

DOCUMENT DETAILS

Document Name:	DBS and Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy		
Approval body:	Safeguarding Committee		
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Document author	Senior People Services and Projects Manager		
Document owner	Director of People and Culture		
Applicability	Students		Staff X
	Governors		Other X
Summary	The purpose of this document is to set out the policy on DBS and overseas police background checking and recruitment of ex-offenders.		

DOCUMENT CONSULTATION & APPROVAL

Consultation person / body	Date passed
None	

Approval body	Date approved
Safeguarding committee	March 2026

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

A significant negative impact has been identified in the following area and a full impact assessment / risk assessment is available.

Equality & diversity	No
GDPR	No
Health & safety	No
Safeguarding	No

Friendly version of policy available	No
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POLICY CHANGES

Key updates	Impact	Section reference
Storage and access updated to include personal files and online single central record	None	6
Retention updated to include keeping disclosure information throughout employment period and up to 6 months following	None	9
Updated convictions section to include whether convictions disclosed at application at decision making, and the introduction of yearly disclosure of changes to convictions by all employed colleagues	None	11
Inclusion of overseas police background checks included in policy, to cover convictions from other countries which are not picked up in DBS checks	None	2, 4 - 6, 9 - 14

1. POLICY STATEMENT AND PURPOSE

Nottingham College has a duty to provide a safe and secure environment in which all students and colleagues are enabled to achieve the best they can from working or studying at the college. The college will ensure that it does not engage or make use of the services of any person who has a criminal conviction or record of conduct that could present a risk to the safety and wellbeing of students and staff or to the reputation of the college.

This policy ensures that Nottingham College complies with the DBS code of practice, relevant legislation and the responsibilities defined within the Department for Education publication: Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE).

2. SCOPE

DBS checks are required for the purposes of employment, relevant work experience placements, governor appointments, volunteers and agency workers.

All contractors will be assessed to determine the level of access to students and level of supervision on site before DBS disclosure requirements are specified in the contract.

Where a colleague, agency worker, volunteer, governor or work experience placement has lived or worked outside of the UK for more than 3 months within the last 5 years, they will be required to apply for an overseas police background check. Applicants will be required to cover the cost of this check. This must be provided in English or a translation of the original document in English, and therefore a certified document translation service may be required at the cost of the applicant.

Each country has its own process for applying for an overseas police background check and therefore the Home Office Guidance on how to apply for the criminal record checks for overseas applicants can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-records-checks-for-overseas-applicants>

3. DEFINITIONS

DBS - Disclosure and Barring Service.

KCSIE – Keeping Children Safe in Education Statutory guidance for schools and colleges.

GDP Regulations – General Data Protection Regulations

4. KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Leaders

- Ensure that the college's policies and procedures are applied effectively.
- Seek advice from People Services for guidance on the application of this policy.

Director of People and Culture

- Make decisions on the outcome of risk assessments.
- Ensure People Services Team members are suitably trained.

People Services Team:

- Obtain, process, action, store and destroy DBS and overseas police background check information in compliance with this framework.

- Ensure the correct level of check is carried out for the role.
- Ensure that DBS and overseas police background check information is only provided to those entitled to see it.
- Ensure that risk assessments are undertaken.
- Review this policy ensuring compliance with employment legislation.
- Maintain policies in a format that are readily available and easily accessible to colleagues.
- Ensure appropriate guidance is provided to colleagues and leaders.

5. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

As an organisation, using the DBS and overseas police background checks to help assess the suitability of candidates for positions of trust, Nottingham College complies fully with the DBS code of practice.

The college also complies with its obligations under the GDP regulations and other relevant legislation pertaining to the safe handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of DBS and overseas police background check information.

The college determines when a disclosure is required and funds the cost of obtaining a DBS disclosure for colleagues. The cost of an overseas police background check and any applicable certified translation services are to be covered by the applicant.

6. STORAGE AND ACCESS

Disclosure information is kept securely online with a contracted partner Nottingham College uses to conduct its DBS checks. Details of the partner can be requested via People Services. Access to this system is strictly controlled and limited to individuals to those who are entitled to see it as part of their duties. Disclosure information including disclosure number and disclosure outcome is also kept on colleague's personal files and the online single central record which are only accessible by individuals entitled to see it within the People Services Team. No DBS information is kept in hard copy form.

Overseas police background checks are often provided as a PDF document. This will be stored on the colleague's personal file and details recorded on the online single central record, which are only accessible by individuals entitled to see it within the People Services Team.

