



Shrewsbury School

DISCLOSURE AND BARRING SERVICE (DBS) POLICY & PROCEDURE

POLICY STATEMENT

The safety of children and young people is paramount, and Shrewsbury School is committed to implementing the Disclosure and Barring (DBS) procedures and arrangements. We will comply with the DBS Code of Practice and National Care Standards guidance regarding the correct handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of Certificates.

The DBS (formerly the CRB Agency) was set up by the Home Office to improve access to criminal record checks for employment related purposes and to help organisations make safer recruitment decisions; this applies to staff with access to children under 18 years of age, vulnerable adults or other positions of trust that fall within the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. The DBS and the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) both became part of the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) in December 2012.

The DBS Code of Practice requires the school to have a written policy and procedure on the recruitment of people with a criminal record¹ and to ensure anyone applying for a job at the school receives a copy. The School is committed to the principle of equal opportunities and, subject to the overriding consideration of protecting children, we will endeavour to prevent unfair discrimination against those with a criminal record.

This policy applies to the appointment of all employees, paid and unpaid, including volunteers, supply staff and peripatetic staff. It is designed to assist in ensuring that all persons working at Shrewsbury School are trustworthy and reliable and are not subject to any offences, which are a risk to our pupils.

This policy is designed to supplement the School's Safer Recruitment Policy and Procedure.

¹ A criminal record is a record of a person's convictions, whether spent or unspent, under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, cautions, reprimands, final warnings and other non-conviction information such as acquittals.

PROCEDURE

Disclosure and Barring Scheme and Background

The original Vetting and Barring Scheme was introduced in 2009. The Scheme was one of the recommendations made by the Bichard Report into the Soham murders and was implemented by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006. There were originally two bodies involved in the Scheme; The Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) – responsible for making all barring decisions relating to individuals and for the upkeep of the lists of barred individuals. The Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) – a processing function relating to the barred list and the online police database.

In 2010 the Government commenced a review of the Scheme and changes were implemented in the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012. From December 2012 the ISA and CRB merged to form the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). Many parts of this Scheme remain unchanged, in particular it is a criminal offence:-

- for an employer to knowingly employ (either on a paid or voluntary basis) a barred person in Regulated Activity.
- to allow someone to work in Regulated Activity without carrying out the required checks. Where a person is removed from Regulated Activity by an employer because the person has caused harm to a child or a vulnerable adult, the ISA must be notified.

Regulated Activity

Any position undertaken at, or on behalf of the School, will amount to "regulated activity" if it is carried out:

- frequently, meaning once a week or more; or
- overnight, meaning between 2.00 am and 6.00 am; or
- satisfies the "period condition", meaning four times or more in a 30 day period; and
- provides the opportunity for contact with children.

Roles which are carried out on an unpaid / voluntary basis will only amount to regulated activity if, in addition to the above, they are carried out on an unsupervised basis.

The School is not permitted to check the Children's Barred List unless an individual will be engaging in "regulated activity". The School is required to carry out an enhanced DBS check for all staff, supply staff and governors who will be engaging in regulated activity. However, the School can also carry out an enhanced DBS check on a person who would be carrying out regulated activity but for the fact that they do not carry out their duties frequently enough i.e. roles which would amount to regulated activity if carried out more frequently

Enhanced Certificates

All Shrewsbury School DBS Certificates will be at an Enhanced level. This involves an extra level of check with local police force records in addition to checks with the Police National Computer and the government department lists held by the Department for Children, Schools and Families and Department of Health, where appropriate. The government's safer recruitment initiative stipulates that all staff in an educational establishment must have an enhanced Certificate.

DBS Update Service

The online DBS Update Service allows:

- Applicants to keep their DBS certificates up-to-date
- Employers to do an instance DBS check against a DBS certificate previously issued.

When the applicant initially applies for a DBS check they can register to use the Update Service with a registration cost of £13 per year. There is no charge if the applicant is a volunteer.

The DBS tracking service can be used to check the progress of the DBS certificate.

Where an applicant subscribes to the DBS Update Service the applicant must give consent to the school to check there have not been changes since the issue of a disclosure certificate.

To check a DBS Certificate on the Update Service, the original DBS Certificate must be provided before the online check is completed. The School will obtain the applicant's permission in the first instance. The School can then see the results from the check straight away.

Recruitment of staff

Job applicants will be asked to state any convictions on their application form. Those invited to attend an interview will be advised in writing that relevant criminal convictions will be discussed to assess job-related risks. Applicants are encouraged to submit written details, dates and any other relevant information, in confidence, to the Head of Human Resources, who will ensure the security of this sensitive information.

To speed up the recruitment process, applicants invited to attend an interview will be asked to complete a DBS form and requested to bring the relevant ID with them to be verified by the School.

The School will apply for a DBS Certificate only for applicants offered a position. The information obtained will be used to help establish whether that person has a background that might make him/her unsuitable for the job or voluntary position in question. The School will not apply to the DBS Certificate to run a check without the knowledge and consent of the person concerned. The forms of unsuccessful applicants will be destroyed after a period of six months.

