



# **VOLUNTEERS POLICY**

**Northgate Primary School**

## Introduction

At Northgate we are open and welcoming to all who would like to support the children in order to enhance their learning whilst at our school. As part of this, we seek to encourage parents and other adults to help the school in a variety of ways.

These guidelines have been written to ensure that for all concerned – volunteers, teachers and children - the experience is positive and rewarding.

## Vision and values

Our children are supported and challenged to become a caring, collaborative, and creative learners who can adapt to meet their future life goals with confidence and success. We aim to ensure that our children are respected as individuals and feel good about themselves so that they can achieve their very best within a safe, caring and supportive environment.

All adults who work in the school, whether a paid member of staff or a volunteer are expected to work and behave in such a way as to actively promote our school aims. All school visitors must comply at all times with the School's policies and procedures. We will not tolerate any form of verbal, written or physical abuse or threatening behaviour towards staff, including comments on social media.

## Responsibilities

- **Head Teacher:** The Head Teacher has responsibility to ensure that operational services are suitably established to provide the processes required to ensure that all staff and volunteers understand and comply with the service provision.
- **Senior Leadership Team:** Each Senior Leader is responsible for ensuring that the policies and procedures are adhered to within their area of accountability.
- **Teachers:** Each Teacher is responsible for ensuring that the policies and procedures are adhered to within their area of accountability.
- **All Staff and volunteer helpers:** All staff and volunteer helpers within the scope of the policies and procedures are responsible for the implementation of the policy within their own area of accountability

## Volunteers are:

Parents, carers or other adults working alongside the teachers.

Volunteers support the school in a number of ways such as:

- Supporting individual pupils within classrooms
- Helping with supervision of children on school visits
- Helping with group work
- Helping with the delivery of practical subjects
- Reading 1-1 with targeted children across KS1 and KS2

## Becoming a Volunteer

Anyone wishing to work as a volunteer who will be in school on a regular basis or a one-off occasion completing a work placement should request a **Volunteer Application Pack** from the school office. This should be completed and returned with the necessary paperwork and original identity documents to facilitate a DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) clearance check if required.

## Volunteer Application Pack

The application pack should contain this policy, the Safeguarding Quick Reference and the Disqualification Declaration form. (appendix 1)

Volunteers should also have access to the following policies which are all available from the school's website or in the staffroom.

- Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Attendance Policy with information about child missing in education
- Code of conduct
- Information about the DSLs
- Safeguarding Guidance
- Equal Opportunity Statement
- Safeguarding for Volunteers Powerpoint

As part of our commitment to safeguarding, the school will seek two references for volunteers who will be working with pupils unsupervised in school on a regular basis. Volunteers who are not already known to the school will be asked to attend an informal interview to ensure that the aims and intentions of the school and the volunteer are compatible. The Headteacher has the authority not to accept the help of volunteers if he or she believes that it is not in the best interest of the children.

## Safeguarding

Safeguarding our pupils is of paramount importance, and our volunteers must share our commitment to child protection.

To ensure we're upholding our responsibility to keep our pupils safe, we will:

- Complete a formal risk assessment and interview for those wishing to become volunteers prior to a placement being considered.
- The risk assessment will consider:
  - The nature of the work the volunteer will be doing.
  - What we know about the adult.
  - References from employers or other voluntary roles.
  - Whether the role is eligible for an enhanced DBS check and barred list check.
- Conduct enhanced DBS checks on **regular** volunteers.
- Conduct a barred list check, if the volunteers will be working in regulated activity.
- Consider the results of any DBS checks that return with unspent and spent listed convictions, and assess these on a case-by-case basis, with regard given to the nature of the conviction and the nature of the work the volunteer will be involved in.
- Provide safeguarding training to all volunteers prior to them beginning work at the school, including ensuring that they have received, read and understood part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.
- Require volunteers to agree and adhere to our Code of Conduct for adults, safeguarding Advice for Visitors and the school's safeguarding policies provided during the safeguarding induction.
- Ensure that visitors without an enhanced DBS check are always supervised, and are never left alone with pupils.
- Ensure that new volunteers are added to the school's Single Central Record (SCR).
- Volunteers who do not have a DBS check wear a red lanyard that states 'supervised' and are with a regulated staff member the entire time they are in the school building.

