



Recruitment and Selection Policy

Wayland Stables Care Farm

Policy version: 2.0 - August 2026

Policy owner: Jake Payne, Business Manager

Approval date: To be completed on approval

Effective date: Upon approval

Next review: August 2027, or sooner after a material legal, safeguarding or organisational change

Safer-recruitment standard: WSCF is a non-school alternative provider. Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) does not automatically make every school requirement a direct legal duty of WSCF, but WSCF adopts the relevant Part Three safer-recruitment practices as its operating benchmark and provides commissioners with evidence of completed checks. Legal eligibility, not job title or preference, determines the level of any DBS or barred-list check.

1. Purpose and policy statement

Wayland Stables Care Farm (WSCF) will recruit employees, workers, volunteers, agency staff, contractors and other role-holders fairly, consistently and safely. Selection will be based on published role requirements, objective evidence and WSCF's values. Safeguarding is an integral part of every child- or adult-facing appointment, not a check completed after the selection decision.

WSCF will prevent unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; make reasonable adjustments; protect candidate information; verify that people are legally and practically suitable for their duties; and maintain a defensible record of the decision. No applicant will be appointed because of personal connection, urgency or an assumed 'clean DBS'.

Immediate safeguarding concern: Information indicating that a child or adult may be at risk must be passed immediately to the appointed safeguarding lead under the relevant safeguarding policy. The recruitment timetable, confidentiality expectations or data-protection concerns must not delay protective action, police contact or a statutory referral.

2. Scope and responsibility boundary

This policy applies to permanent, fixed-term, temporary, casual and sessional staff; apprentices; volunteers; agency and supply workers; self-employed people; contractors; consultants; work-experience or placement adults; and any other person whose role may give access to children, adult participants, premises, vehicles, systems, records, animals or safety-critical work. It applies to new appointments, internal moves, promotions and material changes of duties.

WSCF is responsible for the people it employs or engages and for ensuring that anyone it permits to work is suitable for the actual role. A commissioning school or local authority retains responsibility for the placement it arranges and must satisfy itself that WSCF's safeguarding arrangements are suitable. WSCF will supply proportionate written assurance of checks and restrictions without sharing DBS certificates or unnecessary personal data.

The DfE non-school alternative-provision national standards remain voluntary as at August 2026 but are adopted by WSCF as a quality benchmark. If WSCF's legal status, registration requirements or regulated activities change, the Business Owners must obtain advice and revise the applicable check framework before recruitment continues.

3. Legal and guidance framework

- Equality Act 2010, including reasonable adjustments, restrictions on pre-offer health questions and protection from discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- Employment Rights Act 1996 and relevant rules on written particulars, fixed-term and part-time work, agency workers, working time, pay and employment status;
- Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006 and current Home Office right-to-work guidance;
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, Protection of Freedoms Act 2012, Police Act 1997, Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and Exceptions Order, and DBS eligibility and referral guidance;
- Children Act 1989 and 2004, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026, and relevant adult-safeguarding law and guidance;
- UK GDPR, Data Protection Act 2018 and Data (Use and Access) Act 2025 provisions in force, together with ICO employment-practices guidance;
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 until 31 August 2026 and KCSIE 2026 from 1 September 2026, used by WSCF as described in this policy; and
- DfE Non-school Alternative Provision: Voluntary National Standards and applicable commissioner requirements.

1 September 2026 change: The supervision exemption is removed from the definition of regulated activity with children. A person who teaches, trains, instructs, cares for or supervises children often enough, or overnight, may be in regulated activity even when supervised. Before that date WSCF must identify affected current and prospective roles, check whether the existing certificate included Children's Barred List information, and obtain any newly eligible check in line with current DBS/DfE guidance. The definition of regulated activity with adults is not changed by this reform.

4. Roles and accountability

Role	Core responsibility
Business Owners	Approve this policy and senior appointments; provide independent oversight where a conflict exists; ensure resources, safer-recruitment competence and audit; review serious failures.

