



Application Pack

Senior Trust SENCO



Job Title	Senior Trust SENCO
Salary & Grade	L6-L10
Contract	Permanent, Full time
Reporting to	Head of SEND and Inclusion
Start Date	January 2027

Dear Applicant

Thank you for your interest in the role of Senior Trust SENCO.

This is an exciting opportunity to join our established SEND and Inclusion team at an important stage in the Trust's development. We are looking for an experienced, knowledgeable and highly skilled SEND practitioner who shares our ambition to ensure that every child, regardless of need or starting point, receives high-quality provision and is able to thrive.

The Senior Trust SENCO will be a key leadership role within our Trust SEND and Inclusion structure. Working directly to the **Head of SEND and Inclusion**, you will provide professional leadership and line management to our team of Trust SENCOs, while also retaining designated SENCO responsibilities within identified schools. You will work flexibly across our academies, providing additional capacity, advice, challenge and support where this is required.

The role sits alongside our **Lead Practitioner for Inclusive Teaching** and **Deputy Trust Behaviour and Inclusion Lead**. Together, these posts provide specialist leadership across complementary areas of SEND, inclusive teaching, behaviour and inclusion. All three roles work under the strategic leadership of the Head of SEND and Inclusion and contribute to the continued development of consistent, high-quality practice across Waterton.

This is therefore much more than a traditional school-based SENCO role. You will coach and develop other SENCOs, support leaders to evaluate and strengthen SEND provision, contribute to Trust-wide improvement work and help translate strategy into strong day-to-day practice within schools. At the same time, you will maintain direct experience of SENCO practice, ensuring that your leadership remains closely connected to the realities faced by pupils, families and school teams.

We are looking for someone who combines excellent SEND knowledge with credibility as a leader and practitioner. You will need to be confident supporting and challenging colleagues, able to analyse provision and identify priorities quickly, and skilled at building positive professional relationships with headteachers, SENCOs, teachers, support staff, families and external partners.

Our Trust principle is "**Success is a shared experience**", and this is particularly important within SEND and Inclusion. We believe that improving outcomes for pupils with SEND is a collective responsibility and that the strongest practice develops through collaboration, shared expertise, high expectations and a relentless focus on what makes the greatest difference for children.

If you are an experienced SENCO who is ready to take the next step into a wider leadership role, while remaining closely connected to practice in schools, we would be delighted to hear from you.

About Us

Waterton Academy Trust is a thriving and values-led partnership of schools committed to giving every child the best possible start in life.

Established in 2014 with Walton Primary Academy as its founding member, the Trust has grown steadily and strategically, guided by a strong moral purpose and a deep understanding of the communities we serve. We believe that **success is a shared experience** – every learner, every member of staff, and every school should flourish, together.

By the end of 2026, we expect to support more than 4,000 pupils across our schools, with a dedicated team of over 600 staff and an annual turnover approaching £28 million.

Our growth has not been about size alone - it reflects the strength of our educational offer, the diversity of our provision, and the depth of our partnerships.

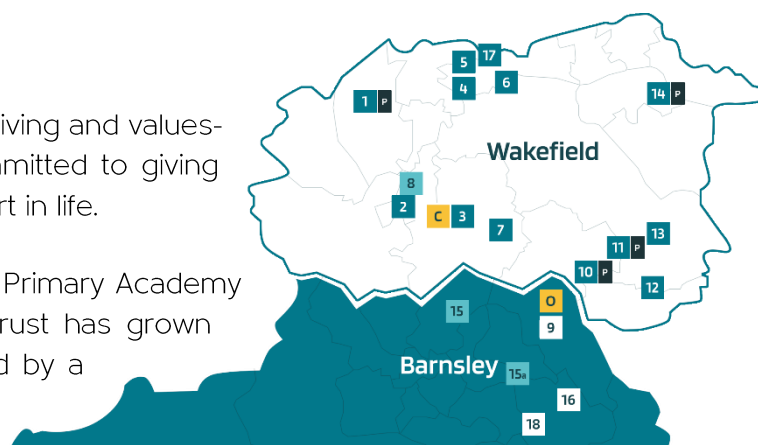
We work across two key regions - Wakefield and Barnsley - and are proud to be seen as a trusted and collaborative presence within the wider education system. All our schools are primary-phase, and collaboration sits at the heart of how we work.

