

**St. Andrew's C of E (Aided) Primary School
Buckland Monachorum**

Volunteers in School Policy

Introduction

At St. Andrew's Primary School, volunteers are a welcome resource for helping to raise children's achievement, complementing the work of teachers and teaching assistants. We feel that our school benefits greatly from developing well-planned, active parental and community links through participation by adults in the activities of the school on a voluntary basis. We also feel that the role of volunteers in our school provides for the enrichment of the pupil's learning experiences, but should not encroach on or restrict professional teaching duties. The use of volunteers is in addition to normal levels of staffing for teaching, educational support and other staff provided from the school's designated budget. Staff are aware that volunteers are not regarded as substitute labour. The deployment of any volunteer, whether for one day or for a number of sessions over a longer period, is managed with care; in particular taking account of the needs of the pupils and the staff to whom they are assigned.

Appointment

When considering recruitment there is a full consultation, in advance of that person being introduced into school, with members of staff who will work with the volunteer. No member of staff is obliged to work directly with a volunteer if this is against his/her expressed wish. Similarly, staff have the right, in the light of experience, to request discontinuance of the use of voluntary help if it is not found to be valuable. Where volunteers are used in a teaching area, individual class teachers will continue to carry the responsibility for the teaching programme and supervision of pupils. In other areas or activities supervised by educational support staff they will continue to carry responsibility where volunteers are used.

Induction and Training

All new volunteers are made to feel welcome and are given an induction session to provide them with information about the school, its Vision, Values and Aims and the facilities available. The duties of the volunteer, within their individual capacity, are explained and the parameters of their role within the school are clearly defined from the outset in order to avoid the possibility of misunderstanding. The volunteer is linked with a specific member of staff to whom he or she is directly responsible.

At the outset, an assessment is made as to whether the volunteer needs any specific training for the tasks they will be undertaking and, if so, this is arranged. Similarly it may be appropriate to include volunteers in regular staff training sessions.

Confidentiality

Volunteers in school are bound by a code of confidentiality. Any concerns that volunteers have about the children they come into contact with should be voiced with the class teacher and not with the parents of the child or persons outside school. Comments regarding children's behaviour or learning can be highly sensitive, and if taken out of context, can cause distress to the parents of a child if they hear about such issues through a third party rather than directly from the school. Volunteers who are concerned about anything another adult in the school does or says should raise the matter with the headteacher.

Supervision

All volunteers work under the supervision of the class teacher of the class to which they are assigned. Teachers retain responsibility for children at all times, including the children's behaviour and the activity they are undertaking. Volunteers should have clear guidance from the teacher as to how an activity is carried out and what the expected outcome of an activity is. Volunteers are encouraged to seek further advice/guidance from the Teacher in the event of any query/problem regarding children's understanding of a task or behaviour.

Health & Safety

The school has a Health & Safety Policy and this is made available to volunteers working in the school. Class teachers ensure that volunteers are clear about emergency procedures (e.g. fire alarm evacuation) and about any safety aspects associated with a particular task (e.g. using specific items of equipment or accompanying children on visits). Volunteers need to exercise due care and attention and report any obvious hazards or concerns to the class teacher.

Child Protection

The welfare of the children in our care is paramount and to ensure their safety we adopt the procedures outlined below.

The law requires the school to receive an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) disclosure check for anyone with responsibilities which can give them regular unsupervised access to pupils. Under the Education (Teachers Amendment) Regulation 1998 this now includes volunteers who regularly help in the classroom, in extra curricular activities or who supervise pupils on school residential visits. All volunteers falling within any of these categories are asked to complete a Protection of Children Form (PO39) and a Police check will then be carried out. In such a case, a volunteer will not be allowed to carry out duties in school until a check has been completed to the satisfaction of the Local Authority and the headteacher.

The above measures might be particularly sensitive for parent helpers, who may view steps taken as unnecessarily restrictive given their relationship to some of the pupils and their likely involvement with their children's friends outside of the school. However, all parents have the right to expect high standards of care for their children and expect adults involved with their children, whether paid or unpaid, to meet these standards. The school has a responsibility to assess the risks to pupils involved in undertaking activities where a volunteer is present and to ensure that they have taken all reasonable precautions to protect pupils.

Where a volunteer is engaged in school activities on an irregular or ad hoc basis e.g. helping to supervise a group of children as part of a class visit or helping at a school fete, no formal checks are carried out on these volunteers because they are under the constant supervision of school staff.

The Headteacher will take all reasonable steps to confirm the identity of the person volunteering. Where necessary the school secretary will view, and take a copy of, at least one original document from each of the following lists, as part of the checking process:-

- Birth Certificate, marriage certificate, copy of deed poll or licence, passport, driver's licence.
- Proof of address such as a recent utility bill, a local authority tax bill or a bank statement.

Insurance

Volunteers are informed about the extent of the insurance cover available. Whilst volunteering for the school they are covered by the Local Authority (LA) for third party liability only and the limitations of this insurance are explained carefully to volunteers. They may wish to make their own arrangements for insuring against theft, personal injury or damage to their own property.

Volunteers using their own car to transport children other than their own children to school events, (sport, music etc) are made aware of the school policy and advised to check with their car insurance company to ensure that they do not contravene their insurance policy conditions.

Allowances

Although there is no obligation to make financial reimbursement to volunteers it is appropriate to pay out-of-pocket expenses connected with the tasks they undertake for the school. Such payments, if requested, are reimbursed through the school fund.

State benefits claimed by volunteers can be affected by voluntary work and as such volunteers are advised to refer to Form FB26 available from the local Benefits Office if they are in any doubt about work they may undertake voluntarily. The main points for consideration are that volunteers should remain available for work if claiming unemployment benefits and that disabled volunteers should not undertake voluntary work of a nature similar to that for which they are receiving disability benefit.

Monitoring and Review

This Policy has been approved by the Governing Body and will be reviewed annually and updated in the light of new guidance from either the Department for Children, Schools and Families or the LA.

Signed:
Graham Osborn, Chair of Curriculum and Admissions Committee

Dated: January 2008

Due for Review: January 2010