



Volunteers in School Policy

Purpose

There are four main purposes to this policy:

- To enable the opportunities for children to be enriched both within the curriculum and the extended school
- To establish expectations for both staff and volunteers
- To promote continuity and coherence across the school
- To state the school's approaches to volunteers in school in order to promote public, and particularly parent's and carers' understanding of the curriculum.

The Importance of Volunteers in Schools

The value of well-deployed volunteers in schools is widely recognised. Volunteers are a welcome resource in helping to raise children's achievement, complementing the work of teachers and Learning Mentors. St Paul's C of E Junior School recognises that there is no doubt that the school as a whole benefits greatly from developing well-planned, active parental and community links through participation by adults in the activities of the School on a voluntary basis. Volunteers in school provide for the enrichment of the pupils' learning experiences, but must not encroach on or restrict professional teaching duties.

Volunteers in school will be deployed appropriately and will not be asked to replace paid staff or be given responsibility within the school that would normally be associated with paid employees.

Our volunteers include:

- Members of the Governing Body - School governors are the largest volunteer force in the country, giving their time freely and generously to help schools achieve the highest standards. Governors play an important role in setting the school's strategic direction and ensuring that staff are accountable to the wider community for pupil achievements. Working as members of corporate governing bodies their main role is to promote high educational standards for all the pupils in their school.
- Parents and other Family Members - Parents and other family members are particularly valuable as volunteers in schools. Parents can become more involved by volunteering to take part in a range of school activities, such as helping in the classroom, in the school library, with school trips or by coaching sports. As well as helping to enrich children's learning experiences and often giving the parents new skills, schools that involve parents in reading, numeracy and other areas of the curriculum can see levels of achievement rise. Normally, parents/grandparents would not work in the classroom of their child/grandchild, unless a prior arrangement has been made.
- Ex-pupils, ex members of staff, local residents and Friends of the school

The types of activities that volunteers can do include:

- Hearing children read
- Working with small groups of children
- Working alongside individual children
- Accompanying school visits

Becoming a Volunteer

Anyone wishing to become a volunteer, either for a one-off event such as a school visit or on a more regular basis, e.g. hearing children read, should contact **Ms Linda Edwards**, who coordinates our volunteers. She will arrange for a 'Volunteer Information Sheet & Agreement' (Appendix 1) in advance of any volunteer work being undertaken.

How volunteers contribute to the aims of the school

St Paul's C of E Junior School aims to:

- Celebrate the diversity of skills, knowledge and expertise within our school and wider community;
- Enrich the opportunities within the curriculum through inviting volunteers into school to support, advise and inform both staff and children;

- Provide regular support to children and the classroom;
- Provide opportunities for children to gain first-hand insight into areas of knowledge, understanding and experience not available from other staff, for example from discussion with a volunteer of a particular faith or religion within an R.E. unit of work, or a volunteer who has lived in a country being studied within a Geography unit of work.

Guidelines

Deployment of Volunteers

All volunteers at St Paul's C of E Junior School will be made to feel welcome. The parameters of their role within the School will be clearly defined from the outset in order to avoid the possibility of misunderstanding. The school will provide volunteers with sight of the Volunteers in School Policy, Safeguarding and Health & Safety induction, and volunteers will be asked to sign an agreement to abide by its contents.

During visits to the School, or visits elsewhere with the School, each volunteer will be designated a particular member of staff to whom he / she will be directly responsible. Whilst there should not be any significant addition to the workload of the staff member taking responsibility for the volunteer, it is expected that time is taken to ensure the volunteer is adequately inducted into the role and that there is mutual agreement and understanding. This 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 to St Paul's C of E Junior School will be made aware of the following as appropriate:

- Volunteers at St Paul's C of E Junior School will not have unsupervised access to children
- Location of toilets and staffroom and invitation to tea/ coffee facilities
- Location of areas in which they will be working
- Fire-alarm procedures
- Expectations with regard to confidentiality
- Access to information, as necessary, in relation to staff and pupils
- Expected level of behaviour and an awareness of professional codes of conduct
- The school's Equal Opportunities, and Volunteers in School Policies along with other Policies and practices as appropriate to the visit
- The School's Complaints Procedure
- The School's Disciplinary Procedure.

Volunteers will 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 Teaching Assistant, i.e. covering for absence.
- Would normally be performed by a contractor engaged by the Local Authority or the School.

It is noted that the Class Teacher remains responsible for the organisation of the class and methods of work.

Confidentiality

Volunteers in school are bound by a code of confidentiality. Any concerns that volunteers have about the children they work with/come into contact with, should be voiced with the Class Teacher and NOT with the parents of the child/persons outside school. If it is a comment which a child makes which gives rise to concerns, then the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher should be informed directly.

Comments regarding children's behaviour or learning can be highly sensitive, and if taken out of context, can cause distress to the parents of a child if they hear about such issues through a third party rather than directly from the school. Volunteers who are concerned about the conduct of any other adult in school should raise the matter with the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher.

Supervision

All volunteers work under the supervision of the class teacher in the first instance. Teachers retain responsibility for all children at all times, including the children's behaviour and the activity they are undertaking.

Volunteers should have clear guidance from the teacher about the activity they are carrying out. Volunteers are expected to seek advice/clarification from the class teacher in the event of any query/problem regarding children's understanding of the task or behaviour.

Child Protection

The welfare of our children is paramount. To ensure the safety of our children, we adopt the following procedures:

- All volunteers are given a copy of the Volunteer Policy and asked to sign a 'Volunteer Agreement' (Appendix 2).
- To ensure the safety of our pupils at all times, all volunteers involved in regular, unsupervised activities with pupils must have been cleared by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). A certificate is issued to the individual to produce in school. Separate instructions on how to apply are available from the school office.
- Where a volunteer is engaged in a 'one-off' activity, e.g. helping supervise a group of children as part of a class visit, no formal checks are carried out. These volunteers, who are under constant supervision of school staff, must read the guidance related to Off Site Activities (Page 5).

To qualify for a reduced fee criminal record check, the applicant must not benefit directly from the position the DBS application is being submitted for, i.e.,

- **receive any payment (except for travel and other approved out-of-pocket expenses)**
- **be on a work placement**
- **be on a course that requires them to do this job role**
- **be in a trainee position that will lead to a full time role/qualification**

Insurance

Volunteers will be informed about the extent of the insurance cover available. Whilst volunteering for the school they are covered by the Local Authority for third party liability only and the limitations of this insurance will 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 own car insurance company to ensure that they do not contravene their insurance policy conditions.

Allowances

Although there is no obligation to make financial reimbursement to volunteers; it is sometimes appropriate, in exceptional circumstances, to consider paying out-of-pocket expenses connected with the tasks they undertake for the school.

Extension or extra-curricular opportunities

Medium Term Planning may identify opportunities for visits and fieldwork as appropriate to the unit of work. The planning of such activities will be in line with school policy and practice and will be discussed with the head teacher before firm plans are made. Such visits may include and involve volunteers.

Inclusion

St Paul's C of E Junior School recognises that there will be times when the School requests the support of a volunteer for whom particular arrangements are necessary. The school operates an inclusive policy and all offers of help from volunteers will be considered on an equal basis. Offers of help will be accepted purely because they fit the needs identified for the specific group of children and enhance and support what is on offer at the school both within and in addition to the curriculum.

Health and Safety

Safe practice must be promoted at all times. The school has a Health and Safety policy and maintains records of Risk Assessment. All volunteers will have their attention drawn to emergency procedures identified risks, the teacher will explain to the volunteer the risk and any specific actions which should or should not be taken by the volunteer.

Complaints Procedure

Any complaints made about a volunteer will be referred to the Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher for investigation. Any complaint made by a volunteer will be referred to the Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher.

The Headteacher reserves the right to take the following action:

- Speak with a volunteer about a breach of the 'Volunteer Agreement' and seek reassurance that this will not happen again;
- Offer an alternative placement, e.g. helping with another activity or in another class;
- Inform the volunteer that the school no longer wishes to use them.

A copy of the School's Complaints Policy is available on request.

Off Site Visits

School trips are an integral part of learning at our school and afford many children opportunities which are outside their usual experiences. We are pleased that you have come forward as a volunteer helper: You will have an important role to play in the success and safety of this school trip.

Role on Visits

- to be responsible and look after, in equal measure, all of the children in your group
- to stay with your allocated group of children, ensuring that their well-being and safety is maintained for the total duration of the school trip
- to promote polite, respectful and courteous behaviour towards each other and members of the general public. We all go as ambassadors of our school!
- to ensure that your group keep up with the body of the school visit party, be it walking, entering or exiting from transportation or following speakers for the trip
- to contact your child's class teacher/member of staff if there are issues with first aid, safety and/or behaviour

Working alongside school staff

The school expects volunteer helpers to:

- comply with all of the above whilst being under the direct line management of school staff
- show a commitment to their group, an interest in the focus of the visit and assist children in their learning by helping them to read signs/labels/information, asking questions that encourage children to think about the task and help to explain areas of interest
- follow guidance from the school staff

What is not permitted?

- Volunteer helpers are not allowed to bring additional siblings on the school trip.
- Volunteer helpers are not allowed to re-organise school visit groups.
- Volunteer helpers are not allowed to smoke, drink alcohol or engage in any illegal practices.
- Volunteer helpers are not permitted to take photographs of children.
- Volunteer helpers are not allowed to give/buy their group treats e.g., ice creams, biscuits, sweets – before, during or after the school trip.

First Aid

For each class on the school visit, there will be at least one qualified first aider. You will be informed if any child in your group has medication/needs. If medicine needs to be administered, this will be done by a member of staff unless it is your child who requires medicine in which case you will be asked to administer this and be responsible for carrying the medicine. All other medicines and first aid box(es) will be carried by staff.

Emergencies

You are expected to inform a member of staff as soon as possible. If you have become separated from the rest of the school party, please telephone one of the members of staff on your contact list or telephone the school (**0118 9785219**).

If there is a security alert, the guidance is to:-

- Find a safe place – a public building is suggested
- Find a land line and call school (it's worth checking you have some loose change)
- Stay put following local emergency services advice

Review: This policy will be reviewed bi-annually by the HSE committee.

Volunteer Information and Agreement

Name	
Contact Details Address, telephone, email	
Dates/Duration/Frequency of Voluntary Work	
What skills/areas would you like to help with in school?	
Are there any particular age groups/classes you would like to work with?	
Do you have any disabilities/other needs we need to take into account when working as a volunteer?	

Please read and sign this Volunteer Agreement and hand it to the school office. You will receive a copy of it for your records:-

VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have received a copy of the School's Volunteer Policy and agree to abide by its contents • I agree to support the School's aims • I agree to treat information I learn from being a volunteer in school as confidential • I understand that I am required to undergo a DBS check to advise the school of my suitability as a volunteer 	
Signature:	Date:

Thank you for taking the time to read our Volunteers In School Policy. Please hand the completed Agreement form into the school office. Your offer of help is appreciated and we will be in touch shortly.

HISTORY

Date	Reference	Amendments
January 2016		Introduction of Policy