7. HANDLING

In accordance with sections 124 of the Police Act 1997, disclosure information is only available to those who are authorised to receive it in the course of their duties. The college maintains a record of all those to whom disclosures or disclosure information has been revealed and recognises that it is a criminal offence to pass this information to anyone who is not entitled to receive it.

8. USAGE

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

9. RETENTION

The college will keep the DBS disclosure number, disclosure outcome, date of issue, and if required, the overseas police background check and any related risk assessments of all employed colleagues, work experience placements, governor appointments, volunteers and agency workers during the course of their employment.

Once a recruitment (or other relevant) decision has been made, the college will not keep DBS and overseas police background check information for any longer than is necessary. For individuals who are not engaged with the college, this is generally for a period of up to six months, to allow for the consideration and resolution of any disputes or complaints.

10. DISPOSAL

Once the retention period has elapsed, the college will ensure that any disclosure information is immediately destroyed by secure means.

While awaiting destruction, a disclosure will not be kept in any insecure receptacle (e.g. waste bin or confidential waste sack).

The college will not keep any photocopy or other image of the DBS disclosure certificate or any copy or representation of the contents of a disclosure however, notwithstanding the above, the college will keep a single central record of the date of issue of a disclosure, the name of the subject, the type of disclosure requested, the position for which the disclosure was requested, whether or not a barred check was undertaken, and any decision taken.

11. CONVICTIONS – PROSPECTIVE AND CURRENT COLLEAGUES

For all appointments and placements within the college, where colleagues will be engaging in regulated activity with children, an enhanced DBS check, (which includes a children's barred list check) and overseas police background check (where applicable) is required, as set out in the KCSIE, and which is deemed by the college to be satisfactory.

For all other appointments and placements (e.g. contractors) within the college, who have an opportunity for regular contact with children who are not engaging in regulated activity, an enhanced DBS check, which does not include a children's barred list check, will be appropriate.

Job applicants are requested to confidentially provide information about their criminal background during the application process so that any issues raised can be dealt with at the earliest opportunity and a decision can be made subject to the DBS check. Any provisional offer of employment is dependent upon the information contained in the DBS disclosure being deemed satisfactory.

If a DBS disclosure or overseas background check contains information of concern, then the Director of People and Culture will undertake a risk assessment to identify if the information indicates that the prospective candidate poses a potential risk to vulnerable groups, or poses a reputational risk to the college. This risk assessment is conducted confidentially and where necessary will involve meeting with the individual to ask questions about the information provided.

Nottingham College will ensure that those engaged in this activity are suitably trained to identify and risk assess the relevance and circumstances of offences and associated legislation.

The following will be taken into account when reaching a decision about engaging someone with a conviction or caution:

- Whether the conviction or other matter is relevant to the position.
- The seriousness of the offence or other matter.
- The length of time since the offence or other matter occurred.
- Whether the individual has a pattern of offending behaviour or other relevant matters.
- Whether the individual's circumstances have changed since the offending behaviour or other relevant matters.
- The circumstances surrounding the offence and the explanation(s) offered by the individual.
- Whether the individual disclosed the conviction within their application ahead of the DBS or overseas police check disclosure

When the risk assessment process has been completed, there are two outcomes:

- The disclosure is deemed as satisfactory, and the appointment of the individual can be confirmed.
- The disclosure is deemed as unsatisfactory, and the appointment cannot be confirmed. People Services will confirm this with the individual.

If a candidate disputes the information contained on a disclosure they may appeal to the DBS. The right to appeal an overseas police background check may differ by country and the candidate may find information of appeal via the Home Office website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-records-checks-for-overseas-applicants>. A final decision about the candidate's suitability will not be made until the outcome of the appeal is known.

If a colleague is convicted of a criminal offence whilst employed at the college, they must inform People Services. Once per year, all employed colleagues will be requested to complete a form to disclose any changes to their criminal background since their appointment with the college. This information is strictly controlled and limited to individuals to those who are entitled to see it as part of their duties. Any new disclosures of convictions will be reviewed by the Director of People and Culture.

The relevance of the conviction will be considered using the same information as for an applicant. The Director of People and Culture will decide if the conviction has any relevance to the colleague's job. If the conviction bears no relevance to their work at the college no further action will be taken.

The colleague's leader will only be informed if there is a specific reason for doing so, and the conviction is considered directly connected with their job. In these circumstances the colleague will be invited to discuss the reasons behind this decision with people services.

