

# **Initial Teacher Education**

## **Safeguarding Pack**

**2025 entry**

**PGCE Core and Lead Programme Partners**

**The University of Manchester**

**(Summer 2025 edition)**

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## Safeguarding Statement

The University of Manchester is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare and safety of children by:

- Adhering to University procedures to recruit staff and select students;
- Carrying out appropriate DBS checks as necessary;
- Ensuring that staff and students are aware of The University of Manchester Safeguarding Policy and related procedures, and that appropriate staff and students are provided with Safeguarding Policy and Guidance training on a regular basis;
- Providing information to all interested parties regarding The University of Manchester Safeguarding policy and procedures for working with children;
- Providing information to teachers, group leaders, service providers and any other interested parties on The University of Manchester's expectations regarding child protection responsibilities when visiting the University and when our staff and students are involved in activities on premises external to the University;
- Working closely with other organisations to safeguard children;
- Having procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse

The Primary and Secondary PGCE Teams consider the issue of 'Safeguarding' to be a fundamental component of the Programmes. The issue is considered from the following perspectives:

- Ensuring children are protected;
- Ensuring children are empowered to protect themselves;
- Ensuring students are protected;
- Ensuring students are empowered to protect themselves.

This handbook provides information with regard to safeguarding, with particular reference to the Primary and Secondary PGCE Programmes.

## Safeguarding Personnel

The Compliance and Risk Office is responsible for ensuring that The University of Manchester is meeting its many statutory and regulatory compliance obligations. The office is also responsible for supporting the University's risk management process and all aspects of risk management.

The Head of Compliance and Risk is responsible for the Governance Office (including Ethics and Records Management), Occupational Health, Safety Services and Radiation Safety Unit.

### **Dr David Barker**

Director of Compliance & Risk

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Where a school or department within The University of Manchester runs many activities involving under-18 year olds it is suggested that a local **Academic Lead for Safeguarding** is designated for that area. Their role is to liaise with Head of Compliance and Risk and/or the Compliance and Risk Officer. The nominated Academic Lead for Safeguarding for the ITE area is currently:

### **Dr Andrew Howes**

Head of ITE

[andrew.j.howes@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:andrew.j.howes@manchester.ac.uk)

Responsive responsibilities in relation to safeguarding are discharged through two standing safeguarding committees, and / or through an MIE Professional Suitability Panel where appropriate. The Suitability Committee and the Safeguarding Committee address concerns or outstanding checks in relation to applicants to the programme, and trainees at an early stage on the programme. The MIE Professional Suitability Panel addresses potential professional misconduct of students on the programme.

1) The **'Suitability Committee'**, a sub-group of the Partnership Committees for Primary and Secondary PGCE, makes a decision with regard to the suitability to train of an applicant/trainee when there is a disclosure made (see Appendix D). A decision is made using information from the most up to date version of Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges and the UCET Guidance (Appendix A) and Teachers' Standards.

The Suitability Committee members:

Chair: Head of Initial Teacher Education

Three representatives each from:

Primary Partnership

Secondary Partnership

The decision is notified to the relevant Programme Directors. If the outcome is that the trainee/applicant is deemed unsuitable to train, a meeting is convened with the Programme Director and trainee/applicant to discuss the outcome and implications.

The Suitability Committee procedure is further detailed in **Appendix D** of this document.

2) The **'Safeguarding Committee'** is designed to keep under review the suitability of applicants/trainees to teach, in the case that some applicants – particularly those recruited late in the cycle – may be accepted and registered onto the programme with outstanding checks, such as DBS or Overseas Police Checks. The Committee will review the status of all such applicants at regular intervals to ensure that trainees are tracked and supported.

The Safeguarding Committee members are:

Head of Initial Teacher Education

Primary Programme Director

Secondary Programme Director

PGCE Manager

3) The **Manchester Institute of Education (MIE) PGCE Professional Suitability Procedure** is designed to hear and where appropriate investigate concerns resulting from a trainee's possible transgression from the Part 2 of the teacher standards (professionalism). The process can lead to an **MIE Professional Suitability Panel** ('MIE Panel') which is charged with determining the appropriate outcome with regard to continuation on or removal from the ITE programme. The "UoM PGCE Professional Suitability Procedure ('MIE Panel')" document describes this procedure in detail.

## Recruitment and Selection

**Overview:** The University of Manchester is responsible for ensuring that we do not admit applicants to training who are unsuited to work with children. We use barred list, criminal record checks and prohibition checks in order to do this. However, we also consider evidence from applications and assessment centres (application forms, personal statements, interviews, entry tasks and/or portfolios).

To apply for a PGCE/Lead Programme Partner course at The University of Manchester, trainees must apply through DfE's [Apply](#) website. Applications or CVs sent directly to the University are not considered.

Academic and English Language qualifications are assessed by the Recruitment and Admissions team, along with academic tutors to determine suitability for the programme.

Applicants who are shortlisted based on their application are invited to attend an assessment centre. At the assessment centre, interviewees are vigilant as to any issues which may suggest unsuitability to working with children and young people, and must indicate whether or not they are aware of any such issues. To support this, at least one member of our assessment centres has been trained in safe recruitment practice.

Applicants' skills in Literacy and Numeracy are audited and where necessary developed during the PGCE, to ensure satisfactory levels in each.

If an application is successful, we require trainees to comply with a confidential health screening questionnaire as advised by the Department for Education. Health screening is undertaken by the Student Occupational Health Service who then advise on any follow-up vaccinations or other intervention which may be required.

If an application is successful, we require trainees to: comply with an enhanced check through the Disclosure and Barring Service. Trainees must also undergo a Prohibition List check. This is separate to the DBS check, as people can be prohibited from teaching for actions or behaviours that would not lead to them being included on the DBS barred list. Individuals that do not hold QTS can be listed on the Prohibition List. Trainees must also meet the University's suitability requirements for the safeguarding of children.

**Trainee's online presence:** our serious approach to safeguarding means that we work with our beginning teachers to support them to understand their online presence and what is/is not appropriate as a professional teacher. This includes tasks which take place in the induction phase of the course. Where there are incidents or issues that have happened in a student's life, which are publicly available online, we explore these with the student and agree an appropriate way forward. On very rare occasions this may lead to suspension from or withdrawal from the programme on grounds of unprofessional behaviour.

**A condition of offer for all successful applicants is that they:**

- Obtain satisfactory Enhanced DBS clearance;
- Obtain satisfactory medical clearance from The University of Manchester's Occupational Health Department;
- Obtain satisfactory overseas police checks for all periods of six or more months in any one non-UK country in the five years preceding the start of the course;
- International students certificate of good conduct where applicable;
- Satisfactorily complete The University of Manchester's Suitability Questionnaire;
- Are not listed on the GTCE or Prohibition sanction lists.

## DBS and Suitability checks

All applicants must complete a suitability questionnaire and declare any potential disclosure/issues. All UK applicants must apply for a DBS report prior to registration onto the programme. Applicants from countries other than the UK, or UK residents who have spent six months or more in any non UK-country within five years of the course start date must additionally provide a police certificate of good conduct from the relevant country.

