St Paul's CE Primary School

Use of Volunteers Policy

Agreed by Governing Board on 13/3/23

Policy will be reviewed by March 2025

Volunteer Policy

The Head Teacher, Governing Body with the Designated Safeguarding Lead will monitor the safeguarding practice of the school to ensure that this policy is understood and being operated effectively in practice.

General Introduction:

This policy supports the work of the school in promoting its mission statement, aims and values.

1. Definition of a volunteer

Volunteers can be divided into 2 groups, either ‘occasional’ or ‘regular’.

Occasional can be defined as volunteers or parents who only accompany staff and children on one off outings or trips that do not involve overnight stays, or who only help at specific one-off events e.g. Christmas Fair. It is expected that occasional volunteers would be supervised by a ‘regulated’ member of staff e.g. teacher and would never be left unsupervised.

Regular volunteers can be defined as those who help 3 or more times in a 30 day period, once a month or more or on an overnight stay. If regular volunteers are unsupervised the school will require an enhanced DBS certificate with barred list check (See appendix 1).

2. Recruitment of volunteers

Occasional volunteers would usually be parents or carers who come in to help on a one off educational visit and would not be recruited as such to the position of volunteer. They would not be required to go through a recruitment process including the taking up of DBS checks. This would be at the Head teacher’s discretion and where there are known concerns about a parent or other occasional volunteer it would be at the Head teacher’s discretion not to engage this person as an occasional volunteer.

Regular volunteers would be in a position of trust within the school and even though they are not left unsupervised with children, should always go through a recruitment process. The school should also take into consideration any knowledge they have of the person in their relationship with the school as a parent, grand-parent, previous employee, governor, committee member etc. when deciding if this person will be trustworthy and make a valuable contribution to the school in the capacity of volunteer.

Even after all checks have been made and it is decided that a volunteer is suitable, they will not be left wholly unsupervised with children eg if hearing readers, they will work in the corridor where there are other staff around.

The recruitment process should include

- DBS checks for all. A barred list check would be needed if volunteers had unsupervised access to children and young people but this will not be the case at St Paul's.
- Informal interview with a senior leader to go through out volunteer risk assessment and to include discussion about previous work or contact with children, safeguarding and advise of the school's safeguarding policy, confidentiality, being in a position of trust, any transferable risks, expectations of conduct at St Paul's.
- At least 1, preferably 2 references (one of which should, where possible, relate to involvement with children/young people). References from family will not be accepted. References should include information regarding the prospective volunteer's suitability to work with children eg could be from previous voluntary work or from the last employer.

Where volunteers have been recruited by another organisation and work in an educational establishment, e.g. sports coaches from a local club or early-years activity provider, the establishment should obtain assurance from that organisation that the person has been properly vetted and has the correct level of DBS required for their role.

3. Recruitment and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check

DBS Checks are checks carried out to identify whether or not individuals working in an unsupervised activity with children are suitable to do so. This is because it is known that a small minority of people use this route to gain the confidence of children before causing them harm.

See Appendix 1 for KCSIE guidance.

Having a criminal record does not automatically prevent an individual from being a volunteer. The Head teacher and Governing Body would consider the details of the criminal record and balance this against the activities the individual is to undertake. Advice may be required from HR services in order to make this decision.

If a volunteer commits a criminal offence during their time as a volunteer they must disclose this to the Head teacher in the same way that any employed member of staff should. The Head teacher will assess whether it is acceptable to continue with the volunteering role, whether the activities should be changed, or whether it is the best interests for all concerned to no longer act as a volunteer. HR advice may be required.

4. Information for volunteers

As part of an induction process volunteers should be given verbal and written information about the school. This would include;

School expectations of volunteers, including access to the staff handbook.
What a volunteer can expect from the school.
School vision, aims and values.
Health and safety issues e.g. what to do if there is a fire, Lock down procedures, site/premises security, access to staff room.
Code of conduct (including staff behaviour codes) etc e.g. polite, courteous, self-discipline, respectful, being an appropriate role model, language, dress, rules around smoking, use of mobile phone, alcohol and illegal substances.
Child protection and Safeguarding policy, practices and responsibilities including the Prevent agenda, this could be 'signed up to' as evidence that the policy has been read and will be complied with.
Keeping Children Safe in Education part 1 (including Annex A & C)
Equality policy
School Behaviour policy and Anti bullying policy
Internet/ On-line Safety Policy and Acceptable User Policy (where appropriate).
Guidance for safer working practice for adults who work with children and young people
Explain the DBS requirements, that regular volunteering is subject to satisfactory clearance and the expectation that once cleared the volunteer will advise the Head teacher/line manager if their position changes e.g. if they commit an offence

5. Safeguarding issues

Volunteers should be supervised by a designated member of staff. They should be working in a setting where there is always a paid member of staff present. Even where DBS checks have been undertaken, volunteers should not be left unsupervised with children.
Occasional volunteers should never be left unsupervised, would not take children to the toilet or be left in charge of a small group of children on an outing away from teacher/teaching assistant/staff member supervision.
Volunteers must be advised about physical contact with children in the same way as employed staff.
Volunteers should use the staff toilets and staff room for any breaks rather than using the children's toilets or play areas unless separate toilets are not available.
Volunteers must be advised that if a child discloses any information relating to potential abuse that they must bring this to the attention of the teacher/designated safeguarding lead immediately.
All volunteers should be given a basic safeguarding briefing by the Designated Safeguarding Lead. It may also be appropriate for volunteers to attend any staff training sessions on safeguarding.

6. Managing the behaviours of Children

Volunteers should be made aware of the behaviour management policy of the school.
Volunteers must be advised that it is not their role to discipline children.
If a potential discipline situation occurs, even where this involves their own child, they must bring this to the attention of the teacher/staff member to resolve or if it has been dealt with at the time, as soon as possible after the incident.
They must be advised that they must maintain their composure at all time and if things become difficult, they must immediately inform another member of staff.
Volunteers should be advised of the anti-bullying policy and bring any situations of conflict or bullying or prejudice to the attention of the teacher/staff member.

7. Confidentiality

Volunteers must be advised that all information about the children and the school in which they are volunteering is confidential and must not be discussed outside of the school or with children, parents or other visitors to the school.
Volunteers are asked to sign to say they have understood and agree to abide by the code of conduct of the school.
They should not have access to school's records, children's personal details etc.

Any information should be shared on a ‘need to know’ basis e.g. child’s medical condition such as diabetes, ADHD where this may affect their behaviour or well-being.
Volunteers would not usually attend staff meetings but there may be exceptions on a ‘need to know’ basis.
The volunteer must not take any notes/files about children outside of the school.
At no time should volunteers be permitted to take photographs, films or recordings of children unless on school equipment and requested to do so by a regulated member of staff. This equipment must not be taken home by the volunteer.
Volunteers should be referred to the relevant school policy on the taking, storage and disposal of images of children.
Volunteers should abide by the school/ setting Online Safety/mobile phone policy. Personal mobile phones and other personal hand held electronic devices should not be used anywhere in school where there could be children. Calls and texts should be dealt with in a private area such as office or staffroom.

8. Health and safety issues

Volunteers must be aware of health and safety policies and procedures that are relevant and be advised how to act in an emergency situation the same as for any other staff member.
The school must ensure that the appropriate insurances are in place for the volunteer.
They should be made aware of which staff are first aid trained and of the process when first aid is required rather than undertake any procedure themselves.
Volunteers should be made aware of any medical conditions for children they are working with which may require immediate intervention e.g. diabetes, epilepsy, allergies and how to respond including which staff to refer to.
Volunteers must sign in and out of the school. They must also wear an ID security lanyard. DBS checked visitors, including volunteers, wear an ID lanyard with a green ribbon. (Non-DBS checked visitors’ lanyards have a red ribbon. This information has been shared with all staff and children.)
If a school is considering involving a volunteer in an activity where there could be a level of risk to themselves or to a child (eg going on an educational visit), a risk assessment must be undertaken as for any other member of staff and health and safety advice sought.

9. Supervision/mentoring/allegations

A volunteer should know who their ‘contact’ person is in the school. This person would usually be the class teacher (or appropriate staff in setting).
The contact person should be available during their volunteer sessions to provide direct support/supervision. There should also be an opportunity for a regular

volunteer to be able to discuss any concerns, their contribution, any training needs etc.
If there are any concerns about the behaviour of the volunteer, there should be a discussion between the volunteer and their supervisor. This may need to involve advice from a more senior member of staff on the SLT depending on the concern. This discussion must be recorded together with any actions regarding expected change in behaviour and given to the headteacher who will save this on her “Daily log” document. This will then be reviewed. If the unacceptable behaviour continues the offer of the volunteer placement will be withdrawn.
A volunteer should know who to go to if they have a complaint or grievance, for example where there may be a conflict situation with another member of staff or volunteer. They should also know who to talk with if they have a concern about the behaviour of a member of staff or another volunteer (whistle blowing). This could be the contact person in the first instance, head of year or Head teacher, given the nature of the concern.
If a complaint or allegation is made against the volunteer they need to be made aware of how this will be dealt with and offered appropriate support. Any allegation must be referred to a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and treated as for any other member of staff.
If a volunteer is involved in an incident outside of school/college which did not involve children e.g. domestic abuse but could have an impact on their suitability to work with children, this is known as ‘transferable risk’. (see part 4, KCSIE). The school/college will need to consider what triggered these actions and could a child in the school trigger the same reaction, therefore being put at risk. This may need to include the LADO.
If specialist skills are being offered by a volunteer, where necessary appropriate qualifications need to be checked and these activities may need to be supervised by a person who also has these specialist skills.
Any necessary training should be made available to the volunteer through negotiation with their contact person e.g. safeguarding.
For longer term volunteers a review process would be appropriate. However any safeguarding concerns in relation to the behaviour of the volunteer must be dealt with immediately and not wait for a review period.

10. Transport

Volunteers must not transport children in their own vehicles unless they have express permission to do so and are appropriately covered with insurance, current driving licence, MOT etc. They will then be required to sign a document confirming that their vehicle is roadworthy.
A volunteer would not be expected to take children on school transport or public transport unless accompanied by a member of staff and where a risk management assessment had been made and this met with health and safety regulations.

11. Contact with children outside of school

Volunteers must be reminded that they are in a position of trust and that what they see, hear or are involved in whilst at school must be considered as confidential to the establishment.
Volunteers must be actively discouraged from forming any friendship relationships with children and their families outside of school. Where people are recruited from the local community and they know some of the children, the impact of this should be talked through with the volunteer as part of their supervision.
The volunteer must not share their personal details such as address, e mail, phone or mobile numbers or engage with pupils/children and young people, or their families, in school on social network sites. The only exceptions to this would be where the volunteer is a relative or family friend of a child/young person. This connection must be made known to the Head teacher.
If they become aware of a situation of concern about a child from information received in the community this should be discussed with their contact person or the Head teacher.

12. Outings and off site visits

These may include occasional volunteers as well as regular volunteers.
Occasional volunteers, or others who have not had DBS checks, must not be left unsupervised or alone with children at any time.
There should be a briefing meeting at the start of the outing to ensure that volunteers are clear about the plan for the day, who the team leader is, the children who are their responsibility, any special needs of these children, who to ask for advice, who has the first aid kit, basic road safety advice etc.
Points 1-12 also apply to outings.