InfoSpace

Hillside Primary School

Recruiting & Managing Volunteers Policy



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Recruiting and managing volunteers G120

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1. Introduction

1.1 Volunteers are a welcome resource for helping to raise children's achievements, complementing the work of teachers and support staff. This document will provide guidance on the deployment of volunteers to help ensure that schools prevent people who pose a risk of harm working with children. Different guidance may apply for occasional or one-off volunteers, where this is the case it will be made clear.

1.2 The DfE document 'Keeping children safe in education' places a responsibility on Governing Boards and proprietors to ensure all staff who work with children undergo statutory checks to prevent people who pose a risk of harm from working with children. Schools must ensure volunteers are appropriately supervised and can also decide to ask for checks beyond what is required.

1.3 Headteachers should also ensure that no volunteer replaces paid staff or takes on work normally given to a paid member of staff.

2. Recruitment of Volunteers

2.1 For some types of voluntary work, such as for ad-hoc or one-off events, the recruitment process can be very informal. However, because the volunteer role in a school, in most cases, have some degree of responsibility (e.g. working with pupils), selection processes need to be robust to ensure only the right volunteers are recruited. The school will need to satisfy themselves that the volunteer is of good character and will therefore undertake the following recruitment process:-

- Application Form and Volunteer Agreement (See Appendix 1-5) – all sections must be complete and demonstrate both an understanding of and appropriateness for the role in question.
- Two satisfactory references - requests for references should include asking for details on the prospective volunteer's behaviour and interaction with children and young people.
- Interview – the Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher should meet with the volunteer for a discussion of the proposed role, its requirements and expectations.
- DBS checks - an enhanced DBS check with barred list check is required for all volunteers who will have regular and unsupervised access to children as they will be considered to be undertaking a regulated activity. Where the volunteer is supervised to a reasonable level, an Enhanced DBS check can be undertaken but it is not required by law as they will not be considered to be in a regulated activity. However, schools/academies will need to be able to evidence their decision making in terms of the level of supervision a volunteer has where it is deemed not necessary to undertake the check. Existing volunteers will not have to be re-checked if they have already had a DBS check (which will include children's barred list information if engaging in regulated activity). However, if there are concerns a new DBS check will be considered. For further information regarding volunteers and DBS checks see *Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) checks model policy and procedure P112*, on InfoSpace.
- Verification of the volunteer's identity and where relevant, verification of qualifications and professional status.
- Childcare (disqualification) regulations 2009 declaration – The same criteria apply to volunteers as employees in terms of who should be checked. Any information provided by volunteers or prospective volunteers should be assessed in line with the guidance issued in relation to employees. See *Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations requirements guidance G112b* on InfoSpace for further information.
- Equality of opportunity - schools have responsibility for applying their policy on equal opportunities to avoid unlawful discrimination.

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2.2 The Headteacher will be responsible for ensuring these checks have been completed where they are appropriate. Evidence of all volunteer recruitment should be recorded on the school's single central record.

2.3 Where a one-off or occasional volunteering opportunity arises, for example where a school approaches a parent who is well known to the school to take on a particular role, such as helping with a school trip or event, a streamlined procedure can be adopted – such as checking to ensure others in the school community know of no concerns and can make a positive recommendation.

3. Management of volunteers

3.1 The monitoring of volunteers continues beyond recruitment. Volunteers should have a planned induction. Safeguarding protocols and monitoring of performance are both important and will be ongoing whilst the volunteer is volunteering in the school.

3.2 All volunteers should have a named supervisor who shall be responsible for:

- ensuring the volunteer understands their volunteering role by outlining specific and general tasks, responsibilities and who they will report to,
- organising a planned induction to the school, including explaining relevant policies and procedures (including safeguarding, safer working practice/ the Code of Conduct, Health and safety, data protection, sickness absence reporting) and the duties and tasks agreed,
- ensuring that volunteers are aware of their agreed responsibilities with regards to confidentiality and relations with the media,
- ensuring that volunteers have adequate work space, equipment and services necessary to perform their tasks effectively and safely including personal identification where appropriate,
- arranging a short trial period during which volunteers will receive close support and mutual feedback, including the chance for them to feedback their views
  providing regular support,
- making sure that the volunteer, their role and activities are reviewed and monitored,
- organising appropriate training to make sure that volunteers can carry out their activities effectively. This training must directly relate to the activity for which they volunteer.

3.3 One off or occasional volunteers should be made aware who to report to and who they will be supervised by. They should also fully understand what is expected of them, be briefed on safeguarding protocols, health and safety and safer working practices and how to safely access any equipment or services required.

4. Conduct, monitoring performance and complaints

4.1 Volunteers will not be subject to school disciplinary procedures nor have access to the school's' grievance procedures as these are for school/academy employees only. However, volunteers will be given an opportunity to discuss any concerns that they may have about their volunteering and consult with the school generally.

4.2 Volunteers should raise any complaints or concerns with their supervisor. If this is not appropriate or they are not happy with how this is dealt with, volunteers should take their complaint to the Headteacher or follow the School's complaints procedure.

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4.3 If there are concerns about the conduct or performance of a volunteer, their supervisor should investigate. This should include talking with the volunteer concerned.

4.4 If conduct or performance is unsatisfactory, the volunteer should be informed that they will be offered additional support for an identified period of time. The object of the support will be to encourage improvement.

4.5 If a volunteer does not meet the school/academy's standards of performance, and the steps the school has taken to encourage them to improve, do not work, the volunteer should be offered more suitable alternative voluntary activities or asked to leave with one week's notice.

4.6 If behaviour, which in the school's view is, equivalent to gross misconduct has occurred the volunteer activity will be terminated immediately.

4.7 In the event of conduct concerns and doubt as to the procedures to follow please contact Education**HR** by telephone on 01603 307760 or by emailing EHRenquiries@norfolk.gov.uk.

5. Ending involvement

5.1 Either the school or the volunteer can end the volunteering at any time and without any notice. However, unless there is an emergency or misconduct, the school should usually try to give volunteers at least 2 weeks' notice.

5.2 In all cases the school should provide the volunteer with details of the reasons why their involvement is no longer needed.

5.3 If asked, the school should provide volunteers with a certificate giving details of all the activities that they have successfully undertaken for the school.

6. Health and safety

6.1 The school/academy has a duty to look after the safety and wellbeing of volunteers. The *Recruiting volunteers compliance code P656* on InfoSpace provides information on what health and safety considerations need to be addressed.

7. Repaying volunteers their expenses

7.1 Whilst unpaid, volunteering shouldn't leave volunteers out of pocket. Therefore, it is good practice to reimburse a volunteer for the expenses they incur while working for the school/academy. However, schools need to exercise caution when it comes to refunds. Paying 'expenses' automatically, without justification, can be seen in tribunals and by HM Revenue and Customs as the equivalent of paying a salary and could therefore potentially give volunteers employment rights, have tax implications for the school/academy and affect a volunteer's benefit claim (if applicable). The safest course is to reimburse only actual expenses, preferably against receipts.

7.2 Individual arrangements and procedures for claiming should be explained to volunteers before they start their volunteering activity. When claiming volunteers should attach corresponding receipts and/or travel tickets or other evidence of the actual expenditure incurred.

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8. Insurance

8.1 Schools must ensure that their insurance covers all volunteer activities carried out for the school. This is likely to be covered under the school/academy's public liability insurance as long as:

- volunteers were acting within their authority at the time of the incident giving rise to the claim,
- the school/academy would have been covered for the claim had the claim been made against them,
- Where Norfolk County Council organises the insurance, it has full conduct and control of any claim.

9. Data protection act and Freedom of Information act

9.1 Any personal information held regarding volunteers should be stored and used only in compliance with data protection law. Volunteers should be made aware that information produced by them in the course of their volunteering may be made available to the public under the Freedom of information act 2000.

Responsible Governor: Harry Hamilton
Headteacher: Simon Minter
Date: Feb 2025
Review date: Feb 2027

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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.

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Appendix 2



VOLUNTEER APPLICATION FORM

Name:

……..

Address:

……..

……..

Telephone:…… Date of Birth: ……

Reason/s 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)

……

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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):

   _____

   _____

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 3



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, read and understood the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- 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 & values and to follow all policies & procedures.
- 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:_____

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

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

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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: *(if you are not satisfied, please state what your concerns are and the reasons why the applicant is considered unsuitable).*
COMPLETED BY
Name:
Address:
Signature
Date:

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Appendix 6 – Table of changes

Date of change	Paragraphs affected	Summary of update
17/06/2022	2.1	Updated to state that CV's can only be accepted alongside completed application forms and that existing volunteers will not need further checks unless there are concerns.
30/08/2018	5	Removal of reference to *Recruiting Volunteers –Health and Safety Checklist (C656)* as this no longer exists.
01/03/2017	All	New formatting due to launch of new HR website, HR InfoSpace – no change to content.

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