



Woodstone Community Primary School

Growing together, Learning forever

Volunteering is simple

It's about giving your time to do something useful, without getting paid.

In return you get the satisfaction of time and effort well spent. In addition, volunteering can be a great way to meet new people, learn new skills and gain useful experiences.

Whatever skills and experience you have, there is something you can do.

Think about what you want from volunteering - new skills, new contacts, a chance to contribute to our school?

Think about what you have to offer - enthusiasm, work skills, life skills?

Work out roughly how much time you have to give and how many times a week or month.

What is a volunteer?

A volunteer is, in England and Wales, a person who performs an activity which involves spending time, unpaid (except for approved out of pocket expenses), doing something with aims to benefit someone (individuals or groups) other than, or in addition to, close relatives.

Volunteers are seen by children as safe and trustworthy adults and we, therefore, adopt the same recruitment measures as we would for paid staff.

In some circumstances, for example, where a parent who is well-known to the school becomes a volunteer, a streamlined procedure can be adopted: seeing references, checking to ensure others in the school community know of no concerns and can make a positive recommendation, conducting an informal interview to gauge a person's aptitude and suitability, and undertaking a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) criminal records check.

In other circumstances, eg. where a volunteer's role will be a one-off, such as accompanying teachers and children on a school trip or helping at a school fayre, it would not be necessary to undertake the same level of recruitment or undertake a criminal records check. However, the person should not be left alone and unsupervised in charge of children.

Disclosure and Barring Service Enhanced Disclosure

To qualify for a free-of-charge criminal record check, the applicant must not benefit directly from the position the DBS application is being submitted for. The applicant must not:

- receive any payment (except for approved out of pocket expenses);
- be on a work placement;
- be on a course that requires them to do this job role;
- be in a trainee position that will lead to a full-time role/qualification.

Involving young people as volunteers

If you are under 18, then there is no legal reason why you cannot volunteer. However, children are classed as a 'vulnerable group', so we have a duty of care towards them to ensure they are protected. *(Legally a child is defined as someone who is under 18 years old, or under 16 if employed).*

Risk assessments need to take into account the level of maturity and not take for granted that it would be the same as an older volunteer. Employment Law requires individual risk assessments for young employees and although this is not required for volunteers, it is advisable as it enables us to consider each volunteer's level of understanding and maturity.

Young volunteers need to be safeguarded whilst volunteering. Similarly, there are safeguarding issues when the young person themselves is working with vulnerable groups, including other children. Young volunteers should not be left unattended and ideally should be supervised by an adult.

If things go wrong

For most people their volunteering experience is a positive one and may result in them becoming lifelong volunteers. Sometimes, though, things do go wrong and it is important to work out a course of action if this happens.

It could be due to a complaint, issue, concern or problem raised either by, or about, a volunteer. Depending on the nature of the problem or concern, there are various ways it can be dealt with.

Complaints or problems should initially be discussed between the volunteer and the Deputy Headteacher through an ad hoc discussion or in a supervision meeting. In some cases, it may be that more training, support or supervision is needed, especially if the issue is related to a volunteer's performance, attitude or behaviour. The person who is responsible for the volunteer may set a time period in which they can monitor the volunteer to find out if the problem or concern has resolved itself.

Do I have any rights?

Whereas paid employees have 'grievance and disciplinary procedures' built into the terms and conditions of their employment contract, volunteers don't have a legal status in the same way that paid workers do in the UK. Volunteers are not covered by employment law and, therefore, do not have formal rights to redress in an Employment Tribunal. This is because employment law is usually based on having a Contract of Employment or for providing work or services and volunteers do not have such contracts with the organisations that they help.

Health and Safety

Organisations have a duty of care towards their volunteers. In practice this means taking all reasonable steps to reduce the likelihood of harm coming to them, either through action or inaction. Section 3 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 also places a duty on employers "to ensure, as far as reasonably practical, that persons not in their employment, who may be affected by their undertaking, are not exposed to risks to their health and safety" and "to give information that might affect their health and safety".

What these legal duties imply is that we need to be aware of potential risks to volunteers and take steps to reduce them where they are unacceptable. The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 compel employers to carry out risk assessments on their activities, again taking into account anyone who may be affected by their work.

Volunteering at Woodstone Community Primary School

Good Practice

- Volunteers will need to complete a simple form prior to joining the school. This will contain basic information and ask for one or two references. These references must be obtained prior to working at the school.
- Volunteers will need to complete an Enhanced DBS application and receive satisfactory clearance.
- Volunteers will be made aware of Health and Safety regulations.
- Volunteers should not be left in sole charge of groups of children even if they have full clearance from the DBS.
- Information about how new individual volunteers are going to be used should be communicated to all staff at the school.
- Volunteers are not there to 'fill the gaps'. They should not be doing work formerly carried out by a paid employee.
- Volunteers do not have to be parents of children at the school. Many retired people have time, patience and experience to share and would welcome the chance to become involved.
- Remember that not all volunteers want direct contact with children. Some people might be very happy helping in the library, working in the school garden, etc.
- Volunteers will be given information about disciplinary procedures in school and who they can go to if they want advice. It is usually best if the volunteer reports poor behaviour to a teacher rather than getting personally involved.
- Be aware that some children can become too attached to a particular volunteer, especially if they feel they are getting more attention than usual.
- There should be regular liaison between staff and volunteers - this will help to keep things focused and stop problems developing.
- Volunteers under 18 are classed as 'vulnerable' and, therefore, should not be placed/used in circumstances that would be detrimental to them.



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VOLUNTEER APPOINTMENT FORM

Volunteers wishing to gain experience in school are requested to:

- complete an application form;
- have a face to face interview;
- provide proof of identity;
- complete an Enhanced DBS application and receive satisfactory clearance;
- attend safeguarding/child protection training;
- provide names of two references and receive satisfactory responses.

Name:

Address:

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Telephone Number: Email Address:

Do you have any children at this school?

First Reference (*name, address, email, telephone*)

Second Reference (*name, address, email, telephone*)

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Do you have any special skills or interest that you wish to share?

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Signed: (*by volunteer*)

Date:

To be completed by the School

Interview		Proof of Identity		DBS clearance	
Safeguarding training		References received		Added to SCR	
Tour of School		Signing in/out procedure		Fire drill procedures	
Toilet facilities		Staffroom facilities		Accessing the building	
Policies (behaviour, H&S)		Disciplinary procedures in school			

Start Date:

Class:

Volunteering days and times:

Roles and Responsibilities:

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Signed: (*by line manager*)

Date: