



PGCE Safeguarding Policy



**4-11 PGCE Primary (with EY enhancement)
11-16 PGCE Secondary (with Post-16
Enhancement)**

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University of York Safeguarding Policy

Introduction

The University takes its safeguarding role and responsibilities within its initial teacher training provision very seriously. We have a clear safeguarding policy for:

- Recruitment stage
- Training stage

Partnership staff will find the processes attached to these stages delineated below.

Health and Physical Capacity to Train to Teach

The **University of York** and its **ITE Partnership** have a responsibility to ensure that Beginning Teachers have the health and physical capacity to train to teach and will not put children and young people at risk of harm. The activities that a teacher must be able to perform are set out in the Education (Health Standards) (England) Regulations 2003. The **University of York** is responsible for ensuring that only Beginning Teachers who have the capacity to teach remain on the programme.

It should be noted that people with disabilities or chronic illnesses may have the capacity to train to teach, just as those without disabilities or medical conditions may be unsuitable to train to teach. The **University of York** encourages applications from all applicants.

Successful applicants are asked to complete a fitness questionnaire prior to commencing their training programme. The **University of York** does not ask all-encompassing health questions but it does ask targeted and relevant health-related questions which are necessary to ensure that a person is able to train to teach.

Upon acceptance of an offer, all **successful applicants** complete Suitability to Teach Declarations prior to DBS checks. This may lead the University of York to require **offer holders** to attend additional Occupational Health appointments and/or refer **offer holders** to Open Door and Disability Services to create Student Support Plans prior to commencing their PGCE course and/or during the PGCE course. In isolated cases, it may result in a deferral of start date whilst the partnership and the university consider ways in which they can best support an offer holder once registered and needing a bespoke form of placement.

Disclosure and Barring Service Checks

The **University of York** and its **ITE Partnership** must pay due regard to duties outlined in the annually updated “**Keeping Children Safe in Education**”¹ statutory guidance when carrying out their duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

At admissions stage, the **University of York** ensures that all Beginning Teachers have been subject to appropriate pre-selection checks. This includes:

- obtaining and considering Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) criminal records checks and
- children’s barred list information.

¹ See [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)

When determining an individual's suitability to train to teach, at interview stage the **University of York** and its **Lead Partners** will check that a Beginning Teacher has not previously been removed from a programme because they have behaved in a way that indicates that they may not be suitable to work with children, or if the previous provider would have removed them had they not left.

At admissions stage, **applicants** that are checked early in the recruitment cycle may also choose to register with the DBS update service.

Upon registration and after allocation of school placement the **University of York** will confirm in writing to schools that a non-salaried Beginning Teacher's criminal record check, including a check of the children's barred list, has been completed and that the individual has been judged by the provider to be suitable to work with children. The **University of York** is not required to provide any information to **Partner Schools** in addition to this confirmation. **Partner Schools** may wish to record this confirmation in their single central record, but they are not required to do so. **Partner Schools** are also entitled to look at any Beginning Teacher's DBS certificate (DfE, 2025), and Beginning Teachers are asked to bring their DBS certificate with them to each of their main placement schools during induction visits in both September and February.

Where **Partner Schools** allow University of York Beginning Teachers to commence training in regulated programme activity before DBS certificates are available to the University of York, **Partner Schools** must ensure that any such Beginning Teachers are appropriately supervised and that all other checks, including a separate barred list check, have already been completed.

The **University of York ITE Partnership's** established clear safeguarding policy and procedures with protocols are annually reviewed and agreed by **all partners** in the University of York ITE Partnership. This includes a common understanding across the University of York ITE Partnership of convictions, offences, cautions and warnings that would not pose a barrier to joining the University's ITE programme (see Appendix 1 below)

At the start of their training in each placement, **Partner Schools** must ensure that **all Beginning Teachers** allocated to be placed with them for either Placement 1 or 2, are provided with:

- the school's **child protection policy**
- the school's **staff behaviour policy** (or **code of conduct**)
- information about **the role of the school's designated safeguarding lead**
- the latest copy of **Keeping Children Safe in Education** (see: [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) (DfE, Sept, 2025))

If the **University of York** removes a Beginning Teacher from one of our ITE programmes because they have harmed or pose a risk of harm to children, or if the **University of York** would have removed the Beginning Teacher had the Beginning Teacher concerned not left, we will immediately seek guidance from the DBS and keep relevant Partner Schools informed. In such cases, it is highly likely that an **FTP Panel** will also have investigated the nature of the Beginning Teacher's conduct, following the procedures and protocols outlined

in the [University of York Department of Education Fitness to Practise Policy](#) (also available at: [University of York PGCE - Mentor Library website](#)). Please see Appendix 2 below.

Other Background Checks

On occasion, candidates at admissions stage who are unsuited to working with children may not have any previous convictions, so the **University of York** is vigilant during the selection process alongside its **Lead Partners**. The **University of York** and its **Lead Partners** have a duty to ensure that Beginning Teachers are properly managed and supervised and that, if we have concerns, information is referred to the police and the DBS.

