Safer Recruitment Policy

Approved: From September 2026
Review Date: July 2027

1. Background

1.1 The safe recruitment of trainee teachers is the first step in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people.

1.2 Mid Essex Initial Teacher Training (MEITT) is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff, mentors, partner schools and trainee teachers to share this commitment.

1.3 MEITT recognises that this can only be achieved through:

a) Sound safeguarding procedures;
b) Robust recruitment and selection processes;
c) Effective partnership working;
d) Appropriate vetting and suitability checks; and
e) Compliance with statutory safeguarding requirements.

1.4 MEITT recognises the value of, and seeks to achieve, a diverse workforce and trainee body which reflects the communities it serves.

1.5 Recruitment and selection will be conducted fairly, consistently and lawfully and will promote equality of opportunity.

1.6 Selection decisions will be based upon merit, suitability, qualifications, skills and aptitude for teaching.

1.7 Safer recruitment procedures are designed to deter, identify and reject applicants who may pose a risk to children or who may be unsuitable to work with them

2. Purpose

2.1 The purpose of this policy is to ensure that:

a) Children and young people are safeguarded;
b) Unsuitable individuals are prevented from entering teacher training;
c) Statutory safeguarding requirements are met;
d) Recruitment procedures are robust, fair and transparent;
e) Appropriate pre-admission checks are undertaken; and
f) Partner schools understand and fulfil their responsibilities in relation to safer recruitment.

3. Scope

3.1 This policy applies to:

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a) Fee-funded trainees;
b) Salaried trainees;
c) MEITT employees;
d) Members of the Leadership Team;
e) Interview panel members;
f) Partner and Associate schools;
g) Mentors
h) External assessors
i) Partner organisations if involved in recruitment and selection activities.

4. Guidance

4.1 MEITT has due regard to:

a) Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2026);
b) Initial Teacher Training: Criteria and Supporting Advice;
c) Working Together to Safeguard Children; and
d) Relevant safeguarding legislation and guidance.

4.2 MEITT will regularly review recruitment and selection procedures to ensure compliance with current legislation and statutory guidance.

5. Marketing and Recruitment Communications

5.1 All advertisements will clearly state MEITT's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people.

5.2 Recruitment materials will include the statement:

"Mid Essex Initial Teacher Training is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff, trainees and partners to share this commitment. All admissions are subject to satisfactory safeguarding and suitability checks."

5.3 The MEITT website will contain information regarding:

a) Safeguarding expectations;
b) Safer recruitment procedures;
c) Suitability requirements; and
d) DBS and vetting arrangements.

5.4 Marketing materials, brochures and recruitment literature will refer to MEITT's commitment to safer recruitment.

5.5 Interview invitations will include information regarding:

a) Safeguarding expectations;
b) Online searches;
c) DBS requirements; and

d) Suitability checks.

6. Recruitment

6.1 MEITT implements robust recruitment procedures and checks to ensure that reasonable steps are taken not to admit or appoint a person who may be unsuitable to work with children.

6.2 Selection activities will assess:

a) Suitability to train to teach;
b) Motivation for working with children;
c) Commitment to safeguarding;
d) Professional values;
e) Professional conduct; and
f) Capacity to meet the Teachers' Standards.

6.3 Recruitment decisions will be evidence-based and appropriately recorded

7. Application Scrutiny

7.1 Applications will be scrutinised to identify:

a) Gaps in employment;
b) Gaps in education or training;
c) Inconsistencies in information provided; and
d) Concerns relating to safeguarding or suitability.

7.2 Career histories will be reviewed, and applicants may be required to provide additional information or clarification.

7.3 Any concerns identified through application scrutiny must be explored and resolved before a place is offered.

8. Online Searches

8.1 As part of the shortlisting process and prior to interview, MEITT will undertake online searches of shortlisted candidates using publicly available information.

8.2 The purpose of online searches is to identify incidents or issues that may be relevant to:

a) Safeguarding;
b) Professional conduct; and
c) Suitability to work with children.

8.3 Candidates will be informed that online searches form part of the recruitment process.

8.4 Where concerns are identified:

a) They will be explored during interview;

b) Applicants will be given an opportunity to respond;
c) Outcomes will be considered fairly and proportionately; and
d) Appropriate records will be maintained.

8.5 MEITT reserves the right to refuse admission where concerns exist regarding an applicant's suitability to teach, professional conduct, safeguarding record or ability to meet the expectations of the profession

9. Interviews

9.1 The MEITT Safer Recruitment Policy will be available to applicants during the recruitment process.

9.2 Interview activities will assess:

a) Safeguarding awareness;
b) Professional judgement;
c) Commitment to teaching;
d) Motivation to work with children; and
e) Personal and professional values.

9.3 Interviewers will explore:

a) Gaps in employment or education;
b) Concerns identified through references;
c) Issues arising from online searches; and
d) Information disclosed through suitability declarations.

9.4 MEITT will ensure that appropriate safer recruitment expertise is available throughout the recruitment and selection process.

9.5 At least one member of any interview or selection panel will have successfully completed appropriate Safer Recruitment Training.

9.6 All panel members will be familiar with:

a) This policy;
b) Safeguarding responsibilities;
c) The principles of safer recruitment;
d) The requirements of Keeping Children Safe in Education; and
e) Their responsibilities in assessing an applicant's suitability to train to teach and work with children.

9.7 MEITT will maintain records of safer recruitment training completed by those involved in recruitment and selection activities

10. References

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10.1 A minimum of two references will be obtained.

10.2 References must:

a) Be obtained directly from referees;
b) Be of a professional or academic nature;
c) Not be provided by relatives or personal acquaintances; and
d) Use professional or institutional contact details where possible.

10.3 At least one reference should be obtained from:

a) The current employer;
b) The most recent employer; or
c) The most recent organisation where the applicant worked with children.
d) Previous teacher training provision if withdrawn from a previous course

10.4 Where a reference is provided on behalf of a school or college, MEITT may seek confirmation that it represents the organisation's official position.

10.5 References will seek information regarding:

a) Suitability to work with children;
b) Professional conduct;
c) Disciplinary matters;
d) Safeguarding concerns;
e) Substantiated allegations; and
f) Whether employment ceased whilst under investigation.
g) Whether the referee knows of any reason why the applicant should not be considered suitable to work with children.

10.6 Referees will be asked to confirm whether they know of any reason why the applicant should not work with children and young people.

10.7 Any concerns arising from references will be investigated before a final decision is made. Where appropriate, references will be used to identify any previous disciplinary, capability or safeguarding concerns relevant to the applicant's suitability to teach or work with children.

11 Self-Declaration of Suitability

11.1 Applicants will be required to complete a suitability declaration.

11.2 This will include disclosure of:

a) Convictions;
b) Cautions;
c) Reprimands;
d) Safeguarding investigations;
e) Professional misconduct findings;

f) Prohibition orders; and
g) Restrictions relating to working with children.

11.3 Failure to disclose relevant information may result in withdrawal of an offer.

12. Verifying Identification and Qualifications

12.1 Candidates must verify their identity by providing appropriate documentation.

12.2 MEITT will verify:

a) Identity;
b) Date of birth;
c) Current address;
d) Previous names where applicable;
e) Right to work and/or study where applicable;
f) Degree qualifications;
g) GCSE or equivalent entry requirements; and
h) Other relevant qualifications.

12.3 All documents provided as evidence must be valid, current and original unless an approved electronic verification process is used.

12.4 Where an applicant has changed their name, evidence of the name change must be provided.

12.5 At least one document must confirm the applicant's date of birth.

12.6 At least one document must confirm the applicant's current address.

12.7 MEITT will take reasonable steps to ensure that the person admitted to the programme is the individual who completed the application process and attended interview.

12.8 Applicants must meet the entry requirements set out within the Initial Teacher Training (ITT): Criteria and Supporting Advice, including holding the required qualifications for their chosen programme.

12.9 Where qualifications have been awarded outside the United Kingdom, MEITT may require additional evidence to determine equivalence and eligibility for admission.

12.10 Where applicants present qualifications obtained overseas, MEITT may seek verification through recognised qualification comparison services or other appropriate means. [gov.uk].

12.11 Any discrepancies identified during the verification process will be investigated before a place is offered or confirmed.

12.12 Where fraudulent documents, misleading information or deliberate omissions are suspected, MEITT reserves the right to:

a) Withdraw an offer of a place;
b) Terminate the admissions process;
c) Refer concerns to relevant agencies where appropriate; and
d) Consider whether a safeguarding or suitability risk assessment is required.

12.13 Copies of verified documentation will be retained securely in accordance with data protection legislation and MEITT record retention arrangements.

13. Pre-Admission Safeguarding Checks

13.1 MEITT ensures that all fee-funded trainees are subject to:

a) Enhanced DBS checks;
b) Children's Barred List checks;
c) Prohibition checks;
d) Identity checks;
e) Qualification checks;
f) Reference checks;
g) Online searches; and
h) Overseas checks where applicable.

13.2 Trainees must not commence school-based activity until all required safeguarding checks have been satisfactorily completed and verified.

13.3 All vetting checks will be completed within an appropriate timescale before programme commencement.

13.4 MEITT will ensure all applicants have been assessed against the ITT suitability requirements before admission to the programme.

14 Overseas Checks

14.1 Applicants who have lived, worked or studied overseas may be required to provide:

a) Overseas criminal record checks;
b) Certificates of good conduct;
c) Employer verification; and
d) Professional standing information.

14.2 Where documentation cannot be obtained, a risk assessment will be undertaken.

14.3 Where a candidate has completed qualifications overseas, MEITT will undertake additional verification of those qualifications to establish equivalence and authenticity. Where applicants have worked with children overseas, MEITT may seek references or verification from overseas employers, schools or relevant professional bodies.

14.4 Applicants are responsible for meeting any costs associated with obtaining overseas checks unless otherwise determined by MEITT.

14.5 MEITT will verify immigration status and any right to work or study requirements applicable to the training route.

14.6 Where documentation cannot be obtained, MEITT will:

a) Consider alternative evidence;
b) Undertake a documented risk assessment; and
c) Determine whether sufficient assurance regarding suitability has been obtained.

14.7 A final decision regarding suitability will take account of:

a) The availability of overseas information;
b) The applicant's explanation of circumstances;
c) References and other recruitment information;
d) Any identified safeguarding risks; and
e) The welfare of children and young people

15. Prohibition and Other Regulatory Checks

15.1 MEITT will undertake checks as appropriate, including:

a) Teacher Prohibition Orders;
b) Children's Barred List checks;
c) The Teacher Regulation Agency's Check a Teacher's Record Service;
d) Section 128 checks where applicable; and
e) Other statutory safeguarding restrictions.

16. Childcare Disqualification

16.1 Where applicable, MEITT will consider childcare disqualification requirements and undertake any checks required by legislation.

17. Occupational Health and Reasonable Adjustments

17.1 Applicants will be required to complete occupational health assessments.

17.2 The purpose of such assessments is to:

a) Identify support needs;
b) Identify reasonable adjustments and the introduction of a Personal Plan as appropriate; and
c) Enable MEITT to determine whether applicants have the health and physical capacity to undertake the programme and teach successfully

17.3 Health conditions will not automatically prevent participation in teacher training.

17.4 All decisions will be made fairly, proportionately and in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

18. Risk Assessment of Recruitment Checks

18.1 Where concerns arise from:

a) DBS disclosures;
b) References;
c) Overseas checks;
d) Self-declarations;
e) Prohibition checks;
f) Teacher Regulation Agency records; or
g) Other pre-admission safeguarding checks,

MEITT will undertake a documented risk assessment before determining whether an offer should be made or confirmed.

18.2 A criminal record will not automatically prevent admission to an ITT programme.

18.3 Each case will be considered individually with regard to:

a) Nature and seriousness of the concern;
b) Relevance to teaching;
c) Evidence of rehabilitation;
d) Potential safeguarding risks; and
e) The welfare of children and young people.