Depending upon on the seriousness of the offence, the colleague may be moved to another role, or safeguards introduced. In certain serious situations, the colleague may be subject to the college's disciplinary policy and procedure. A conviction may be considered gross misconduct and could result in their dismissal.

12. EXCEPTIONAL STARTS

DBS and overseas police background checks can take some time to process and there may be rare occasions when the individual is required to commence the role urgently. Exceptional starts can only be authorised by a senior member of People Services subject to:

- The individual has not disclosed any convictions or cautions of concern.
- A barred list check has been satisfactorily completed, where the individual will be engaging in regulated activity.
- Key pre-employment checks being completed satisfactorily (including at least one reference, social media check, ID and address verification and right to work in the UK), with the DBS check, Medical Clearance and Overseas check (where applicable) in progress.
- The leader has demonstrated a clear business need for an urgent start in writing.
- The leader has provided written assurance that the individual will be supervised at all times pending the receipt of a satisfactory disclosure, at no time will they be left in charge of children or vulnerable adults, and they will be monitored by their leader.

13. PEOPLE SERVICES WILL CONTINUE TO CHASE OUTSTANDING CHECKS WHERE AN EXCEPTION START HAS BEEN AUTHORISED. RECRUITMENT OF EX-OFFENDERS STATEMENT

Nottingham College uses the DBS and overseas police background check to assess a candidate's suitability for positions of trust. The college complies fully with the DBS code of practice and undertakes to treat all applicants fairly.

Nottingham College undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a disclosure on the basis of a conviction, caution or any other information received. Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar a candidate from working for the college, undertaking a placement, or being a volunteer or a governor, this will depend on the nature of the position and the circumstances of the offence.

This policy statement is contained within the information made available to all applicants, volunteers, governors and students who are likely to need a disclosure at the outset.

Nottingham College actively promotes equality of opportunity for all, with the right mix of talent, skills and potential and welcomes applications for employment from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records. The college selects candidates for interview on objective criteria outlined in the person specification, based on skills, qualifications, knowledge and experience.

Nottingham College is an exempted organisation as all colleagues have the potential to come into contact with children and vulnerable groups as defined within the Safeguarding and Vulnerable Groups Act 2006. In accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2025), an enhanced DBS disclosure and a barred check, and where applicable an overseas police background check will be obtained for those posts which meet the definition of regulated activity within the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012. For all other individuals who have an opportunity for regular contact with children who are not engaged in regulated activity, an enhanced DBS certificate which does not include a barred list check will be obtained, as well as an overseas police background check where applicable.

The college's recruitment information is clear that a satisfactory enhanced DBS disclosure (and barred check where applicable) will be requested in the event of the individual being offered employment.

Students over the age of 16 who undertake work experience as part of their course and who will have access to children or vulnerable groups as defined within the Safeguarding and Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, may also be required to obtain a satisfactory enhanced DBS disclosure (and a barred check where the work experience placement meets the definition of regulated activity within the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012) if they will have unsupervised contact with children and vulnerable groups

The corporation has nominated the Director of People and Culture to make decisions and ensure a framework is in place regarding the employment or placement of those with a criminal record.

In all cases, the college undertakes to complete a risk assessment and discuss any matter revealed in a disclosure with the person seeking the position before withdrawing any conditional offer of employment or placement.

14. DBS AND OVERSEAS POLICE BACKGROUND CHECK PORTABILITY

The DBS does not facilitate portability and organisations that choose to accept a previously issued DBS check do so at their own risk. Nottingham College does not accept any DBS disclosure undertaken by another organisation.

Portability can only be accepted where prospective colleagues have registered with the DBS update service and the same level of DBS check has been undertaken and no new information has been listed. A copy of the original DBS certificate must be provided by the candidate to ensure the correct level of DBS check has been obtained.

Overseas police background checks are often obtained as part of visa applications to live and work in the UK. If a recent overseas police background check has been completed as part of a visa application, and the candidate has not travelled or worked overseas for more than 3 months since the check was obtained, the college may accept this previously issued overseas police background check.

15. RE-CHECKING CLEARANCES

Where a colleague changes role and does not have the correct level of DBS disclosure for the new role, a DBS check will be completed at the college's expense. Some colleagues working in high-risk posts may be required to have a DBS check every three years. Where this is the case, People Services will facilitate this process.

16. DBS CODE OF PRACTICE

A copy of the DBS's code of practice is available at:
www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-code-of-practice