

VOLUNTEERS IN SCHOOLS

GUIDANCE

Reviewed: August 2013

Human Resources

If you require further help in the interpretation of this policy you can contact the HR ONE Helpline at hrdirect@devon.gov.uk . Telephone 01392 385555

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VOLUNTEERS IN SCHOOLS

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The value of well-deployed volunteers in a school is now widely recognised. Volunteers are a welcome resource for helping to raise children's achievement, complementing the work of teachers and support staff. There is no doubt that an individual school will benefit greatly from developing well-planned, active parental and community links through participation by adults in the activities of the school on a voluntary basis. It should be emphasised that the role of volunteers in schools provide for the enrichment of the pupils' learning experiences, but must not encroach on or restrict professional teaching duties.
- 1.2 The deployment of any volunteer, whether for one day or for a number of sessions over a longer period, must be managed with care; in particular taking account of the needs of the pupils and the staff to whom they are assigned.
- 1.3 Head teachers and Governors should be mindful of deploying volunteers appropriately. Volunteers should not be asked to replace paid staff or be given responsibility within the School that would normally be associated with paid employees.
- 1.4 These guidance notes are offered for the guidance of the Head teacher and the Governing Body.

2.0 Statement on the Deployment of Volunteers

- 2.1 It is strongly recommended that the Governing Body adopts a clear statement on the engagement and deployment of volunteers and that this document is included in the staff handbook for the information of everyone.
- 2.2 It is suggested that the statement is drafted in consultation with staff representatives and current volunteers at the school.

3.0 Deployment of Volunteers

3.1 Volunteers should not be asked to carry out duties which:-

- fall normally within a Teacher's responsibility under *loco parentis*;
- fall normally within the job description of a Teacher or member of support staff, i.e. they must not be asked to cover the absence of staff from School;
- would normally be performed by a contractor engaged by the LA or by the school;

It should be noted that the class teacher remains responsible for the organisation of the class and methods of work.

3.2 Supervision of Volunteers

During a visit to the School each volunteer should be designated to a specific member of staff to whom he or she will be directly responsible. Whilst there should be no significant addition to the workload of the staff member taking responsibility for the volunteer, it would be expected that time is taken to ensure the volunteer is adequately inducted into the role and that there is mutual agreement and understanding. This additional responsibility is not compulsory for staff and should only be delegated with the agreement of the employee concerned. It is however essential that the volunteer is clear which member of staff has this responsibility.

4.0 Recruitment, Child Protection and Safeguarding

4.1 Recruiting Volunteers

4.1.1 Schools need to have a clear process for recruiting and vetting potential volunteers.

4.1.2 Schools are recommended to use an application form for the recruitment of volunteers. A model form is attached at Appendix A. The form should be used as a framework for structuring the discussion with the individual about the school's needs, their needs and potential contribution and expectations of the volunteering arrangement.

4.1.3 It is important that two satisfactory references are obtained before volunteers begin to carry out activities in the school.

- 4.1.4 It is strongly recommended that the School issues all volunteers with an induction pack that includes support materials.

4.2 Child Protection and Safeguarding

- 4.2.1 Child protection and safeguarding procedures should be undertaken with volunteers in the same way as with employees. The following policies should be consulted for guidance in this area.

Schools Model Recruitment and Selection Policy.

<http://staff.devon.gov.uk/cr/er/gap/schoolspersonnel/saferrecruitmentschools/pp-er-gap-schoolsrecruitment.htm>

Guidance on Safe Recruitment

<http://staff.devon.gov.uk/saferecruitment.doc>

- 4.2.2 The DBS Disclosure Policy should be followed to ensure that appropriate checks are undertaken:

Many parents and other volunteers help regularly in the classroom and some will require a DBS Disclosure. This should be determined by the frequency and nature of contact with children i.e. if being left unsupervised with children and/or if having regular contact which is defined as 3 times in a 30 day period or more.

Volunteers who only accompany staff and children on one off outings or trips or who help at one off specific events such as sports days, school fetes etc do not need to be DBS checked. If however an overnight stay is involved then an enhanced DBS must be obtained.

- 4.2.3 Consult the DBS Disclosure Policy for further guidance.

<http://staff.devon.gov.uk/dbs-check-disclosure-policy.pdf>

5.0 School Protocols

- 5.1 In fairness to all concerned, volunteers must be made aware of the rules governing behaviour at the School; the key 'dos' and 'don'ts' for children and adults. This should include procedures designed to avoid hazards or risks associated with the tasks that they are being asked to carry out and, importantly, details of first aid and emergency arrangements such as procedures to follow in case of fire.

- 5.2 As part of their induction to life at the School, volunteers should also be provided with basic information such as a plan of the campus and details of those facilities available to them eg staff room, toilets etc.

- 5.3 It is essential that volunteers are made aware of the following procedures:-

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- expectations with regard to confidentiality;
- access to information related to pupils and/or staff;
- expected level of behaviour;
- School's Equal Opportunities policy – especially focussing on issues relating to discrimination and the use of appropriate language;
- the School's Complaints procedure;
- the School's Conduct procedure.

6.0 Insurance

- 6.1 Volunteers should be informed about the extent of the insurance cover available. Whilst volunteering for the school they are covered by the LA for third party liability only and the limitations of this insurance should be explained carefully to volunteers. They may wish to make their own arrangements for insuring against theft, personal injury or damage to their own property.
- 6.2 Volunteers using their own car to transport children other than their own children to school events, (sport, music etc) must provide documentary evidence that their car insurance covers this.
- 6.3 The Headteacher must ensure that the appropriate insurance is in place before deploying volunteers to drive a school minibus. All parties must be made fully aware of the regulations and drivers should be offered appropriate training and instruction before taking children on journeys in vehicles owned by the school.

7.0 Out of Pocket Expenses

- 7.1 The Governing Body may wish to consider whether it would be appropriate to consider paying out-of-pocket expenses connected with the tasks volunteers undertake for the school if approved in advance. If school funds will not allow a policy of general reimbursement, consideration could be given to such payments in exceptional circumstances.

Volunteers are not employees. In order to make sure volunteers don't fall under the legal or tax definition of an employee, Schools should ensure the following:

- Only reimburse expenses after a receipt has been submitted.
- Do not pay unaccountable round sums to cover expenses
- Do not pay regular allowances, no matter how small.

- 7.2 State benefits claimed by volunteers can be affected by voluntary work and schools are strongly advised to refer volunteers to the leaflet from DWP "**A Guide to Volunteering whilst on Benefits**"

GUIDANCE HISTORY

Policy Date	Summary of change	Contact	Implementation Date	Review Date
January 2011	Revised in line with Safer Recruitment Requirements and Child Protection Procedures	Schools Personnel Helpline	March 2008	
August 2013	Change references from CRB to DBS	HR ONE	12/08/2013	

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