Role	Core responsibility
Jake Payne - Business Manager and policy owner	Authorise vacancies and panels; ensure the role-risk assessment and recruitment record are complete; approve conditional offers and any exceptional pre-check start; maintain oversight of the recruitment register.
Appointed safeguarding lead	Advise on child and adult safeguarding, role risk, disclosures, allegations, low-level concerns and referral duties. The current post-holder is identified in the controlled safeguarding-role record rather than assumed in this policy.
Recruiting manager / panel chair	Plan the process, declare conflicts, use agreed criteria, ensure adjustments, record evidence, reconcile concerns and make a reasoned recommendation.
Safer-recruitment-trained panel member	Challenge gaps and inconsistencies, test safeguarding suitability and verify that no appointment proceeds on incomplete or unexplained information.
Administrator / check verifier	Use approved forms, verify identity and documents, record outcomes accurately, protect information and escalate discrepancies without making unauthorised suitability decisions.
All panel members	Maintain confidentiality, avoid bias, score independently against agreed criteria, disclose relationships or interests and report safeguarding or integrity concerns.
Commissioners, agencies and contractors	Provide specified written assurances and cooperate with due diligence. Their assurance supports but does not replace WSCF's responsibility for site access, role boundaries, supervision and ongoing conduct.

Vacancy or conflict: A named person's departure does not transfer authority automatically. Jake Payne must record an interim competent owner for each recruitment duty. Recruitment involving Jake Payne, a Business Owner, a close relative or another material connection must be overseen by an uninvolved owner or suitable independent person; the conflict and mitigation must be recorded.

5. Vacancy planning and role-risk assessment

Before advertising or approaching a candidate, the recruiting manager must obtain vacancy approval and complete a written role-risk assessment. The assessment drives the job description, selection method, supervision, training, pre-employment checks and commissioner assurance. Checks must be lawful and proportionate to actual duties, not copied from another post.

- define the employment or engagement status, purpose, duties, location, hours, accountability, essential and desirable criteria, pay basis, probation and any genuine occupational requirement;
- map contact with children and adults: frequency, overnight work, teaching, training, instructing, care, supervision, transport, personal care, healthcare, unsupervised access and access to sensitive information;
- determine regulated-activity status separately for children and adults, the legally eligible DBS level and workforce, whether a Children's or Adults' Barred List check is permitted, and the 1 September 2026 transition effect;
- identify any legally relevant qualification, registration, licence, driving entitlement, insurance, work-equipment competence or prohibition check;
- consider farm-specific competence, including animals, vehicles, machinery, lone work, first aid, medication, food, outdoor activity and emergency duties;

- identify foreseeable disability, communication or access barriers and how reasonable adjustments will be offered without weakening essential safety or safeguarding standards; and
- state panel composition, safer-recruitment competence, conflicts, assessment methods, reference plan, decision authority, records, start restrictions and commissioner requirements.

Where the correct legal check is uncertain, WSCF must use the current DBS eligibility tool or obtain competent advice. It must never request barred-list information or an enhanced certificate when the role is not eligible, and must never use a basic DBS check as a substitute for an eligible enhanced/barred-list check.

6. Advertising and candidate information

Recruitment will normally be open and proportionate to the role. Limited or internal recruitment requires a recorded business reason and must still use objective criteria and safeguarding controls. Advertising channels and wording should reach a suitably broad field and avoid unnecessary barriers or coded assumptions about age, sex, disability, race, religion or belief, caring responsibilities or other protected characteristics.

