

**Hillside Primary School**

# **Volunteers Policy**



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## Volunteers Policy

### Rationale

Volunteering is an important expression of citizenship and fundamental to democracy. It is the commitment of time and energy for the benefit of society and the community and can take many forms.

At Hillside we recognise the value of well-deployed volunteers, who are a valuable resource for helping to raise children's achievement and complementing the work of teachers and support staff. There is no doubt that we will benefit greatly from developing well-planned, active, parental and community links through participation by adults in the activities of school, on a voluntary basis.

The deployment of any volunteer must be managed with care, taking account of the needs of the pupils, the volunteers themselves and the staff to whom they are assigned. Volunteers should be protected against exploitation of their interest both as individuals and as volunteers. Volunteers should not be put under any moral pressure to undertake activities that go against their principles.

Four key elements of volunteering are choice, diversity, mutual benefit and recognition;

- Choice - Volunteering must be a choice freely made by each individual. Encouragement to volunteer should not result in compulsion or coercion. Freedom also implies the freedom not to be involved.
- Diversity - Volunteering should be open to all no matter what their religion, background, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins, age, gender, marital status, sexual orientation or disability. However, schools have a duty of care to their pupils and there may be legal reasons why volunteers may not be allowed to work with children. Volunteers should be screened using DBS (enhanced) checks and, where relevant, the taking of references, to ensure their suitability to work with children.
- Mutual Benefit - Volunteers offer their contribution and skills unwaged but should benefit in other ways in return for their contribution. Giving time voluntarily must be recognised as establishing a reciprocal relationship in which volunteers benefit and feel that his or her contribution is personally fulfilling.
- Recognition - There should be an explicit recognition that valuing the contribution of volunteers is fundamental to a fair relationship between volunteers and school. This could include recognising the contribution to the school, the community, the social economy and wider social objectives.

### Key Definitions

A 'volunteer' is defined as 'a non-staff member giving regular voluntary help with school activities'. This does not include one-off volunteering such as accompanying children on day trips or taking children to sports competitions, though these helpers are bound by the same insurance and child protection issues. Nor does it include working with FOHA (Friends of Hillside Association), which is bound by its own policies and procedures.

### Recruitment (see Appendices 2, 3, 4 + 5)

- Volunteers will normally be connected to the school in some way (i.e. relatives of children at the school) or members of the local community interested in helping at the school.

- Volunteers will usually be adults, though secondary-aged pupils are also encouraged to help at the school. However, under-18's will not be given unsupervised responsibility for pupils, but will be expected to work alongside other volunteers or members of staff. They are bound by the same policies and procedures as adult volunteers, with the exception that DBS checks will not be carried out.
- Recruitment will usually occur at the request of members of staff for help in a specific or general area. Volunteers may also be invited personally, or approach the school at their own initiative.
- No expectation will be made as to how much help will be given and for how long, though those considering volunteering will be encouraged to consider it a commitment to help the school as regularly as they can

## **Induction**

As part of their induction to life at the school, volunteers will be provided with basic information as appropriate (see Induction Policy) in addition to the Safeguarding information listed in Part 6.

## **Deployment (see Appendices 1 + 3)**

- Volunteers will not be used to carry out duties which:
  - (i) would constitute being used to cover the absence of teaching or support staff from school; (ii) would normally be performed by a contractor engaged by the local authority or by the school;
  - (iii) require them to have unsupervised access to children unless they have been appropriately checked (see 'Child Protection').
- All new volunteers shall be allocated to a class teacher for support in the school, who shall undertake regular reviews with the volunteer to consider possible difficulties, training needs and queries raised either by the volunteer or the school.
- Volunteers are also subject to the same obligations to abide by, and be subject to, the school's agreements, policies and procedures. They should be familiar with procedures designed to avoid hazards and risks associated with the tasks that they are being asked to carry out and, in particular, details of first aid and emergency arrangements.
- The relationship between all paid workers and volunteers should be complementary and mutually beneficial. Paid workers should be fully aware of the work undertaken by volunteers and of their responsibility to the volunteers working in the school.
- Volunteers wishing to cease their work in school may do so at any time. Though they are not required to give any advanced notice of their intentions, they will be encouraged to inform their link staff member as soon as possible to avoid disruption.

## **Safeguarding**

- It is ultimately the Headteacher's responsibility to ensure that legally required checks are carried out on anyone in the school with responsibilities that can give them unsupervised access to pupils.

- Before volunteers can commence their work (including those providing transport for other people's children), a DBS check must be undertaken and make a photocopy of the volunteer's passport or driving licence. Both these pieces of information will then be stored in the Volunteer File.
- One-off volunteers accompanying classes on trips will not be allowed unsupervised access to children unless they have had a DBS check.
- Where volunteers are not previously known to or connected with the school, character references must be sought from reputable sources who can specifically comment on the volunteer's attitude towards and ability to work with school-age children.
- Identification badges will be available for volunteers when they sign in at the office.
- Volunteers will also be made aware of the following:-
  - the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (Incl. Part 1 of KCSiE)
  - Guidance for Safer Working Practice 2019
  - the school's Staff Code of Conduct Policy
  - the school's Whistle-blowing Policy
  - the school's Induction Policy
  - the school's Health & Safety Policy
  - the school's GDPR Policy
  - the school's Behaviour Policy
  - expectations with regards to confidentiality
  - that at no time will they be working with a child or a group completely unsupervised

## Insurance

- Volunteers must be informed about the extent of the insurance cover available. Whilst volunteering in the school they should be adequately protected against any risks that may arise from undertaking their voluntary activity. School public liability insurance must cover volunteers and they must be made aware of the position regarding any liability and limitations of this insurance. In particular, the school will ensure that volunteers are also protected against theft, personal injury or damage to their own property.
- Volunteers using their own vehicles to transport children other than their own children to and from school events (sports, music, etc) should be made aware of the school policy and advised to check with their personal car insurance company to ensure that they do not contravene their insurance policy conditions. Proof of insurance and MOT certificate (if relevant) must be provided to the office before these volunteers are deployed.