The SLT or line manager should assess the tasks that the volunteer will be required to perform, what supervision will be available and whether the volunteer will be undertaking 'regulated activity' with children, as defined by the Disclosure and Barring Service. An enhanced DBS

check with barred list information will be needed for **unsupervised** volunteers who support pupils regularly, or provide personal care on a one-off basis, according to Keeping Children Safe in Education. These volunteers are considered to be in 'regulated activity'.

If a volunteer disagrees with the school's decision and refuses to undergo a DBS check, the school is within its rights to refuse the volunteer's help.

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 Northgate Safeguarding leaflet, Code of practice for voluntary helpers (appendix 4) and the Volunteer agreement (appendix 2). Please ask the office if you have not received one.
- Training in child protection procedures is provided on a regular basis. Volunteers are expected to make every effort to attend this important training. The PowerPoint can be found on the school website.
- Any concerns about pupils' welfare must be reported. Safeguarding issues must be reported to the DSP (Designated Senior Person) or Deputy DSP.
- Volunteers who are concerned about anything another adult in the school does or says should raise the matter with the DSP, the Headteacher or Deputy DSP. Where the volunteering is a placement linked to a course of study, the cost of the DBS (if required) will be met by the volunteer (or his/her college).

**Supervised volunteers** who are parents doing guided reading in the classroom, parents who support the daily mile, are not in regulated activities, and therefore **do not** need a DBS. Supervision must take place on an ongoing basis, whether the worker has just started or has been doing the activity for some time. Volunteers who are reading 1-1 with children and are awaiting DBS checks will be supervised in the dining room and escorted off the premises by a regulated school staff member.

The school will undertake a risk assessment for supervised volunteers.

**One-off volunteers** who are **supervised** at all times i.e. assisting with a school walk, a fund raising event or a school visit will not require a DBS. Care should be taken to ensure these volunteers do not have sole responsibility for a group of children or provide any form of intimate care. If they are **unsupervised** on the trip, the adults will need a DBS check. Any volunteers helping on an offsite school trip must sign the Off-site visits volunteer agreement (appendix 3).

**Association members** do not need DBS checks as a matter of course. Whether a check is needed, and what level of check, will depend on the specific activities an individual is engaged in. A parent who comes to help at one or two school events would not need a DBS check, as the activity is not 'regular' and the presence of school staff at the event would mean it counts as 'supervised'.

**School governors** are covered by the same requirements as other volunteers with respect to DBS checks.

### **Maintaining records of volunteers**

The school office maintains records of volunteers. Details of all volunteers selected for volunteering within the school should be recorded on the Volunteer Record spreadsheet. Details of volunteers in regular contact with children should also be entered onto the single record of pre-employment checks for inspection by Ofsted.

### **Working with Children**

Whether you have previous experience of working with children or not, here are some guidelines to help you be successful in your voluntary work:

1. Be friendly and encouraging with the children, especially when working with them for the first time. Expect them to be a little nervous – introduce yourself and explain that you will be helping them with their learning etc.
2. Remember that although we need to be friendly, we are not making friendships, and it is important that the children give the same amount of respect as other adults in the school. Expect children to use your surname, e.g. Mrs Smith
3. Our children are usually enthusiastic and cooperative. You are not responsible for managing their behaviour beyond making a reasonable attempt to help the child focus on their task. Be positive and clear in your explanations, and remember you are not there to negotiate about what the children have to do.
4. If a child is overenthusiastic or disengaged, ask them politely to settle down to help them and others concentrate. If a child is not engaging at all with their work, remind them of the purpose of the activity and that you are there to help them.
5. If your reasonable attempts to help the child engage with their task are not working, use a final reminder, e.g. 'If you can't settle down you will have to go back to see your teacher.'
6. If you have any concerns at all, go and get help from a member of staff immediately.
7. The children know you are not a teacher, so don't feel embarrassed or disappointed if you need to seek extra support. Simply ask the child to return to class and explain to their teacher why they have been sent back.
8. When you have finished working with a child it is good to reflect on how the activity has gone. Praise the children when they have done well with their learning and attitude; when they haven't use phrases like 'Next week you should think about...' and 'I think it would help your learning if...'