If there is a disclosure on any police checks the following procedures will occur:

- i. The Senior ITE Admissions officer will communicate with the applicant;
  - to inform him/her that they will only be accepted if, on successful completion of the programme, they will be likely to be able to enter the teaching profession
  - to explain that the decision will be made by the Suitability Committee (which includes University- and School-based staff) who will discuss the case itself without knowing the applicant's name or personal details
  - to request they provide full details of the offence(s) for referral to the Suitability Committee
- ii. A referral will be made to the Suitability Committee and a decision will be made using information from KCSIE (Keeping Children Safe in Education) statutory guidance for schools and colleges (DfE September 2022); UCET Guidance (Appendix A) and the Teachers' Standards. Each case is unique and will be examined individually, but the broad areas for consideration are:
  - the nature of the offence or issue, criminal convictions for sexual, violent or drug offences will be particularly strong contraindications for working with children
  - the age of the offence/issue, recent offences are most relevant
  - the frequency of the offence/issue, a series of offences/issues over a period of time are more concerning
- iii. Suitability Committee members are informed and asked to recommend (if a Deputy/Assist HT in their own right) or discuss with senior colleagues as to likely acceptability of the candidate applying for a post in their own school
- iv. The applicant will be informed of the decision within two working weeks. If the decision is to reject the applicant, representatives of the Suitability Committee will meet with them to explain the decision.
- v. Should the panel not come to a majority decision, the applicant will be invited to meet with the Head of ITE and relevant Programme Director to discuss the DBS in more detail in order to support the decision.
- vi. The applicant will be informed of the decision within two working weeks. If the decision is to reject the applicant, representatives of the Suitability Committee will meet with them to explain the decision.

If it becomes known that either a trainee has gained a criminal record or an incident has occurred that raises a question their suitability during the programme, the above procedures will occur. Depending upon the decision made, the trainee may be required to withdraw immediately from the Programme.

**Please Note:** We ensure that all applicants have applied for an enhanced DBS before registration on the Programme so that disclosures are received prior to trainees commencing school/college/setting-based elements of their training. This process is outlined to schools (see Appendix A). However, in some cases – and especially for late recruits onto the Programme – the DBS may arrive after the commencement of the school and college-based elements of the Programme. In these cases a Children's Barred List check is carried out. The head teachers and principals have discretion to allow an individual to begin school and college-based training pending receipt of the DBS result (provided they have a Children's Barred List check). Where this is necessary, tutors, head teachers and principals must ensure that the trainee is appropriately supervised.

### Extensions to the Childcare Disqualification Requirements

Extensions to the Childcare Disqualification Requirements apply only to students on fee paying routes. Trainees are asked to commit to ensuring that any changes to their circumstances are communicated immediately to the Programme Director. Trainees affected should review the relevant information on the Ofsted website, and consider applying for a waiver.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/applying-to-waive-disqualification-early-years-and-childcare-providers>

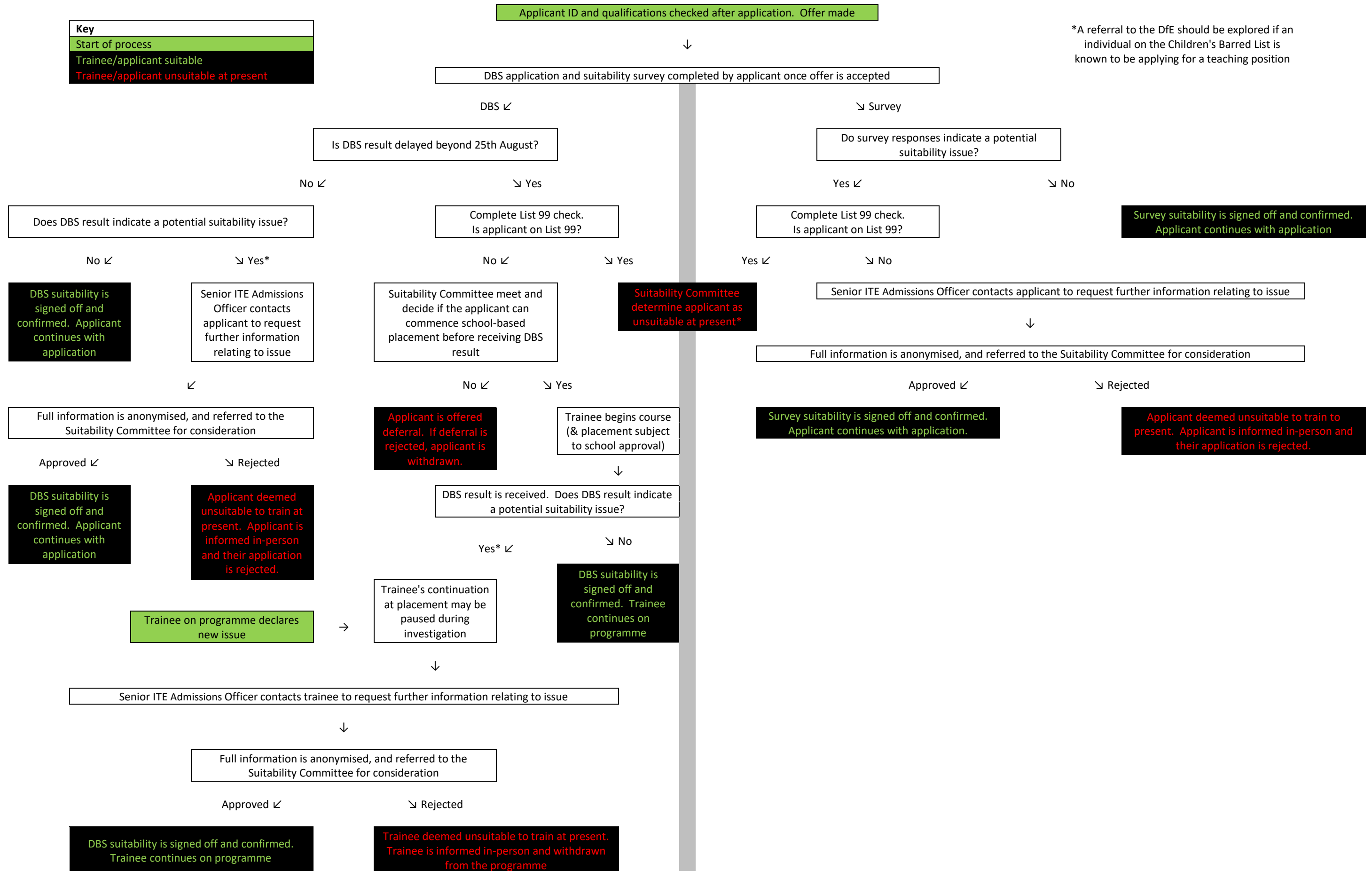
Questions should be sent to the following e-mail address, where someone will respond on a case by case basis.

E-mail: [mailbox.disqualification@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:mailbox.disqualification@education.gsi.gov.uk)

Information on waivers is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/applying-to-waive-disqualification-early-years-and-childcare-providers>

## Safeguarding protocol for trainees with a suitability issue – PGCE

All applicants are required to complete both branches of the below flow-chart



\*A referral to the DfE should be explored if an individual on the Children's Barred List is known to be applying for a teaching position

Safeguarding protocol for trainees with a suitability issue – Lead Programme Partners

All applicants are required to complete both branches of the below flow-chart

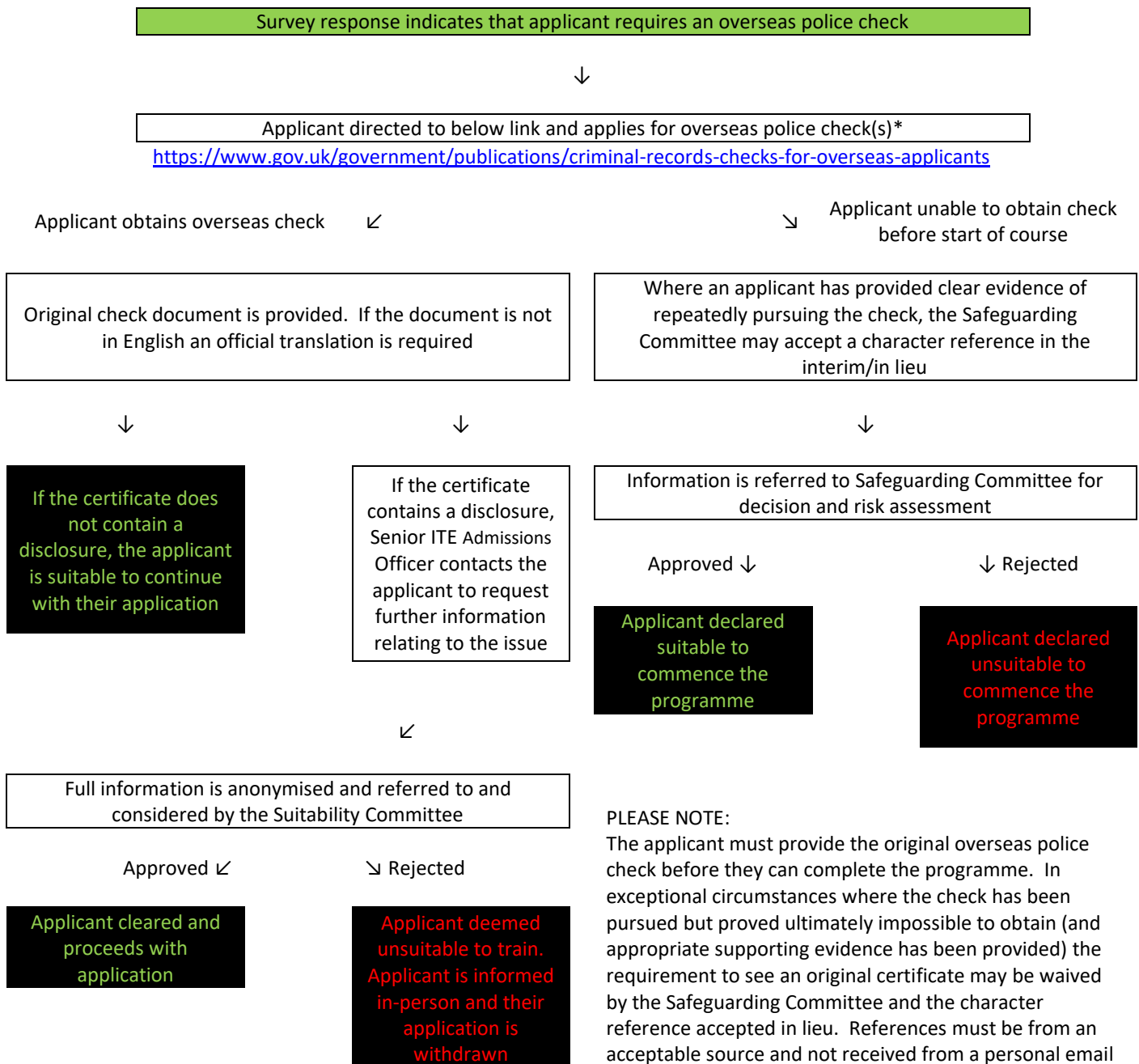


\*A referral to the DfE should be explored if an individual on the Children's Barred List is known to be applying for a teaching position



## Overseas police checks

A DBS check cannot currently check an applicant's criminal record from an overseas country. As such, applicants need to obtain an overseas police check from any non-UK country in which they have resided for a continuous period of six months or longer in the five years preceding the start of the course they have applied for. These checks are commonly referred to as "Certificates of Good Conduct". Non-UK nationals need to obtain an overseas police check from their country of origin unless they have resided in the UK from the age of 17 or younger. Applicants whose first nationality is not British - but whom have since obtained British citizenship - will be required to submit a copy of their UK passport/evidence of permanent residency/evidence of indefinite leave to remain instead of obtaining an overseas police check from their country of origin.



### PLEASE NOTE:

The applicant must provide the original overseas police check before they can complete the programme. In exceptional circumstances where the check has been pursued but proved ultimately impossible to obtain (and appropriate supporting evidence has been provided) the requirement to see an original certificate may be waived by the Safeguarding Committee and the character reference accepted in lieu. References must be from an acceptable source and not received from a personal email address.

\*For international trainees, there are some minor variations according to previous country(ies) of residence.

## **Fitness to Train and Disability Support Procedures**

At The University of Manchester, we recognise the benefits that teachers with a disability can bring to education and actively welcome applications from trainees with a disability. For teacher education courses, whilst needing to ensure that all applicants have the health and physical capacity to teach (ITT Criteria document), we are also mindful of the implications of The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014, and the Equality Act (2010). As such, we address disability positively and do not discriminate against applicants with disabilities. We strive to ensure that such applicants are given every opportunity to succeed with the support of our staff, staff in partner schools and the wider University Support Services.

### **Lead Programme Partners**

This document applies to all 'Core' ITT programmes, including Lead Programme Partner routes within The University of Manchester. For our Programme Partners, The University of Manchester completes the Fitness to Train process. The University of Manchester is responsible for supporting Programme Partner trainees with disabilities and/or learning difficulties during their academic studies.

### **Fitness to Train and Disability Support**

It is important for applicants/trainees and ITT staff to understand the differences between the Fitness to Train medical assessment and an applicant's rights to disability support under the Equality Act. Regular communication between The University of Manchester ITE Administration Team, the Disability Advisory and Support Service (DASS) and Student Occupational Health ensures that all parties who might be involved in discussion with an applicant/trainee who declares a medical condition or a disabled applicant/trainee are fully informed. The Fitness to Train assessment is related to a trainee's time spent in a school environment as a trainee teacher. Wider assessment from the DASS ensures that trainees with disabilities and/or learning difficulties are well supported during their academic studies.

### **Determining Fitness to Train at application stage**

All successful applicants are informed that the offer of a place is **conditional** upon being deemed Fit to Train, and they are required to complete a confidential medical questionnaire. This is returned - preferably by email – and sent to Student Occupational Health. In line with guidance provided in Physical and Mental Fitness to Teach of Teachers and of Entrants to Initial Teacher Training (DfE Circular 04/99) and Able to Teach (TDA 2007), an informed decision is made (See flow chart B).

Sometimes, there may be a delay in receiving confirmation of Fitness to Train or for appropriate support to be put in place (for example, in the case of late applicants). In these instances, a trainee's details will be discussed by a panel on a fortnightly basis to ensure that the process is moving forward swiftly and to enable school partners to be kept fully informed. If necessary, this may result in a trainee needing to interrupt their studies if a recommendation is not confirmed or the adjustments required are deemed reasonable but a suitable placement cannot be found within these constraints for the appropriate period of time.

### **Re-assessing Fitness to Train once training has commenced**

If an applicant fails to disclose a pre-existing disability on the medical form which would have deemed him or her not Fit to Train, the University has the right to reassess the trainee and if necessary, require the trainee to leave the programme.

If a trainee's physical or mental health changes during the year, the University, or the trainee, has the right to ask for a second Fitness to Train assessment (see flow chart B).

### **Accessing Fitness to Train after a break in study**

If a trainee interrupts his/her ITT programme, a further Fitness to Train assessment will be required on their return, regardless of whether the reason for interruption is connected to the trainee's health or capacity to train.

### **Disclosing a disability on application, at interview or at registration**

Disclosure of relevant health matters and disabilities is a requirement of the Fitness to Train process. However, any information disclosed via the Fitness to Train process remains confidential to Student Occupational Health and is used solely for the assessment of Fitness to Train unless permission is given by the applicant/trainee for disclosure to other parties.

Separately, all applicants are given the opportunity to disclose any disabilities at application and again at registration (and at any point during the programme thereafter) in order that appropriate support can be provided by the University. However, an individual's right not to disclose in this context is fully respected.

When applicants are invited for interview, they are given the opportunity to provide details of any medical, special or cultural needs that should be met during the interview process. This information is passed to the admissions tutor and appropriate arrangements are made. If an applicant declares a disability for the first time during the interview, the admissions tutor should refer the applicant to DASS, should an offer of a place on the programme be made.

If an applicant declares a disability on their application form and is subsequently offered a place, this information is passed to the University's DASS who will contact the applicant before the start of the programme inviting them to complete a questionnaire about their support needs. Once registered, the trainee will then receive communications from DASS encouraging them to book an appointment for a meeting with a Disability Support Officer who will then, if appropriate, draw up an Individual Learning Plan (ILP). The ILP provides information to the relevant teaching department (via the DASS) on what support or adjustments are required and whose responsibility it is to provide them. It will not, as a matter of course, provide information on the actual disability or medical condition; it will only provide details of the adjustments needed.

If a trainee declares a disability for the first time at registration or to a member of staff at any other point in the year, a referral to DASS should be discussed and processed if the trainee provides consent.

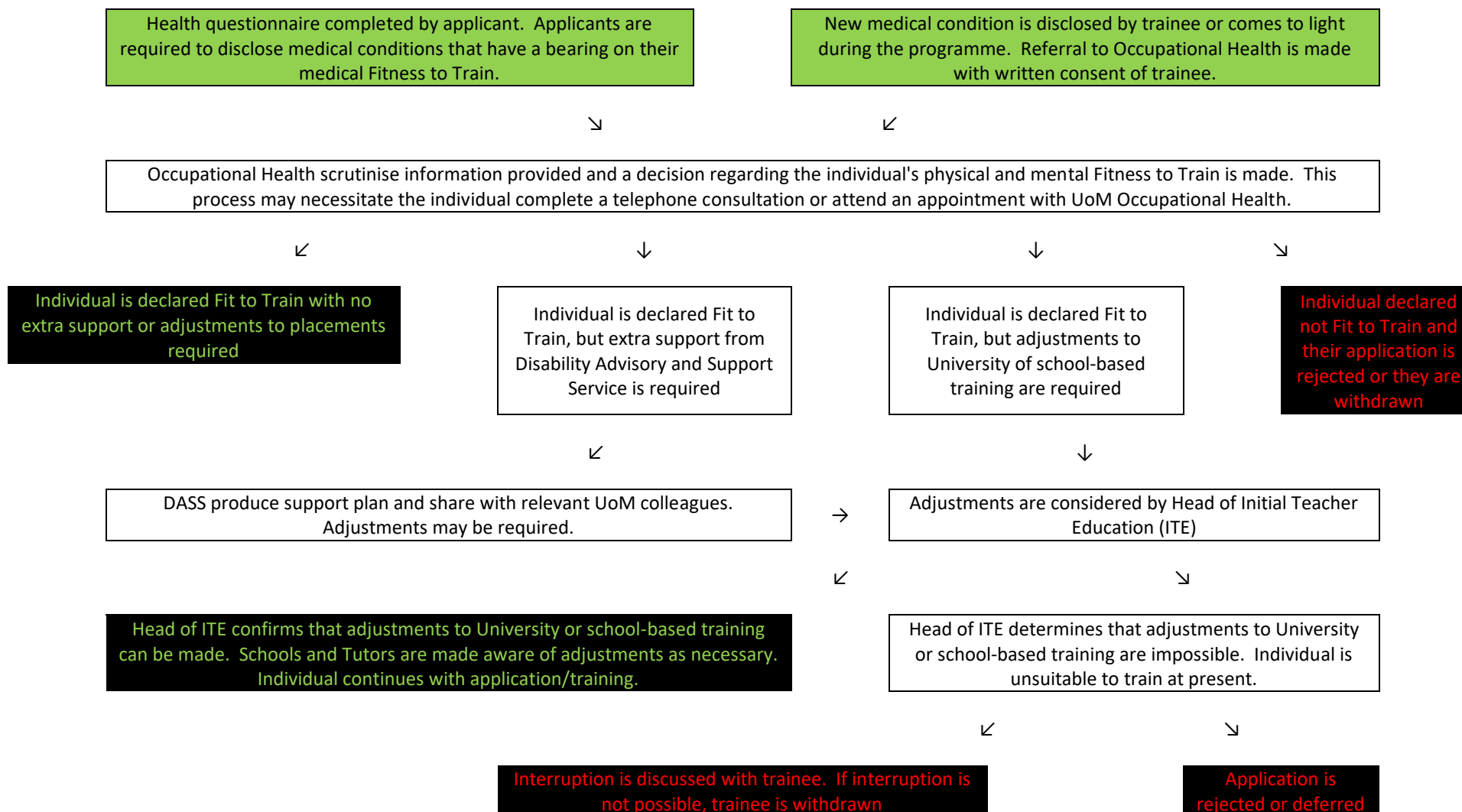
### **Disclosure during the Fitness to Train Assessment process**

If a disability or medical condition is disclosed during the Fitness to Train process which is relevant to the support available from the DASS or Wellbeing Services teams, the Disability Support Officer will invite the applicant to contact the relevant team to discuss support options.

### **Disability disclosure and school placements**

In addition to the Individual Learning Plan process and the Fitness to Train process, there are times when it might be appropriate for a wider group of staff to be made aware of any individual support needs. If the trainee discloses a disability at application stage or at registration, there is an additional process whereby the trainee is contacted by Admissions Administrator for permission for them to be able to inform the trainee's PGCE Programme Director, placement school's ITT Accredited Tutor/Professional Mentor and University Visiting Tutor of their declared disability so that support can be made available as appropriate. The trainee has the choice of giving consent to all, some or none of these individuals.

## Fit to Train process for applicants and trainees



## Returning Trainees

Trainees that interrupt for a period of more than six months will need to complete a new DBS check, Occupational Health questionnaire, suitability questionnaire and overseas police check (as necessary). These trainees will also be subject to renewed Prohibition and GTCE List checks.

Trainees that interrupt for a period of less than six months will be required to submit a self-declaration indicating that their circumstances in relation to all safeguarding checks remain unchanged. The only exception to this is when trainees interrupt on medical grounds. In these cases, trainees will be referred to Occupational Health before returning to study.

Trainees that have not met the requirements for QTS by the end of the academic year will need to return to placement in October of the following academic year. These trainees are also required to submit a self-declaration indicating that their circumstances in relation to all safeguarding checks remain unchanged before continuing their study.

