

Uffculme Primary School



Volunteers in Schools Guidance

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Reviewer: Mrs J Dentith, Head teacher

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Volunteers in School Guidance

Introduction

The value of well-deployed volunteers in schools is widely recognised. Volunteers are a welcome resource for helping to raise 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 provide for the enrichment of the pupils/students' learning experiences, but should 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/students and the staff to whom they are assigned.

The Senior Leadership Team 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.

Deployment of Volunteers

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, i.e. they must not be asked to cover the absence of staff from school;
- would normally be performed by a contractor engaged by the Trust; it should be noted that the teacher remains responsible for the organisation of the class and methods of work.

Supervision of Volunteers

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 which member of staff has this responsibility.

Recruitment, Child Protection and Safeguarding

Recruiting Volunteers

Recruiting and vetting potential volunteers will mirror that used for paid employees.

Volunteers should complete the standard Trust application form for the recruitment of volunteers. The form should be used as a framework for structuring the discussion with the individual about the school's needs, their needs and potential contribution and expectations of the volunteering arrangement.

It is important that two satisfactory references and a clear enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service disclosure are obtained before volunteers begin to carry out activities in the school.

All volunteers should be issued with an induction pack.

Child Protection and Safeguarding

Child protection and safeguarding procedures should be undertaken with volunteers in the same way as with employees.

The DBS Disclosure Policy should be followed to ensure that appropriate checks are undertaken:

'Many parents and other volunteers help regularly in the classroom and some will require a DBS disclosure. This should be determined by the frequency and nature of contact with children i.e. if being left unsupervised with children and/or if having regular contact.'

'Volunteers who only accompany staff and children on one off outings or trips or who help at one off specific events such as sports days, school fetes etc may not need to be DBS checked. If however an overnight stay is involved then an enhanced DBS disclosure must be obtained.'

School Protocols

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.

As part of their induction to life at the school, volunteers should also be provided with basic information such as a plan of the site and details of those facilities available to them, e.g. staff room, toilets etc.

It is essential that volunteers are made aware of the following procedures:-

- expectations with regard to confidentiality;
- access to information related to pupils/students and/or staff;

- expected level of behaviour;
- the Single Equality Scheme – especially focussing on issues relating to discrimination and the use of appropriate language;
- the complaints procedure;
- the conduct procedure.

Insurance

Volunteers should be informed about the extent of the insurance cover available. Whilst volunteering for the school they are covered by the Trust 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.) must provide documentary evidence that their car insurance covers this.

The Executive Headteacher/Headteacher must ensure that the appropriate insurance is in place before deploying volunteers to drive a school minibus. All parties must 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 Trust.

Out of Pocket Expenses

Out-of-pocket expenses, authorised by the relevant budget holder in advance, may be reimbursed. There should be no expectation that volunteers should incur out-of-pocket expenses.

Volunteers are not employees. In order to make sure volunteers don't fall under the legal or tax definition of an employee, schools should ensure the following:

- Only reimburse expenses after a receipt has been submitted.
- Do not pay unaccountable round sums to cover expenses
- Do not pay regular allowances, no matter how small.

State benefits claimed by volunteers can be affected by voluntary work and volunteers should refer to Department of Work and Pensions guidance.