

## POLICY ON THE USE OF VOLUNTEERS

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### Introduction

1. The school aims to provide our children with the best education possible. The school believes that parents and other members of the community have knowledge, skills and experience, which can enhance the learning opportunities of children.
2. Due to the nature of our school and our close contact with parents, it is common to have occasions when people present their services on a voluntary basis, either for 'one-off' activities or for longer periods. While such offers are welcome, the school needs to be mindful of the practical considerations implicit within such arrangements and, more importantly, issues surrounding safeguarding of our young people.
3. This policy does not cover the presence in school of trainees on teaching practice or other forms of work experience. These arrangements are subject to different procedures and are overseen by designated members of staff.

### Definition of a volunteer

4. A volunteer is an unpaid adult who provides support to the school, that is, a person who performs any activity which involves spending time without remuneration (except for

travelling and other out of pocket expenses), doing something which aims to benefit people other than, or in addition to, close relatives.<sup>1</sup>

5. A typical example of this is when a parent volunteers to accompany a group of children (usually including their own child) on a day trip or other event organized by the school. The child benefits from having the parent present, but also the whole group benefits from the presence of an additional capable adult who can assist in the supervision of the activity under the direction of staff members.

6. Volunteers can include parents of pupils, university students, ex-members of staff, local residents, etc. Whilst this list is not exhaustive, it gives some impression of the range of reasons why volunteering may be seen as beneficial.

7. The types of activities that volunteers are engaged in might include:

- hearing children read
- working with small groups of children
- working with individual children
- undertaking arts and craft activities with children
- supporting teachers to run after-school clubs
- working with children on the computer
- accompanying school visits

8. **Regular volunteers** must have more detailed checks made on them (see below). A regular volunteer is somebody who will be volunteering at least once per term for two consecutive terms or who will be attending on three or more occasions in a 30-day period, or who will be staying overnight with children, e.g. on a school camp.<sup>2</sup>

9. Where a volunteer is engaged in a 'one-off' activity, e.g. helping to supervise a group of pupils as part of a class visit under the guidance of the member of staff in charge of the group, no formal checks are required. Whereas regular volunteers will be required to complete the volunteer agreement, for non-regular volunteers, discussion of the guidelines for volunteers may be sufficient.

### **Register of volunteers and daily record of attendance**

10. The school must maintain an up-to-date register of volunteers.

11. In addition, a record must be kept on a day-to-day basis to show which volunteers are in school at any given time, which member(s) of staff have responsibility for them and where they are based within the school.

### **Recruitment: procedures to be undertaken before commencing voluntary work**

12. Anyone wishing to become a volunteer should approach their child's class teacher or the headteacher.

13. The school must carry out a risk assessment on each and every person who volunteers, regardless of the length of time they are likely to be in contact with pupils. This will reveal the extent of vetting procedures required and whether or not a criminal records check

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<sup>1</sup> This definition is taken from the 1997 Police Act (Criminal Records) Regulations 2002 and was used to decide whether a check should be free or subject to a charge.

<sup>2</sup> This differs from the terms as defined in the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, where 'frequent' is defined as 'once a week or more often on an on-going basis.'

is necessary. For example, a parent who volunteers for a day trip would not usually be subject to the full vetting procedures if they are not left alone and unsupervised in charge of children.<sup>3</sup>

14. The following procedures apply to those volunteers who will be **regular volunteers**.

#### *Application form*

15. Every potential regular volunteer must complete a volunteer application form (see Appendix 1) for the headteacher, or a designated member of staff, stating the reason for their request and the activity or areas of the school in which they are interested in working.

16. Every potential regular volunteer (if not a parent of a child at the school) must provide the names of two referees.

#### *Criminal records check and references*

17. Every potential regular volunteer must be subject to a criminal records check. The criminal records check and, where required, receipt of satisfactory references must be completed before any work commences. The number of the certificate must be recorded on the school's register of volunteers.

18. It is at the discretion of the school as to whether additional references are sought. These may be unnecessary in the case of parents with children at the school, but in other instances the school will need to apply its judgement. When in doubt, the school should err on the side of caution and seek references.

#### *Volunteer agreement*

19. Every regular volunteer must be given a copy of the policy on the use of volunteers.

20. Every regular volunteer must complete the volunteer agreement (Appendix 2), which sets out the school's expectations of its volunteers, and confirm in writing that they have received a copy of this agreement and read and understood all the relevant school policies.