- provide an accurate job description and person specification, working pattern, location, pay or pay range where decided, contract status and closing arrangements;
- state WSCF's commitment to safeguarding and equal opportunity, the role's child/adult contact, conditional checks and whether the post is exempt from relevant Rehabilitation of Offenders Act protections;
- state only the DBS level and barred-list status supported by the completed eligibility assessment, and explain that a criminal record will be assessed fairly rather than automatically excluding the applicant;
- invite requests for reasonable adjustments and alternative formats through a route separate from scoring;
- explain how candidate data, references, proportionate online searches and equality monitoring will be handled; and
- give a contact for questions while avoiding informal promises, private-message recruitment or undocumented selection decisions.

7. Applications, shortlisting and online due diligence

7.1 Application information

For roles involving children or other safeguarding-sensitive access, WSCF will use a consistent application form or equivalent structured record. A curriculum vitae may supplement but will not replace the complete information needed to identify employment history, qualifications, referees, relationships, gaps and declarations. Applications must be signed or otherwise authenticated as accurate; material false or omitted information may lead to withdrawal or disciplinary action.

The application asks only for information relevant and lawful at that stage. Equality-monitoring information is separated from decision-makers. Health or disability questions before an offer are limited to the purposes permitted by section 60 of the Equality Act, such as arranging adjustments, establishing whether an applicant can undertake an intrinsic function, or lawful monitoring—not screening out disabled people.

7.2 Shortlisting

- at least two people shortlist wherever practicable; for child-facing recruitment, at least one panel member has current safer-recruitment training;
- the same published criteria and scoring approach are applied to every applicant before names or personal familiarity influence discussion;
- employment dates, unexplained gaps, overlapping work, repeated moves, inconsistencies, missing information, disciplinary information and reasons for leaving are identified for clarification;
- applications are screened for conflicts or close relationships, but no adverse inference is drawn merely from a career break, disability, caring responsibility, criminal record or overseas history; and
- the shortlist decision, individual scores, adjustments and reasons are recorded. A person who has not submitted the required information is not progressed on an informal understanding.

7.3 Online search

For shortlisted candidates in child-facing or other identified safeguarding-sensitive roles, WSCF will consider a proportionate search of publicly available online information as one part of due diligence. Candidates will be told that this may occur. The purpose is to identify matters relevant to suitability that can be explored at interview; it is not covert lifestyle surveillance or a substitute for checks, references or fair assessment.

- use a documented scope, search terms and sources consistently, with searches normally completed by a person who is not deciding the initial shortlist;
- record only relevant findings, source, date and context; do not retain irrelevant photographs, opinions, family information or protected-characteristic data;
- verify identity and authenticity and give the candidate a fair opportunity to explain relevant information before a decision; and
- do not seek access to private accounts, impersonate another person, demand passwords or use automated profiling or facial recognition without a separately justified lawful process.

8. Interview and assessment

Candidates will receive reasonable notice, practical information and an invitation to request adjustments. Interviews should be conducted by at least two people wherever practicable and by the same core panel for all candidates. Panel members must prepare and declare conflicts before seeing candidates.

- ask consistent core questions linked to the person specification, while allowing fair follow-up and probing of the application, career history, online-search findings and references;
- test safeguarding knowledge, professional boundaries, response to concerns or disclosures, willingness to report colleagues, attitudes to vulnerable children and adults, and understanding of safe farm practice relevant to the role;
- use practical exercises only when relevant, risk assessed, accessible and scored against stated criteria; candidates must not be given unsupervised access to children or adult participants as part of selection;
- avoid questions about protected characteristics, family plans, childcare, trade-union membership or health except where legally permitted and necessary;
- permit the candidate to explain discrepancies or adverse information and record the explanation fairly; and

- score independently before panel discussion, document evidence rather than impressions, and record the reason for the recommended decision and any reservations.

Children or participants in selection: Their views may contribute to a properly planned activity, but they do not carry the appointment decision. A safeguarding-risk assessment, consent and suitable supervision are required; no candidate is tested by being left alone with a child or vulnerable adult.

9. Conditional offer and pre-employment checks

Offers must be clearly conditional until every required check is complete, verified, reconciled and authorised. No check in isolation establishes suitability. The level, timing and outcome must be recorded in the controlled recruitment file and recruitment register, with access restricted to people who need it.

