



# Coton-in-the-Elms C/E Primary School

## Volunteer Policy

Version	Last Review	Reviewed by	Next Review	Comments
1	N/A	S. Marbrow	July 2027	New document in support of safeguarding.

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## **General Introduction**

This policy supports the work of the school in promoting its vision statement, aims and values and safeguarding children

## **School Values**

Our school values are PEACE – Perseverance, Enjoyment, Awe and Wonder, Compassion and Excellence

## **School Aims**

We have simplified these into our school aims listed below:

### **For our children to:**

Learn and remember the skills and knowledge they need for the next phase of education

Love and enjoy books and reading

### **For school to be:**

- a place of safety and stability
- a place where we nurture a Christian character

**For Staff and children to** respect differences and live and work peacefully with each other

## **How the Vision, Values and Aims relate to this policy**

All community members, including volunteers are encouraged to take responsibility for themselves and others to promote our core values of Peace, working together to enable pupils to fulfil their true potential and Respect, encouraging the recognition of differences, abilities and needs.

## **1. Definition of a volunteer**

Volunteers can be divided into 2 groups, either 'occasional' or 'regular'.

- **Occasional** can be defined as volunteers or parents who only accompany staff and children on one off outings or trips that do not involve over-night stays, or who only help at specific one-off events e.g. a sports day, school fete. It would be expected that occasional volunteers would be supervised by a 'regulated' member of staff e.g. teacher and would not be left unsupervised.
- **Regular** volunteers can be defined as those who help on more than 3 days in any period of 30 days or on an overnight stay. If regular volunteers are unsupervised the school will require an enhanced DBS certificate with barred list check (See appendix 1).

## 2. Recruitment of volunteers

- Occasional volunteers who are not in regulated activity would usually be parents or carers who come in to help on a one-off outing or occasion and would not be recruited as such to the position of volunteer. They would not be required to go through a recruitment process including the taking up of DBS checks. This would be at the Head teacher's discretion and where there are known concerns about a parent or other occasional volunteer it would be at the Headteacher's discretion not to engage this person as an occasional volunteer.
- Regular volunteers would be in a position of trust within the school and even where they are not left unsupervised with children, should always go through a recruitment process. The school should also take into consideration any knowledge they have of the person in their relationship with the school as a parent, grand-parent, previous employee, governor, committee member etc. when deciding if this person will be trustworthy and make a valuable contribution to the school in the capacity of volunteer.

The recruitment process will include

- Enhanced DBS checks for all and a barred list check where volunteers have unsupervised access to children and young people.
- Informal Interview with the Headteacher or nominated senior member of staff to include discussion about safeguarding and advise of the school's safeguarding policy, confidentiality, being in a position of trust and any transferable risks.
- 2 references (one of which should, where possible, relate to involvement with children/young people). This should relate to recent paid work or volunteering wherever possible including the last known employer.
- Completion of a volunteer recruitment form which includes personal details, background, skills, types of activities they would like to help in, times they are available.
- Where volunteers have been recruited by another organisation and work in an educational establishment, (e.g., sports coaches from a local club or early years activity provider), the establishment should obtain written confirmation and assurance from that organisation that the person has been properly vetted and has the correct level of DBS required for their role.

## 3. Recruitment and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks

DBS Checks are checks carried out to identify whether or not individuals working in an unsupervised activity with children are suitable to do so. This is because it is known that a small minority of people use this route to gain the confidence of children before causing them harm.

*See Appendix 1 for KCSIE guidance.*

Having a criminal record does not automatically prevent an individual from being a volunteer. The Headteacher and Governing Board would consider the details of the criminal record and balance this against the activities the individual is to undertake. Advice may be required from HR services in order to make this decision.

If a volunteer commits a criminal offence during their time as a volunteer they must disclose this to the Headteacher in the same way that any employed member of staff should. The Headteacher will assess whether it is acceptable to continue with the volunteering role, whether the activities should be changed, or whether it is the best interests for all concerned to no longer act as a volunteer. HR advice may be required.