#### *Induction*

21. Every regular volunteer must attend an induction meeting with the person designated to oversee their work in school. This meeting will set out clearly the volunteer's responsibilities and role within the school and will include:

- details of the school staff code of conduct
- details of the school safeguarding policy
- details of the school health & safety policy
- discussion of the guidelines for volunteers
- details of school procedures and routines including fire drill
- details of days, times and areas in the school that the volunteer will be working
- the importance of confidentiality
- anti-bullying policy
- behaviour policy
- equal opportunities policy.
- E-safety and acceptable use policy

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<sup>3</sup> See "Safer recruitment and safeguarding children in education," Section 4.56, published by DCSF.

## **Volunteer code of conduct**

22. All volunteers are expected to conform to high standards of behaviour while carrying out their duties. The school expects that volunteers will:

- respect other volunteers, students, staff and children and make them feel welcomed and valued
- be sensitive towards others
- be approachable and pleasant
- dress and behave in a manner which promotes healthy and safe working practices
- maintain the confidentiality of personal information at all times.

23. All volunteers should be aware how their behaviour can affect both adults and children. Everyone has the responsibility to avoid becoming involved in situations that could bring the school into disrepute.

24. Mobile phones must not be used in the vicinity of children.

25. In accordance with the GDPR, photographs must not be taken in school under any circumstances unless agreed with the Headteacher or class teacher of the class the volunteer is linked to.

26. Volunteers must follow the code of conduct on internet use. This code exists to safeguard and promote the proper use of the school's internet and email facilities. Volunteers are responsible for using these facilities in an efficient, effective, ethical and lawful manner. No volunteer or member of staff is permitted to access school IT equipment for personal business.

27. Volunteers, acting in their capacity as volunteers, must not use any aspect of social media to submit articles/reports relating to their experiences within the school.

### **Confidentiality**

28. The school expects our volunteers to abide by the same code of confidentiality as teaching staff. All staff members, voluntary helpers and visitors should be aware that information relating to individual children or members of staff should be completely confidential.

29. Whilst in school, volunteers may hear conversations which are of a confidential nature. These cover aspects such as children's academic progress, misbehaviour or home circumstances. All information relating to individual children and staff is totally confidential and volunteers must respect this. Any information gained about any individual child or family or member of staff gained whilst in school must not be repeated out of school.

30. Anything heard that concerns volunteers should be discussed with the headteacher. Volunteers should ask the teacher they are working with about this. The school has well-defined procedures for informing parents of what has happened whilst the children are at school. Volunteers must not be tempted to relay anything seen or heard in the classroom to other parents.

### ***Issues affecting adults in school***

31. All adults in our school can expect their personal and health issues to remain confidential unless:

- it impinges on their terms of contract
- it endangers pupils or other members of staff
- there is a legal obligation to disclose such information

- it is necessary for legal proceedings
- despite the duty of confidence, the staff member's interest or the wider public interest justifies disclosure.

32. Volunteers who are concerned about anything another adult in the school does or says should raise the matter with the headteacher.

### **Time offered to volunteering**

33. The period of time spent volunteering in a school day/week will be discussed and mutually agreed between the volunteer and their supervisor. To help the school plan for volunteers we ask that the school is informed of any unforeseen changes to an agreed time spent volunteering in school.

34. If volunteers are likely to be absent, they, like other members of staff, are expected to telephone and inform school prior to their start time, so appropriate arrangements can be made if any cover is required.

### **Scope of the work of volunteers**

35. Volunteers should not be used in place of paid staff or be expected to carry out responsibilities considered inappropriate, for example:

- Toileting and changing students
- Any activity that might place them in a potentially compromising situation
- Any activity where they have not received the appropriate training, e.g. moving and handling pupils.

36. The designated member of staff should meet with the volunteer on a regular basis throughout the placement to discuss concerns or queries about aspects of their work in school. Any issues connected with disclosure and safeguarding should be dealt with separately and recorded as set out in the school Safeguarding Policy.

37. Further advice is contained in the guidelines for volunteers (Appendix 3).

### **Child protection and safeguarding**

38. If a child discloses something, this information should be shared promptly with the safeguarding officer. The school cannot offer unconditional confidentiality when a child discloses something. However, reassurance can be given that the best interests of the child will be maintained.

39. All volunteers have the responsibility to report any concern they may have regarding child protection. It is not the role of the volunteer to investigate concerns. The Safeguarding Policy explains the guidelines and procedures to follow regarding any concerns. The school's safeguarding policy can be found on the website or a copy can be obtained from the office on request.

### **Equal opportunities**

40. The school recognizes that the activity of volunteering can provide an individual with experience and opportunities for development. All volunteers are required to make a commitment to the school's equality and diversity policy, which can be found on the school web-

site or a copy can be obtained on request. Where a prospective volunteer demonstrates hostility to, or a clear lack of support for equal opportunities, they will be deemed automatically unsuitable for a volunteer position.