## Finance

- Volunteers will be signposted to, or offered opportunities for, relevant training to develop skills and knowledge which may or may not be accredited. Where appropriate, a contribution towards the cost of providing training will be met by the school.
- All volunteers are entitled to prompt reimbursement of expenses that are incurred solely as the result of their volunteering. 'Out-of-pocket' expenses include travel, petrol, cost of buying special or protective clothing, reimbursement of items purchased at the request of the school (e.g. fabric for costumes, prizes, refreshments for events organised by the school or FOHA).
- No payments will be made to volunteers other than 'out-of-pocket' expenses.

## **Monitoring & review, policy into practice**

The Deputy Headteacher will be responsible for the day-to-day organisation of Volunteers. The Headteacher and Governors will regularly monitor and evaluate mechanisms to ensure that the policy is being consistently applied. Any issues identified will be incorporated into the school's action planning.

**Responsible Governor Committee:** Finance & Staffing

**Headteacher:** Simon Minter

**Date:** Mar 2023

**Review date:** Mar 2025

## **Appendix 1**



## VOLUNTEER GUIDELINES

Thank you very much for volunteering to help at Hillside Primary School. The following are a set of guidelines, which we hope will help to establish a successful partnership between staff and volunteers at the school.

- Teachers work hard to plan lessons and direct learning in advance. If you are unsure of the purpose of the activity you have been asked to assist with please clarify it with the teacher or teaching assistant at the start of the session.
- If you are committed to helping on a regular basis and for any reasons are unable to attend on a day when you are expected, please inform the teacher or the school office in advance. Similarly, if your help is not required on a particular day (due to a trip or other school activity) then the teacher will provide you with advance notice of this.
- Helping in the school that contains your own child will give you an insight into his or her education. Should you have any questions that arise out of this please direct them to the class teacher privately on a separate occasion, through Parent /Carer meetings, or through the other channels that already exist within the school.
- When you are working with the children it is important to create an atmosphere that makes the children want to learn. Enthusiasm and encouragement are extremely important in helping with development.
- Should a child or children spoil an activity for others in which you are participating, please give one warning before asking the teacher or teaching assistant to intervene.
- Under the Children Act 1989 relating to child protection, if a child tells you something that you feel is of concern but you might not know the relevance of, you should discuss this privately with the teacher and no further.
- Confidentiality regarding what might be seen, heard or discussed within the class or group by children or adults is extremely important. School staff are bound by the rule of confidentiality that as a volunteer will also apply to you. Please do not discuss any issues that might arise in class with anyone other than the class teacher who is best placed to decide on the correct course of action. With this in mind, whilst we are happy for you to use the Staff Room for comfort breaks, we request that you do not use it at Lunchtimes.

You may be aware that legislation requires all people working with 'vulnerable members of society', whether in a professional or a voluntary capacity, to apply for a "Disclosure" from the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS). DBS disclosures are not 'portable' and therefore, even if you have one already, you will need to fill in a new form. These can be obtained from the school office.

Thank you very much for volunteering, your time, effort and enthusiasm to help in school. You can be assured that your help is greatly appreciated and will be of genuine help to both children and staff alike.

## Appendix 2



### VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT

Thank you for offering your services as a volunteer at Hillside Primary School. Your offer of help is greatly appreciated and we hope that you will gain much from your experience here.

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

- I have received a copy of the school's Volunteer Policy and have read the Volunteer Guidelines (Appendix 1).
- I agree to support the school's aims and values & follow school policies.
- I agree to treat information I gain 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.
- I understand that I will need to provide the school with two references (where applicable).
- I understand that I will need to provide evidence if my right to work is subject to a work permit/visa/worker registration scheme.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Note: this agreement is in honour only and is not intended to be a legally binding contract of employment.

## Appendix 3



## VOLUNTEER INFORMATION SHEET

Name of Volunteer: .....

Address: .....

.....

Telephone:..... Date of Birth: .....

Reason for applying as a volunteer: .....

Do you have the right to work in the United Kingdom? Yes/No (Delete as applicable)

Is this subject to a work permit/visa/worker registration scheme? \*Yes/No (Delete as applicable)

\*If yes, evidence must be provided.

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 (e.g. health related) we need to take into account when working as a Volunteer in school? (please give details)

.....

### Details of two referees (where applicable):

1. Title and full name: .....

Relation to the applicant: .....

Work place (if applicable): .....

Contact details (address, phone number, email): .....

Dates: from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

Responsibilities at the workplace (if applicable):

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2. Title and full name: .....

Relation to the applicant: .....

Work place (if applicable): .....

Contact details (address, phone number, email): .....

Dates: from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

Responsibilities at the workplace (if applicable):

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*Please complete the form and hand in to the school office.*

### Appendix 4 – Letter for Character Reference



Date

Dear

..... would like to volunteer in our school and has provided your name as a character reference.

I would be very grateful if you could provide a reference on the attached form and return to us either by post or scan to an email.

I would like to thank you in advance for your co-operation.

Kind regards,

Yours sincerely

Mr S Minter

Head Teacher

**Appendix 5 – Character Reference Request Template**

# Character Reference

Name of Applicant:
How long have you known the applicant:
In what capacity do you know the applicant:
Are you satisfied that the applicant is suitable to work with children: <i>(if you are not satisfied, please state what your concerns are and the reasons why the applicant is considered unsuitable).</i>
<b>COMPLETED BY</b>
Name:
Address:
Signature
Date: