

Volunteering Policy

This policy sets out the school's approach to recruiting, managing and supporting volunteers within school and is part of the school's safeguarding systems.

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1 Why do we need volunteers?

Volunteers at our school bring with them a range of skills and experience that can enhance the learning opportunities of children at our school. We welcome and encourage volunteers from the local community.

Our volunteers include:

- Governors
- Parents of pupils
- Ex-pupils
- Students on work experience
- Local residents

The types of activities that volunteers are engaged in include:

- Listening to children read
- Working with small groups of children
- Working with individual children
- Accompanying school visits
- Sharing their skills/knowledge by talking to the class

2 Becoming a volunteer

The school should create a volunteering experience that is open to everyone, whatever age, skill level or background subject to safeguarding checks.

Whilst volunteers play an important role and are often seen by children as being safe and trustworthy adults, the nature of voluntary roles varies, therefore the school should undertake a written risk assessment and use their professional judgement and experience when deciding what checks, if any, are required.

The risk assessment should consider:

- the nature of the work with children, especially if it will constitute regulated activity, including the level of supervision
- what the school knows about the volunteer, including formal or informal information offered by staff, parents and other volunteers
- whether the volunteer has other employment or undertakes voluntary activities where referees can advise on their suitability
- whether the role is eligible for a DBS check, and if it is, the level of the check.

Details of the risk assessment should be recorded.

2.1 School Governors

Governors in maintained schools are required to have an enhanced DBS check. The Headteacher should arrange the certificate for any governors who do not already have one.

Governance is not a regulated activity relating to children, so governors do not need a children's barred list check unless, in addition to their governance duties, they also engage in regulated activity.

Schools should also carry out a section 128 check for school governors, because a person prevented from participating in the management of an independent school by a section 128 direction, is also disqualified from being a governor of a maintained school.

Schools should use the free Employer Secure Access sign-in portal via the TRA Teacher Services web page, to check if a person they propose to recruit as a governor is prohibited or restricted from taking part in the management or governance of a school as a result of being subject to a section 128 direction. There is no requirement for schools to record this information on the single central record, but they can if they choose to.

2.2 Regular volunteers

All regular volunteers will be required to complete the Volunteer Application Form with their contact details, type of activities they would like to help with and the times they are available to help.

In line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024, the school will need to conduct safer recruitment checks and the volunteer will be required to provide the contact details of 2 referees. A referee should not be a family member and will preferably be a previous employer or representative of an organisation where the applicant has previously worked or volunteered but can also be a character reference.

The school should obtain an enhanced DBS check (which should include children's barred list information) for all volunteers who are new to working in regulated activity with children, i.e. where they are unsupervised and teach or look after children regularly or provide personal care on a one-off basis in schools.

Regular volunteers will also be required to complete a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) application form or provide details of an existing DBS certificate (which should include children's barred list information). It is the headteacher's responsibility to co-ordinate this and the school will pay for any associated costs.

Volunteers do not have to be re-checked if they have already had a DBS check (which should include children's barred list information if engaging in regulated activity). However, if the school has any concerns, a new DBS application can be considered.

Before starting to help in school, volunteers must complete the Regular Volunteer Agreement, which sets out the school's expectation of volunteers and asks volunteers to confirm they have received a copy of this policy. The volunteer agreement can be ended at any time.

2.3 Volunteer for particular activity

Those wishing to volunteer on a one-off basis e.g. for a school outing, should speak to the relevant class teacher. Where a volunteer is engaged in a one-off activity they must be under the constant

supervision of school employees. They must also read and sign the school Offsite Visit Volunteer Agreement.

Schools are not legally permitted to request barred list information on a supervised volunteer, as they are not considered to be engaging in regulated activity.

Under no circumstances should a volunteer on whom safer recruitment checks have not been obtained, be left unsupervised or allowed to work alone with children.

For more information about DBS checks, please see the Vetting Policy on the Schools Portal.

3 Managing volunteers

The school must provide the volunteer with advice, support and appropriate training to assist them to undertake their activities.

