



Volunteer Policy

Approved by:	Governing Body	Date: September 2024
Last reviewed on:	March 2022	
Next review due by:	September 2027	

Background

Volunteers offer valuable support and enhance service provision by filling a wide variety of roles, which may involve working with teachers, children/students etc. Legislative requirements impact on the use of volunteers who work with children and vulnerable adults, particularly in relation to their suitability for this type of work. Disclosure and Barring service checks (DBS) may therefore be required for these roles.

Volunteers are also required to evidence their entitlement to live and work in the UK in the same way as paid workers.

Aims & Objectives

- a) To welcome volunteers into the school as part of the community.
- b) To recruit volunteers to support the children's learning.
- c) To develop skills required to help children within the classroom context.
- d) To screen all volunteers in line with safer recruitment and safeguarding guidance
- e) To provide information about the school for volunteers.
- f) The school positively welcomes the support and interest of all members of the community and everyone in the school values the contribution made by volunteers.

Application of the policy

These guidelines have been developed to cover voluntary workers undertaking duties on behalf of, and in support of, the activities of Harrington Hill Primary School. These guidelines set the minimum standards expected.

The use of the volunteers

Volunteers make a valuable contribution when supporting contracted staff in providing services to the school. There are a variety of capacities within which volunteers can be of service, but they cannot replace a member of staff, or to cover a vacant post. In return for their services, a volunteer will receive a sense of identity/fulfilment, social contact and involvement within the school, together with an opportunity for personal development or continuing professional practice.

- a) Voluntary work cannot offer paid employment, or the promise of a permanent position, security or remuneration (other than some expenses, where agreed by the Headteacher);
- b) If the volunteer is a relative of a pupil or a staff member of the school, they can still work in that area, but will not be asked to carry out any work that impinges upon their relationship;
- c) The school accept the service of all volunteers with the understanding that at any time, for whatever reason, the school can decide to terminate their relationship;
- d) Any volunteer, who has a conflict of interest with any activity or programme, whether personal, or financial, must declare this to the Headteacher.

Recruitment of volunteers

Volunteers make a valuable contribution when supporting contracted staff in providing services to the school. The Headteacher must comply with the School's equality and inclusion policy

- a) Opportunities to undertake a placement should be available to all however there may be some schools where this may not be possible or appropriate due to the nature of the work, or where there is a conflict of interest.
- b) The Headteacher should undertake a form of selection to ensure a person is suitable for the role. The Process will be less formal than that used for paid employment, however it is still important that the Headteacher conducts a form of vetting and assessment of skills and suitability.

This process should include:

- a) Volunteer expresses an interest in working for the School and is given a copy of the Volunteer handbook;
- b) The Headteacher explains the nature of the assignment and the commitment to safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults;

- c) Volunteer completes an application form so that the school have their contact details and education/work history with supporting documentation as instructed (Proof of Identity, right to work etc.).
- d) The Headteacher conducts an informal face to face interview;
- e) The Headteacher conducts pre-employment checks including DBS Check and references (see below).
- f) An Induction meeting is conducted and any relevant training is arranged.
- g) If the Volunteer is attending a school trip they will also be required to attend a meeting with the Class teacher (usually on the day prior to the trip) where they will review a copy of the trip risk assessment and received key information about the day and be briefed on the specific needs of children attending.

Interviewing volunteers

Interviews should be less formal than for paid staff, however it is important that the Headteacher checks that the person is able to undertake the role and understands what will be expected of them.

- a) The face to face interview is an important part of a Headteacher's recruitment and risk assessment process;
- b) The Headteacher should make every effort to place a person in a role that would be suitable and safe for them, and safe for anyone else coming into contact with them (such as other volunteers, pupils/students, paid colleagues, and members of the public);
- c) The Headteacher should also probe into the motivation to undertake their chosen work, especially if they have no previous experience. The interview should also promote the role and explain how the individual is likely to benefit from working in School and the positive input they can make.
- d) There may be occasions where the Headteacher decides that the particular role is unsuitable for the volunteer. This situation may arise if the support that the volunteer requires is too great and not feasible within the School, or the Headteacher may decide to offer a trial period to assess suitability.

Pre-employment checks

The Headteacher should take up two references for all volunteers working at the school on a regular or frequent basis. Volunteers working with children or vulnerable adults will need to provide a reference for the last five years.

- a) DBS checks will be required for some placements. The Headteacher should explain the reasons for the check and reassure the volunteer that such checks are a standard procedure when working regularly with vulnerable people.
- b) The Headteacher should also give reassurance that all information will be treated with the strictest confidence and provide information on how the process will work.
- c) A criminal record will not be an automatic bar to volunteering, as only relevant convictions will be taken into account.
- d) Some volunteers, such as a parent volunteering to help out at an event will not require a DBS checks, but arrangements will need to be in place for them to be accompanied and support in school. A person who regularly or frequently has contact with children or vulnerable adults will be subject to checks. Regular contact is defined as three times or more in a specified period.
- e) A person volunteering in a post working with children or vulnerable adults will not be permitted to start until appropriate checks have been undertaken.
- f) Volunteers who have an unsatisfactory DBS check or reference will be automatically refused the role and will be advised of the reason for the decision by the Headteacher.
- g) Volunteers who do not agree to the checks will be refused the opportunity to volunteer at the school.

Induction

All volunteers should be subject to an induction to ensure that they know what is expected of them and what they can expect when volunteering in school. The induction should also cover equal opportunities, safeguarding, code of conduct and health & safety within the workplace. The Volunteer should be given/or directed to the Schools key policies and procedures including, safeguarding, code of conduct & whistle blowing etc. the volunteer handbook should be provided prior to the induction to define the scope of responsibilities of a volunteer. The volunteer and designated staff member will both sign and date the induction checklist at the end of the induction meeting.

All volunteers are valued for their contribution and some of the standards we expect from our contracted employers will apply, such as demonstrating motivation and commitment to achieve the school's objectives. Volunteers will also be required to work within agreed procedures including health and safety requirements, reliability and punctuality.

The Headteacher should provide appropriate training and give a clear induction of the role and the limitations thereof. The volunteer should be treated in a fair and consistent manner in a safe working environment.

Any volunteer working with young or vulnerable people should receive a local safeguarding induction that specifically advises on the safeguarding standards in that service area. The induction must also include clear codes of conduct. The Headteacher should keep records of all training a volunteer receives.

Supervision

Volunteers need to be supervised appropriately within the working environment and receive regular contact with the person responsible for them. They should be advised how they will be supervised and the type of feedback they will receive.

Confidentiality

In the course of their duties, volunteers may need to have access to confidential information. It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to determine whether access to confidential information is appropriate and, if it is, to make sure that the information is kept to a minimum.

The Headteacher must also ensure that the volunteer understands the confidential nature of the information and their responsibilities regarding confidentiality. They will also be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement.

Health & Safety

The school has a duty to people other than employees to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that they are not exposed to health and safety risks when on school premises.

Volunteers who may be affected by the way the undertaking is conducted should receive appropriate health and safety advice from the Headteacher. The Headteacher must ensure health & safety training and instructions given to volunteers as defined on the risk assessments for the activities being undertaken. Records should be kept of the information and training provided.

Training

Volunteers may be required to attend training. The Headteacher is responsible for advising volunteers on the code of conduct and behavioural standards related to safeguarding.

Insurance

The school's employer's liability insurance contains a clause relating to volunteers which is sufficient to fulfil their legal liability in relation to volunteers carrying out work within the remit of their agreed work programme.

Unsuitability of Volunteers

If, after appropriate support and encouragement, it is determined that a volunteer is unsuitable, they should be advised by the Headteacher that they are no longer required.

Where a volunteer arrangement is cancelled, or a volunteer chooses to leave, then all authorisation or ID cards, together with any other school property, must be returned.

If a volunteer is asked to leave because they harmed or may harm a child/pupil, Headteachers will be required to refer the details to the relevant authorities such as the Police or the Disclosure and Barring Service.

Linked Policies and documents:

- a) Volunteers handbook
- b) Volunteers application form
- c) Visitors policy
- d) Safeguarding policy
- e) Code of conduct
- f) Whistle blowing policy
- g) Health & Safety policy
- h) Behaviour policy