

Volunteers Policy for Schools and Academies

Effective from June 2017

1. Introduction

A volunteer is a person who gives freely of their time, skills and experience to the school without expectation of financial reward.

Volunteering may be a one-off activity; for a limited time to complete a particular activity or project; or carried out on a frequent basis.

The school encourages the appropriate use of voluntary workers and recognises the benefits that volunteers can bring. In return the school gives its volunteers an opportunity to exercise their skills in a different environment and to undertake new experiences.

2. Scope

This procedure applies to:

- Voluntary workers and Community Service Volunteers.

It does not apply to:

- Placements for children of school age. Such placements should only be part of a structured work experience programme arranged by the school or college; or
- Work placements.

3. Principles

3.1 Volunteering Roles

Roles suitable for volunteers are identified by the Headteacher and agreed with the volunteer. Volunteers will not be used as substitutes for employees.

3.2 Status of Volunteers

A volunteer is not an employee and does not have a contract of employment, so benefits such as payment for work, holidays or sickness do not apply.

Whilst the school and the individual will agree the role and the planned volunteering hours, the individual is not bound to volunteer and the school is not bound to provide the volunteering opportunity.

3.3 Volunteer Recruitment

The recruitment of volunteers is carried out by the Headteacher or a nominated member of the leadership team.

Unless the volunteering opportunity is a one-off short-term nature (see 3.5) the following applies.

A person wishing to become a volunteer completes a volunteer application form (see Appendix 1).

The applicant will be asked to identify areas in which they would like to volunteer.

If the school is able to match the volunteer to a suitable volunteering opportunity an informal interview will take place to consider the person's suitability.

Depending upon the nature of the opportunity, the potential volunteer may be subject to the following pre-volunteering checks:

- Disclosure and Barring Service Certificate (DBS). This is mandatory where the volunteer will be carrying out unsupervised regulated activities with children. Refer to the school's DBS Policy for more details. Where DBS clearance is required the individual must not commence any voluntary activities prior to receipt of satisfactory clearance. Checks will be recorded on the Single Central Record.
- If the individual is from outside the EU/EEA, they must confirm that they have checked their own visa or entry clearance conditions to make sure that they are allowed to volunteer. If they cannot find the answer clearly on their immigration documentation, the school will suggest that they contact the UK Border Agency.
- References – normally two references will be required.
- Medical clearance. This is recommended where the volunteer has declared a medical condition which should be taken into consideration by the Headteacher, or where the volunteer will be required to undertake a role that involves a significant level of physical activity.

3.4 Volunteering Agreement

The volunteer will be invited to enter into a Volunteering Agreement with the school (see Appendix 2). This will include:

- the volunteer's role;
- health and safety considerations;
- confidentiality considerations;
- the mileage expenses that the school will reimburse if the volunteer role involves driving;
- the insurance cover that will be in place;
- supervisory arrangements; and
- how the volunteer will be notified if their role is to come to an end.

3.5 One-off volunteering opportunities

Some activities may involve volunteers on a one-off, short-term basis. If the volunteering opportunity is of one day's duration or less and not likely to recur, e.g. assistance at a fête, the recruitment processes above and the Volunteering Agreement will not apply.

In such cases the Headteacher must ensure that all volunteers involved in the event complete the Volunteers Registration form (see Appendix 3.)

3.6 Supervision

A supervisor will be designated to support and manage the volunteer. The supervisor will review the arrangements on a regular basis. If the volunteer has any queries or would like to change their role this should be discussed with the supervisor.

The supervisor will ensure that an appropriate risk assessment is undertaken.

3.7 Volunteer's induction

On commencing the voluntary role (unless the volunteering opportunity is for a one-off event), the volunteer will be given an appropriate induction including:

- Information necessary for their role
- General information about the school, as appropriate
- A copy of this policy
- A Volunteering Agreement, and
- Details of where the volunteer can access the policies and procedures relevant to their role.

3.8 Training

The school will provide any reasonable training required for the role.

3.9 Health and Safety

The school has a responsibility for the health and safety of volunteers. The supervisor will ensure that volunteers are provided with appropriate guidance on any health and safety issues.

Volunteers:

- should at all times follow the school's health and safety policies and procedures;
- will be advised that they are not permitted to act outside their authorised area of work; and
- must report all accidents and 'near miss' incidents to their supervisor.

3.10 Policies and Procedures

Many of the school's policies that apply to employees do not apply to volunteers, for example grievance and disciplinary procedures. However volunteers are expected to comply with all policies on health and safety, data protection and child safeguarding. The Headteacher will ensure that the induction includes an explanation of these policies and procedures and any other policies that are relevant to the volunteering work.

3.11 Reimbursement of expenses

Volunteers are unpaid and are not generally eligible to receive expenses. However, the school will reimburse volunteer drivers for any mileage incurred using their own vehicle as part of their role. This does not include travel to and from their volunteering role. Such journeys must be agreed in advance with the supervisor and the appropriate claim form completed and submitted for payment. Claims will be reimbursed at the HMRC mileage rate.

Where the volunteer is using their own vehicle they must provide a copy of their driving licence, insurance policy (showing appropriate level of cover i.e. business use) and, if appropriate, the valid MOT certificate. All volunteer drivers will be required to comply with any school policy on driving.

The volunteer will report any accidents or police cautions to the Headteacher. The school will not pay any fines relating to motoring offences (including parking fines) incurred by the volunteer.

3.12 Insurance

The school will ensure that volunteers are covered for insurance purposes in respect of personal injury. The school also holds public liability insurance. The school's insurance will not cover unauthorised actions or actions outside the volunteering agreement.

3.13 Dealing with problems

The supervisor will normally try to solve any problems informally.

If the volunteer wishes to make a formal complaint this should be put in writing to their supervisor. If

it is not possible to reach a solution the volunteer may raise the matter with the Headteacher. It is expected that the person receiving the formal complaint will meet with the volunteer to discuss the issue raised and seek a solution.

If a complaint is made about a volunteer, or there are concerns about a volunteer's performance or conduct, this will be notified to the volunteer in writing and the Headteacher will decide what action should be taken.

3.14 Ending the Volunteering Arrangement

Either the school or the volunteer can end the arrangement when they choose. Whilst there is no requirement to give notice, both parties should give as much advanced warning as is reasonably practicable.

3.15 Records

A record of volunteers and associated documents, as appropriate, will be maintained by the Headteacher in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

The Volunteer Record can be found at Appendix 4.