

Volunteers in School Policy

Bushmead Primary School

March 2023



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1. Aims

The aim of this policy is to:

- To provide parents/staff and volunteers with clear expectations, induction and guidelines for working in school.
- To encourage the wider community to engage with children's learning to raise standards of achievement and promote community cohesion.
- To ensure the highest standards of safeguarding for our pupils by a shared knowledge of procedures.

2. Legislation and guidance

Volunteers in school policy has been written with reference to The National Council for Voluntary Organisations guidelines.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The Governor/s

They will:

Work with the head teacher to ensure that volunteers in school work safely and for the benefit of the children whilst ensuring that safeguarding remains the priority.

The Governing Body will review this policy in line with the Policy review schedule at the FPP committee meetings.

3.2 The head teacher

The head teacher is **Mr Steve Down**

He will:

Work with staff, parents and governors to determine the strategic development of the volunteer policy and provision in the school to ensure it has the safeguarding of children as the priority.

3.3 Class teachers and teaching assistants

They will:

Use the policy to ensure volunteers in school have a benefit to the education of children whilst having safeguarding as the priority.



4. Introduction

Volunteers are parents or other adults working alongside the school staff and students on work experience. Thank you for volunteering to help and support our school community. At Bushmead Primary School we welcome those wishing to help in the school and value the contribution they make to school life. We believe that the involvement of parents, carers and volunteers in children's education is vital and we encourage active participation in many ways. Some volunteers come to school to help with a variety of tasks such as ICT, art, cooking, and especially reading, and usually work with individuals or small groups in specific classes. In addition volunteers often help when the children are taken on educational visits outside school or get involved with the work of our FoB. These guidelines have been written to ensure that for all concerned – volunteers, teachers and children - the experience is positive and rewarding.

5. Safeguarding

As part of our commitment to safeguarding volunteers who are not already known to the school will be asked to attend an informal interview to ensure that the aims and intentions of the school and the volunteer are compatible. The Headteacher has the authority not to accept the help of volunteers if he or she believes that it is not in the best interest of the children. We carry out a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check for all volunteers who have regular contact with children. All schools need to hold a register of the checks undertaken. In order for you to work in school as a volunteer, you will need to complete a DBS online check. We will help you get the process started. Please be assured that all information will be treated in the strictest confidence and that these checks are done only in the best interests and safety of the children. The Finance Officer will help you with this process. Those who help out at specific events e.g. school fair, relatives in school days etc who do not have unsupervised access to children do not need a DBS but must not have unsupervised access to children.

6. Becoming a Volunteer in School

All volunteers will be required to read and sign that they have read the volunteer handbook BEFORE starting work in school. All volunteers will meet with a senior leader or finance manager BEFORE starting work in school to confirm handbook has been read.

7. Deployment of Volunteers

Volunteers will be asked to support in classes/areas of the school where there is the most need for support. Parent volunteers should be aware that they will not usually be able to work in their child's class as for some children this can be distracting for the child and perhaps can place the class teacher in a difficult situation. We will therefore probably ask you to help in a different class or area of the school. This is entirely at the Headteacher's discretion. It is helpful if you can explain to your child that you will be coming into school to help all of the children and that he/she will not always be able to work with you. We may from time to time ask you to support another class during a visit if extra adults are required for a specific activity (e.g. supporting practical science work).

8. Volunteer Roles in School

Many of the activities that we ask you to help with are the sorts of things that parents do with their own children at home. We might ask you to become involved in a variety of activities such as:

- Sharing books ;
- Working on the computer;
- Playing games;
- Making things;
- Cooking;
- Gardening;
- Sewing;
- Topic related studies;
- Coming with us on visits ;

The teacher always ensure:

- Clear guidelines about the activity;
- All the materials you need.

