

THE HAVEN

Operated by the Autistic Girls Network charity — 1196655 (England and Wales), SC054837 (Scotland)

Safer Recruitment and Use of Volunteers Policy

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1. Policy statement and purpose

The Haven is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all learners. Safer recruitment is central to this duty. The Haven makes sure that all staff, contractors, volunteers, governors and agency workers are suitable to work with children, and that its recruitment practices deter, identify and reject people who may pose a risk.

Recruitment at The Haven is designed to:

- **Create a safe environment:** meet Part three of *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026* (KCSIE) in full. The Haven is not a DfE-registered independent school, so the Independent School Standards do not apply to it; where this policy meets or exceeds that benchmark, it does so deliberately rather than as a legal obligation.
- **Champion equity and neuro-affirmative practice:** value diversity, accessibility and inclusive recruitment.
- **Comply with the law:** including the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 as amended by the Crime and Policing Act 2026, the Equality Act 2010, immigration and right-to-work law, the UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018, and the Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023 (the preventive duty on sexual harassment, including by third parties).
- **Protect personal data:** apply the Recruitment Privacy Notice and the Employment of Ex-Offenders Policy v10.25.

This policy should be read alongside:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy v10.26
- Staff Conduct Policy v10.25
- Managing Allegations Against Staff Policy v01.26

- Equal Opportunities, Equality & Diversity Policy v10.25

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- recruitment of all permanent, fixed-term, sessional and probationary staff;
- agency staff, contractors, volunteers, governors, trustees and proprietors;
- all online and hybrid provision run by The Haven, and any in-person event.

3. Regulated activity

Regulated activity is the work with children for which an enhanced DBS check with children's barred list information is required, and from which a barred person is legally excluded.

- **Paid staff** who teach, train, instruct, care for or supervise learners, or provide advice or guidance on their wellbeing, are in regulated activity. This includes work done entirely online.
- **Volunteers.** From 1 September 2026 the **Crime and Policing Act 2026** removed the "supervision exemption". A volunteer who teaches, trains, instructs, cares for or supervises learners frequently, on more than three days in any 30-day period, or overnight, is now in regulated activity **whether or not they are supervised** by someone else. Before that date, a volunteer supervised in this way was not in regulated activity; that is no longer the case.
- **Learners helping other learners.** A learner who supports other learners (for example as a peer mentor or buddy) under the direction of a member of staff is not in regulated activity, because the "peer exemption" was not changed by the 2026 Act. This applies only while a member of staff is genuinely directing the activity. The DSL records each arrangement, the member of staff directing it and a short risk assessment.
- **Anyone in regulated activity** must have an enhanced DBS check with children's barred list information **before they start**. There is no exception for supervised volunteers.

Where it is unclear whether a role is regulated activity, the DSL decides, records the reasons, and takes the safer option.

4. Safer recruitment principles

- **Child first:** safeguarding comes before convenience or speed.
- **Transparency:** decisions are fair, consistent and fully documented.
- **Inclusivity:** recruitment is anti-discriminatory, neuro-affirmative and accessible.
- **Compliance:** KCSIE 2026 Part three is met in full. Those who run recruitment read Part three in full.
- **Competence:** at least one panel member in every recruitment process holds current Safer Recruitment training, refreshed every five years.

5. Recruitment process

5.1 Identifying vacancies

Vacancies arise through staffing changes, service development or curriculum need. All recruitment needs approval from senior leadership or the Proprietor.

5.2 Job descriptions and person specifications

Each role has a clear job description and person specification, including:

- safeguarding responsibilities;
- whether the role is regulated activity, and the level of DBS check needed;
- required qualifications and experience;
- expectations on professional boundaries and online conduct.

Language is explicit, inclusive and accessible.

5.3 Advertising

All advertisements:

- state The Haven's safeguarding and neuro-affirmative commitment;
- confirm the level of DBS check required for the role;
- make clear that online searches will be carried out on shortlisted candidates, in line with KCSIE 2026.

5.4 Applications and shortlisting

- CVs alone are not accepted. All applicants complete The Haven Safer Recruitment Application Form; a CV may be provided as supplementary information only.
- Applicants may submit a supporting statement.
- Shortlisting is carried out by at least two panel members against the published criteria.
- Gaps in employment are explored at interview.
- Reasonable adjustments are offered at every stage.
- The process follows the Equal Opportunities, Equality & Diversity Policy v10.25.

5.5 Qualifications (including QTS)

- QTS is required for teaching roles unless the role description states otherwise (for example specialist mentoring or therapeutic roles).
- Where QTS is not required, equivalent professional qualifications and experience are evidenced and verified.

5.6 Selection and interviews

- Interviews are conducted by at least two panel members, one of whom is Safer Recruitment trained.
- Structured questions include safeguarding scenarios and values-based discussion.
- Scoring criteria are applied consistently and records kept.

