



## Ashton St. Peter's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

### Volunteers in School Policy

Ratified in Sep 2021

Update in Sep 2023

#### **Introduction**

The value of well-deployed volunteers in Schools is now widely recognised. At Ashton St Peter's VA School volunteers are a welcome resource for helping to raise children's achievement, complementing the work of teachers and support staff. The Headteacher and Governing Body have no doubt that the 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.

Headteachers and Governors are 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.

#### **School Policy**

The Governing Body intends that this policy give a clear statement on the engagement and deployment of volunteers and that this document be included in the staff handbook for the information of everyone.

This policy document has been written and agreed in consultation with school staff and all employees were given the opportunity to comment before the policy was adopted.

The policy will be reviewed regularly by the Governing Body and be revised in response to changing legislation, guidance or practice as necessary.

## **Deployment**

Volunteers should not be asked to carry out duties which:

- a) fall normally within a teacher's responsibility under loco parentis;
- b) 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;
- c) would normally be performed by a contractor engaged by the LA or by the school;
- d) require them to have unsupervised access to children;
- e) it should be noted that the Class Teacher remains responsible for the organisation of the class and methods of work;
- f) expose them to dangerous or hazardous substances or situations.

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.

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.

The Governing Body does not require the use of volunteer application forms. However, all successful applicants will be required to sign that they have read, understood and will observe this policy, and will complete a DBS form (see Appendix 1)

It is important to match the talents and skills of volunteers to the needs of the school. Volunteers who do not feel valued will not stay. Where a volunteer's particular skills or knowledge do not match the current needs of the school, the offer of help should be declined.

## **School Regulations and Other Information**

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 campus and details of those facilities available to them eg staff room, toilets etc. If the staffroom is not available to volunteers for relaxation then an alternative room needs to be made available for all the volunteers. Volunteers should not use the children's toilets.

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

- expectations with regard to confidentiality;
- the School's Data Protection Policy - especially access to information related to pupils and/or staff;
- expected level of behaviour and an awareness of Professional Codes of Practice;
- the School's Equality Policy - especially focussing on issues relating to discrimination and the use of appropriate language;
- the School's Complaints procedure;
- the School's Disciplinary procedures.

### **Child Protection**

The law requires check to be made on anyone with responsibility 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 now includes volunteers who regularly help:

- In the classroom
- In extra curricular activities
- Supervise pupils on school organised holidays or residential visits

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

Schools planning to work with volunteers falling into any of the above groups should complete a 'Disclosure and Barring Service Form' to enable a check to be made against 'List 99' and the Central Bedfordshire Council Applicant Referral List before commencing duties.

These regulations do not apply to volunteers such as those who help organise or run fetes or may assist the school activities on an irregular basis or adhoc basis but should apply to volunteers that drive children in cars or minibuses. However, if the Headteacher 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 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 List 99 and a 'Disclosure and Barring Service Form' (DBS). In other circumstances, eg 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, eg sports coaches from a local club, the school should obtain assurance from that organisation that the person has been properly vetted.

Whilst having no direct contact with children in their role, the Governing Body have directed that all governors should be DBS checked.

**IMPORTANT:** It is the Headteacher's responsibility to ensure that volunteers do not have unsupervised access to children.

A full list of acceptable Valid Identity Documents can be found on the leaflet, 'An Applicants Guide to Completing the DBS Application Form'

All volunteers will be given a copy of our 'Safeguarding Children' Leaflet, Information for Visitors, Volunteers and Governors'

All volunteers must provide 2 referees.

### **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.

### **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.

**Review Procedures**

The School's policy will be reviewed when:

- Every 2 years- Sep 2023
- The School wishes to review the policy.
- If amendments are required by the LA

Ratified by: *David Bower*

Date: Sep 2021

Headteacher

**Volunteer Declaration**

I have received, read, and will observe the requirements of this policy.

I agree to complete a Disclosure and Barring Service Form and understand that my role as a school volunteer is conditional upon background-checks being successful.

Signed .....

Name (in capitals) .....

Date .....