In response to local need, our first independent special academy – Newstead Academy opened in Barnsley in 2023 and has already grown to include a satellite site based at Hunningley. Building on this success, we have opened a new specialist setting - Hammer Lane Academy - in Wakefield in September 2025. These developments are a testament to our commitment to inclusive education and our ability to work alongside local partners to meet the needs of all learners.



We also know that a great start in education begins early. That's why we've expanded our offer to include four pre-school settings, with plans for further growth.

If you share our belief that all children deserve the highest-quality education and want to be part of a forward-thinking, people-centred organisation, we'd love to hear from you.



Our Locations

Waterton Offices

C - Centre for Excellence
O - Operations Office

Waterton Schools

- 1 - Wrenthorpe Academy
- 1p - Wrenthorpe Pre-School
- 2 - Sharlston Community School
- 3 - Walton Primary Academy
- 4 - Normanton Junior Academy
- 5 - Lee Brigg Infant and Nursery School
- 6 - Normanton Common Primary Academy
- 7 - Crofton Infant's School
- 8 - Hammer Lane Academy
- 9 - Churchfield Primary School
- 10 - King's Meadow Academy
- 10p - The Meadow Pre-School
- 11 - West End Academy
- 11p - The Woodland Pre-School
- 12 - South Kirkby Academy
- 13 - Ackworth Mill Dam School
- 14 - Cherry Tree Academy
- 14p - Cherry Blossom Pre-School
- 15 - Newstead Academy
- 15a - Hunningley Academy
- 16 - Kings Oak Primary
- 17 - Alfton Junior Academy
- 18 - Jump Primary Academy

Our Vision and Values

The Trust is proud of its shared vision and values, which are embedded across all aspects of our work.

This vision – centred on collaboration, aspiration, enjoyment, and equity – guides our actions and unites our schools in a common purpose. We aim to create a culture where success is a shared experience, every child enjoys a rich and relevant curriculum, and all pupils are supported to achieve their full potential, regardless of background.

Candidates interested in joining the Trust are encouraged to explore our vision and values to ensure they align with their own ethos and long-term aspirations.



Our Pupils

Waterton Academy Trust serves communities with some of the highest levels of deprivation in the region, and in the country. In response, we place children's well-being, voice, and enrichment at the very heart of our work. We believe that every pupil, regardless of background, should feel the full benefit of belonging to a trust that puts their experience of school first.

Pupil voice is not just encouraged - it's embedded in our decision-making. Our elected Children's Parliament meets regularly with the CEO and Headteachers, sharing their views and shaping priorities for improvement. Their efforts were recognised nationally, receiving a letter of commendation from former Prime Minister Theresa May.

Beyond the classroom, we create rich and joyful experiences that promote creativity, confidence, and healthy living. Our roaming art gallery, Waterton's Got Talent, and Waterton Young Chef of the Year celebrate the diverse talents of our pupils, while our annual MATlympics and extensive sports offer promote inclusion, teamwork, and well-being.

These experiences are not just events; they are integral to our mission – ensuring that every child in a Waterton school is heard, celebrated, and empowered to thrive.

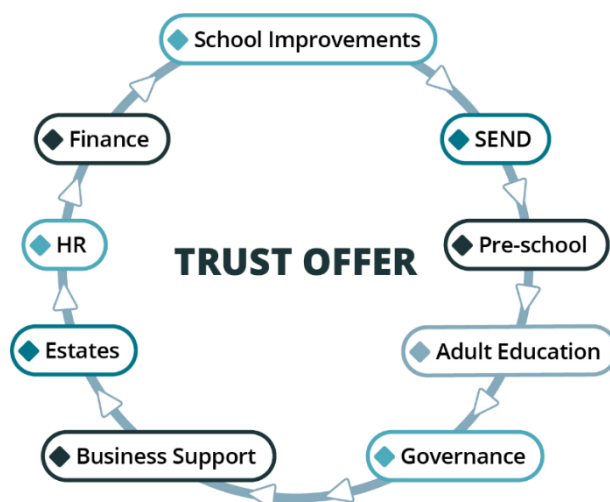


Trust Offer

At Waterton Academy Trust, we are proud to provide a consistent, high-quality offer that enables every school - regardless of size, Ofsted rating, or context - to thrive. Our Trust Offer ensures that all academies benefit from the same comprehensive package of educational and operational support, tailored to meet individual school needs while remaining accessible to all.

This offer is underpinned by our belief that school leaders should be able to focus their time and energy on what matters most: delivering excellent teaching and learning. By reducing operational burdens and providing high-quality, evidence-informed school improvement support, we create the conditions in which pupils and staff can flourish.

Our investment in a strong and expert central team means that every school can draw upon specialist support in areas such as safeguarding, governance, curriculum, finance, HR, IT, estates, marketing, and data protection. This support is complemented by access to legal advice and professional development, including high-impact CPD, leadership development, and coaching.



The Trust Offer is more than a service package - it's a reflection of our values. It supports excellence, equity, and collaboration across all Waterton schools, enabling leaders to deliver the very best for their pupils, every day.

To read about impact in 2025, please read our annual report to stakeholders on the Trust website.

<https://www.watertonacademytrust.org/academies/trust-performance/>

Job Description – Senior Trust SENCO

Job Title	Senior Trust SENCO
Reporting to	Head of SEND and Inclusion
Grade	L6-L10

Key Responsibilities	1. Leadership and Management of Trust SENCOs • Provide direct line management, professional supervision and support to Trust SENCOs. • Establish clear expectations regarding the quality, consistency and impact of SENCO practice. • Undertake regular professional meetings, performance discussions and review of agreed priorities with Trust SENCOs. • Coach, mentor and professionally challenge SENCOs, supporting their continued development and increasing their confidence, knowledge and leadership capacity. • Support SENCOs to prioritise effectively and deploy their time where it will have the greatest impact. • Promote consistency of systems and expectations across schools while recognising individual school context. • Identify strengths within the SENCO team and create opportunities for expertise and effective practice to be shared. • Identify areas of concern or underperformance promptly and agree appropriate support and improvement actions with the Head of SEND and Inclusion. • Support induction and development of newly appointed SENCOs. 2. Designated SENCO Responsibilities For allocated academies, fulfil the professional and statutory responsibilities of the SENCO, including: • Coordinating provision for pupils with SEND. • Supporting the identification and assessment of pupils' needs. • Ensuring an effective graduated approach to SEND provision. • Supporting the development, implementation and review of appropriate support plans and provision. • Coordinating Education, Health and Care Plan processes and annual reviews where appropriate. • Ensuring provision reflects individual needs and agreed outcomes. • Working closely with headteachers, teachers, teaching assistants and other professionals. • Supporting effective communication and partnership with parents and carers. • Liaising with local authorities, health professionals and other external agencies. • Supporting effective transition between settings and phases. • Maintaining accurate, purposeful and compliant SEND records and systems.
----------------------	---

	- Supporting leaders to ensure statutory duties relating to SEND are fulfilled. 3. Trust-wide SEND Support - Provide additional SENCO leadership and capacity within academies where needs, circumstances or improvement priorities require it. - Work across schools to review SEND provision and identify strengths, risks and priorities for development. - Provide advice, coaching, modelling and professional challenge to school leaders, SENCOs, teachers and support staff. - Support schools experiencing complex SEND circumstances, significant changes in cohort need or pressures relating to SEND provision. - Support schools to strengthen identification, provision, assessment and review processes. - Assist with complex individual pupil cases where Trust-level SEND involvement is appropriate. - Support effective relationships and communication between schools, families, local authorities and external professionals where cases require escalation or additional expertise. - Support schools to develop sustainable provision rather than creating dependency on central Trust support. 4. Quality Assurance and Improvement - Contribute to Trust SEND quality assurance activities as directed by the Head of SEND and Inclusion. - Support the evaluation of SEND provision through learning walks, provision reviews, case sampling, pupil discussions, staff discussions, data analysis and review of documentation. - Evaluate the quality and impact of SEND provision rather than focusing solely on procedural compliance. - Support leaders to translate evaluation findings into clear and manageable improvement actions. - Monitor agreed SEND improvement priorities and support schools to evidence impact. - Contribute to Trust systems for identifying schools or aspects of practice requiring additional support. - Support SENCOs to prepare confidently for external scrutiny and articulate the impact of their SEND provision. - Promote a culture in which SEND improvement is continuous and embedded within whole-school improvement. 5. Strategic Development and Implementation Under the direction of the Head of SEND and Inclusion: - Lead or contribute to agreed Trust-wide SEND projects and areas of development. - Support the implementation of the Trust's SEND and Inclusion strategy across academies. - Translate strategic priorities into effective operational practice.
--	--

