

Wiltshire Equine Assisted Learning

Safer Recruitment Policy

Manager: Hannah Lindsay

Last Reviewed: 30 September 2025

Next Review Due: 30 September 2026



Linked Policies: Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy | Staff Code of Conduct | Whistleblowing | Health & Safety | Fire Safety

1. Purpose

This policy sets out Wiltshire Equine Assisted Learning's safer recruitment procedures to ensure all staff, volunteers, and contractors who work with learners are suitable, safe, and appropriately vetted.

It reflects:

- **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025**, Part 3: Safer Recruitment
- **Ofsted Education Inspection Framework 2025** expectations for safeguarding culture
- **DEFRA animal welfare and premises standards** relevant to equine-assisted learning environments
- The organisation's duty to safeguard children and vulnerable young people.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All employees
- Volunteers
- Freelance practitioners
- Contractors working on site
- Anyone involved in regulated activity with learners
- Staff working directly with animals as part of equine-assisted learning

3. Principles of Safer Recruitment

Wiltshire Equine Assisted Learning commits to:

- Prioritising safeguarding at every stage of recruitment
- Ensuring all recruitment materials reflect our safeguarding ethos
- Conducting robust pre-employment checks as required by KCSIE 2025
- Maintaining a **culture of vigilance** from advert to induction

- Ensuring suitability for work in an animal-assisted learning environment

KCSIE 2025 emphasises that safer recruitment is **not just a set of checks**, but a safeguarding culture embedded throughout the process.

4. Recruitment and Selection Procedures

4.1 Advertising

All job adverts will:

- State our commitment to safeguarding
- Outline that enhanced DBS checks and references are required
- Highlight expectations around working with animals and young people
- Include a link to our Safeguarding Policy

4.2 Application Process

Applicants must complete:

- A full application form
- A declaration of criminal history
- A self-disclosure of any safeguarding concerns
- A statement of suitability for working with children and animals.

4.3 Shortlisting

Shortlisting will be completed by at least **two trained staff members**.

Red flags (gaps in employment, vague history, inconsistencies) will be explored at interview, in line with KCSIE 2025 expectations.

4.4 Interviews

Interviews will include:

- Safeguarding-focused questions
- Scenarios involving boundaries, professional conduct, and whistleblowing
- Questions assessing suitability for working with horses and vulnerable learners
- Verification of identity and right to work (reinforced in KCSIE 2025 updates)

5. Pre-Appointment Vetting Checks

In accordance with **KCSIE 2025 Part 3**, the following checks are mandatory before appointment:

5.1 Identity Verification

- Birth certificate preferred (KCSIE 2025 best practice)

5.2 Right to Work in the UK

5.3 Enhanced DBS Check with Barred List Check

- Required for all staff engaged in regulated activity
- DBS certificates **must not be retained longer than six months** unless legally justified (2025 update)

5.4 Prohibition Checks

- Teachers
- Management roles (Section 128)

5.5 Online Search

- Conducted for all shortlisted candidates (KCSIE requirement)

5.6 References

- Two references, including most recent employer
- Must comment on safeguarding and suitability

5.7 Employment History

- Full chronological history verified
- Gaps explored and documented

5.8 Qualifications

- Verified and recorded

5.9 Suitability to Work with Animals

Because this is an equine-assisted learning setting, we also assess:

- Experience with horses
- Understanding of animal welfare
- Ability to follow DEFRA-aligned safety protocols

6. Volunteers

Volunteers undergo:

- Risk-based DBS checks
- Induction and safeguarding training
- Supervision until fully assessed as safe and competent

7. Induction and Training

All new staff receive:

- Safeguarding induction
- Code of Conduct
- Whistleblowing procedures
- Health & Safety and Fire Safety training
- Animal handling and welfare training
- Emergency procedures for equine environments

8. Record Keeping

In line with KCSIE 2025 requirements for recording vetting information:

8.1 Single Central Record (SCR)

The SCR includes:

- Identity checks
- DBS details
- Barred list checks
- Prohibition checks
- Right to work
- Qualifications
- References
- Date checks were