



VOLUNTEER POLICY

Member of Staff Responsible: Lorraine Shaw

Ratified by Governors: October 2021

Next Review date: October 2023

Review cycle: Two years

Introduction

This Volunteer Policy sets out the principles and practice of how we involve volunteers, and is relevant to staff, volunteers and governors within our organisation. It aims to explain procedures and clarify roles and responsibilities to make sure we maintain the highest standards in our management of volunteers.

Volunteers bring a range of skills and experience that can enhance the learning opportunities of our pupils. The Governing Body therefore welcomes and encourages volunteers from the local community and appreciates their ongoing commitment.

Our Volunteer Handbook (Appendix 1) and Volunteer Code of Conduct (Appendix 2) provides further details about the support expected from Bush Hill Park Primary School and procedures in place for volunteers.

The school's Volunteer Policy is part of the schools safeguarding system and policy.

Who is a volunteer?

Volunteers are individuals who undertake activities at Bush Hill Park Primary School, unpaid and of their own free choice, and is not to be mistaken for work experience placements, apprenticeships or internships.

Volunteers are individuals or groups who offer our school their time, experience, knowledge and skills without financial gain, helping us to achieve its aims, or with the aim of providing a benefit to the wider school community.

The role of volunteers is very different from employees, consultants, contractors, supply staff or students on work placements. There is no contract of employment or services between the school and its volunteers. Volunteers do not have to commit to a given number of hours.

If volunteers are asked to work a given number of hours this will be at the individual's discretion, who must not be penalised if they are unable to do so.

Volunteers may be involved on a one-off, short term or long-term, and on a regular basis.

Examples of who can be a volunteer include:

- Members of the Governing Body
- Parents of pupils
- Ex-pupils
- Ex-members of staff
- Local residents
- Friends of the school

The recruitment of new volunteers can take time and the intake of new volunteers will be dependent on individual candidates and the needs within school. The smooth running of

Bush Hill Park Primary School will always be a priority and the Headteacher maintains the right to refuse volunteers and also terminate placements.

The types of activities that volunteers engage in, on behalf of the school, include:

- Hearing pupils read
- Working with small groups of pupils to assist them in their learning
- Working alongside individual pupils, as an additional tutor
- Accompanying and helping on school trips and visits

Our school aims

All adults and young people who work in our school, whether a paid member of staff, or an unpaid volunteer, are expected to work and behave in a way which actively promotes our school aims and educational purpose.

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 pupils read, can approach the Class Teacher, Headteacher or senior leader directly.

It is the school's decision to take on volunteers, and the number of volunteers it decides to engage with will depend on the time of year, the number of volunteers already active within school and the potential impact on the children and staff time.

If a staff member wishes to volunteer in a role different to their current role, they can do so with explicit permission from the Headteacher, for a period of time as decided by the Headteacher. This will be monitored to ensure it does not interfere with other working patterns.

Volunteers should complete the Volunteer Application Form (Appendix 3) with a covering letter expressing their interest and detailing skills, abilities and experience which might be of help within our school environment along with their contact details, types of activities they would like to help with, and the times they will be available to help.

Child Protection and Safeguarding

Safeguarding is a priority and we are committed to keeping our pupils and young people safe. We expect all staff and volunteers to keep up to date with and adhere to safer recruitment guidelines and to share our commitment.

The recruitment process of volunteers mirrors the safer recruitment of paid staff to make sure the most suitable adults volunteer their time and energy for the benefit of pupils in our school.

A list of volunteers will be kept in the Finance Office and will be the responsibility of the School Business Manager.

To ensure the safety of our pupils, we adopt the following procedures:

- All volunteers are given a copy of the Volunteer Policy and asked to sign a Volunteer Declaration Form (Appendix 4).
- All of our frequent volunteers must have been cleared by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). A DBS will be issued to the individual and the record of the check and date kept on file and in the school's Single Central Record (SCR).
- Volunteers will have a defined Job Role as detailed in their Volunteer Agreement (Appendix 5) and their assigned supervisors will address any concerns regarding their work, attitude and practice.
- Volunteers must agree to the Visitor Protocol and sign in on InVentry system at reception upon entry.

Online Safety

Online Safety relates to the teaching and learning of information technology and the use of social media in a responsible and safe environment, focusing on raising awareness of the core messages of safe content, contact and conduct when using it. This can include accessing websites and online content, email, online chat rooms, mobile phones, gaming and games consoles, social networking sites, instant messaging (IM), apps, platforms, viruses and spam. Volunteers, like staff are expected to follow the Online Safety Policy which is available on the school website.

Volunteers should not make or receive calls during teaching time. The use of phones or phone watches must be limited to non-contact time when no children are present. Volunteers should keep devices out of sight whilst on school premises.

Frequent or intensive volunteers

Activity which is described as 'frequent' or 'intensive' covers the meaning given in the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006.

'Frequent' - once a week or more often on an ongoing basis; and 'Intensive' – three or more occasions in a 30-day period, or overnight (between 2am – 6am).

Volunteers who are frequent or intensive need a DBS. If a volunteer does not have a DBS they should not under any circumstances be left alone with a child.

Where a volunteer is engaged in a 'one-off' activity, e.g. helping to supervise a group of pupils as part of a class visit, no formal checks are required. However, volunteers on school trips, who will be under the constant supervision of school staff.

Volunteers for school visits

School visits are an integral part of learning at our school and provide opportunities for many pupils which are outside of their usual experiences. The class teacher or staff member leading the visit is responsible for briefing the volunteer and should provide a risk assessment, their specific tasks, the visit schedule, route details and any other important pieces of information. The visit lead, who will be a staff member, has ultimate responsibility for the pupils. Pupils should never be left with a volunteer unsupervised.

Process for recruiting volunteers who will be working frequently or intensively

A) Volunteers will be given a copy of the Volunteer Policy. They will be asked to complete a Volunteer Application Form and provide a supporting covering letter with their application.

B) References will be requested from two sources not related to the potential volunteer and must be known for at least six months. Placements are subject to references and DBS checks.

C) The Headteacher or Senior Leaders will identify the need and role for volunteers.

D) Candidates may apply to become a volunteer in response to a school advert or following a recommendation by completing a Volunteer Application Form.

E) Candidates will attend the school for a discussion with the Headteacher to ensure they are suitable for the role required.

F) An enhanced DBS check will be undertaken before a volunteer can begin their role, to make an informed decision when accepting volunteers to work with children. This is not required where a volunteer is engaged in a 'one-off' activity.

G) The volunteer's role and tasks will be agreed and detailed in their Volunteer Agreement.

H) Volunteers will undergo an induction and given school and corporate policies, which they will be required to read and sign they have understood. These policies and documentation will include for example the Safeguarding Policy, Health and Safety Policy, Behaviour Policy and Whistleblowing Policy.

I) Before starting to help at Bush Hill Park Primary School, volunteers must complete the Volunteer Declaration Form, which states what volunteers sign up to be honest with the information they provide and to adhere to all the school's policies and procedures which pertain to them and their presence at Bush Hill Park Primary School. Along with The Volunteer Code of Conduct, it sets out the school's expectations of its volunteers and confirms they have received a copy of this policy, as well a Health Questionnaire.

J) Volunteer records will be kept in the Finance Office.

Volunteers who wish to gain work experience

We are happy to take work experience students on a placement if we have suitable experiences available and if it supports the smooth running of our school.

Secondary schools, colleges and universities who would like students to be placed with us need to formally make contact with the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher or Assistant Headteacher, outlining the aims of the placement and its duration.

If the placement is a part of a teaching course (BA, BEd. or PGCE) the Deputy Headteacher or Assistant Headteacher will deal all correspondence and details. If the placement is just for

work experience purposes, the school or college must provide the reference for the student and the student will need to complete our volunteer paperwork.

The Headteacher retains the authority to refuse or terminate a volunteer or work experience placement at any time, with no notice, to ensure the smooth running of the school.

Confidentiality

Volunteers in school are bound by a code of confidentiality and are required to sign a Confidentiality Agreement (Appendix 6). Any concerns that volunteers have about the pupils they work with or come into contact with should be voiced to the designated supervisor and NOT with the parent/s of the child.

Volunteers who are concerned about anything within the school, which may affect their work, should raise the matter with the Headteacher, Designated Supervisor or senior leader. Any information gained at the school, either directly or indirectly, about a child or any adult should remain confidential.