	• Contribute professional expertise to the development and review of Trust guidance, systems, tools and resources. • Support the development of consistent approaches to SEND across Waterton. • Analyse themes emerging from SENCO practice, pupil need and school support and report these to the Head of SEND and Inclusion. • Contribute to planning for emerging SEND needs across the Trust. • Support the evaluation of the impact of Trust SEND initiatives. • Contribute to Trust SEND networks, professional development and leadership activity. Overall accountability for the strategic direction of SEND and Inclusion across Waterton Academy Trust remains with the Head of SEND and Inclusion. 6. SEND Provision and Inclusive Practice • Champion ambitious expectations for pupils with SEND. • Promote the principle that pupils with SEND are the responsibility of every teacher and every school leader. • Support schools to develop provision that enables pupils with SEND to access, participate in and benefit from the full curriculum and wider life of the school. • Work collaboratively with the Lead Practitioner for Inclusive Teaching to strengthen adaptive teaching and classroom practice. • Work collaboratively with the Deputy Trust Behaviour and Inclusion Lead where SEND, behaviour, regulation, attendance or inclusion needs intersect. • Ensure recommendations regarding additional or specialist provision complement, rather than replace, high-quality inclusive classroom practice. • Support appropriate deployment of teaching assistants and additional adults so that support develops pupil independence and improves outcomes. 7. Statutory Compliance and Professional Advice • Maintain an excellent working knowledge of SEND legislation, statutory guidance and national developments. • Provide accurate and timely advice to SENCOs and school leaders regarding statutory SEND responsibilities. • Support schools in the effective implementation of the SEND Code of Practice and relevant legislation. • Support appropriate processes relating to Education, Health and Care Plans, consultations, annual reviews and requests for statutory assessment. • Identify potential compliance concerns and escalate significant risks to the Head of SEND and Inclusion. • Contribute to the review and implementation of Trust SEND policies and procedures.
--	---

	- Ensure professional advice balances statutory requirements with the needs and best interests of pupils. 8. Data, Provision and Impact - Support SENCOs and school leaders to use SEND information and data intelligently. - Analyse patterns including identification of need, attainment, progress, attendance, behaviour, suspensions, exclusions, provision and pupil outcomes where relevant. - Use quantitative and qualitative information to identify priorities and evaluate impact. - Support schools to evaluate whether provision is making a demonstrable difference to pupils. - Challenge practices or interventions where impact cannot be evidenced. - Support effective use of resources and provision mapping to ensure provision is purposeful and responsive to need. 9. Professional Development - Identify common professional development needs across the Trust SENCO team. - Design and deliver professional development, coaching and guidance for SENCOs and other colleagues. - Contribute to the Trust SENCO Network and other professional forums. - Facilitate opportunities for SENCOs to learn from one another and from strong practice across the Trust. - Remain informed about research, national SEND developments and emerging practice. - Model reflective, evidence-informed professional practice. 10. Partnership Working - Develop strong professional relationships with headteachers, executive leaders and school leadership teams. - Work constructively with local authorities, health services and other external agencies. - Promote positive and respectful relationships with parents and carers. - Support SENCOs in managing complex conversations professionally and constructively. - Represent the Trust professionally at meetings and external forums when requested by the Head of SEND and Inclusion. - Develop effective partnerships that strengthen provision and outcomes for pupils.
Additional Duties	- Demonstrate commitment to Waterton Academy Trust’s vision, values and principle that “Success is a shared experience.” - Promote equality, inclusion and ambitious expectations for all pupils.

