



Human Resources
Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks
Policy and Procedure



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1.0 Policy

- 1.1 Walsall College is committed and passionate about providing a safe and secure environment in which all students and employees are enabled to achieve the best they can from working or studying at the College.
- 1.2 The College will ensure, through the appropriate use of DBS checks, that it does not employ 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 well-being of Walsall College students and employees.
- 1.3 Walsall College is a registered body with the DBS and complies fully with the DBS Code of Practice regarding the correct handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of Disclosures and Disclosure information. It also complies fully with its obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998 and other relevant legislation pertaining with the safe handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of Disclosure information.
- 1.4 The policy is inclusive of and compliant with the College's obligations under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The CRB was introduced in April 2002 to provide a 'one stop' service for access to criminal record checks for employment purposes. It replaced the previous system of local police record checks and List 99 (the register of people who are deemed unfit to work with children). This service is known as 'Disclosure' and is now the only available method of carrying out criminal record checks.
- 2.2 On 1 December 2012 The Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) merged with the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) to become the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). The College's CRB Policy and Procedure has been updated to take this name change into account, as well as updating it in relation to the new changes brought in. CRB checks are now called DBS checks.
- 2.3 There are two levels of Disclosure. Standard Disclosures are intended to be used for positions that involve regular contact with those aged under 18 or people of any age who may be vulnerable for other reasons. Enhanced Disclosures are for posts involving regularly caring for, supervising, training or being in sole charge of those aged under 18 or people of any age who may be vulnerable for other reasons. As all staff who work at Walsall College have access to students under the age of 18 or people of any age who may be vulnerable for others reasons. Therefore, all employees will require an enhanced disclosure check.

- 2.4 The Enhanced Disclosure involves an extra level of checking beyond that which is carried out for the Standard. Applications for a Disclosure are made by the College as a Registered Body, which countersigns and pays for the application. When the individual receives the Disclosure Certificate they must present it to the College for checking. A record of receipt of this is kept on the individual's computerised file.
- 2.5 It will be a condition of all offers of employment made by the College that a satisfactory DBS disclosure is obtained. Should any prospective employee or student to whom this applies refuse to complete a DBS Disclosure Application form within a reasonable timescale (i.e. two weeks of the offer date) this will result in the withdrawal of the provisional offer.
- 2.6 All sessional employees and volunteers will be required to have a satisfactory enhanced DBS disclosure.
- 2.7 All contractors and agency workers will be assessed to determine the level of access to Walsall College students and level of supervision on site before DBS disclosure requirements are specified in the contract.
- 2.8 Should any employee be convicted of an offence during the period of their employment, it is their duty to declare this to the Head of Human Resources in order for the risk to be assessed. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action being taken.

3.0 Cautions and Convictions

- 3.1 As of 29 May 2013, the DBS will filter criminal record certificates to remove old and minor convictions and cautions (subject to a list of exceptions) e.g., if somebody aged 18 or over at the time of conviction, the conviction would be removed only if **all** of the following apply:
- 11 years have passed since date of conviction;
 - It is the person's only offence;
 - It did not result in a custodial sentence.

4.0 The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (ROA)

- 4.1 The main purpose of the ROA is to ensure that a person who has been convicted of a criminal offence in the past and who has not re-offended in a specified period is, so far as possible, treated as if the offence and the conviction for it had never occurred. The ROA achieves this by enabling some convictions to become 'spent', or ignored, after a period of time, so that the offender does not have to declare the conviction when applying for a job. In some instances, however, exemptions are made from the ROA, allowing the employer to ask candidates to declare all convictions, cautions, warnings and so on. Work in a further education institution where the normal duties of

that work involves regular contact with children aged under 18 and vulnerable adults is exempted from the ROA.