## **Supervision**

41. All volunteers work under the supervision of the class teacher to whom they are assigned.
42. Although teachers retain responsibility for children at all times, this does not require volunteers to be under their direct supervision at all times. Volunteers should feel confident to carry out the tasks they have been assigned and should seek further advice or guidance from the teacher in the event of a query or problem regarding a child's behaviour or understanding of a task.

## **Insurance**

43. Volunteers are covered by the local authority's public liability insurance policy and will be insured for the same activities as teachers. The school's policy is held by Cornwall Council and can be consulted if necessary upon request. Basically, as long as volunteers follow the guidelines, they will be covered by the school insurance policy for most ordinary occurrences.

## **Health and safety**

44. It is important for school security and fire regulations that all adults in school can be identified and located at all times, so volunteers must:
  - sign in and out at the office when coming into and leaving the premises
  - wear a visitor's badge at all times whilst in school.
45. The school has a health and safety policy, which can be found on the school website or a hard copy can be obtained from the school office. Class teachers should ensure that volunteers are clear about emergency procedures (e.g. fire evacuation) and about any safety aspects associated with a particular task (e.g. using cookery equipment). If a volunteer attends a school trip, their up to date emergency contact details must be available to the school.
46. Volunteers need to exercise due care and attention and report any obvious hazards or concerns to the class teacher or headteacher.
47. Volunteers should make themselves familiar with fire evacuation procedures.
48. Smoking is not allowed anywhere on the school site or whilst involved with an off-site activity with the school including whilst transporting pupils.

## **Complaints**

49. Any complaints made about a volunteer or by a volunteer must be referred to the headteacher for investigation.
50. Any complaints made about a volunteer will be referred to the headteacher or appropriate member of staff for investigation. Any complaints made by a volunteer will be dealt with in the same way.
51. The school has the right to take any of the following actions:
  - Discuss with the volunteer any breach in the volunteer agreement

- Offer an alternative placement for a volunteer
- Inform the volunteer that they are no longer needed to help in school and that their role as a volunteer has ceased.

## Appendix 1: Volunteer application form

Details of volunteer:

First name	
Surname or family name	
Date of birth	
Address	
Home phone number	
Mobile phone number	
Email address	

What activities or areas of the school's work would you like to help with?

Are there any particular age groups or classes you would like to work with?

Do you have any disabilities or other needs we need to take into account or adjustments we need to make to allow you to work as a volunteer in school? Please give details.

Thank you for taking time to complete this volunteer application form. Please hand it to the school office, marked for the attention of the headteacher.

Your offer of help is greatly appreciated and we will be in touch as soon as possible.

Names and addresses of two referees (if required):

Name		
Address		
Phone number		
Email address		



## Appendix 2: Volunteer agreement

Thank you for offering your time and services to our school.

Please read and sign this Volunteer Agreement and hand it in at the office. You will receive a copy of it for your records.

- I have received a copy of the school's policy on the use of volunteers and have read and understood the guidelines for volunteers.
- I understand that an enhanced check of my criminal record will be undertaken to advise the school of my suitability as a volunteer in school
- I agree to support the school's aims
- I agree to treat information obtained from being a volunteer in school as strictly confidential
- I have been made aware of my designated supervisor, e.g. class teacher.
- I have read and understood all the policies listed below.
- I have read and understood the following school policies (available on the school website):
  - Volunteers Policy
  - Safeguarding Policy
  - Health and Safety Policy
  - Behaviour Policy
  - Anti-bullying Policy
  - Confidentiality Policy
  - Equality Opportunities Policy
  - Code of Conduct Policy
  - E-safety and Acceptable Use Policy
  - Child Protection Policy

If you already have a certificate in relation to a criminal records check, this must be hand it to the school office. The number will be recorded and checks made with the issuing body. A new enhanced check must be undertaken if it is necessary.

Signed:\_\_\_\_\_

Name:\_\_\_\_\_

Date:\_\_\_\_\_

### **Appendix 3: Guidelines for volunteers**

#### *Where can I work and how much time must I give?*

The answer to both questions is mainly up to you. Just tell us your preferences and we will try to make them happen. All we ask is that you let us know in advance if you have made an arrangement with the school but find that you can't come. This will, for example, allow teachers to change their plans if needed.

#### *Where can I go in the school?*

As a volunteer, you will be expected to work with the teacher whom you have decided to help. For most of your time, therefore, you will be sharing the classroom with the teacher concerned. This teacher is responsible for you and if you are in any doubt about your role, where you should be working or have any questions about the school, please ask the teacher.

#### *What rules are the children expected to follow?*

The school has high expectations for achievement and behaviour. The school vision highlights our ethos and values. There are clearly defined school rules.