## **Child Protection**

### **Security**

### **Signing in**

When any volunteer arrives in the school, they must sign in at the main visitor reception and collect an appropriate visitor badge/lanyard (blue if they have a DBS check or red if they are to be escorted) which must be worn at all times in school.

Volunteers must also sign out when they are leaving the school premises.

### **Use of Mobile Telephones**

Volunteers are not permitted to make/receive calls or text messages when in school. Volunteers should ensure that mobile phones are turned off or in silent mode at all times while on school premises. Mobile phones should be kept out of site eg in a bag/locked in a drawer and not be left on view.

### **Confidentiality**

Volunteers in school are bound by a code of confidentiality. Any concerns that volunteers have about the children they work with and come into contact with should be voiced with the class teacher and **NOT** with the parents of the child or persons outside school. Social media cannot be used to communicate about your time in school as a volunteer. Comments regarding children's

behaviour, welfare 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.

## **Supervision**

In a classroom setting, all volunteers work under the supervision of the class teacher of the class to which they are assigned. Teachers retain responsibility for children at all times, including the children's behaviour and the activity they are undertaking. Volunteers should have clear guidance from the teacher as to how an activity is carried out and what the expected outcome of an activity is. Volunteers are encouraged to seek further advice / guidance from the teacher in the event of any query or problem regarding children's understanding of a task or behaviour.

## **Health & Safety**

The school's Health and Safety Policy is available on the school website. Class teachers or the designated member of staff should ensure that volunteers are clear about emergency procedures (e.g. fire alarm evacuation) and about any safety aspects associated with a particular task (e.g. using DT equipment /accompanying children on visits). Volunteers need to exercise due care and attention and report any obvious hazards or concerns to the class teacher or the designated member of staff in the first instance.

## **Volunteer helpers are not allowed to do the following activities:**

1. Take responsibility for all or some of the class
2. Change very young children or supervise them changing
3. Supervise children engaged in PE or other specialist activities
4. Take the children off the school site without a teacher in charge

The responsibility for the health and welfare of the children remains with the class teacher at all times

## **Complaints Procedure**

Any complaints made about a volunteer will be referred directly to the Headteacher for investigation. Any complaints made by a volunteer will be referred to the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher. The full Complaints Procedure is available from the school office.

The Headteacher reserves the right to take the following action:

- To speak with a volunteer about a breach of the volunteer agreement and seek reassurance that this will not happen again;
- Offer an alternative placement for a volunteer, e.g. helping with another activity or in another class
- Inform the volunteer that the school no longer wishes to use them if she believes it will not be in the best interests of the children.

## **Extra-curricular Clubs**

In order to maximise opportunities for children, volunteers from the school community may lead extra-curricular clubs. Volunteers may lead these clubs independently as long as the required insurance is in place, and appropriate checks have been made. Volunteers who run an extra-curricular activity, should seek further advice / guidance with any problem regarding children's behaviour or there is a first aid issue.

## **Equality and Diversity**

At our school we do not tolerate discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, race, ethnic background, colour, religion, gender, sexual orientation, history of illness or your marital, employment, financial or social status. As a volunteer, you must treat people with respect at all times and ensure that there is no unlawful discrimination, abuse, harassment or bullying in your

dealings with children, colleagues or others at the school. If you feel that you have been unfairly discriminated against, please discuss this with the Head Teacher.

Our equal opportunities policy is available from the school.

**Monitoring**

The policy is reviewed regularly. The governing body monitor the Volunteers Policy as part of its policy review programme.