- 4.2 Applicants are requested to provide information about their criminal background on the application form so that any issues raised can be dealt with at the interview stage (or shortly after) and a decision can be made on that basis, subject to the Disclosure check. Should applicants wish to submit a disclosure under separate cover and not via the online application form, they may do so by writing to the Head of Human Resources at Walsall College. The application form includes a statement to candidates that their appointment is subject to a satisfactory Disclosure check, and that a criminal record will not necessarily prevent an offer of employment.
- 4.3 A copy of the DBS's Code of Practice is available to all candidates on request.

5.0 Scope

- 5.1 The College requires all staff, agency workers and volunteers to have an Enhanced DBS Disclosure.

6.0 Procedure

- 6.1 Once a provisional offer of employment has been made, Human Resources will issue the necessary Disclosure paperwork and verify the applicant's identification in line with DBS guidance. Original documents are seen and checked, and the Disclosure application form is countersigned and sent to the DBS.
- 6.2 The Disclosure certificate is posted to the individual's registered home address and it is the responsibility of the individual to produce the original certificate to Human Resources. Human Resources will check for any recorded convictions, cautions, etc. and take a copy of the DBS certificate which is retained for six months in a confidential area. The unique DBS reference number is recorded on the individual's personal file.
- 6.3 If the Disclosure certificate shows recorded items such as convictions or cautions, Human Resources will pass the certificate together with the relevant paperwork to the Head of Human Resources for consideration. In all situations, where there are any offences relating to children or vulnerable adults, the Head of Human Resources will consult with the Director of Student Journey and the Executive Team. Under no circumstances will an appointment be made if a person is on the Barred List (an Enhanced check for Regulated Activity).
- 6.4 The following will be taken into account when reaching a decision about employing an individual with a criminal 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 applicant has a pattern of offending or other relevant behaviour
- Whether the applicant's circumstances have changed since the offending behaviour or the other relevant matters
- The circumstances surrounding the offence and the explanation(s) offered by the individual at the Safer Recruitment Interview.

6.5 Where the decision is taken to employ an individual with a criminal conviction or caution, the Head of Human Resources will place a record of the risk assessment using the above criteria on their personal file. No appointment of an individual with criminal convictions or cautions relating to children or vulnerable adults can be confirmed without the agreement from a member of the Director of Student Journey or the Executive Team.

6.6 Where the decision is taken not to appoint an applicant because of the information on their Disclosure, the Head of Human Resources will provide the Executive Team with a recorded risk assessment using the criteria stated in clause 6.4. No conditional offer of appointment can be withdrawn without the agreement from a member of the Executive Team.

7.0 Discussing Criminal Records

7.1 If a candidate has given details of their criminal record at the interview, it may be appropriate to discuss this at this stage.

7.2 Where an applicant's criminal record was disclosed in their application prior to interview and they are provisionally offered employment, HR will need to discuss this with the applicant prior to them commencing.

7.3 Where an applicant's criminal record is not made available prior to interview and there are issues revealed through the DBS Disclosure, which HR feel need to be discussed, HR will meet with the applicant. Such a discussion will also be necessary when the Disclosure contradicts what the applicant has declared. It may be that they have, for example, misunderstood what is meant by a spent conviction or was unaware that cautions would also be included in the Disclosure. Following any discussion, the provisions outlined in paragraphs 6.5 and 6.6 apply.

7.4 If an applicant disputes the information contained on a Disclosure, they can appeal to the DBS. If a mistake has been made a fresh Disclosure will be issued to the individual who must provide to HR for checking. A final decision about the applicant's suitability for the job will not be made until the outcome of the appeal.

7.5 The College cannot accept responsibility where a job offer has been withdrawn due to entry errors on the DBS return.

8.0 Update Service

8.1 The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) launched an Update Service on 17 June 2013. Details are as follows:

- DBS checks are updated on a regular basis rather than just on the day they were applied for
- New applicants or relevant employees can register with the update service
- The College can carry out a free, online check on the status of a DBS certificate
- The Update service will cost employees £13 per year and is free for volunteers.
- The DBS certificate is portable between roles (provided the same level and type of check are required)
- Employers will no longer receive copies of the DBS Check, it will only be sent to individuals.
- Individuals would need to give the College consent to carry out an on-line check.

9.0 Portability

9.1 The DBS has issued guidance that a Disclosure carries no period of validity and the DBS does not endorse the use of portability, due to the risks involved unless the Update Service is subscribed to by the individual. This is because Disclosures are designed for use immediately after issue, for a particular post only, and will be of most use the closer they are to the date of issue they are used. Consequently, the College will no longer accept a previously issued Disclosure.

10.0 Conditional Employment

10.1 DBS checks can take several weeks to be processed. There may be rare occasions where an employee is urgently required to start work before the receipt of a satisfactory DBS Disclosure. This can only be authorised by the Head of Human Resources or a Senior Postholder subject to the following conditions:

- Where the individual has no declared convictions or cautions in the application process, which may cause concern.
- Where the individual is not on the barred list.
- Line manager to provide written assurance to the Head of HR, that the individual will be appropriately, supervised pending the receipt of the

satisfactory DBS Disclosure and that this is monitored by their line manager.

11.0 Re-checks

11.1 All employees will need to be re-checked every three years.

12.0 Storage, Use and Disposal of DBS Information

12.1 Disclosure information is kept securely with access strictly controlled and limited to those who are entitled to see it as part of their duties.

12.2 In accordance with section 124 of the Police Act 1997, Disclosure information is only passed to those who are authorised to receive it in the course of their duties. We maintain a record of all those to whom Disclosures or Disclosure information has been revealed and it is a criminal offence to pass this information to anyone who is not entitled to receive it.

12.3 Disclosure information is only used for the specific purpose for which it was requested and for which the applicant's full consent has been given. Once a recruitment (or other relevant) decision has been made, we do not keep Disclosure information for longer than is necessary. This is generally for a period of up to six months, to allow for the consideration and resolution of any disputes or complaints. If, in very exceptional circumstances, it is considered necessary to keep Disclosure information for longer than six months, we will consult the DBS about this and will give full consideration to the data protection and human rights of the individual before doing so. Throughout this time, the usual conditions regarding the safe storage and strictly controlled access will prevail. Once the retention period has elapsed, we will ensure that any Disclosure information is immediately destroyed by secure means, i.e. by confidential shredding. While awaiting destruction, Disclosure information will not be kept in any insecure receptacle. We will not keep any photocopy or other image of the Disclosure or any copy or representation of the contents of a Disclosure. However, notwithstanding the above, we may keep a 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, the unique reference number of the Disclosure and the details of the recruitment decision taken.

13.0 Monitoring and Review of the Policy

13.1 HR will monitor the development and dissemination of good practice to ensure that the policy and procedure is achieving the key aims. HR will also impact assess this policy. The application of this procedure will be monitored by equality and diversity protected characteristics of candidates/employees affected.

14.0 Equality and Diversity

- 14.1 If any employee has difficulty at any stage of the procedure because of a disability, they should discuss the situation with their line manager or a member of HR as soon as possible.
- 14.2 Candidates or Employees who need a carer (for reasons of their disability), or an interpreter/translator to attend a meeting with them, for disability or language reasons, may arrange this with HR.
- 14.3 Candidates or Employees who require assistance accessing a meeting should inform HR who will ensure that venues for meetings are accessible.
- 14.4 The College is committed to fairness and equality of treatment for all employees and will comply with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and the ACAS Code of Practice in the implementation of these procedures. The College will not discriminate against any employee through use of this procedure directly or indirectly for reasons related to their race, sex, ethnic or national origin, marital status, age, disability sexual orientation, gender identity, religious or political belief or trade union membership. For more details, refer to the College Equality and Diversity Policy.
- 14.5 Employees may request this procedure in an alternative format from Human Resources who will endeavour to accommodate the request.