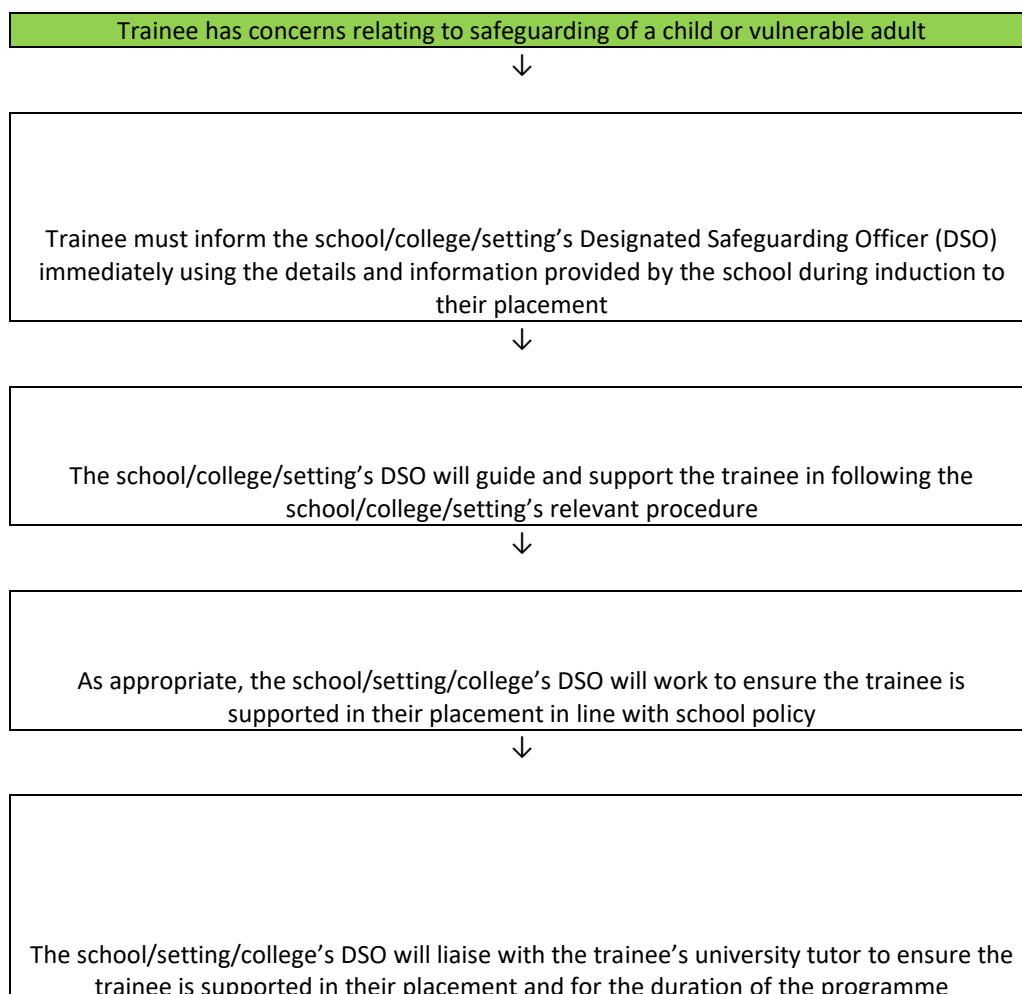
## Management of a Cause for Concern

### Trainee who has safeguarding concerns on Placement

Child Protection is the responsibility of all staff, including trainee teachers.

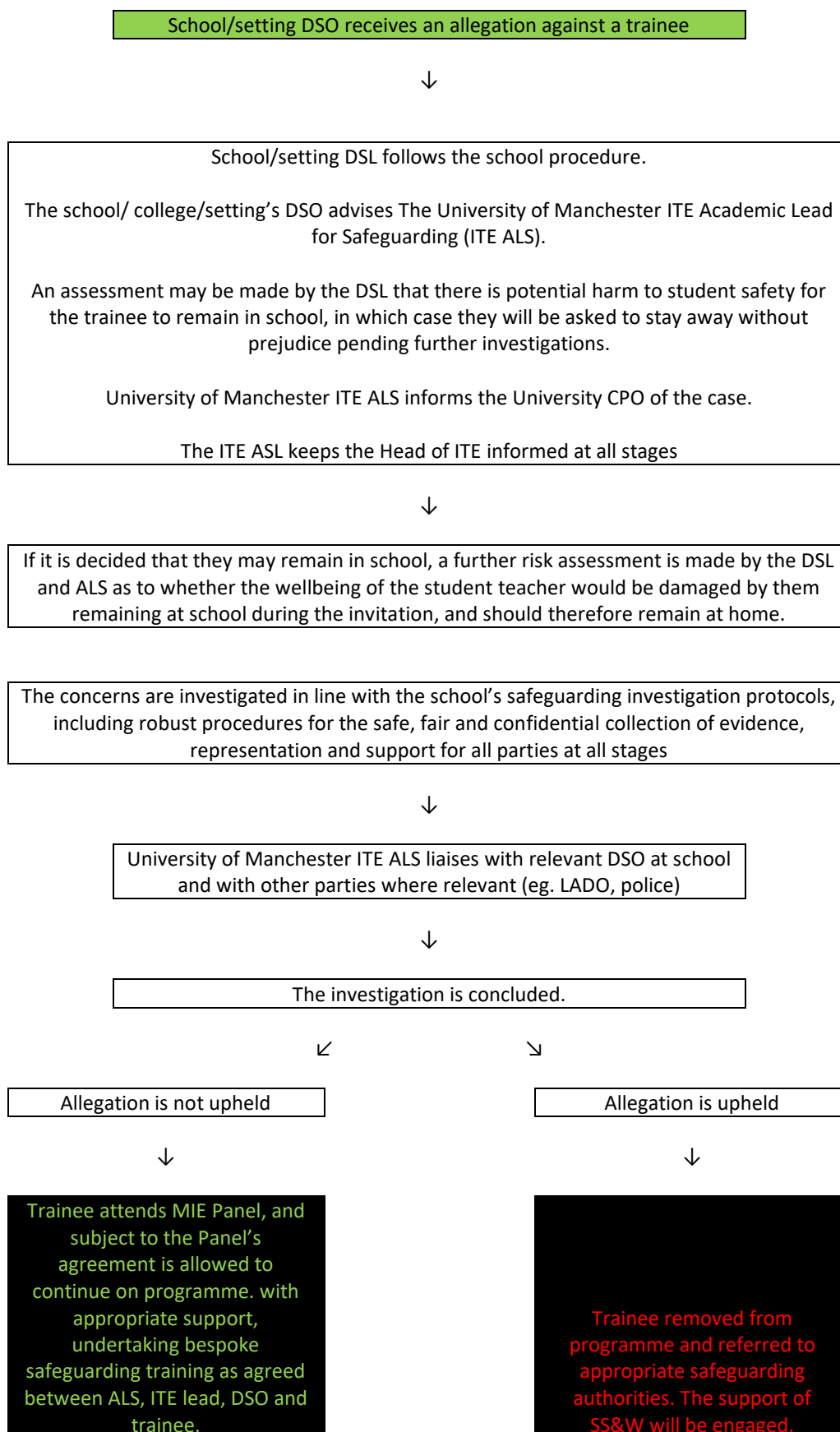
Everyone must ensure that trainees know who the school/setting/college's Designated Safeguarding Officer is. Trainees should also be aware of the school/setting/college's Safeguarding Policy (including their responsibility with regard to E-Safety) and the action they should take if a child discloses any information to them. Trainees should avoid, within the context of the school, where possible, being alone with an individual child. They should also be aware that they should not let the child think information can be kept secret, and should note carefully any comments made.

The following sets out the actions to be taken by a student/trainee should they have a cause for concern related to safeguarding.



## Safeguarding concerns regarding trainee at Placement

Trainees must demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to protect themselves from allegations of abuse. **Allegations of abuse made against a trainee will be fully investigated in accordance with the appropriate safeguarding procedures of the setting.**





## Appendices

### Appendix A: Letter for schools outlining safeguarding processes

Dear Colleague

#### Safeguarding Children

##### Important information regarding safeguarding checks on trainee teachers

I would like to take the opportunity to thank you for your support in working in partnership with the University of Manchester. A critical element of our partnership for all of us is that we meet all safeguarding requirements to protect the interests of the children and young people with whom we work. This letter outlines the processes we follow to achieve this at the start of the PGCE programme.

As the accredited provider of Initial Teacher Education (ITE), the responsibility for ensuring that trainee teachers on an ITE programme - including those on the Lead Programme Partner route - are subject to DBS and Safeguarding checks lies with The University of Manchester. As the provider we must act in accordance with the Secretary of State's requirements for ITE, which includes responsibilities for safeguarding.