If a DBS Certificate reveals any convictions the school will follow a fair process. Please see Recruitment of Ex-offenders' policy and procedure.

Staff recruited from abroad

All new employees where persons have lived outside the UK are subject to additional checks in accordance with Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006. The School, in accordance with the UK Border Agency Code of Practice, will, if applicable, sponsor all new foreign members of staff (see Certificate of Sponsorship section).

Overseas checks

Applicants who have lived/travelled abroad for more than 3 continuous months will need to obtain a criminal record check from the relevant country. The applicant will not be permitted to commence work until the overseas information has been received and is considered satisfactory by the School.

Renewal of DBS Certificates

The DBS Certificate does not recommend a specific renewal interval for DBS checks. However, following the National Care Standards' recommendation, it is the School's policy to renew all DBS Certificates every three years.

Prohibition Order

Prohibition Order means that the person concerned is not allowed to undertake unsupervised teaching work in schools. Where an individual is prohibited, their name and details will appear on the Prohibited List. A Prohibition Order is a lifetime ban.

As part of the Safeguarding Checks, and in addition to the DBS Certificate, a check will be undertaken on all applicants that have been teaching profession against the Prohibited List.

Storage and access

DBS Certificate information will be kept in a locked cabinet with access strictly limited to those who are entitled to see it as part of their duties. It is a criminal offence to pass this information to anyone who is not entitled to receive it.

Usage

Certificate information is used only for the specific purpose for which it was requested and for which the applicant's full consent has been given.

Retention

Once a recruitment (or other relevant) decision has been made, we retain DBS Certificate information generally for a period of up to six months. This is to allow time to consider and resolve any disputes or complaints. If, in exceptional circumstances, it is considered necessary to keep the information for longer, we will consult the DBS, taking data protection and human rights issues into consideration.

Disposal

Once the retention period has elapsed, any Certificate information will be destroyed by secure means, ie by shredding, pulping or burning. We will not keep a copy of the Certificate or record its contents. We may, however, keep a record of the date of issue of a Certificate, the name of the subject, the type of Certificate requested, the position for which it was requested, the unique reference number of the Certificate and the details of the recruitment decision taken.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. How long does it take to receive my DBS Certificate?

We will send you an application form to complete; meet you to check your form and verify your identity. On average the process can take 3-4 weeks (but may take longer if you have lived at various addresses).

2. What do I receive from the DBS?

You will receive a certificate from the DBS stating whether or not you have a police record and, where appropriate, will confirm that your details have been checked against the list of those banned from working with vulnerable adults or children. In order for the school to verify the DBS Certificate you must contact the Human Resources Department for them to take a copy.

3. Is my DBS certificate portable?

Yes, if you register with the DBS Update Service. Further details can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/dbs-update-service>

4. What happens if I have a previous conviction(s)?

Having a criminal record will not necessarily stop you from working at Shrewsbury School. This will depend on the nature of your work, the circumstances and background of the offence(s) and the time elapsed. Please read our policy and procedure on Recruitment of Ex-offenders'.

5. What happens if I have a criminal conviction during employment?

It is important, if you have a criminal conviction, that you disclose this information either to the Bursar or the Headmaster as soon as possible. You will be asked to attend an interview to explain the background and circumstances regarding the conviction. Failure to reveal information directly relevant your role may lead to disciplinary action.

6. Who will know about my criminal record?

If a criminal record is revealed through a DBS check, the Bursar, Headmaster and Head of Human Resources will know the details of the convictions, and any agencies with which the School is obliged to share that information (ie if you have applied to work with children when banned from doing so).

7. The information on my Certificate is wrong – what can I do?

If you think that any information contained on your Certificate is wrong, please contact the DBS Certificate Dispute line on 0870 9090 778 who will advise on their dispute procedures.

8. Can I refuse to apply for a Certificate?

It is compulsory to check your details against the list of people banned from working with children. Shrewsbury School is obliged to insist on DBS Certificate from applicants and members of staff.

9. How long are Certificates valid?

A Certificate carries no period of validity. The information it contains reflects the position at the date of its issue. The closer this date, the more reliance can be placed on its content. Shrewsbury School has a policy of renewals every three years.

10. Do all parent helpers and volunteers need to obtain a Certificate?

This depends on the level of contact and Regulated Activity or the possibility that helpers may be alone with or have some responsibility for pupils. The School will use its discretion about whether or not it is needed.

11. Do applicants from overseas need to be checked?

Yes. Overseas applicant will be treated the same as any new employee. In addition, any member of staff that has lived/worked abroad will need to obtain the relevant police check from the country they lived/worked in before they commence employment.

12. How long does a teacher newly arrived from overseas need to live in the country before a Check is carried out?

If the teacher has lived in this country previously, a Check against the Barred List can be done immediately. Those who have not lived here previously should contact their embassy to seek a letter of good conduct and a police check from the Country.

13. Can I start my employment before my DBS arrives?

No. Under the School's Safer Recruitment policy all staff must have a DBS Certificate in place before commencing work.