	• Act at all times in accordance with safeguarding requirements and Trust policies. • Maintain appropriate professional confidentiality. • Participate in relevant Trust meetings, training and professional development. • Undertake other duties commensurate with the seniority and purpose of the role as reasonably directed by the Head of SEND and Inclusion.
Expectations of All Employees	• Represent and promote Waterton Academy Trust values internally and externally • Ensure that all stakeholders receive an excellent customer service experience in all dealings with you and with Waterton Academy Trust • Deliver your day-to-day duties consistently with the agreed service level • Actively promote and act, at all times, in accordance with Trust policies, e.g. Code of Conduct, Health and Safety, Equal Opportunities and Safeguarding • Make a commitment and contribution to the overall ethos and values of the trust, upholding these in all activities connected with the role • Undertake other duties commensurate with the job level • Promote high standards of personal professional conduct in accordance with the Trust Employee Code of Conduct
Additional Information	The Senior Trust SENCO forms part of the central SEND and Inclusion leadership structure. The postholder works directly to the Head of SEND and Inclusion, who retains overall strategic responsibility and accountability for SEND and Inclusion across Waterton Academy Trust. The Senior Trust SENCO works at an equivalent level to the: • Lead Practitioner for Inclusive Teaching, whose primary remit is developing inclusive teaching and classroom practice across the Trust; and • Deputy Trust Behaviour and Inclusion Lead, whose primary remit is supporting behaviour, relational practice and wider inclusion. These roles work collaboratively and flexibly according to Trust and school priorities. The distinctive leadership responsibility of the Senior Trust SENCO is the direct professional line management and development of the Trust SENCO team, alongside their own SENCO responsibilities and wider Trust SEND work.
Characteristics of the Post	Employees are encouraged to participate in training activities in order to enhance their own personal development. The employment checks are required: • Evidence of entitlement to work in the U.K. • Evidence of essential qualifications - see job specification • Two satisfactory references • Confirmation of medical fitness for employment • Registration with appropriate bodies (where applicable)

	The following employment checks are required for those positions which are based in a school or working with vulnerable young people and adults: Evidence of a satisfactory safeguarding check e.g. DBS check at the relevant level.
--	--

Person Specification – Senior Trust SENCO

AF: Application Form

OT: Occupational Task

CQ: Certificates/Qualifications

I: Presentation

I: Interview

R: Reference

Qualifications	Essential	Desirable
Qualified Teacher Status.	X	
Holds the statutory SENCO qualification appropriate to their appointment, including the National Award for SEN Coordination or NPQ for SENCO, as applicable.	X	
Evidence of sustained and relevant professional development relating to SEND.	X	
Commitment to continued professional learning and evidence-informed practice.	X	
Leadership qualification or evidence of substantial leadership development.		X
Further specialist SEND qualification or postgraduate study.		X
Training or accreditation relevant to coaching, leadership or school improvement		X
Experience	Essential	Desirable
Significant and successful experience as a SENCO.	X	
Successful experience of leading SEND provision within a school.	X	
Experience of coordinating provision for pupils with a broad range of SEND	X	
Experience of leading and managing complex SEND cases.	X	
Experience of working effectively with parents, carers, local authorities and external professionals.	X	
Experience of the Education, Health and Care Plan process, including annual reviews and statutory assessment processes.	X	
Experience of evaluating the effectiveness and impact of SEND provision.	X	
Evidence of improving provision and outcomes for pupils with SEND.	X	
Experience of coaching, supporting or professionally developing colleagues.	X	
Experience of working effectively with senior leaders to influence whole-school practice.	X	
Experience of working across more than one school or setting.		X
Experience within a multi-academy trust, local authority, school improvement or advisory capacity.		X
Experience of directly line managing SENCOs or other experienced professionals.		X
Experience of supporting schools through SEND improvement activity.		X

Experience across different phases or a range of school contexts.		X
Experience contributing to Trust-wide or organisation-wide development		X
Knowledge and Understanding	Essential	Desirable
The SEND Code of Practice and relevant SEND legislation.	X	
The statutory responsibilities of schools, SENCOs and governing bodies/trustees.	X	
The graduated approach to identifying and meeting SEND.	X	
Education, Health and Care needs assessment and planning processes.	X	
Effective identification, assessment, provision and review.	X	
High-quality inclusive and adaptive teaching.	X	
Effective use and deployment of teaching assistants and additional adults.	X	
The importance of curriculum access and ambitious expectations for pupils with SEND.	X	
The relationship between SEND, behaviour, communication, wellbeing, attendance and inclusion.	X	
Effective transition planning for pupils with SEND.	X	
Effective partnership working with families.	X	
The use of data and other evidence to evaluate provision and impact.	X	
Current national developments relating to SEND and inclusion.	X	
Knowledge of SEND funding and resource allocation		X
Understanding of the strategic challenges facing SEND within schools, trusts and local authorities.		X
Knowledge of school improvement methodology and implementation.		X
Leadership and Management	Essential	Desirable
Be a credible and confident SEND leader capable of influencing experienced professionals.	X	
Demonstrate the ability to line manage, develop and hold colleagues to account.	X	
Be able to coach colleagues while also providing appropriate professional challenge.	X	
Establish clear expectations and follow through on agreed actions.	X	
Be able to identify strengths and development needs accurately.	X	
Make effective professional judgements in complex circumstances.	X	
Be able to distinguish between issues requiring direct intervention and those where colleagues should be supported to develop their own solutions.	X	