Check	Required control
Identity	Verify the person's identity using current DBS/Home Office standards as applicable and reconcile all names, aliases, dates of birth and address history before other checks are treated as matched.
Right to work	Complete a prescribed manual, Home Office online or eligible digital-identity check before employment begins; retain the required dated evidence securely and schedule follow-up checks for time-limited permission. Apply the same fair process regardless of nationality or ethnicity.
References	Normally obtain two satisfactory references, including the current or most recent relevant employer where available. Seek them directly from an authoritative source, verify authenticity, ask role-appropriate safeguarding questions and resolve omissions or inconsistencies. Do not rely on open testimonials.
Employment history	Account for the full history and discuss gaps, overlapping dates, reasons for leaving and unverified periods. Record a proportionate assessment rather than assuming a gap is adverse.
Qualifications / registration	Verify only qualifications, professional status, training, licences and driving entitlements that are required or materially relevant. Confirm them with the issuing body or reliable service where necessary.
DBS and barred lists	Apply only for the legally eligible level and workforce. Inspect the original certificate or complete a consented Update Service status check where valid for the same level/workforce. Obtain the relevant barred-list information where the role is regulated activity and eligibility permits; never employ or permit a barred person in regulated activity.
Criminal-record self-disclosure	For an eligible exempt role, request only information the law permits WSCF to ask about, explain filtering and assess disclosed or certificate information fairly, individually and confidentially. A record is not an automatic bar unless the law says it is.
Overseas history	For a person who has lived or worked outside the UK, consider proportionate additional criminal-record, professional, reference or letter-of-good-standing checks. Where reliable evidence cannot be obtained, record the residual risk and additional controls; a UK DBS check does not cover overseas history.

Check	Required control
Health and adjustments	After conditional offer, obtain only information necessary to assess intrinsic duties, workplace health and safety, or reasonable adjustments. Use occupational-health advice where appropriate; do not demand a generic declaration of perfect health.
Safeguarding / prohibition information	Check any role-specific prohibition, restriction, direction, disqualification or professional suitability information that is legally applicable. Do not perform school-only checks without a legal or commissioner basis.

Where adverse or uncertain information arises, Jake Payne and the appointed safeguarding lead must undertake a documented, role-specific assessment considering relevance, seriousness, age of information, pattern, circumstances, credibility, explanation, legal restrictions, duties, supervision, vulnerability and residual risk. The candidate must normally have a fair opportunity to respond before a final decision, unless doing so would prejudice a police or safeguarding process.

10. Agencies, contractors, volunteers and other arrangements

Arrangement	Minimum assurance and control
Agency or supply worker	Obtain written confirmation that identity, right to work, references, required DBS/barred-list and qualification checks were completed, plus the date and outcome. WSCF checks identity on arrival, matches the person to assurance, records restrictions and reports misconduct to both agency and safeguarding routes.
Contractor or self-employed person	Assess the actual duties, frequency and access; verify competence, insurance, identity and legally eligible safeguarding checks. If assurance is insufficient, prevent unsupervised or regulated activity access and use site supervision or segregation.
Volunteer	Use a role description, application/discussion, references and suitability assessment proportionate to risk. Apply the correct DBS/barred-list rules. From 1 September 2026, frequent qualifying child work may be regulated activity even when supervised.
Existing worker changing role	Repeat the role-risk assessment and obtain any newly eligible check, qualification or reference information before the new duties begin. Do not assume an old DBS certificate covers a different workforce, level or role.
Work experience / trainee adult	Agree responsibility and supervision with the sending body, verify identity and role eligibility, and prevent unsupervised child/adult access unless all required checks and controls are complete.
One-off visitor	Use visitor identification, signing-in, briefing, escort and access controls. A visitor badge or supervision is not a device for avoiding a legally required check where the actual work is regulated activity.

