



Code of Conduct for Volunteers

This policy has undergone an Equalities Impact Assessment in line with the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty

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Contents

	Page Number
1. Welcome	3
2. Supervision	3
3. Relationships and safer working practices	3
4. What to do if you are concerned about a child	4
5. Setting an example	5
6. Use of mobile phones, cameras and computers	5
7. Gifts and Rewards	5
8. Transporting children	5
9. Safety Procedures	6
10. Educational trips and outings	6
11. Medical Issues	6
12. If you are unable to attend	6
13. Confidentiality	6
14. Breaches to this Code	7
15. Further Information	7
16. Code of Conduct for Volunteers – form to complete and return	8

1. Welcome!

- 1.1 Thank you for volunteering to assist within our Partnership. We appreciate the effort taken by parents and other volunteers who provide a valuable contribution towards school activities. We encourage your assistance and recognise that many school activities would be at risk if it were not for your help.
- 1.2 We aim to make sure that your time spent in our schools is productive and enjoyable. The deployment of any volunteer, whether for one day or for a number of sessions over a longer period, must take account of the needs of pupils and the staff to whom they are assigned. We have a duty to ensure that the welfare of pupils is promoted and they are safeguarded from harm.
- 1.3 This Code of Conduct sets out the guidelines that we expect all our volunteers to follow in order to ensure everyone is safe. Please read this document carefully before signing at the end to say you understand and agree to abide by the Code; you will need to return the signed back page but keep the main document for your future reference. In addition to the information within this document, you will be made aware of the Designated Safeguarding Lead(s) within your school and how to access them.

2. Supervision

- 2.1 You should be working under the broad supervision of a member of staff at all times when working with pupils. If you are undertaking a role in which you might be supervised less whilst working with pupils, the school will need to undertake deeper safeguarding checks: an enhanced DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check with child barred list check. This check must be undertaken before you start your voluntary work.
- 2.2 However, whatever your voluntary role and however closely you may be working with a member of staff, you should always be aware of 'safe working practices'. This means that you should avoid finding yourself in a position where you might be vulnerable to allegations by pupils. For example, avoid working alone in a room with one pupil; rather, if you are working with one child, find a space in a higher-traffic area where you can work together. Thinking in this way will help to keep you safe – if you are ever unsure, staff in school will be able to advise you.
- 2.3 You should follow the guidance and instructions given by members of staff about your role in the activity that you are helping with.
- 2.4 Parents of pupils may be asked to volunteer in a class other than that attended by their child. This is because it can be quite difficult to work in a classroom and avoid the temptation to get especially involved with your own child's activities! If, however, a parent assists in their child's class, it is important to try to avoid conflicts of interest: for example, that is not the right time to discuss your child's progress with the class teacher. If it is proving difficult for such situations to be avoided, the school may direct the parent to work in a different class or, if necessary, to reconsider their offer of help.

3. Relationships and safer working practices

- 3.1 At all times you should maintain a 'professional' relationship with all pupils and staff. This will minimise the risk of any allegations of inappropriate behaviour. Again, this requires thinking about 'safer working practices': for example, when working in schools, physical contact with pupils should be minimised. You may, for example, know some of the pupils well because you know their families outside of school. However, you should still adopt a professional manner within the school environment. Any physical contact should be a response to a pupil's needs at the time and even then of limited duration and appropriate to the child's age, stage of development, gender and ethnicity.

- 3.2 It is important that you do not share personal information about yourself with pupils in school – this includes your views, beliefs, personal relationships or lifestyle. You should never give or exchange contact details with pupils, including email or home addresses, phone numbers or social networking identities. Avoid any communication with a child or young person that could be misinterpreted. If you find yourself being asked for such information by a child, or in the event that a child tries to make contact with you outside of school, you should discuss this with school staff immediately.
- 3.3 Volunteers should use the staff toilet, never the pupils' toilets. On educational visits and outings when public toilets or changing areas may need to be used, you should exercise caution and avoid placing yourself in a position where your actions might be open to criticism or misinterpretation. Male volunteers should use a cubicle in public toilets.
- 3.4 Behaviour management of the children is the responsibility of members of school staff and should not usually involve volunteer helpers. The routine re-focusing of a child's attention to the task in hand and any appropriate prompts or reminders is expected but must be appropriate to the situation and mindful of the dignity and respect of the child. The class teacher will ensure that, for any children for whom a Behaviour Management Plan is in place, you are aware of how to respond should a need arise.
- 3.5 The school in which you are volunteering is an inclusive environment which values diversity and it expects all volunteers to adhere to that principle. You should act appropriately towards all pupils, parents, carers, staff and other volunteers, whatever their socio-economic background, age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, race, religion or belief. If you witness or experience bullying, harassment or discrimination, no matter who is the victim or perpetrator, you should raise this with a member of staff.
- 3.6 Any adult who begins to feel in any way uncomfortable with the way in which a child is behaving towards them should discuss this with school staff at the earliest opportunity. It is likely that the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead/s will be consulted so that appropriate action can be taken to manage the situation sensitively and appropriately to maintain the dignity and safety of all concerned. Very occasionally, a child may develop an infatuation with an adult who works with them.
- 3.7 If you have any concerns about following this guidance or if you are aware of any incident which may be misconstrued or give rise to concern, please talk to a member of staff.

