



ANDOVERSFORD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy

Date Ratified: 27.02.2023

Signed on Behalf of the Governing Body:

S. Hewlett
Chair of Governors

Date for Review: February 2025



ANDOVERSFORD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy

Schools undertake not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a Disclosure on the basis of conviction or other information revealed. Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar someone from working in a school. Criminal records will be taken into account for recruitment purposes only when the conviction is relevant. For the purposes of this policy, working in the school also includes voluntary and governor roles.

All applicants who are offered employment in a school will be subject to a criminal record check from the Disclosure and Barring Service before an appointment is confirmed. This will include details of cautions, reprimands and warnings as well as spent and unspent convictions. An enhanced DBS (check) may also contain non conviction information from local police records which a chief police officer thinks may be relevant.

Any DBS return or self-declaration that contains information (caution, reprimand, conviction, soft information) will be referred to Gloucestershire County Council DBS Panel for consideration.

When reaching a recruitment decision GCC DBS Panel will take the following factors into account:

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

There are, however, particular offences that would automatically prevent an offer of employment in a school being confirmed. These include:

- Rape
- Incest
- Unlawful sexual intercourse
- Indecent assault
- Gross indecency
- Taking or distributing indecent photographs

Other offences which make it unlikely (although not automatic) for an offer of employment in a school to be confirmed include the following:

- Violent behaviour towards children or young people
- A sexual, or otherwise inappropriate relationship with a pupil (regardless of whether the pupil is over the legal age of consent)
- A sexual offence against someone over the age of 16
- Any offence involving serious violence
- Drug trafficking and other drug related offences
- Stealing school property or monies
- Deception in relation to employment as a teacher or at a school, for example false claims about qualifications, or failure to disclose past convictions
- Any conviction which results in a sentence of more than 12 months' imprisonment
- Repeated misconduct or multiple convictions unless of a very minor nature.

If appropriate, applicants will be invited to discuss disclosure information before a final recruitment decision is made.

The Rehabilitation Offenders Act

The Rehabilitation Offenders Act 1974 is aimed at helping people who have been convicted of a criminal offence and have not-re-offended since.

The Act applies to anyone who has been convicted of a criminal offence and received a sentence of less than two and half years and has not been convicted of an offence during the rehabilitation period.

The rehabilitation period is the specified period after the original conviction. The length of time depends on the sentence the individual was originally given for the offence and runs from the date of the conviction.

If the individual does not re-offend during the rehabilitation period, their conviction is considered to be 'spent'. Custodial sentences over two and a half years are not considered to be spent and always have to be revealed.

Once a conviction is spent, it remains spent and an applicant is not required to reveal it to an employer, even if convicted of a further offence later. However, there is an exemption to this which relates to posts involving working with vulnerable groups including children.

All school based jobs are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act as the work brings employees into contact with children who are regarded by the Act as a vulnerable group. Applicants for school based jobs must, therefore, disclose all spent and unspent convictions.

Spent Convictions

The table below details when convictions become 'spent':

Sentence	Age 18 or over when found guilty	Age 17 or under when found guilty
Prison and young offenders' institution – sentence of 6 months or less	7 years	3 years and 6 months
Prison and young offenders' institution – sentence of more than 6 months and less than 2 year and six months	10 years	5 years
Fines, compensation order, probation (people convicted on or after 3 February 1995), community service, combination order, action plan, curfew, drug treatment, reparation order	5 years	2 years and 6 months
Absolute discharge	6 months	6 months

Further offences during rehabilitation period

If a rehabilitation period is still running and a further minor offence is committed then the individual only needs to reveal convictions that are unspent. A minor offence will be tried in a magistrate's court.

If the further offence is one that is tried in the Crown Court, then neither conviction, even if the first one is minor, will become spent until the rehabilitation periods for both offences are over. If the further conviction leads to a custodial sentence of over two and a half years, neither conviction will become spent.

Working with vulnerable groups including adults

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 overrules the employment rights that ex-offenders would have when employed in certain exempted occupations. The Exceptions Order 2013 amends the Exceptions Order 1975 by removing most "protected convictions" and "protected cautions" from the exceptions to rehabilitation under the ROA 1974.

With limited exceptions, protected convictions and protected cautions will not be required to be disclosed in a DBS certificate and employers will not be legally entitled to ask questions about such convictions or cautions or to rely on them to refuse employment or to dismiss an employee.

Protected convictions

A conviction is a "protected conviction" if:

- It does not relate to a "listed offence", such as violent and sexual offences
- No custodial sentence was imposed
- The individual has no other convictions. Where the individual has more than one conviction, all convictions will be included on the certificate
- It was received by a person aged under 18 at the time of the conviction and five and a half years or more have elapsed
- It was received by a person aged 18 or over at the time of the conviction and 11 years or more have elapsed.

Protected cautions

A caution is a "protected caution" if:

- It does not relate to a listed offence
- It was given to a person aged under 18 at the time of the caution and two years or more have elapsed
- It was given to a person aged 18 or over at the time of the caution and six years or more have elapsed.

During the Interview

As part of the interview paperwork the recruiting panel will have the application form which indicates if the candidate has unspent convictions.

The interview panel will interview with an open mind and focus on the ability and merit of the candidate to do the job but should be prepared to discuss convictions revealed with the candidate to be able to make an objective recruitment decision.

The panel will make the best use of the interview to discuss the nature of convictions with the candidate if they have disclosed a criminal record. This information is essential to any risk assessment.

If the candidate is successful:

- Ensure they understand the content of this document and not discuss spent protected convictions or cautions as detailed in section 2.0 of this document
- Ensure that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matter that might be relevant to the position
- Advise the candidate that all information is dealt with in the strictest confidence
- Not to share any information revealed with anyone who is not entitled to see it

- Advise the candidate that failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment
- Respect the right of candidate to conceal any convictions that are spent unless they are applying for a job that is subject to a DBS check
- Explain to the candidate that, where the job applied for is subject to a DBS check, that they are required to disclose all unspent criminal convictions and cautions unless they are 'protected' as detailed above
- Explain the DBS Panel process for unclear disclosures

Risk assessments

Assessing the risk of employing a person with a criminal record means comparing an applicant's skills, experience and conviction circumstances against risk criteria that have been identified for the job. For example, some violence offences would be relevant to positions involving unsupervised contact with the public. But it is also important to remember that no two offences are exactly alike.

In assessing for risk, a number of factors need to be taken into account as follows:

Issues	Reasons
Exemption status under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 Duties under the Police and Children's Acts regarding one-to-one contact with children, vulnerable adults or the elderly Requirements of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006	It is illegal to employ certain offenders in some occupations
To what extent is the school bound by other legal constraints?	For example, those with motoring convictions employed as drivers
Does the post involve and direct responsibility for finance or items of value? Does the post involve any direct responsibility for finance or items of value? Will the nature of the job present any realistic opportunities for the post holder to re-offend in the place of work?	What could happen and how serious would that be? What factors would increase or decrease the perceived risk? For example, the nature of the offence and impact of rehabilitation since then. Consider whether the offence would create unacceptable risks for other employees, customers, suppliers, clients, service users, etc.

The school will also consider:

- The level and closeness of supervision that might be needed early on in the employment
- The extent to which procedures, such as audits or the involvement of others in the work process, would be a form of indirect supervision
- Whether any training or briefing would be useful to enable the school to manage the post-holder in the work context
- What precautions already exist in the organisation or could be put in place? Consider direct or indirect supervision, progress reviews involving the ex-offender, etc.