WSCF will not accept a generic statement that a person is 'DBS checked'. Assurance must identify the certificate level, workforce, barred-list element where applicable, date and whether the agency saw the original certificate or used a valid Update Service check. WSCF must not request or retain more certificate information than necessary.

11. Appointment, start controls and withdrawal

- the panel submits its recommendation and evidence; Jake Payne confirms the selection was fair, conflicts were controlled and all conditions are satisfied;
- the final written offer or agreement states role, status, pay or fees, hours, location, probation or review, safeguarding obligations, required training, confidentiality, data protection and relevant policies;
- a person is not added to unsupervised duties, transport, keyholding, system access, medication, personal care or other higher-risk activity until the specific authorisation is recorded;
- a start before an eligible enhanced DBS result is exceptional, never routine, and requires all other checks, any legally available barred-list check, a written risk assessment approved by Jake Payne with safeguarding-lead advice, close supervision, access restrictions, a review date and commissioner agreement where required;
- no person may start or remain in regulated activity if WSCF knows or has reason to believe that they are barred, and no operational pressure can override that prohibition; and
- WSCF may withdraw a conditional offer where a condition is not met, information is materially false or omitted, legal employment is not possible, or a fair role-specific assessment finds unacceptable risk. The reason and decision-maker are recorded and communicated appropriately.

12. Recruitment records and data protection

WSCF will give candidates clear privacy information, identify lawful bases and any special-category or criminal-offence condition, collect the minimum information needed, keep it accurate and secure, limit access, respond to rights requests and delete or anonymise records under the retention schedule. Consent is not treated as the default lawful basis merely because an applicant signed a form.

- keep vacancy approval, role-risk assessment, advert and job pack, application, shortlisting and interview records, conflicts, adjustments, online-search record, references, check outcomes, risk decisions, offer and induction evidence;
- maintain a controlled recruitment and safeguarding-check register for workers and volunteers. WSCF will not describe it as a statutory school Single Central Record unless that legal requirement applies;
- record DBS certificate number, level, workforce, barred-list element, date seen and decision where necessary, but normally do not copy or retain the certificate beyond the limited period permitted by the DBS Code of Practice;
- keep equality monitoring separate and use it only in appropriately anonymised or restricted form;
- do not disclose one candidate's information to another, include unnecessary personal data in commissioner assurance, or place recruitment records in general shared folders; and
- apply the retention schedule consistently to successful and unsuccessful candidates, subject to legal claims, safeguarding, immigration, contractual and DBS requirements and any documented hold.

13. Induction, probation and ongoing suitability

Safer recruitment continues after appointment. Before or at the start of relevant duties, the person receives role-specific induction covering child and adult safeguarding, the staff code of conduct, professional boundaries, allegations and low-level concerns, whistleblowing, equality and sexual-harassment prevention,

data protection, online safety, health and safety, emergency arrangements, farm hazards and any individual restrictions.

Probation or an equivalent review must set objectives, supervision and review dates and must consider conduct, boundaries, competence, training and concerns—not only task performance. Concerns are recorded and managed promptly under the safeguarding, disciplinary, capability, whistleblowing or complaints procedure as appropriate. A new allegation must not be ignored because pre-employment checks were satisfactory.

WSCF will reassess suitability when duties, frequency, regulated-activity status or known risk changes. It will make referrals to DBS, a professional regulator, police, local authority designated officer or other body where the legal threshold or safeguarding guidance requires. Settlement, resignation, expiry of a contract or withdrawal from duties does not remove a referral duty.

