



Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Guidance for Candidates

1. Purpose of this document

This DBS Guidance for Candidates explains what Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks are, why they are required, and what Synergy Education Trust expects from applicants and employees. It is designed to help candidates understand the process clearly and transparently, and should be read alongside the Trust's Recruitment Policy and current national guidance.

Synergy Education Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. All staff and volunteers are expected to share this commitment.

2. Why DBS checks are required

Most roles within Synergy Education Trust involve working with children or are positions of trust. To meet our safeguarding duties, the Trust is legally required to carry out appropriate pre-employment checks, including DBS checks, in line with:

- *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (current edition)
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions Order)
- The DBS Code of Practice

Having a criminal record does **not** automatically prevent employment. All disclosures are considered fairly, proportionately, and in line with safer recruitment principles.

3. Types of DBS checks used by the Trust

Depending on the role, the Trust will request one of the following:

- **Enhanced DBS Check**
- **Enhanced DBS Check with Children's Barred List** (for roles in regulated activity)

The level of check is determined by the duties of the role and national eligibility guidance. Most roles in schools are classed as *regulated activity* and therefore require an enhanced DBS with a barred list check.

4. Regulated activity – what this means

A role is considered to be *regulated activity* if it involves:

- Teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervising children on a regular basis
- Working regularly in a school where there is opportunity for contact with children
- Providing personal or intimate care, or overnight supervision

It is a criminal offence to apply for, or undertake, regulated activity if you are barred from working with children



5. Self-disclosure by candidates

Where a role is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act, candidates are required to disclose **relevant, unfiltered** convictions, cautions, reprimands or final warnings as part of the recruitment process.

You do **not** need to disclose convictions or cautions that are legally filtered or protected.

Failure to disclose relevant information may result in:

- Withdrawal of a conditional offer
- Disciplinary action or dismissal (if employed)

All information will be treated sensitively and confidentially.

6. Filtering of convictions and cautions

Certain spent convictions and cautions are considered *protected* and will not appear on a DBS certificate. These cannot be taken into account by employers.

Filtering depends on factors such as:

- Time elapsed since the offence
- The age of the individual at the time of the offence
- The type of offence
- Whether there is more than one conviction

Further information is available from GOV.UK via the DBS filtering guidance.

7. Equality, fairness and inclusion

Synergy Education Trust:

- Complies fully with the DBS Code of Practice
- Does not unfairly discriminate against applicants based on criminal history
- Assesses suitability based on the role, the nature of any offences, and safeguarding risk
- Promotes equality of opportunity in line with the Equality Act 2010

Shortlisting and selection decisions are based on skills, experience and suitability for the role.

8. How disclosed information is assessed

Where criminal record information is revealed, the Trust follows a structured and proportionate process. Information may be referred to an appropriate DBS or safeguarding panel for consideration.

Factors considered include:

- The nature, seriousness and relevance of the offence
- When the offence occurred
- The age of the individual at the time



- Any pattern of offending behaviour
- Evidence of change or mitigation
- Relevance to safeguarding children
- Whether the information was disclosed openly

You will always be given an opportunity to discuss disclosed information before a final decision is made.

9. DBS application process

If offered a role (subject to checks):

1. The Trust will guide you through the online DBS application process
2. You must provide appropriate identity documentation
3. You will receive your DBS certificate directly
4. You must present the original certificate to the school or Trust for verification

A role cannot be confirmed until DBS and all other required checks are satisfactorily completed.

10. The DBS Update Service

You may choose to subscribe to the DBS Update Service (free for volunteers, annual fee for employees). This allows DBS status checks to be carried out without applying for a new certificate each time, where eligible.

The Trust will still:

- Verify your identity
- Check the certificate is at the correct level and workforce
- Carry out a status check with your consent

The Trust may still require a new DBS in some circumstances.

11. Storage, handling and confidentiality

The Trust handles all DBS information in line with:

- The DBS Code of Practice
- UK GDPR and data protection legislation

Key principles:

- Information is stored securely
- Access is restricted to authorised staff only
- DBS certificate information is retained only as long as necessary (normally up to six months)
- Certificates are destroyed securely and never photocopied



12. Overseas criminal record checks

If you have lived or worked outside the UK, you may be required to provide an overseas criminal record check (sometimes called a Certificate of Good Conduct), in addition to a DBS check.

HR will advise you if this applies to your circumstances.

13. Ongoing responsibility of employees

All employees have a continuing duty to inform their line manager or HR immediately if:

- They are arrested, cautioned, charged or convicted of a criminal offence
- There is any change that may affect their suitability to work with children

Relevant matters will be assessed in line with safeguarding and disciplinary procedures.

14. Further information and support

If you have questions about DBS checks or this guidance, you can contact the Trust's HR team for confidential advice.

Further information:

- Disclosure and Barring Service: <https://www.gov.uk/dbs>
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE)

This guidance reflects Synergy Education Trust's Recruitment Policy and current national safeguarding and DBS guidance. It will be reviewed regularly to ensure legal and regulatory compliance.