5.7 Pre-appointment checks

All appointments are conditional on the satisfactory completion of:

- an enhanced DBS check with children's barred list information for anyone in regulated activity (section 3), and an appropriate level of check for anyone else;
- identity and right-to-work verification;

- professional qualification checks;
- two references, including the most recent employer, normally covering the previous three years where practicable;
- overseas criminal record checks or certificates of good conduct, where applicable;
- prohibition from teaching and section 128 checks, as relevant;
- a declaration of suitability to work with children.

All checks are completed and recorded on the Single Central Record before the person starts work with learners. Conditional offers stay conditional until then.

5.8 DBS Update Service

Where an applicant is registered with the DBS Update Service, it may be used with their consent. The Haven remains responsible for confirming that the check is the right level and workforce for the role, and is current.

6. Induction and probation

6.1 Induction

All new staff and volunteers:

- read **Part one of KCSIE 2026 in full** and confirm in writing that they have read and understood it. The condensed version formerly in Annex A was withdrawn in the 2026 edition, so there is no shorter alternative. Staff working directly with learners also read the annex on further information (Annex A in the 2026 edition). Confirmations are kept in the staff training register;
- receive a safeguarding and whistleblowing briefing, including how to contact the DSL;
- are trained on the Staff Conduct Policy, online safety and professional boundaries.

6.2 Probationary period

All new appointments are subject to a six-month probationary period, with regular supervision, proportionate quality assurance and mandatory safeguarding and online safety training.

6.3 Confirmation of appointment

A permanent appointment is confirmed after:

- satisfactory performance and conduct;
- adherence to safeguarding expectations;
- completion of required training;
- a successful probation review by the Head.

Probation may be extended where more support or monitoring is needed.

7. Volunteers

Volunteers are used rarely, and only after a risk assessment by the DSL. Before any volunteer starts, the DSL:

- decides whether the role is regulated activity under section 3, taking into account that supervision no longer removes a volunteer from regulated activity;

- for a volunteer in regulated activity, obtains an enhanced DBS check with children's barred list information **before they start**;
- for a volunteer not in regulated activity, decides on the right level of check (an enhanced check without barred list information, or a basic check) and records why;
- obtains a reference and a signed declaration of suitability;
- gives a safeguarding induction, including Part one of KCSIE, and asks the volunteer to sign the Staff Conduct Policy v10.25.

Existing volunteers. Following the Crime and Policing Act 2026, the DSL reviews every current volunteer against the new rules. Any volunteer who previously relied on being supervised, and who is now in regulated activity, must hold an enhanced DBS check with children's barred list information. They do not continue in the role until it is in place. The review and its outcome for each volunteer are recorded on the Single Central Record.

DBS checks for volunteers are free of charge.

8. Agency, contractor and third-party staff

Agency staff are used only where necessary. Where they are engaged:

- a service level agreement confirms that the agency follows safer recruitment standards;
- the agency confirms in writing that all checks, including an enhanced DBS check with barred list information where the role is regulated activity, are complete **before the person starts**. Starting under supervision while checks are outstanding is no longer an option for anyone in regulated activity;
- identity is checked at the start of the first session;
- they are inducted into safeguarding, online safety and expected conduct.

Contractors who have not been checked never work in regulated activity. Allegations about agency staff, contractors or trainees are handled under the Managing Allegations Against Staff Policy v01.26, and The Haven remains responsible for gathering the facts and keeping learners safe.

9. Governors, trustees and proprietors

All governors, trustees and proprietors:

- have an enhanced DBS check (with barred list information where they are in regulated activity) and section 128 checks, as applicable;
- provide identity and right-to-work evidence;
- are recorded on the Single Central Record;
- read Part two of KCSIE and confirm this in writing.

10. Record keeping and the Single Central Record

The Haven keeps a Single Central Record in line with KCSIE 2026 Part three.

- The SCR covers all staff, agency staff, governors, trustees and proprietors, and records volunteers and the checks carried out on them.
- It is stored securely in The Haven's Google Workspace with restricted access.

- It is updated promptly after each appointment.
- The DSL and the Safeguarding Governor audit it termly.

Recruitment records are kept securely in line with the UK GDPR and the Data Retention Policy. DBS certificates are not kept; the date and certificate number are recorded. Unsuccessful applications are kept for 12 months and then destroyed.

11. Training

- At least one Safer Recruitment trained panel member for every recruitment process.
- Annual safeguarding and whistleblowing refreshers for all staff.
- The DSL and staff who administer recruitment are trained in SCR maintenance and audit, and read KCSIE Part three.

12. Monitoring and review

- Annual report to the Proprietor on safer recruitment compliance, including the volunteer review in section 7.
- Termly SCR audits.
- This policy is reviewed annually, each September when KCSIE is reissued, and after any change in the law on regulated activity or DBS checks.

This PDF was generated from the published policy at policies.thehavenonline.school on 22 October 2026. The website is the authoritative, most current version of this policy.