14. Monitoring and review

- Jake Payne reviews recruitment files and the controlled register at least termly for missing checks, expiring permissions, unresolved restrictions, training gaps and commissioner assurance;
- Business Owners complete an annual audit of a sample of appointments, panel competence, equality outcomes, adjustments, conflicts, agency assurance, data retention, induction and any allegations linked to recruitment weaknesses;
- before 1 September 2026, WSCF completes and records the supervision-exemption transition review for affected current workers and volunteers;
- lessons from complaints, grievances, safeguarding concerns, probation failures, exit information and near misses are used to improve job design and selection; and
- the policy is reviewed annually and sooner after a serious recruitment failure, legal or KCSIE change, commissioner finding, organisational change or evidence that controls are ineffective.

Appendix A - Hiring manager immediate-action guide

Situation	Immediate action
Urgent vacancy	Do not bypass checks. Record interim staffing, supervision or service restrictions; use an agency only after written assurance and identity matching.
Candidate reveals a safeguarding concern	Listen, record facts, avoid investigating, pass it immediately to the appointed safeguarding lead and follow safeguarding/police advice.
Application dates or identity do not match	Pause the process, verify directly and invite an explanation. Do not alter the record or treat an assumption as resolved.
DBS shows information	Restrict access to the certificate, do not copy or circulate it, and arrange a role-specific assessment with safeguarding input; avoid automatic rejection unless legally barred.
DBS result is delayed	Do not allow routine unsupervised work. Consider only the exceptional written start-control process in section 11 and any commissioner requirement.

Situation	Immediate action
Possible barred person / false declaration	Prevent regulated activity immediately, preserve evidence, inform Jake Payne and the safeguarding lead, and obtain DBS/police/LADO advice as required.
Panel member knows the applicant	Declare it before scoring. Replace the member or record independent oversight and mitigation; personal assurance is not a reference.
Candidate requests an adjustment	Ask what barrier needs removing, agree a reasonable confidential adjustment and ensure assessors score the same competence criterion.

Appendix B - Minimum safer-recruitment record

- vacancy approval, role status, current job description/person specification and role-risk assessment;
- regulated activity analysis for children and adults, DBS level/workforce/barred-list eligibility and 1 September 2026 transition conclusion;
- advert, safeguarding statement, application form, candidate privacy information and adjustment route;
- panel membership, safer-recruitment training, conflicts and mitigations;
- shortlisting scores, gaps/inconsistencies, proportionate online-search record and candidate explanations;
- interview questions, practical assessment, individual scores, panel decision and reasons;
- identity, right to work, references, employment history, qualifications, overseas and role-specific checks;
- DBS certificate outcome and recorded details, barred-list/prohibition result where eligible, and any suitability assessment;
- conditional offer, cleared conditions, restrictions, exceptional-start risk assessment and commissioner assurance where applicable; and
- contract/agreement, induction, policies issued, training, probation/review dates, register entry and secure retention/deletion date.

Sources and related guidance

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 - Part Three: Safer Recruitment — Department for Education; effective 1 September 2026.

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 — Department for Education; applies until 31 August 2026.

Non-school Alternative Provision: Voluntary National Standards — Department for Education, August 2025.

Change to the Definition of Regulated Activity with Children from 1 September 2026 — Disclosure and Barring Service, 4 August 2026.

DBS Checks: Guidance for Employers and DBS Code of Practice — Disclosure and Barring Service.

The Legal Duty to Refer to DBS — Disclosure and Barring Service, updated April 2026.

Right to Work Checks: An Employer's Guide — Home Office / UK Visas and Immigration.

Recruitment and Discrimination Guidance — Acas / Equality and Human Rights Commission.

Employment Practices and Data Protection: Recruitment and Selection — Information Commissioner's Office.

Revision history and approval

Version	Date	Summary of change	Owner
1.0	2025	Previous Recruitment and Selection Policy.	Operations Manager
2.0	Aug 2026	Full legal and operational update: non-school AP boundary, KCSIE-aligned safer recruitment, September 2026 regulated-activity change, fair selection, role-based checks, agencies, records and staff guidance. Former personnel references reviewed.	Jake Payne

Approval record

Approved by	Role	Signature	Date

Next review due: August 2027, or sooner under section 14.