous employee is relevant to a reference, the school will provide accurate, factual information where there is a lawful and appropriate basis for doing so.

The school will never knowingly provide a misleading reference.

Any safeguarding allegation concerning an existing member of staff will be managed in accordance with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and current KCSIE.

21. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the governing board and headteacher, or sooner where there are significant changes to legislation, statutory guidance or school procedures.

The next scheduled review date is **September 2027**.

The school will monitor the effectiveness of its safer recruitment arrangements through:

- regular review of the SCR;
- recruitment file checks;
- monitoring of safer recruitment training;
- review of recruitment procedures;
- consideration of safeguarding incidents or concerns;
- feedback from recruitment panels;
- updates from the local authority, DfE, DBS and other relevant bodies.

All staff involved in recruitment will be expected to familiarise themselves with this policy and any associated procedures.

Appendix 1 – DBS and barred list checking

The school will determine the appropriate DBS check by considering:

1. What will the individual actually do?

- Teaching or training children?
- Caring for or supervising children?
- Providing personal care?
- Working with children frequently?
- Working overnight?
- Working in another role with children?

2. Does the activity meet the legal definition of regulated activity?

The school will consider the frequency and circumstances of the work and the removal of the former supervision exemption from 1 September 2026.

3. What level of DBS check is legally available and required?

The school will request only the level of check for which the individual is legally eligible.

4. Is a Children's Barred List check required?

Where the individual will undertake regulated activity with children, the school will obtain the appropriate barred list information.

5. Has the individual previously been checked?

Previous DBS checks may be considered where relevant, but the school will determine whether a new check is required in accordance with current guidance and the circumstances of the appointment.

6. Can the individual safely commence work?

The school will not permit an individual to undertake regulated activity where the required checks have not been completed, unless an arrangement expressly permitted by current legislation and guidance applies and appropriate safeguards are in place.

The school will keep the DBS eligibility decision and completed checks appropriately recorded.