Training activities should be identified and made accessible for volunteers in relation to their volunteering roles. Volunteers are to be encouraged and supported to undertake appropriate training which may enhance their skills and experience and contributions they can make to the school.

All volunteering activities that form part of the volunteering agreement are intended to bring value to the school, therefore it is important to refresh, review and change/move the role if it helps the volunteer or the school. Similarly, any review that identifies that the volunteering agreement is not adding value to the school, either due to the performance or conduct of the volunteer, the agreement can be immediately ended.

3.1 Supervision

Volunteers should have appropriate support from within the school and should feel valued for the contributions they make.

Volunteers should have clear guidance from the teacher as to how an activity is carried out and what the expected outcome is. Volunteers are encouraged to seek further guidance from the teacher where there is any issue regarding children's understanding of a task or behaviour.

All volunteers in a class will work under the supervision of the class teacher. Teachers retain responsibility for children at all times, including the children's behaviour and the activity they are undertaking.

3.2 Confidentiality

Volunteers in school are bound by a code of confidentiality. Any concerns volunteers have about a child they are working with should be raised with the class teacher, the designated Safeguarding lead or the headteacher.

Volunteers should not speak with parents of the child or other people outside of school about concerns arising out of their volunteering role.

3.3 Health and safety

The school's health and safety policy must be made available to volunteers working in the school and volunteers have a responsibility to read this document. Volunteers should exercise due care and attention and report any obvious hazards or concerns to the class teacher or headteacher.

It is the responsibility of the Class teacher to ensure that volunteers are clear about emergency procedures e.g. fire alarm evacuation and about any safety aspects associated with a particular task e.g. using equipment or accompanying children on visits.

3.4 Child protection

All regular volunteers or volunteers who will be left unsupervised with children will be subject to clearance checks, in addition they should be:

- Given a copy of this policy and asked to sign a volunteer agreement;
- Made aware of our child protection and safeguarding policies;
- Told who our designated safeguarding members of staff are.

3.5 Insurance

The Headteacher should ensure the school maintains insurance against risks including loss and damage to or destruction of its property, the injury or death of members of the public affected by its activities and its employees and volunteers undertaking authorised work.

In order for this to apply the Volunteer must be:

- formally acknowledged by the school;
- deemed to be qualified/competent to carry out the voluntary duties;
- under the control and direction of the school.

It is important that volunteers comply with the conditions of the school's insurance and do not do anything, which might result in the council or the volunteer not being covered.

If a volunteers role involves driving, the school must ensure they have a valid driving licence and that a photocopy of this is taken. Volunteers using their own vehicle must also ensure they have business insurance or a letter from their insurance provider stating they are insured for voluntary work with the School.

3.6 Complaints procedure

It is the headteacher's responsibility to ensure that any complaints made about a volunteer are investigated. As a result of the investigation, the headteacher may take the following action:

- Speak with the volunteer about a breach of the volunteer agreement and seek reassurance that it will not happen again;
- Offer an alternative placement for the volunteer e.g. helping with a different activity or in a different class;
- Inform the volunteer that the school no longer wishes to use them.

Any concerns by a volunteer should be referred to the headteacher or Chair of Governors in the first instance. Any complaints can be raised under the schools Complaints Procedure.



HR Advice and Support

For advice regarding the application of this policy please contact:

HR Advice and Support

hradvice@durham.gov.uk

Pay, Reward and Employment Services can be contacted by emailing:

Schools

PESSchools@durham.gov.uk

Further support can be accessed by contacting:

Occupational Health

occhealthadmin@durham.gov.uk

Health and Safety

hsteam@durham.gov.uk

Employee Assistance Programme

wisdom.healthassured.org/login

Employer Code MHA042951

Tel 0800 0280199

School policies and guidance documents will be reviewed periodically as required, and in accordance with any changes to legislation and best practice.

The school complies with all relevant statutory obligations. The school privacy notice provides more specific information on data collected and how it is handled, a copy of which can be accessed from the school. For more information please contact the school directly.

If you have any concerns about how your data is handled, please contact either the school Data Protection Officer (details available from the school office), or the Information Commissioner's Office

Author	Version	Last review
RP	V2.1	November 2024