Any concerns should be reported immediately to the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher or senior leader.

Supervision

All volunteers will work under the supervision of a teacher or support staff. Teachers retain ultimate responsibility for pupils at all times, including the pupils' behaviour and the activity they are undertaking.

Volunteers should have clear guidance from the Designated Supervisor as to how an activity is carried out and what the expected outcome of an activity is. In the event of any query or problem regarding the pupil's understanding of a task, behaviour or their welfare, volunteers must seek further advice or guidance from their Designated Supervisor.

Volunteers who are related to a member of staff will most likely be placed in a different class or area in the school as part of our commitment to best practice. We believe that working in a different area can help a related volunteer to better develop character and independence.

Health and Safety

The school has a Health & Safety Policy and this will be made available to volunteers working in the school. An appropriate member of staff will ensure that volunteers are clear about emergency procedures (e.g. Fire Alarm Evacuation) and about any safety aspects associated with particular tasks (e.g. using school equipment or accompanying pupils on visits).

A Volunteer Risk Assessment will be completed after roles are defined and at the start of a volunteer beginning their role in school.

Volunteers need to exercise due care and attention and report any obvious hazards or concerns to their Designated Supervisor or School Business Manager (SBM).

Volunteers are included under the school's Insurance Policy under the definition of Persons Employed.

Complaints Procedure

Any complaints made about a volunteer should follow the schools Complaints Policy which is found on the school website.

Monitoring and Review

This policy has been approved by the Governing Body and will be reviewed every two years and updated as necessary.

Roles, responsibilities and expectations

The SBM is responsible for the coordination of voluntary activity within the school, including volunteering policies and procedures and the welfare of volunteers.

All volunteers will have a Designated Supervisor for guidance, support and supervision. Staff responsibilities for volunteers will be explicitly referred to in their Volunteer Agreement.

The volunteer role is based on trust and mutual understanding. There is no enforceable obligation, contractual or otherwise, for the volunteer to attend or to undertake particular tasks or for the organisation to provide continuing opportunities for voluntary involvement, provision of training or any benefits. However, there is a presumption of mutual support and reliability.

Reciprocal expectations are acknowledged within this document – both of what the school expects of volunteers and what volunteers expect of the school.

The organisation expects volunteers:

- to be reliable and honest
- to uphold the school's values and to comply with school policies
- to make the most of opportunities given when available, e.g. training
- to contribute positively to the aims of the organisation and avoid bringing the organisation into disrepute
- to carry out tasks within agreed guidelines

Volunteers can expect:

- to have clear information about what is and is not expected of them
- to receive adequate support and training
- to volunteer in a safe environment
- to be treated with respect and in a non-discriminatory manner
- to receive out of pocket expenses by agreement only before any financial commitment is made
- to have opportunities for personal development when available
- to be recognised and appreciated

- to be able to say 'no' to a request which they consider to be unrealistic or unreasonable
- to know what to do if something goes wrong

Code of Conduct

Volunteers must adhere to the Volunteer Code of Conduct as part of their requirement to being a volunteer in the school.

Our Volunteer Code of Conduct is a fair, written procedure explaining rules and procedures for all volunteers. It makes clear from the outset, the expectations of all volunteers and the consequences and penalties for poor conduct in all its forms.

Volunteers must sign that they have read and understood our Volunteer Code of Conduct, signalling their agreement to abide by the code of conduct before they begin their role in school.

If there any concerns, Designated Supervisors must arrange to discuss them immediately. The volunteer will be given the opportunity to discuss these concerns as soon as possible.

If there are concerns about the conduct or performance of a volunteer, the Designated Supervisor should investigate to find out what is happening. This should include talking with the volunteer concerned and appropriate colleagues.

If the conduct or performance of a volunteer is unsatisfactory, the volunteer should be informed accordingly. If school resources and time allow, guidance and additional support may be offered for a limited period determined by the Headteacher. If at the end of the period of 'additional support' the volunteer's conduct or performance does not improve the volunteer agreement should be terminated, and the volunteer should be asked to leave immediately.

If the volunteer displays behaviour or conduct that is equivalent to gross misconduct, the volunteer activity should be terminated immediately.