Candidates who have lived or worked outside the UK must undergo the same checks as all other staff in schools and colleges. In addition, further checks are carried out before registration by the **University of York Central Admissions Team** so that events that occurred outside the UK can be considered. In this consideration, the **University of York ITE Partnership** and the **central University of York Admissions Team** use:

- the Home Office published guidance on criminal record checks for overseas applicants and
- the Home Office “Changes to checks for EU sanctions on EEA teachers” guidance and “Recruit teachers from overseas” guidance.

The **University of York** also checks that candidates are not subject to a prohibition order issued by the Secretary of State.

Childcare Disqualification

The **University of York** pays due regard to the Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 statutory guidance and related obligations under the Childcare Act 2006 to carry out duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

For **fee-funded Beginning Teachers**, it is the responsibility of the **University of York** to ensure that the Beginning Teacher is not disqualified from childcare, or that the Beginning Teacher has obtained a childcare disqualification waiver from Ofsted. This check occurs before registration in the summer preceding the programme starts. **No Partner School** should therefore undertake this check on any Beginning Teacher.

Appendix 1 – Pre-course DBS Panel Policy Procedure

To address a DBS concern which arises prior to registration, the Partnership has a Safeguarding Committee which looks carefully at each individual case.

The Pre-Course DBS Panel

A practising Head teacher and a practising Professional Tutor from the Partnership sit on this committee alongside the Director of Initial Teacher Education (DITE) from the University of York.

DBS Pre-Course Panel Procedure

Evidence is collated confidentially in any such case and securely shared with the Committee prior to the meeting.

The Headteacher, the DITE and the Professional Tutor meet to discuss the evidence and make an informed decision on behalf of the ITE Partnership as to whether the listed conviction, offence, caution or warning poses a barrier to entry onto the ITE programme at the University.

Once the Committee has met and made its decision, the DITE officially notifies the Central Admissions team who then write formally to the candidate concerned.

PGCE Applicants with Convictions, Offences, Cautions & Warnings

All cases are dealt with on a case by case basis, making use of all evidence available, such as:

- The offence itself and its impact in terms of the degree of harm caused;
- The circumstances surrounding the offence, including how long ago the offence occurred, the age of the applicant at the time of the incident, what, if any, mitigating factors there were, any repeated and/or related offences, etc;
- Any punishment/penalties imposed for the offence;
- Whether punishments/penalties have been resolved;
- Character references;
- Testimonials from relevant professionals e.g. GP.
- The applicant's current reflections on the offence including what they have learnt from it.

Given that all cases are dealt with on an individual basis, it is not possible to make absolute pronouncements about convictions/offences/cautions/warnings which the Safeguarding Committee would decide did **not** pose a barrier to joining an ITE programme. It is likely, however, that offences which suggest no direct safeguarding threat to children/young people would be ones which would permit applicants to start the PGCE course.

When making a decision as to whether a conviction/offence/caution/warning should pose a barrier to joining an ITE programme, the Safeguarding Committee would consider, as a guiding principle, whether the conviction/offence/caution/warning would be a barrier to employment as a teacher and decide accordingly.

Offences such as those of a violent, extremist and/or sexual nature for which a custodial sentence was served would typically be ones which the Pre-Course DBS Panel would conclude to be a barrier preventing someone from embarking upon their PGCE.

Previous Examples

Examples of past DBS issues which have been presented, but where the applicant has ultimately been deemed suitable to start a PGCE course include:

1. A one-off act of vandalism/criminal damage to a bus stop when the applicant was an undergraduate and acting under the influence of alcohol

Not deemed a barrier to enter teacher training course by panel.

2. An applicant who was coerced into cashing a cheque which was later found to be fraudulent;

Not deemed a barrier to enter teacher training course by panel.

3. An applicant who was convicted of assaulting a police officer.

Not deemed a barrier to enter teacher training course by panel.

The applicant was 18 at the time. The applicant was 23 years old at the time of applying for the PGCE course. The offence occurred at a protest/demonstration. The applicant admitted pushing the police officer, but claimed not to have realised the person was a police officer because of the surrounding chaos and the fact that the applicant's arm was grabbed by the officer who was standing behind her.

The offence was caught on CCTV and was deemed to be a push rather than anything more violent and not an intentional act of violence against a serving officer. It was still, however, assault and an assault on a police officer. The applicant was issued with a police caution.

If there were no further, similar issues the issue would be removed from the applicant's DBS after six years had elapsed. At the time of applying for the PGCE course, the caution was due to remain visible on the applicant's DBS for another year, before being removed.

In example 3, the offence was assault and therefore an offence of a violent nature, however the applicant received a police caution rather than a custodial sentence and the caution was due to be removed from the applicant's DBS record after a period of 6 years had elapsed).

The Panel therefore elected to allow the offer holder to register for her PGCE course.

Appendix 2 – Fitness to Practise Policy and Procedure

During the training year safeguarding issues are dealt with through the University of York Fitness to Practise Policy.

Please follow [this link](#) to find the up to date University of York Fitness to Practise Procedure and Policy.