Build leadership capacity in others rather than creating dependency.	X	
Be able to manage competing priorities across several schools.	X	
Work confidently with headteachers and senior leaders.	X	
Know when matters should be escalated to the Head of SEND and Inclusion.	X	
Understand and respect the distinction between contributing to Trust strategy and holding overall strategic accountability.	X	
School Improvement and Analytical Skills	Essential	Desirable
Be able to evaluate SEND provision accurately and identify the most important priorities for improvement.	X	
Analyse information from a range of sources and identify underlying patterns and causes.	X	
Use data intelligently without relying on data alone to determine quality.	X	
Be able to move confidently between strategic discussion and detailed pupil-level practice.	X	
Translate evaluation into clear, proportionate and achievable actions.	X	
Monitor implementation and evaluate whether actions are having the intended impact.	X	
Communicate complex SEND information clearly to different audiences.	X	
Produce high-quality written reports, recommendations and professional documentation.	X	
Professional Practice	Essential	Desirable
Demonstrate consistently high expectations for pupils with SEND.	X	
Believe strongly in inclusive education and pupils' entitlement to high-quality teaching.	X	
Have the credibility to model excellent SENCO practice.	X	
Take a solution-focused and practical approach to supporting schools.	X	
Demonstrate professional curiosity and an ability to ask challenging questions constructively.	X	
Be willing to work directly alongside colleagues within schools rather than operating solely in an advisory capacity.	X	
Maintain a strong focus on improving children's lived experience and outcomes.	X	
Communication and Relationships	Essential	Desirable
Communicate with clarity, confidence and sensitivity.	X	
Build strong professional relationships quickly.	X	
Be able to manage difficult conversations professionally.	X	
Demonstrate excellent listening skills.	X	

Work effectively with professionals from different disciplines and organisations.	X	
Build positive relationships with parents and carers, including where circumstances are complex or challenging.	X	
Adapt communication appropriately for different audiences.	X	
Be able to challenge practice without damaging productive professional relationships.	X	
Personal Qualities	Essential	Desirable
Highly organised and able to work effectively across several settings.	X	
Reflective and open to professional challenge.	X	
Resilient and calm when managing complex situations.	X	
Flexible and responsive to changing Trust priorities.	X	
Collaborative rather than territorial in their approach to leadership.	X	
Able to work independently while remaining accountable to the Head of SEND and Inclusion	X	
Professionally courageous and willing to address poor or inconsistent practice.	X	
Committed to equity, inclusion and improving outcomes for vulnerable pupils.	X	
Able to maintain confidentiality and exercise sound professional judgement.	X	
Committed to Waterton Academy Trust's principle that "Success is a shared experience."	X	
Safeguarding	Essential	Desirable
Demonstrates a strong commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.	X	
Understands the particular safeguarding vulnerabilities that may affect pupils with SEND.	X	
Demonstrates appropriate professional judgement, conduct and confidentiality.	X	
Is suitable to work with children and willing to undertake all required safer recruitment checks.	X	
Suitability to work with children and young people	Essential	Desirable
Satisfactory DBS disclosure and standard Trust pre-secondment checks	X	
Ability to work in a way that promotes the safety and well-being of learners	X	

Next Steps

For further information about the opportunity please contact Laura Thresh on lthresh@watertonacademytrust.org.

To Apply

Please submit applications via My New Term.

Selection Timeline

Closing Date: Monday 19th October 2026 – midday

Shortlisting: Monday 19th October 2026

Interviews: Tuesday 20th October – Friday 23rd October 2026

Start Date: January 2027

Waterton Academy Trust is wholly committed to ensuring children and young people are fully supported and safe. We are dedicated to the safeguarding of all children and young people whilst promoting their welfare and expect all staff and volunteers to share this responsibility. An enhanced DBS check is required for the successful candidate, this process is completed by an online third party company. The position is also subject to two satisfactory references. Shortlisted candidates will be asked to provide details of any unspent convictions and those that would not be filtered, prior to the date of interview. We are committed to treating all applicants fairly and have a policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders which is available to applicants on request. Waterton Academy Trust is wholly committed in ensuring that all employees, future employees and applicants are treated equally regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation.

It is an offence to apply for the role if the applicant is barred from engaging in regulated activity relevant to children.