Each trainee will present the school with a personalised letter from the University confirming in writing whether or not they have successfully met all of the safeguarding compliance criteria (listed below). To further assure schools that a DBS check has been undertaken, the letter includes DBS numbers as agreed by our Partnership Committees. There is no requirement for trainees to present schools with their DBS Certificate. This is in line with the Statutory Guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education which states that *"where trainee teachers are fee-funded, it is the responsibility of the ITET provider to carry out all necessary checks, and for schools to be given written confirmation from the training provider that these checks have been carried out and that the provider has judged the trainee to be suitable to work with children."*

Trainees are offered places on their programmes of ITE at The University of Manchester subject to meeting the following compliance criteria:

1. An Enhanced Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) check – including a Children's Barred List check and/or any other appropriate background check. All trainees are checked against the Prohibition, GTCE sanction lists and asked to confirm that they are not disqualified from working with children;
2. An overseas police check for all applicants that have spent a continuous period of six months or more in any one non-UK country in the three years prior to commencing the course;
3. Occupational Health screening, which may include completion of a health questionnaire for consideration by The University's Occupational Health Service. All trainees must be judged medically Fit to Train;
4. References being supplied under the UCAS, GTTR or The University's admissions requirements. These will not always be from a previous employer as our entrants may have just completed other full-time education;
5. Face-to-face photographic ID check (in the absence of photographic ID, other proof of identity is required); \*(this will be conducted when face-to-face activities start on campus)
6. Original certificates of qualifications are checked;
7. Any overseas students not from the EU have had their immigration status checked and comply with United Kingdom Visa and Immigration (UKVI) requirements. In addition, overseas students may be required to complete an overseas police check depending on the age at which they moved to the UK;



8. All entrants are required to commit to informing the University if their circumstances change during the programme.

Should any information be disclosed on a DBS Certificate, the trainee is only admitted to the programme following a review by the Suitability Committee (which includes both University and school-based staff). As such, any trainee enrolled on an ITE programme has satisfied our robust and rigorous DBS clearance processes and has been found to be suitable to undertake a course of ITE leading to the recommendation of the award of Qualified Teacher Status (QTS).

The University of Manchester will inform schools in writing of any trainee teachers placed in their schools that have not yet received a completed enhanced DBS check prior to the commencement of their placement, but have been checked against the Children's Barred List. For such trainees, admission to your school/college is at the discretion of the Head teacher. In such instances, it would be advisable that school staff exercise caution by ensuring that trainees are always supervised. For further information, please navigate to relevant guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education>. Similarly, should sLead Programme Partner trainees be invited to schools prior to the commencement of the programme, discretion lies with the Headteacher. The University of Manchester will inform schools when enhanced DBS checks of such trainee teachers are received.

We hope that this letter provides clarity with regard to our processes and that the placement is highly successful for the pupils, staff and trainees in your school.

Yours sincerely

Dr Andrew Howes

Head of Initial Teacher Education

## School Placement Letter

Fully compliant version:

Dear Colleague

**Name:**

**Date of birth:**

**University of Manchester ID:**

**DBS Number**

**Please note** that schools should **NOT** use this information to complete any additional DBS or safeguarding checks on the trainee. These checks are completed by the university in line with DfE statutory requirements for fee-funded students.

**Programme:** Postgraduate Certificate in Education – Primary/Secondary

**I can confirm** that the above-named trainee has satisfied our robust and rigorous clearance processes in relation to safeguarding, and found to be suitable to undertake an ITET course leading to the recommendation of the award of Qualified Teacher Status (QTS).

I would like to take the opportunity to thank you for your support in working in partnership with the University of Manchester. A critical element of our partnership for all of us is that we meet all safeguarding requirements to protect the interests of the children and young people with whom we work.

We look forward to working in continued partnership with you.

Yours sincerely

**Dr Andrew Howes**

**Head of Initial Teacher Education**

**Non-compliant version:**

Dear Colleague

**Name:**

**Date of birth:**

**University of Manchester ID:**

**DBS Number:** N/A

**Please note** that schools should **NOT** use this information to complete any additional DBS or safeguarding checks on the trainee. These checks are completed by the university in line with DfE statutory requirements for fee-funded students.

**Programme:** Postgraduate Certificate in Education - Primary

The above-named trainee has not yet completed all safeguarding checks. It would be advisable that school staff exercise caution by ensuring that this trainee is always supervised. We have no reason for concern, but you should follow the same protocol that you would for any visitor into school. Once all checks have been completed, the above-named trainee will be provided with a confirmatory letter to provide to you. The above-named trainee's current completion of pre-registration checks is below:

Pre-registration check	Status	Notes
Completed a health declaration and confirmed medical fitness to train (where required).	Complete	
Enhanced DBS clearance	Incomplete	Awaiting Result
Overseas police check clearance (if applicable)	Complete	
Satisfactory completion of suitability survey	Complete	
Disqualification declaration	Complete	
GTCE Sanction check	Complete	
Prohibition List check	Complete	

I would like to take the opportunity to thank you for your support in working in partnership with the University of Manchester. A vital element of our partnership for all of us is that we meet all safeguarding requirements to protect the interests of the children and young people with whom we work.

We look forward to working in continued partnership with you.

Yours sincerely

**Dr Andrew Howes**

**Head of Initial Teacher Education**



**DBS and child protection issues relating to initial teacher training (ITT) trainees: Updated guidance from UCET**

***Introduction***

*This leaflet updates ITT providers, local authorities, schools, colleges and others on requirements in respect of DBS checks and disqualification from childcare as they impact on student and trainee teachers. It supersedes previous guidance issued by UCET. It does not represent a comprehensive explanation of the DBS, prohibition and criminal records check requirements and should be read alongside relevant statutory guidance and advice.*

***Key points:***

- *ITT providers are responsible for ensuring that appropriate DBS checks (including checks of the barred list) have been completed for fee paying trainees, and to inform partner schools and colleges that they have been completed. Schools and colleges can record this fact in their central record, although they are not obliged to do so.*
- *ITT providers are, with the permission of the trainee, able to share information relating to the level, date, and number of DBS checks.*

- *All prospective trainees must undergo checks to ensure that they are not prohibited by the Secretary of State and/or are not prohibited to teach in the European Economic Area. The list of prohibited teachers can be found via the Teacher Services System.*
- *Certificates of good conduct should be obtained, where possible, from countries in which applicants have lived as adults. There is no firm rule about how far back these checks should go, although 5-7 years would appear to be standard.*
- *Registered bodies such as ITT providers should not under any circumstances share details of the content of DBS certificates with third parties such as schools or colleges. Schools or colleges may request to see DBS certificates from trainees who will be on placement with them, it is up to the trainee whether they want to share the information, but the school would be within their rights to refuse access if the trainee were to refuse.*
- *Providers should reach agreement with partner schools and colleges about the kind of offences that might, depending on when they were committed, be an issue in regard to school or college placement or agree other procedures to reassure schools that appropriate safeguarding measures are in place (for example, referring individual cases to an independent panel or local authority safeguarding teams).*
- *ITT providers should ask students working or training in relevant settings whether they are disqualified under the terms of the 2018 Childcare Disqualification requirements. Previous rules relating to disqualification by association no longer apply.*
- *Visiting ITE tutors will not generally be engaged in regulated activity and so do not legally need to be DBS checked. However, schools are nonetheless within their rights to expect checks to have been carried out and providers might therefore want to arrange for visiting tutors to be checked.*
- *It is considered good practice for ITE providers to ensure that at least one member of interview panels has been trained in safe recruitment practice.<sup>1</sup>*
- *ITE providers should ensure that trainees understand the importance of safeguarding and are aware of the impact that their online presence may have.*

## **Background**

*ITT providers are responsible for ensuring that they do not admit applicants to training who are unsuited to work with children. Barred list, criminal record checks and prohibition checks are some ways of doing this.*

