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## Volunteer Policy

UNDER REVIEW

## CONTENTS

	Page
<a href="#"><u>Introduction</u></a>	3
<a href="#"><u>Schools Policy</u></a>	3
<a href="#"><u>Deployment</u></a>	4
<a href="#"><u>School Regulations</u></a>	5
<a href="#"><u>Child Protection</u></a>	6
<a href="#"><u>Insurance</u></a>	8
<a href="#"><u>Allowances</u></a>	8

# **VOLUNTEERS IN SCHOOLS**

## **Introduction**

The value of well-deployed volunteers in Schools is now widely recognised. Volunteers are a welcome resource for helping to raise children's achievement, complementing the work of teachers and support staff. There is no doubt that an individual school will benefit greatly from developing well-planned, active parental and community links through participation by adults in the activities of the School on a voluntary basis. It should be emphasised that the role of volunteers in Schools provides for the enrichment of the pupil's learning experiences, but must not encroach on or restrict professional teaching duties.

The deployment of any volunteer, whether for one day or for a number of sessions over a longer period, must be managed with care; in particular taking account of the needs of the pupils and the staff to whom they are assigned.

Head teachers and Governors should be mindful of deploying volunteers appropriately. Volunteers should not be asked to replace paid staff or be given responsibility within the School that would normally be associated with paid employees.

These guidance notes are offered for the guidance of the Head teacher and the Governing Body.

## **1 Schools' Policy**

Recruitment of volunteers.

This applies to parents as well as other volunteers.

- a) If an offer of help is received, the headteacher will consider deployment and suitability of all helpers. If teachers are approached directly either by a parent or other volunteer they should offer thanks and consult with the headteacher as to the deployment and suitability of the offer. If a teachers has enough helpers, it maybe the parent or volunteer could support in another class.

In the case of some children their parent working in the same class may not be appropriate.

b) All volunteers, including parents should complete the volunteer application form, so that contact details are held, motives for wanting to help considered and references can be sought. This should be done prior to volunteering.

c) Where parents volunteer to help with a trip, this form is not necessary. However, when completing the risk assessment the DBS status should be included and teachers/ trip leaders are responsible for ensuring that these adults do not have un supervised contact with children.

d) The headteacher or other designated teacher will meet with all on parent volunteers prior to accepting their help.

e) For all volunteers references will be sought and a DBS check completed, volunteers may commence working in school, with the permission of the headteacher prior to clearance if they are supervised at all times. It is however the schools preference that DBS clearance is received first. The above would be the exception rather than rule.

f) When DBS clearance has been received the office will notify the head and relevant teacher.

g) Before any volunteer, including students, commence helping in school they should meet with the headteacher or deputy and receive a copy of the volunteer handbook and have child protection and health and safety induction.

It is the responsibility of all staff to implement these guidelines.

## 2 Deployment

- a. Volunteers should not be asked to carry out duties which:-
  - fall normally within a Teacher's responsibility under *loco parentis*;
  - fall normally within the job description of a Teacher or member of support staff, ie they must not be asked to cover the absence of staff from School;
  - would normally be performed by a contractor engaged by the LA or by the School;
  - require them to have unsupervised access to children;
  - it should be noted that the Class teacher remains responsible for the organisation of the class and methods of work.
- b. During a visit to the School each volunteer should be designated to a specific member of staff to whom he or she will be directly responsible. Whilst there should be no significant addition to the workload of the staff member taking responsibility for the volunteer, it would be expected that time is taken to ensure the volunteer is adequately inducted into the role and that there is mutual agreement and understanding. This additional responsibility is not compulsory for staff and should only be delegated with the agreement of the employee concerned. It is however essential that the volunteer is clear as to which member of staff has this responsibility.
- c. All volunteers need to be made to feel welcome. It is important that the parameters of their role within the School are clearly defined from the outset in order to avoid the possibility of misunderstanding. It is recommended that schools prepare an induction pack including support materials for volunteers.
- d. Organisations usually use application forms when recruiting paid staff because it is not possible to interview every applicant, and some will not meet the requirements. Most organisations do not have large numbers of volunteers applying for individual positions so do not need to use volunteer application forms in this way. However, most volunteer application forms are based on forms used for paid staff and many ask for more information than is needed or is appropriate. A logical first step when dealing with potential volunteers is to get them to fill out an application form. This is a good way of recording basic information like name, address etc. but in most cases it is not the best way of assessing a volunteer's suitability for a role.

If this document has been printed please note that it may not be the most up-to-date version.

For current guidance please refer to The Source. Version date:

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Most organisations find that it is possible to get the information they need when they meet the volunteer in person, rather than getting them to fill out a form themselves. By asking someone to fill out a complex form you may be unintentionally putting barriers in the way for people who have problems with their sight, for whom English is not their first language, or whose level of literacy is not high (all of whom may have lots of other skills and experience that you would not want to lose). Remember that the overall aim of any fair selection process is to allow all potential volunteers to give the best of themselves; application forms do not allow everybody to do this.

Forms can also be off-putting for people. They look very formal, take a long time to fill out and have definite associations with applying for paid work. Remember that at this stage potential volunteers are still making their minds up about your organisation. An unnecessary application form could put them off. You may find that people are much more forthcoming about why they want to volunteer and their skills and experience when chatting to you, than on paper.