9. Procedure and Protocols

9.1 Health and Safety

Volunteers must sign in and state the time when they are leaving the school premises. Signing in and out is important in the event of an emergency so that staff and emergency services know who needs to be accounted for. A visitor badge must be worn at all times in school. Volunteers with a DBS clearance will have been identified to staff members. The Headteacher has the authority to withdraw the help of volunteers if he or she believes that it is not in the best interest of the children.

9.2 Confidentiality

It is very important that all staff, parent volunteers and other adults working in the school work to a policy of confidentiality. While in school you are likely to become aware of issues relating to individual children. You may see children struggling with work, be upset or misbehaving or hear/see other information concerning a child while you are with us in school. It is vital that you do not share anything about specific children with friends or family or a child's parent if you know them. The teachers here have the responsibility of informing parents of any concerns about a child. Volunteers working in classrooms do so on the understanding that they support the teaching staff and will not pass opinion on such matters as discipline or teaching styles outside the school. If you ever have any concerns about a child, please speak to the class teacher as soon as possible after the disclosure in an appropriate setting so that others cannot overhear. Volunteers are asked to sign a 'Volunteer in School Protocol' a copy of which will be kept in school.

9.3 Safeguarding

Safeguarding concerns including those regarding the Prevent Duty about a child must be shared immediately with one of the designated officers for child protection as soon as possible after the disclosure.

The designated persons for child protection are: Mr Steve Down, Headteacher, Mr Mark Leonard, Deputy Headteacher and Mrs Emma Perry.

9.4 Guidelines for Supporting Children in School

Please follow the following guidelines when supporting children

- It is vital to encourage the children to talk about what they are doing in order to support them in using the correct vocabulary.
- There is no rush. We give the children plenty of time to complete a task and they will often need to return to it over several occasions.

- Always encourage the children to do things for themselves. It is important that they are independent and although some children may need help and supervision, the end result should always be their own work. Please don't be tempted to do the work for them! The learning that goes on while the children are doing an activity is often much more important than the end product!
- When playing games with the children, try and encourage the idea of taking turns, sharing and being a good loser.
- It is important that all children in school are given equal time and attention.
- Please do not touch, lift, carry or move a child in any way. We use positive touch in school in line with our Steps training. Please refer to a member of staff for more information.

9.5 Housekeeping

Please ensure that you abide by the following guidelines whilst volunteering within school, whether inside the building or on a trip

- Mobile phones are to be kept switched off whilst helping in school, and to place the phone in a secure place like the school office.
- You are very welcome to make a tea or coffee if you are in school over a break time. If you are a regular visitor then please ask the school office staff about contributing to tea and coffee funds.
- The photocopier is located in the school server room. You may be asked to use this machine to support the class teacher in preparing resources. Please ask in the school office if you are unsure of how to use it.
- Please do not administer First Aid to children whilst you are volunteering in school. A number of staff hold certificates for paediatric first aid and first aid at work. Please talk to the class teacher or teacher on duty if you are approached by a child with an ailment or injury.
- If the fire alarm sounds, please make your way safely to the nearest exit and onto the KS2 playground, guiding the child you are working with if away from the main class area (e.g. hearing readers in the library).
- Attendance. If you find that you are not going to be able to come into school on a particular day, it is really helpful to know in advance, even if that's only a phone message on the morning in question.
- References. Occasionally, volunteers ask the school to provide a written reference when they are seeking employment. We stipulate a minimum qualifying period of three months attendance of regular volunteering (e.g. once a week) before we feel able to provide a work-based reference. We believe that this is fair to both prospective employers and candidates.

Thank you! In case we forget to say so please be assured that we really do appreciate your help (we may sometimes forget to say so because we are busy, but we do!!) If you have any worries or queries, or any good ideas on how we can improve something, please let us know - we are always willing to listen.

10. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed by FPP committee **every 3 years**. It will also be updated if any changes to the information are made during the year.

It will be approved by the governing board.

11. Links with other policies and documents

This policy links to our policies on:

- A. Health and Safety policy
- B. Safeguarding of children policy

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