*ITT partnerships should establish a common understanding of convictions that might pose a barrier to joining a programme of ITT. This should give sufficient reassurance to schools and colleges that no-one who might, in terms of criminal convictions, be a cause for concern will have been recruited. Agreement should also be reached about the type of offence that should lead to a trainee being removed from a course, or the kind of behaviour that might lead to a trainee being referred to the police. Other measures might include establishing a panel, to include a school leader, to consider cases on an individual basis or to refer cases to local authority child protection teams. Such measures should reduce the likelihood of schools requesting sight of DBS information, although they are within their rights to do so if they choose.*

## **Responsibilities in respect of all ITT students**

*All entrants to ITT programmes must by law be checked against the DBS barred list, the list of people prohibited from teaching and subject to criminal record checks. DBS certificates will be issued to individual*

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<sup>1</sup> It is difficult to categorically state what constitutes an interview panel as this will vary across providers. What is important is that individuals can demonstrate that they are up to speed with the latest KCSIE guidance and are compliant, for example, an Admission Document showing how this is addressed through staff training could be one approach

applicants and not to providers. ITT providers have a responsibility to ensure that entrants on fee-paying routes have been subject to DBS checks.,

The responsibilities, which are set out in full in *Keeping Children Safe in Education*, include:

- For trainees on routes other than salaried, the accredited provider such as an HEI or a SCITT is responsible for ensuring that checks have been completed by requesting sight of the original DBS certificate and keeping a record of the fact that it has been seen. Providers should confirm to schools that checks have been made. Schools may ask to see these certificates and record this fact in their central record, although they are not required to do so.

Further checks need not be made by providers, schools or colleges if they have received notification from the responsible organisation that a satisfactory enhanced check has been obtained.

Trainees in England must also undergo a prohibition order check. This is separate to the DBS check, as people can be prohibited from teaching for actions or behaviours that would not necessarily lead to them being included on the DBS barred list. People such as unqualified teachers can be included on the prohibited list, not only those who hold QTS. Fee-paying trainees should therefore be checked, and partner schools notified in a similar way to DBS and barred list clearance. Responsibility in respect of salaried trainees rests with employers. To undertake prohibition order checks, providers will need to be registered with the Employer Access Service. Further information about how to do this can be obtained from <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/teacher-status-checks-information-for-employers>

### **Teachers from overseas and those who have lived or worked overseas**

Trainees from overseas who teach in schools in England should be subject to criminal record checks, including a check of the children's barred list. The Home Office has published guidance on criminal record checks for overseas applicants

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-records-checks-for-overseas-applicants>.

Providers and employers must check that candidates are not subject to a prohibition order issued by the Secretary of State and/or are not prohibited to teach in another country of the European Economic Area (EEA). The lists of prohibited teachers can be found via the Teacher Services System - <https://teacherservices.education.gov.uk>

*Keeping Children Safe in Education* (2022) says that for individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK, 'schools and colleges must make any further checks they think appropriate so that any relevant events that occurred outside the UK can be considered' (paragraph 280-285). Whilst there has been no statutory timescales, many schools and local authorities have been completing these checks for anyone who has lived or worked overseas as adults for three months or more in the last 5-7 years. Following the UK's exit from the EU, schools and colleges should apply the same approach for any individual who has lived or worked outside the UK regardless of whether or not it was on an EEA country or the rest of the world (Para 280)

### **Sharing of information**

It remains an offence under the 1997 Police Act, and a breach of the DBS Code of Practice, for registered bodies such as ITT providers to share copies of DBS certificates, or any information contained in a trainee's disclosure, with third parties such as schools or colleges. Schools & colleges may, however, request to see the original DBS certificate prior to trainee beginning a placement with them. It is the responsibility of the trainee to decide whether to provide this, although they can be refused access to schools if they do not.

*Where an applicant has previously undertaken but failed to complete an ITE programme, it is recommended that the provider ask the applicant to provide a statement from the previous ITE provider confirming the reason for their non-completion.*

### **Childcare Disqualification Regulations**

*ITT providers should have regard to the Childcare (Disqualification) and Childcare (Early Years Provision Free of Charge) (Extended Entitlement) (Amendment) Regulations 2018 when carrying out their duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.*

*Where trainees are salaried, it is the responsibility of the school to ensure they comply with the legislation. If a salaried trainee is, or becomes, disqualified from a childcare role, schools should inform the training provider of this. Where trainees are fee-funded, it is the responsibility of the training provider to ensure that the trainee is not disqualified from childcare or that the trainee has obtained a childcare disqualification waiver from OfSTED.*

*If it is decided that an individual is disqualified, they should be informed on how they can apply for a waiver, see the “Application for an Ofsted waiver from disqualification” section of the guidance. The guidance also includes information about how to comply with the “Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 (as amended in 2013)*

*Further advice on the childcare disqualification arrangements can be obtained from the Department for Education at [mailbox.disqualification@education.gov.uk](mailto:mailbox.disqualification@education.gov.uk) or on 01325 340 409.*

*The 2018 regulations removed disqualification by association for individuals working in childcare in non-domestic settings (e.g. schools and nurseries). The arrangements continue to disqualify individuals working in domestic and non-domestic settings if they themselves have been found to have committed a relevant offence. Disqualification by association continues to apply for individuals providing and working in childcare in domestic settings (e.g., where childcare is provided in a childminder’s home).*

### **Other points**

*Other things to take into account are:*

- It should be made clear to trainees that being cleared to train as a teacher is not the same as being cleared for employment, which will be at the discretion of the school or college concerned.*
- Trainees can, at the Head-teachers’ discretion, go into school pending the completion of a criminal records check provided that checks have been made against the DBS barred and prohibition lists and they have been subject to normal recruitment procedures.*
- There is no requirement to complete separate checks in respect of time spent in different schools*
- Additional checks are not required during the course of programmes, including those lasting for more than three years. Requests for repeat disclosures should be refused unless there is cause for concern.*
- Minor convictions or cautions from several years ago will not be shown on enhanced DBS certificates. Providers, schools and colleges should not ask applicants about any such convictions or cautions.*
- ITT tutors who visit trainees in schools or colleges will not in most cases require DBS certificates, although it might be expedient to have them checked as schools can still request that they are checked and refuse access if they are not.*
- Further checks should not be carried out on anyone entering training after completing a subject knowledge enhancement programme, provided they are continuing their training with the same provider*

and the gap between the ending of the enhancement programme and the beginning of the ITT is shorter than three-months.

### **Further information**

*Statutory guidance on keeping children safe, 2022:*

[Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/101321/Keeping-children-safe-in-education-2022.pdf)

*DFE guidance on the ITT requirements:*

[Initial teacher training \(ITT\): criteria and supporting advice - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/101321/Initial-teacher-training-ITT-criteria-and-supporting-advice-2022.pdf)

[Criminal record checks when you apply for a role: Who can check your criminal record - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/101321/Criminal-record-checks-when-you-apply-for-a-role-Who-can-check-your-criminal-record-2022.pdf)

and [Criminal records checks for overseas applicants - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/101321/Criminal-records-checks-for-overseas-applicants-2022.pdf)

*Childcare (Disqualification) and Childcare (Early Years Provision Free of Charge) (Extended Entitlement) (Amendment) Regulations 2018*

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukSI/2018/794/contents>

**UCET: January 2023**



## **Appendix C: HEOPS Information**

Please see the following link:

[http://www.heops.org.uk/HEOPS\\_Teaching\\_Students\\_fitness\\_standards\\_2014\\_v9.pdf](http://www.heops.org.uk/HEOPS_Teaching_Students_fitness_standards_2014_v9.pdf)

## Appendix D: Referral to the Suitability Committee

If information is disclosed on an enhanced DBS, or an applicant declares an issue that raises concerns in relation to suitability to teach on the suitability questionnaire, the following procedures will occur:

The Senior PGCE Admissions Officer will communicate with the applicant to:

- inform them that they will only be accepted if, on successful completion of the Programme, they are likely to be able to enter the teaching profession
- explain that the decision will be made by the Suitability Committee (which includes members of staff from the University and senior school-based staff) who will discuss the case itself without knowing the applicant's name or personal details
- ask that they provide full details of the offence/incident(s) for referral to the Suitability Committee (on the template on the next page)

A referral will be made to the Suitability Committee and a decision will be made using information from Keeping children safe in education: Statutory guidance for schools and colleges (DfE September 2022), the UCET Guidance (Appendix B) and the Teachers' Standards. Each case is unique and will be examined individually. On occasions deemed appropriate by the Suitability Committee, a trainee could be asked to a face-to-face meeting to provide further detail.