4. What to do if you are concerned about a child

- 4.1 It is possible that, in working with children, you will see or hear something that gives you cause for concern for a child's welfare. If this is the case, you should share your concerns immediately with a member of staff; it is likely that this person will consult the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or indeed you can approach the DSL directly. You should take this action without hesitation or delay: staff in school know their pupils and families well and it may be that your observation is significant within the wider context of that child. It is not the role of the volunteer to decide whether or not they think something is a safeguarding risk – school staff will do that; the volunteer's role is to be swift to share any concerns that they may have.
- 4.2 If you find yourself in a situation where a child discloses to you (this means that a child decides to tell you about something that is worrying them), remember that it is not your role to investigate the matter yourself; whilst you should avoid 'shutting down' that child as they are talking, you should avoid asking questions and certainly never promise to keep any disclosure a secret. You should then report what you have heard to a member of staff urgently (ideally the DSL) and then make a written, dated and signed record which you should give to the DSL.

5. Setting an example

5.1 All volunteer helpers in our schools should be positive role models to the children, so we expect you to:

- Conduct yourself in a professional manner
- Dress appropriately for the school setting and the tasks and role you will undertake
- Talk politely and calmly to all pupils. Avoid sarcasm, demeaning or insensitive comments
- Act in a way that reflects the school's ethos and values
- Never use inappropriate, offensive or abusive language whilst on the school premises, even in the staffroom
- Never smoke in the school building or grounds as it is strictly prohibited to do so
- Offer encouragement and praise to the children, and avoid favouritism to a particular child or group of children nor give rewards which are outside of the school's agreed policy
- Promote and follow the school rules
- Never discuss subjects that are inappropriate for the age of the pupils (this includes general 'gossip', references of a sexual nature, sharing of information about staff, parents or pupils)
- Ensure that comments, including those made on social media, do not bring the school into disrepute
- Never be under the influence of drugs or alcohol when assisting as a volunteer.

6. Use of mobile phones, cameras and computers

6.1 Volunteers who attempt to use their personal devices such as mobile phones within school premises or around children are placing themselves at great risk. Use of personal IT devices and mobile phones is therefore prohibited. There may be exceptional circumstances to this (for example, a volunteer group leader of a school trip may be asked to have their mobile phone to hand as part of the trip's risk assessment) but such circumstances must be agreed by school staff in advance. If you need to use your mobile phone in an emergency whilst on the school premises, please go to the school office.

Using the video or camera features of your mobile phone whilst on the school premises or working with pupils in any context, including school trips, is strictly prohibited.

6.2 If your role requires you to use the school's IT facilities, please speak to the school office; it will be necessary for you to read and sign the school's Acceptable Use Agreement.

7. Gifts and rewards

7.1 Personal gifts must not be given to pupils as such actions, however well-intentioned, can be misconstrued. Neither should you give pupils any rewards not covered by school policy. Volunteers should not usually accept gifts from pupils. There may be exceptions such as small 'token gestures' at Christmas. Any volunteer who is uncomfortable about a gift which a child wishes to give them should discuss this with school staff.

8. Transporting pupils

8.1 If you are asked and agree to transport children to an event or other location in your own vehicle, the school is required to undertake a risk assessment in line with the Safer Driving Policy. This risk assessment requires the school to ensure that you are appropriately insured (business use) and that your vehicle is roadworthy. It will also require you to disclose any endorsements on your licence – drivers with six or more 'points' are not permitted to transport pupils. The school will also be mindful of safer working practices is setting up any such arrangements with you.

8.2 It is inappropriate for adults to offer lifts to any pupil outside their normal duties. This includes children that you may know outside of school. Such arrangements would need to be discussed with school staff and the consent of parents/carers sought.