## **4 .Information for volunteers**

As part of an induction process volunteers should be given verbal and written information about the school. This includes;

- Volunteer agreement with terms and conditions to sign which would include confidentiality and the commitment that they will inform the school of any changes to their circumstances that might affect their position in working with children.
- Schools expectations of volunteers.
- School vision aims and values.
- What a volunteer can expect from the school.
- Health and safety issues e.g., what to do if there is a fire, Lock down procedures, premises security, access to staff room, other staff areas, hot drinks on site.
- Code of conduct (including staff behaviour codes) etc. e.g. polite, courteous, self-discipline, respectful, being an appropriate role model, language, dress, rules around smoking, use of mobile phone, alcohol and illegal substances
- Safeguarding Children policy, practices and responsibilities including the Prevent agenda, this could be 'signed up to' as evidence that the policy has been read and will be complied with.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education part 1, or Annex A
- What to do if.... guidance and information on who to speak to if they have a concern.
- School Behaviour policy and Anti bullying policy.
- On-line Safety Policy and Acceptable User Policy.
- Guidance for safer working practice for adults who work with children and young people.
- An Explanation of DBS requirements, that regular volunteering is subject to satisfactory clearance and the expectation that once cleared the volunteer will advise the Head teacher if their position changes e.g., if they commit an offence.

## **5 .Safeguarding issues**

- Volunteers should be supervised by a designated member of staff. They should be working in a setting where there is always a paid member of staff present. Even where DBS checks have been undertaken, volunteers should not be left unsupervised for long periods.
- Occasional volunteers should never be left unsupervised, would not take children to the toilet or be left in charge of a small group of children on an outing away from teacher/teaching assistant/staff member supervision.
- Volunteers must be advised about physical contact with children in the same way as employed staff.
- Volunteers should use the staff toilets and staff room for any breaks rather than using the children's toilets or play areas.

- Volunteers must be advised that if a child discloses any information relating to potential abuse that they must bring this to the attention of the teacher/designated safeguarding lead immediately.
- All volunteers should be given a basic safeguarding briefing by the Designated Safeguarding Lead. It may also be appropriate for volunteers to attend any staff training sessions on safeguarding.

## 6. Managing the behaviours of Children

- Volunteers should be made aware of the behaviour management policy of the school.
- Volunteers must be advised that it is not their role to discipline children.
- If a potential discipline situation occurs, even where this involves their own child, they must bring this to the attention of the teacher/staff member to resolve or if it has been dealt with at the time, as soon as possible after the incident.
- They must be advised that they must maintain their composure at all time and if things become difficult, they must immediately inform another member of staff.
- Volunteers should be advised of the anti-bullying policy and bring any situations of conflict, bullying or prejudice to the attention of the teacher/staff member.

## 7. Confidentiality

- Volunteers must be advised that all information about the children and the school in which they are volunteering is confidential and must not be discussed outside of the school, or with children, parents or other visitors to the school in any way or via any media.
- It is advised that volunteers are asked to sign to say they have understood and agree to abide by the code of conduct of the school.
- They should not have access to school's records, children's personal details etc.
- Any information should be shared on a 'need to know' basis e.g., child's medical condition such as diabetes, ADHD where this may affect their behaviour or wellbeing.
- Volunteers would not usually attend staff and/or parent meetings but there may be exceptions on a 'need to know' basis.
- The volunteer must not take any notes/files about children outside of the school.
- At no time should volunteers be permitted to take photographs, films or recordings of children unless on school equipment and requested to do so by a regulated member of staff. This equipment must not be taken home by the volunteer.
- Volunteers should be referred to the school policy on Photographic and Filming.
- Volunteers should abide by the school Online Safety/mobile phone policies. Personal mobile phones and other personal hand-held electronic devices should not be brought into the class room.

## 8. Health and safety issues

- Volunteers must be aware of health and safety policies and procedures that are relevant and be advised how to act in an emergency situation the same as for any other staff member.
- The educational establishment must ensure that the appropriate insurances are in place for the volunteer.
- They should be made aware of which staff are first aid trained and of the process when first aid is required rather than undertake any procedure themselves.
- Volunteers should be made aware of any medical conditions for children they are working with which may require immediate intervention e.g., diabetes, epilepsy, allergies and how to respond.
- Volunteers must sign in and out of the school. They must also wear a school lanyard.
- If a school is considering involving a volunteer in an activity where there could be a level of risk to themselves or to a child, a risk assessment must be undertaken as for any other member of staff and health and safety advice sought.