Applicants/trainees are advised to provide a **detailed, specific** supporting statement to the Suitability Committee such that a decision can be made based on the evidence presented. Statements are provided on the template below.

### Important note:

**Should the Suitability Committee agree, based on evidence provided, that an applicant/trainee is deemed as suitable to train as a teacher, this should not be taken as a guarantee that a trainee would be cleared for employment on successful completion of the Programme. Such a decision would be at the discretion of the school/college/setting concerned.**

### Supporting Statement to the Suitability Committee

Please include as much contextual information as possible - even if you feel that the information may be irrelevant or obvious. Omitting significant information and/or providing misleading information will be deemed as unprofessional conduct.

Nature of offence/incident(s)	
Date of offence/incident(s)	
<b>Details of the offence/incident(s)</b>	
Where and when did the offence/incident(s) take place?	
How old were you at the time?	
Why did it happen? Provide clear, detailed contextual information.	
What were the implications of the offence/incident(s)? e.g. received a police caution; led to a fine	
Have there been any subsequent offences/incidents?	
How do you reflect now on the event in question?	
Please provide any other comments or reflections for the committee to consider.	

## **Positive Disclosures – Guidance Notes for Suitability Committee**

The following questions should be used as a guide when considering an applicant/trainee for ITE programmes where a potential suitability issue has been disclosed:

1. Did the conviction(s) occur when the person was a juvenile or an adult?
2. Is there a pattern; is it a one-off or one of several?
3. What is the nature of the conviction(s)?
4. How much time has elapsed since the last conviction/caution?
5. What is the person's attitude towards the offence(s)?
6. What was happening in the applicant's life at the time of the offence(s)?
7. Have these circumstances changed?
8. Is the behaviour which constituted the offence a cause for concern (e.g. drug offences – was it possession of a small amount of cannabis for personal use, or possession of a 'Class A' drug with intent to supply)?
9. How has the applicant/trainee reflected on the incident(s)?

## **Appendix : Disclosure and Barring Service glossary**

The DBS glossary defines a number of terms relating to disclosure:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/142907/Disclosure\\_and\\_Barring\\_Service\\_glossary.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/142907/Disclosure_and_Barring_Service_glossary.pdf)

## Appendix G: Letter to Schools for Trainees with Outstanding Conditions

Dear Colleague

Name:

Date of birth:

University of Manchester ID:

Programme:

Thank you for agreeing to place the above-named University of Manchester ITE trainee at your school. The University of Manchester's safeguarding procedures are set out in the ITE Safeguarding Pack.

The above-named trainee has not yet completed all pre-registration checks. It would be advisable that school staff exercise caution by ensuring that this trainee is always supervised. We have no reason for concern, but you should follow the same protocol that you would for any visitor into school. Once all checks have been completed, the above-named trainee will be provided with a confirmation letter to provide to you. The above-named trainee's current completion of pre-registration checks is below:

Pre-registration check	Completion status	Notes
Face-to-face ID check		
Confirmation of medical Fitness to Train		
Enhanced DBS clearance		
Overseas police check clearance (if applicable)		
Completion of suitability survey		
Provision of academic documentation		
Disqualification declaration		
GTCE Sanction check		
Prohibition List check		

The above-named trainee's continued attendance at placement/teaching experience schools is at the discretion of the respective school's Headteacher. In instances where trainees have not yet received a DBS certificate, we can confirm that a separate barred list check has been completed. For further information, please visit the relevant DfE guidance document at:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1080047/KCSIE\\_2022\\_revised.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1080047/KCSIE_2022_revised.pdf) (p.74 onwards).

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your support in placing University of Manchester ITE trainees. I hope you have a successful and enjoyable term.

Kind regards

Dr Lisa Murtagh

Head of Initial Teacher Education

## **Appendix H: Letter to Trainee following referral (prior to receipt of DBS)**

Name:

Student ID:

PGCE

Dear

### **Suitability Self-Declaration – Positive Disclosure**

Many thanks for providing the statement relating to your suitability self-declaration - positive disclosure.

I am now able to confirm, following a meeting of the sub-committee of the Partnership Committee, that the offence listed on your suitability self-declaration will not prevent you from registering on the PGCE course. This is, however, subject to receipt of the formal DBS documentation and the offences listed being identical to those that you have declared.

Please note, that whilst the Suitability Committee has agreed, based on the evidence provided, that you are deemed as suitable to train as a teacher, this is not a guarantee that you would be cleared for employment on successful completion of the Programme. Such a decision would be at the discretion of the school/college/setting concerned. We recommend that when attending any job interviews that you discuss the details of the disclosure with the interview panel.

Yours sincerely

Dr Andrew Howes

Head of Initial Teacher Education

## **Appendix I: Letter to Trainee following referral (trainee to proceed)**

Name:

Student ID:

PGCE

Dear

### **Suitability Self-Declaration – Positive Disclosure**

Many thanks for providing the statement relating to your suitability self-declaration - positive disclosure.

I am now able to confirm, following a meeting of the sub-committee of the Partnership Committee, that the offence listed on your enhanced DBS will not prevent you from registering on the PGCE course.

Please note, that whilst the Suitability Committee has agreed, based on the evidence provided, that you are deemed as suitable to train as a teacher, this is not a guarantee that you would be cleared for employment on successful completion of the Programme. Such a decision would be at the discretion of the school/college/setting concerned. We recommend that when attending any job interviews that you discuss the details of the disclosure with the interview panel.

Yours sincerely

Dr Andrew Howes

Head of Initial Teacher Education



## **Appendix J: Letter to Trainee following referral (trainee not to proceed/meeting required)**

Name:

Student ID:

PGCE

Dear

### **Suitability Self-Declaration – Positive Disclosure**

Please could you attend a meeting with XX (Programme Director) on DATE, TIME, and VENUE to discuss the outcome of the sub-committee of the Partnership Committee in relation to the positive disclosure on your enhanced DBS?

Yours sincerely

Dr Andrew Howes

Head of Initial Teacher Education

## **Appendix K: Letter to Trainee Requesting Information in relation to a Positive Disclosure**

Name:

Student ID:

PGCE

Dear

### **Suitability Self-Declaration – DBS Positive Disclosure**

As (delete as appropriate) you have disclosed an incident on your suitability questionnaire/a disclosure has appeared on your enhanced DBS, a referral is being made to the Suitability Committee and a decision will be made, using information from the Keeping Children Safe in Education Statutory: guidance for schools and colleges (DfE September 2022) and UCET Guidance, regarding your fitness to proceed with the PGCE Programme.

You will be informed of the decision, normally within two working weeks.

Please complete the form below with as much detail as possible. This will allow the Suitability Committee at The University of Manchester to make an informed decision regarding your situation. Your statement must be anonymous and will be treated confidentially.

Yours sincerely

Dr Andrew Howes

Head of Initial Teacher Education