### **3 School Regulations and Other**

#### **Information**

- a. In fairness to all concerned, volunteers must be made aware of the rules governing behaviour at the School; the key 'dos' and 'don'ts' for children and adults. This should include procedures designed to avoid hazards or risks associated with the tasks that they are being asked to carry out and, importantly, details of first aid and emergency arrangements such as procedures to follow in case of fire.
- b. As part of their induction to life at the School, volunteers should also be provided with basic information such as a plan of the campus and details of those facilities available to them eg staff room, toilets etc.
- c. It is important that volunteers are made aware of the following procedures:-
  - expectations with regard to confidentiality;
  - access to information related to pupils and/or staff;
  - expected level of behaviour and an awareness of Professional Codes of Conduct;
  - School's Equal Opportunities policy –especially focussing on issues relating to discrimination and the use of appropriate language;
  - the School's Complaints procedure;
  - the School's Disciplinary procedure.

## 4. Child Protection

The law requires checks to be made on anyone with responsibilities in a School which can give them regular unsupervised access to pupils under the age of 19. In 2002, the Bichard Inquiry was commissioned and its recommendations led to the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, which recognised the need for a single agency to vet all individuals who want to work or volunteer with vulnerable people.

This includes volunteers who regularly help:-

- i. in the classroom;
- ii. in extra curricular activities;
- iii. supervise pupils on School organised holidays or residential visits.

Volunteers that also have access which is ongoing, substantial and unsupervised also fall within this category.

Schools planning to work with volunteers falling into any of the above groups should complete a 'Corporate Record Disclosure Form' to enable a check to be made against 'List 99' and Devon County Council Applicant Referral List

These regulations do not apply to volunteers such as those who help organise and run fetes or who may assist the School activities on an irregular or ad-hoc basis **but should apply to volunteers that drive children in cars or minibuses**. However, if the Head teacher is unclear about the position in respect of a volunteer, further advice is available from the School's Link Personnel Officer.

Volunteers are also seen by children as safe and trustworthy adults, and if a school is actively seeking volunteers and is considering candidates about whom it has little or no recent knowledge, it should adopt the same recruitment measures as it would for paid staff. In other circumstances, for example where a school approaches a parent who is well known to the school to take on a particular role, a streamlined procedure can be adopted: seeking references, checking to ensure others in the school community know of no concerns and can make a positive recommendation, conducting an informal interview to gauge the person's aptitude and suitability, and undertaking a DBS check disclosure. In other circumstances, e.g. where a volunteer's roles will be one off, such as accompanying teachers and pupils on a day outing or helping at a concert or school fete, those kind of measures would be unnecessary provided that the person is not to be left alone and unsupervised in charge of children. Where volunteers recruited by another organisation work in a school, e.g. sports coaches from a local club, the school should obtain assurance from that organisation that the person has been properly vetted

Head teachers should take all reasonable steps to confirm the identity of the person volunteering. It is recommended that the Head teacher view, and take a copy of at least two original documents. At least one document must show a current address and at least one document must show the volunteers date of birth.

- Birth Certificate
- plus if the name has changed:**
- Marriage Certificate
  - Copy of Deed Poll or Licence
  - Passport
  - Driver's Licence (A photo card is only valid if the individual presents it with the counterpart licence)

A full list of acceptable Valid Identity Documents can be found on the leaflet “**An Applicants Guide to Completing the DBS Application Form**” or alternatively visit the website [www.crb.gov.uk](http://www.crb.gov.uk)

Safer Recruitment training provides valuable information on a safer school culture and advice and guidance to strengthen safeguards against employing unsuitable people in schools. The training will help schools demonstrate that they have effective recruitment and selection processes in place that ensure learners are both well taught and protected. Further information on this can be found at:-

If training has not been completed by relevant personnel it is strongly urged that this is carried out.

## **5 Insurance**

- Volunteers should be informed about the extent of the insurance cover available. Whilst volunteering for the school they are covered by the LA for third party liability only and the limitations of this insurance should be explained carefully to volunteers. They may wish to make their own arrangements for insuring against theft, personal injury or damage to their own property.
- Volunteers using their own car to transport children other than their own children to school events, (sport, music etc) should be made aware of the school policy and advised to check with their car insurance company to ensure that they do not contravene their insurance policy conditions.
- The school should carefully consider all aspects of insurance and safety before deploying volunteers to drive a school minibus. All parties should be made fully

aware of the regulations and drivers should be offered appropriate training and instruction before taking children on journeys in vehicles owned by the school.

## 6 Allowances

Although there is no obligation to make Financial reimbursement to volunteers; it would be appropriate to consider paying out-of-pocket expenses connected with the tasks they undertake for the school. If school funds will not allow a policy of general reimbursement, consideration could be given to such payments in exceptional circumstances.

State benefits claimed by volunteers can be affected by voluntary work and schools are strongly advised to refer volunteers to the leaflet from DWP “**A Guide to Volunteering whilst on Benefits**”

<http://www.volunteering.org.uk/NR/rdonlyres/D1C7064B-561C-4057-84ED-77AF8CEEDA93/0/VG12006.pdf>)-

and discuss any voluntary work with their Personal Advisor to see how this may affect any possible benefits if they are in any doubt about work they may undertake voluntarily. The main points for consideration are that volunteers should remain available for work if claiming unemployment benefits and that disabled volunteers should not undertake voluntary work of a nature similar to that for which they are receiving disability benefit.

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