The school has a positive behaviour system used by all members of staff, as outlined in our behaviour policy. This is age-appropriate for both Key Stages 1 and 2 and helps to celebrate good behaviour and reinforce our school rules. As a helper, you will not be required to manage behaviour, but the children enjoy verbal praise for good behaviour from all adults.

The school expects all members of the school community to be polite, courteous and self-disciplined. Pupils watch us and follow our example.

The school has a behaviour policy which children are expected to follow. As a volunteer you are not expected to discipline children. If there is a problem, inform the teacher straight away. The only time we would expect any adult to intervene is to prevent a child hurting themselves or another child. Do this by telling them quietly and firmly to stop.

#### *What do I do if I have seen challenging behaviour or something that concerns me?*

It is very important that you share any concerns with the class teacher. What you have seen or heard may be part of a bigger picture and will need investigating further. If you are unable to talk to the class teacher, please see the headteacher.

#### *Off-site visits by volunteers*

School trips are an integral part of learning at our school and afford many pupils opportunities that are outside their usual experiences. The school is pleased that you have come forward as a volunteer helper as you will have an important role to play in the success and safety of the school trip.

The role of the volunteer is:

- to be responsible and look after, in equal measure, all the pupils in your group under the instruction of the leader of the school trip
- to stay with your allocated group of pupils, ensuring that their wellbeing and safety is maintained for the total duration of the school trip
- to promote polite, respectful and courteous behaviour towards each other and members of the general public (everyone is an ambassador for our school)
- to ensure that your group keep up with the body of the school visit party, be it walking, entering or exiting from transportation or following speakers for the trip

- to contact teaching staff if there are issues with first aid, safety or behaviour
- to comply with all the guidelines while being under the direct supervision of school staff
- to show a commitment to their group, an interest in the focus of the visit and assist pupils in their learning by helping them to read signs, labels or information, asking questions that encourage pupils to think about the task and help to explain the areas of interest
- to follow guidance from school staff

Volunteers are not permitted to:

- bring additional children, e.g. siblings or children in the care of the volunteer, on the school trip
- smoke, drink alcohol or engage in any illegal practices whilst undertaking their volunteer duties
- take photographs of pupils unless directed by the member of staff leading the trip
- give or buy their group treats, e.g. ice creams, biscuits, sweets, etc., either before, during or after the school trip.

#### *What medical/accident procedures must I follow?*

The school has several qualified first aiders in school who are on hand to deal with any first aid treatment. The school asks that volunteers do not administer first aid of any kind. If a child requires first aid, please seek help. If you are injured whilst on the school site, please report this to the school office.

#### *Can I administer medication?*

You will be informed if any child in your group has medical needs. If medicine needs to be administered, this will be done by a member of staff unless you are the parent of the child who requires medicine, in which case you will be asked to administer this and be responsible for carrying the medicine. All other medicines and first aid boxes will be carried by staff.

#### *What if there is an emergency?*

You are expected to inform a member of staff as soon as possible. If you have become separated from the rest of the school party whilst on an offsite visit, please telephone one of the members of staff on your contact list or telephone the school.

#### *What work should I NOT undertake?*

Some activities will expose you to unnecessary risks and teachers supervising your work should ensure that this does not happen.

You should be clear about your responsibilities and your role at the school. If in doubt, check with the Headteacher.

#### *What if I'm not happy?*

If you are unhappy during your volunteering, please ensure you speak with either the teacher responsible for you or the Headteacher. If you decide you wish to leave the premises early, please ensure you inform the appropriate staff and follow the signing out procedures.

*And finally ...*

We would like to thank you for offering to help as a volunteer at our school. We value the support volunteers offer and aim to try and ensure you time with us is as rewarding for you as it is for our pupils and staff. Please never hesitate to ask if you are not sure about something, or for advice if you feel something you are doing is not working well.

#### **Appendix 4: Guidelines for school visitors working with groups of children or the whole school**

Before your visit:

- Discuss the purpose of your visit with a member of the teaching staff or Headteacher.
- Provide the office with all available paperwork that relates to criminal records clearance etc
- If you require space for a presentation or will be using special equipment, ensure you discuss this with the school before-hand.
- Agree start and finish times and which age group you will work with.
- If presenting to a group of children be clear about the content of your talk, especially if you are leading an assembly or workshop.
- Plan your input so as to be sensitive to areas such as race, religion, gender and social inclusion.
- Send the school a copy of any publications you will be referring to.

On your arrival:

- Sign in at reception where you will be issued with a volunteer's badge which must be worn at all times.
- Check you know the fire drill procedures and exit for the room you are working in.

During your stay:

- Use language appropriate to the age-group
- Observe and promote the school rules
- If practical give the school a copy of any plan/paperwork you are working to.

Before you leave:

- Sign out at the office and return your visitor's badge.