18.4 Where safeguarding, conduct or suitability concerns are identified, MEITT may review information available through the Teacher Regulation Agency, including any prohibition orders, sanctions, restrictions or professional conduct findings relevant to the applicant's suitability to train to teach.

18.5 In considering recruitment and suitability decisions, MEITT will have regard to relevant Teacher Regulation Agency guidance and will assess any information identified alongside all other available evidence, ensuring decisions are proportionate, evidence-based and focused on safeguarding children and young people seeking advice from HR as required.

19. Salaried Trainees

19.1 For salaried routes, the employing school remains responsible for undertaking employment-related safeguarding checks.

19.2 MEITT will obtain assurance from the employing school that all required checks have been appropriately completed.

20 Single Central Record

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20.1 MEITT will maintain an accurate Single Central Record (SCR).

20.2 The SCR will record, where applicable:

a) Identity checks;
b) DBS checks;
c) Barred List checks;
d) Prohibition checks;
e) Overseas checks;
f) Qualification verification;
g) Right to work checks;
h) Dates checks were completed; and
i) The person completing checks.

20.3 Access to the SCR will be restricted to authorised members of the Leadership Team and designated safeguarding and compliance personnel.

20.4 The SCR will be subject to regular audit and review and any discrepancies rectified promptly.

21. Data Protection and Record Retention

21.2 MEITT will retain and manage recruitment records in accordance with:

a) UK GDPR;
b) Data Protection Act 2018; and
c) Trust Records Retention arrangements.

21.3 Records will be stored securely and accessed only by authorised personnel.

21.4 Information will be retained only for as long as necessary and disposed of securely.

22. Monitoring and Review

22.1 The Leadership Team will monitor:

a) Recruitment practice;
b) Safeguarding compliance;
c) Single Central Record accuracy;
d) Recruitment outcomes; and
e) Partner compliance.

22.2 This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if required due to:

a) Changes in legislation;
b) Changes in statutory guidance;
c) Changes to ITT Criteria;
d) Changes to Ofsted requirements; or
e) Findings from safeguarding audits or reviews.

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22.3 Concerns relating to recruitment, safeguarding or suitability may be raised through the Trust Whistleblowing Policy.

Appendix A: Vetting and Recruitment Checks Matrix

Check	Fee-Funded Trainees	Salaried Trainees	Responsibility
Application Scrutiny	✓	✓	MEITT
Interview	✓	✓	MEITT
Online Search	✓	✓	MEITT
Suitability Declaration	✓	✓	MEITT
Identity Verification	✓	✓	MEITT
Qualification Verification	✓	✓	MEITT
References	✓	✓	MEITT
Enhanced DBS Check	✓	School Employer	MEITT / Employer
Children's Barred List Check	✓	School Employer	MEITT / Employer
Teacher Prohibition Check	✓	✓	MEITT
Overseas Checks (where applicable)	✓	✓	MEITT
Occupational Health Assessment	✓	✓	MEITT / Employer
Risk Assessment (where required)	✓	✓	MEITT

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Appendix B: Recruitment Process Overview

Stage 1: Application

- Application received through Apply.
- Application scrutinised for:
- suitability;
- gaps in employment;
- gaps in education;
- inconsistencies within the application.

Stage 2: Shortlisting

- Applications assessed against MEITT entry criteria.
- Online searches undertaken on shortlisted applicants.
- References requested.

Stage 3: Interview and Selection

- Candidate attends interview.
- Safeguarding awareness assessed.
- Motivation for teaching explored.
- Any concerns from references or online searches explored.
- Selection decision recorded.

Stage 4: Pre-Admission Checks

- Identity verified.
- Qualifications verified.
- References reviewed.
- DBS and Barred List checks completed.
- Prohibition check completed.
- Overseas checks completed where appropriate.
- Occupational health process completed.

Stage 5: Final Admission Decision

- All checks reviewed.
- Risk assessment completed where required.
- Suitability confirmed.
- Place formally offered and/or confirmed.