9. Safety procedures

- 9.1 Volunteers should familiarise themselves with the school's fire evacuation procedures that are attached to this guidance. In the event of the alarm sounding, all volunteers should leave via the nearest available fire exit and should not try to recover personal belongings. If you have any questions about the fire safety arrangements, then please speak to the school office. If during the course of your time at the school you notice something which you think may well pose as a health and safety risk, you are asked to share this with the school's health and safety lead via the school office as a matter of urgency.
- 9.2 Please sign in on your arrival and sign out when you leave. This helps us maintain an accurate list of the people on the school premises in the event of a fire. Please obtain a visitor's badge from the school office upon your arrival. This must be worn at all times regardless of how well known you are to the pupils. Please remember to return the visitor's badge before you leave.
- 9.3 Exercise reasonable care for the safety and welfare of yourself, pupils, members of staff or others on the school premises at all times.

10. Educational Trips and outings

- 10.1 Volunteers who are accompanying pupils on educational trips or outings must be approved by the school and be subject to the normal checks and arrangements as outlined in the Partnership's Educational Visits policy. Volunteers who are working with children on a school trip overnight must have a relevant DBS check.
- 10.2 Volunteers should take particular care when supervising children and young people on trips and outings, where the setting may be less formal than the school environment. Adults remain in a position of trust and need to ensure that their behaviour remains professional at all times and stays within clearly defined professional boundaries.

11. Medical issues

- 11.1 The class teacher you are supporting should inform you of any pupils who have severe medical needs, so that you are aware of any symptoms to look out for. All medical information about pupils is strictly confidential and therefore only very limited information will be provided. If a pupil requires medical attention please inform a member of staff immediately. They will get a qualified first aider to attend to the pupil. Volunteers should not administer first aid.

12. If you are unable to attend

- 12.1 If you are due to help in the school but are unable to do so, please inform the school as soon as possible. Please use the answer phone messaging system if no one is available to take your call. This will help our teachers adjust their arrangements if they know your support is unavailable.

13. Confidentiality

- 13.1 All information you may hear or see about a pupil is of a confidential nature. You should not discuss any pupil or member of staff outside of school that you have been working with directly or indirectly. This includes speaking to other parents about their child or other pupils, speaking to family and friends and posting messages online about your experiences in school, e.g. on social media or via email. If other parents approach you for information, always explain that you are not able to discuss school matters with them and ask them to speak with the class teacher or Headteacher if they require further information.

- 13.2 It is accepted that social media relationships with families may have been established prior to the volunteer being placed in school, it is advisable for the volunteer to;
- Refrain from responding to any comments made by contacts on social media about Partnership business.
 - Consider whether to engage with a contact from a parent or family member made through social media as a result of their volunteering in school.

13.3 Where information gives you cause for concern regarding the welfare of a child, you must raise this concern with a member of school staff immediately.

14. Breaches to this Code

14.1 If the Headteacher (or other designated person) believes that any of the above guidance and expectations have been breached, then it is at their discretion to decide either to give a warning to the volunteer concerned or to instruct the individual to cease attending the school as a volunteer.

14.2 We want all the people who work within our schools to maintain the high standards of personal conduct outlined in these guidelines. If the Headteacher is concerned that events in your private life may affect the reputation of the school and/or impact on the effectiveness and safety of those who work and attend our school, they will instruct you to cease your support as a volunteer.

15. Further information

15.1 Once you have read this guidance, you should sign and return the back page. The other documentation provided by the school should include:

- Summary of safeguarding procedures (including names of Designated Safeguarding Leads)
- Emergency evacuation arrangements and assembly points

15.2 Other key, full policies can be accessed on the school and CLP websites.

15.3 If you have any queries or concerns of a safeguarding nature, please refer to a member of school staff, ideally the designated Safeguarding Lead. Online safeguarding training is accessible to volunteers, should you wish to access this training, please speak with a member of staff.

And finally, we would like to extend our thanks to all of our volunteers who contribute to our schools in so many ways.



Code of Conduct for Volunteers

Name: _____

School: _____

I have read and understood the contents of the Volunteer Code of Conduct (2023).

I agree to abide by the procedures and expectations for volunteers that are set out in this code.

I recognise that I am in a position whereby, at certain times, I may have access to information concerning individual stakeholders. I agree to only discuss information on a 'need to know' basis, reporting any concerns to a member of school staff.

I agree not to post or share information online through any means, including all areas of social media, e.g. Facebook, Twitter, which relates to any individual stakeholder or brings the School or Partnership into disrepute.

As a volunteer I understand that the school decides when and where I will be volunteering in school, that I am responsible to the teacher I am placed with and I should discuss with them any concerns or information that needs to be shared.

Failure to adhere to this code of conduct may result in the termination of the volunteer placement.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Please detach this page and return to the school office at your earliest convenience.