

Recruitment of Ex-Offenders policy

Document owner	Director / Designated Safeguarding Lead
Version	2.0
Effective date	25 th September 2026
Review date	September 2027, or sooner if law, statutory guidance, REC criteria or client requirements change
Status	Controlled policy; available to candidates at the outset of recruitment and to clients on request

Policy statement

Unique School Solutions Ltd (USS) welcomes applications from people with the skills, experience and suitability to work in education, including people with criminal records. We treat applicants fairly and do not automatically refuse registration or placement because of a conviction, caution or other lawfully disclosed information. The safety and welfare of children remain paramount. A legal bar, prohibition or applicable disqualification will prevent work to which it applies.

1. Purpose and scope

This policy explains how USS seeks, considers and protects criminal-record information for work-seekers applying for temporary or permanent roles in schools, nurseries, colleges and other education settings. It applies to declarations, DBS certificates and Update Service information, relevant overseas evidence, and new information received during registration or assignment. It should be read with the Recruitment, Selection and Vetting Policy, safeguarding procedures, Privacy Notice and DBS information-handling arrangements.

The Director / Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) oversees complex suitability decisions. Recruitment and compliance staff must escalate disclosures, discrepancies and safeguarding concerns; only authorised personnel may access the detail.

2. Information for applicants

USS makes this policy available at the start of recruitment, tells applicants in advance when the role requires a DBS check and explains the possible effect of relevant criminal-record information on selection. Our application form gives access to the official DBS filtering guidance and asks for confidential disclosure

separately from the main form. Applicants may discuss a declaration confidentially with USS before completing it.

Selection for interview is based on role-related skills, qualifications, experience and safeguarding suitability. A disclosed record does not by itself prevent interview, registration or placement.

3. Lawful questions and DBS checks

USS asks only about information it is legally entitled to consider for the particular role. For an eligible exempt role, the application form asks about unspent conditional cautions or convictions, and adult cautions or spent convictions that are not protected under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975, as amended. Applicants must not disclose protected cautions or convictions.

USS will not take protected information into account if it is volunteered. For a role outside the relevant exception, spent matters will not be requested. USS establishes the lawful DBS level from the actual duties and checks eligibility before requesting a Standard or Enhanced certificate or barred-list information. A children's barred-list check is sought only where the law permits it; an Enhanced DBS check with children's barred-list information is required for eligible regulated activity. Applicants are informed where a new DBS application is needed or an appropriate existing certificate and Update Service check can be used. Identity, workforce, level, barred-list eligibility and consent are checked under the Recruitment, Selection and Vetting Policy.

4. Confidential discussion and individual assessment

When an applicant declares information, a certificate contains information, or another relevant concern arises, an authorised decision-maker invites the applicant to discuss it privately and to provide an explanation or supporting evidence. Any certificate content will be discussed before USS withdraws a conditional offer or decides not to proceed on that basis. USS allows the applicant to identify inaccuracies and considers available routes for challenging incorrect DBS information.

A documented, role-specific assessment considers the nature and seriousness of the matter; relevance to children and to the proposed duties; the person's age at the time and time elapsed; whether there is a pattern; circumstances and the applicant's account; evidence of subsequent conduct or rehabilitation; references and other safeguarding information; the level of access, supervision and responsibility; and whether practical safeguards can manage any remaining risk. A failure to declare information that USS was legally entitled to request is considered in context; protected information is never treated as a failure to disclose. Decisions are reasoned, proportionate and made by a person, not solely by an automated process.

5. Decision, client involvement and legal restrictions

The Director / DSL records the evidence considered, the discussion, assessment, decision-maker, outcome and any conditions or review date. Outcomes may include approval for the proposed work, approval subject to role-specific conditions, a pause pending further evidence, or refusal of the proposed work. The candidate is told the outcome and may provide further relevant evidence or raise a concern.

Where a DBS certificate contains information relevant to a proposed placement, USS securely provides the relevant information to the school or setting and obtains its recorded acceptance before placement, in line with the Recruitment, Selection and Vetting Policy. Sharing is limited to what is lawful and necessary for an informed safeguarding decision; USS does not promise absolute confidentiality where a lawful safeguarding disclosure is required. A person barred from regulated activity with children will not be supplied to that activity. Any applicable teaching prohibition, restriction or childcare disqualification is handled under the relevant vetting and safeguarding procedures.

6. Changes after registration

Work-seekers must promptly report relevant new arrests, investigations, charges, cautions, convictions, safeguarding allegations, professional restrictions or other changes affecting suitability, as explained in the application form and terms. USS assesses new information promptly, may pause availability or an assignment while checks are completed, and informs a client where necessary for safeguarding. Referral duties to the DBS, local authority designated officer, police, Teaching Regulation Agency or other body are considered under the safeguarding policy.

7. Confidentiality and records

Criminal-offence information is processed lawfully, securely and only for necessary recruitment, safeguarding and compliance purposes. Access is restricted to staff with a legitimate need. USS records the certificate check and a proportionate decision and assessment and handles any certificate copy according to the DBS Code of Practice, its Privacy Notice, data protection policy and retention schedule. Certificate information is not circulated or retained longer than necessary. Candidates may ask about how their information is used and exercise applicable data protection rights.

8. Training, monitoring and review

Staff who assess disclosures receive relevant guidance on DBS eligibility, filtering, fair assessment, safeguarding, confidentiality and escalation. The Director / DSL reviews relevant file records and any

complaints or incidents to check consistent use. This policy is reviewed at least annually and sooner following changes to law, statutory guidance, DBS rules, REC criteria or USS practice

Related Guidance

Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and Exceptions Order 1975 (as amended); DBS Code of Practice for Registered Persons (2015); DBS recruitment of ex-offenders guidance and filtering guidance; Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026; USS Recruitment, Selection and Vetting Policy; USS Privacy Notice and safeguarding procedures.