



Volunteer Policy

Introduction

At Shefford Lower School we actively encourage parents, carers and other volunteers to be involved in enhancing the learning opportunities for children at our school. We recognise that they bring with them a range of skills and experience that can develop the learning experience for children.

Our volunteers include:

- Members of the Governing Body
- Parents of pupils
- Ex-pupils
- Students on work experience
- University and college students
- Ex-members of staff
- Local residents
- Friends of the school

The types of activities that volunteers may complete in school include:

- Hearing children read
- Working with small groups of children
- Working alongside individual children
- Working with children at the computers
- Accompanying school visits
- Supporting children in PE
- Taking assemblies
- Assisting in clubs

The following information explains the school procedure so that volunteers are able to support learning in a way that is consistent with school policy and practice.

Regulated Activity

Volunteering at Shefford Lower School is considered to be regulated activity because it cannot be guaranteed that a volunteer will be supervised by a member of staff at all times.

Therefore all volunteers must have an enhanced DBS clearance through the school. References will be taken for all volunteers as part of a risk assessment. These checks will be completed before a volunteer is able to work in the school. A record of the individual's personal details, their DBS number and copies of references will be retained securely by the school.

Under exceptional circumstances, and if considered necessary, a volunteer may start whilst these checks are in process. A police check and risk assessment will be undertaken. This will usually only be the case if the volunteer is already known to the school.

All volunteers are expected to adhere to the school's policies and procedures, especially those on Safeguarding, staff conduct, the use of phones and social media. They will receive guidance on these from the teacher they are working with and at the initial volunteer meeting.

Becoming a volunteer

Anyone wishing to become a volunteer should initially approach the school office. Volunteers are asked to make a regular commitment to helping in school.

The checks and risk assessment will be undertaken and the volunteer will be asked to attend an initial volunteer meeting with the Headteacher. Existing volunteers in school are also required to attend this meeting annually so that they receive any updates. Volunteers receive a Volunteer booklet at these meetings. These meetings cover a variety of matters including: Safeguarding, the behaviour policy, Health and Safety, how to support children (reading, spellings etc), Safer working Practices, Confidentiality.

Students on work experience and university/college students meet with the Deputy Headteacher who completes their school/college/university induction paperwork with them prior to them working in school. DBS checks are not required for young people under 18 but a recommendation from their education setting will be required.

Supervision

All volunteers in classrooms work under the supervision of the class teacher of the class they are working in. However there may be times when they are working outside the classroom in a shared space e.g. *taking children to the library, hearing a child read in a corridor or working on an art and craft project with a small group just outside the classroom.* During these times teachers retain responsibility for the children's behaviour and the activity they are undertaking. Volunteers should have clear guidance from the teacher as to how an activity is to be carried out and the expected outcome. Volunteers are encouraged to seek further guidance from the teacher if they have any queries or problems regarding children's understanding of a task or their behaviour.

Policies and procedures

The following policies are discussed in detail at the initial and annual volunteers meetings with the Headteacher and can be made available on request to volunteers working in school:

- Health and Safety
- Staff code of conduct and Safer Working Practices
- Child Protection
- Behaviour

Dress Code for Work Experience Students and University/College Students

Students on work experience and those preparing who are on teacher training/college programmes must abide by the staff dress code. It is reasonable and important that staff and volunteers come to school smartly and appropriately dressed (refer to The Safer Working Practices document). Sports clothing is encouraged to be worn on days when the class do PE.

Confidentiality

Staff do keep information confidential. However, it is probable that while working in school a volunteer will be exposed to information about children.

Volunteers in school should regard any information that they acquire in working with children, whether personal information, information about progress and attainment or about anything that happens in school, to be confidential and not to be discussed with anyone except the appropriate member of staff. Volunteers should not undertake to pass on information about progress and attainment to a child's parents or to provide written records for the child's parent/carer.

Other information that must be kept confidential include medical, learning or behavioural needs which the school attends to for a child.

If a volunteer is concerned about anything another adult in school says or does they should immediately raise the matter with the Headteacher or with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) in her absence.

Helping on School trips and Visits

Our pupils' education is enriched through the provision of a variety of visits which give the children access to expertise and resources not normally available in school. This can include sporting events and walks in the local area.

School visits and trips are co-ordinated by the Educational Visits and Journeys Co-ordinator (EVC). The EVC ensures all visits and journeys are well-planned, that adult:child ratios are appropriate and that the risks are assessed with regard to the equal opportunities for inclusion for all pupils and health and safety requirements.

All volunteers need to be DBS checked. Without a DBS check volunteers cannot be left in charge of a group and it is usually, therefore, impractical for parents without DBS checks to fulfil the responsibilities of a parent helper on a trip. At the Headteacher's discretion, and only in exceptional circumstances, may an adult without a DBS be able to attend a visit under the supervision of a member of school staff at all times.

All risk assessments would be shared with any volunteer prior to attending a school visit.

The Roles and Responsibilities of Parent/Volunteer Helpers on Visits and Journeys

The main duties of parent/volunteer helpers on school trips and visits are:

- To ensure the safety and security of the children
- To engage with the children in order to enhance their learning experience
- To help ensure that all children, including their own, participate fully and independently in all activities

Further guidelines:

- Parents/volunteers should not leave their group/class at any time without notifying the class teacher
- Only school staff are permitted to take children to the toilet on school trips
- Parents/volunteers who experience any difficulties with a child/children in their group should inform the class teacher as soon as possible.
- Parents/volunteers who are not DBS checked cannot take charge of a group
- Parents/volunteers are not permitted to take photographs of children with any equipment other than school cameras and are not permitted to use their mobile telephones.

Monitoring and Review

The implementation of this policy is monitored by the Headteacher and Governors. It is revisited at the beginning of each school year and reviewed every three years.

Date of review	October 2018	
Chair of Governors	Val Thompson	
Head teacher	Tracey Callender	
Date of next review	October 2021	