## 9. Supervision/mentoring/allegations (KCSiE – Part 4)

- A volunteer should know who their 'contact' person is in the school. This person would usually be the class teacher (or appropriate and identified member of staff).
- The contact person should be available during their volunteer sessions to provide direct support/supervision. There should also be an opportunity for a regular volunteer to be able to discuss any concerns, their contribution, any training needs etc.
- If there are any concerns about the behaviour of the volunteer, there should be a discussion between the volunteer and their supervisor. This may need to involve advice from a manager depending on the concern. This discussion must be recorded together with any actions regarding expected change in behaviour. This will then be reviewed. If the unacceptable behaviour continues the offer of the volunteer placement will be withdrawn.
- A volunteer should know who to go to if they have a complaint or grievance, for example where there may be a conflict situation with another member of staff or volunteer. They should also know who to talk with if they have a concern about the behaviour of a member of staff or another volunteer (whistle blowing) This could be the contact person in the first instance or Headteacher, given the nature of the concern.
- If a complaint or allegation is made against the volunteer, they need to be made aware of how this will be dealt with and offered appropriate support. Any allegation in relation to safeguarding must be referred to a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and treated as for any other member of staff. Low level concerns should be reported to the Headteacher.
- Transferable Risk: If a volunteer is involved in an incident outside of school which did not involve children (e.g., domestic abuse), that could have an impact on their suitability to work with children, this is known as 'transferable risk' (KCSIE part 4). The school will need to consider what triggered these actions and could a child in the school trigger the same reaction, therefore being put at risk. This may need to include the LADO.
- If specialist skills are being offered by a volunteer, where necessary appropriate qualifications need to be checked and these activities may need to be supervised by a person who also has these specialist skills.

- Any necessary training should be made available to the volunteer through negotiation with their contact person e.g. safeguarding.
- For longer term volunteers a review process would be appropriate. However, any safeguarding concerns in relation to the behaviour of the volunteer must be dealt with immediately and not wait for a review period.

## 10. Transport

- Volunteers must not transport children in their own vehicles unless they have express permission to do so and are appropriately covered with insurance, current driving licence, MOT etc.
- A volunteer would not be expected to take children on school transport or public transport unless accompanied by a member of staff and where a risk management assessment had been made and this met with health and safety regulations.

## 11. Contact with children outside of school

- Volunteers must be reminded that they are in a position of trust and that what they see, hear or are involved in whilst at school must be considered as confidential to the establishment.
- Volunteers must be actively discouraged from forming any friendship relationships with children and their families outside of school. Where people are recruited from the local community and they know some of the children, the impact of this should be talked through with the volunteer as part of their supervision.
- The volunteer must not share their personal details such as address, email, phone or mobile numbers or engage with children and young people, or their families, in settings on social network sites. The only exceptions to this would be where the volunteer is a relative or family friend of a child/young person or their parents. This connection must be made known to the Headteacher.
- If they become aware of a situation of concern about a child from information received in the community this should be discussed with their contact person or the Head teacher.

## 12. Outings and off-site visits

- These may include occasional volunteers as well as regular volunteers.
- Occasional volunteers, or others who have not had DBS checks, must not be left unsupervised or alone with children at any time.
- There should be a briefing meeting at the start of the outing to ensure that volunteers are clear about the plan for the day, who the team leader is, the children who are their responsibility, any special needs of these children, who to ask for advice, who has the first aid kit, basic road safety advice etc.
- It is also advised to ensure that some form of 'debrief meeting' takes place directly after the visit and before the volunteer leaves. This will ensure any feedback can be gathered and concerns are known and addressed immediately.
- Points 1-11 also apply to outings.

## **Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 (Paragraphs 311 - 318)**

### **Volunteers**

287. Under no circumstances should a volunteer on whom no checks have been obtained be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

288. Whilst volunteers play an important role and are often seen by children as being safe and trustworthy adults, the nature of voluntary roles varies, so schools and colleges should undertake a written risk assessment and use their professional judgement and experience when deciding what checks, if any, are required.

289. The risk assessment should consider:

- the nature of the work with children, especially if it will constitute regulated activity, including the level of supervision;
- what the establishment knows about the volunteer, including formal or informal information offered by staff, parents and other volunteers;
- whether the volunteer has other employment or undertakes voluntary activities where referees can advise on their suitability; and
- whether the role is eligible for a DBS check and, if it is, what level is appropriate.

290. Schools or colleges should obtain an enhanced DBS check (which should include children's barred list information) for all volunteers who are new to working in regulated activity with children, i.e. where they are unsupervised and teach or look after children regularly, or provide personal care on a one-off basis in schools and colleges. 291. Employers are not legally permitted to request barred list information on a supervised volunteer, as they are not considered to be engaging in regulated activity.

292. It is for schools and colleges to determine whether a volunteer is considered to be supervised. Where an individual is supervised, to help determine the appropriate level of supervision, schools and colleges must have regard to the statutory guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

293. For a person to be considered supervised, the supervision must be:

- by a person who is in regulated activity relating to children;
- regular and day to day; and
- reasonable in all the circumstances to ensure the protection of children.

**Volunteer Recruitment Process**

Refer to Section 2 of the Volunteer Policy 202:

The following process will therefore be followed when recruiting volunteers:

