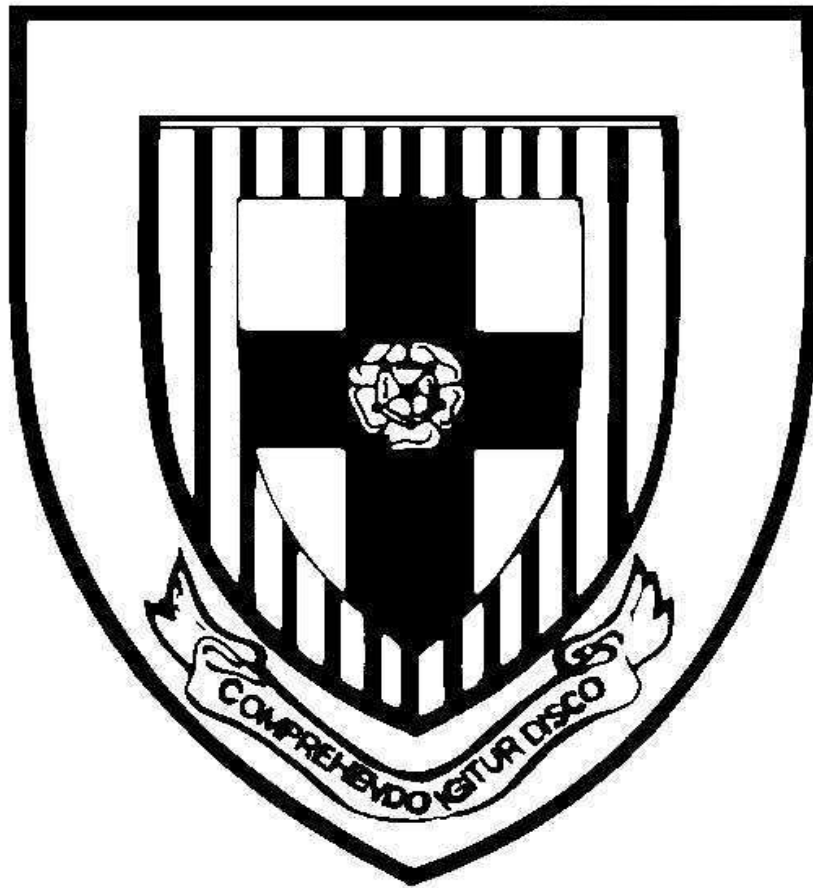


Oak Cottage Primary School



VOLUNTEER HELPER POLICY

OCTOBER 2024

VOLUNTEER WORKING IN SCHOOL POLICY

This policy is part of the school's safeguarding systems.

Oak Cottage Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects its staff and volunteers to share this commitment. An enhanced DBS and completion of the Confidential Declaration Form will be required for volunteers. A hard copy of the The Childcare (Disqualification) and Childcare (Early Years Provision Free of Charge (Extended Entitlement) (Amendment) Regulations 2018 is available in the school office upon request.

At Oak Cottage we strive to ensure the safety and well-being of our children at all times. Before working with our children all volunteers are asked to read through the school's confidentiality and safeguarding statements. Volunteers are also asked to switch off their mobile phones before entering the school.

GDPR

The school's data protection policy sets out, in writing, the manner in which personal data on staff, students and other individuals (eg parents, members of the governing body and other stakeholders) are kept and how the data concerned is protected.

For our full Fair Processing Notice please visit our website www.oak-cottage.solihull.sch.uk.

Introduction

Volunteers at our school bring with them a range of skills and experience that can enhance the learning opportunities of pupils. The Board of Governors therefore, welcomes and encourages volunteers from the local community.

Our volunteers include:

- Members of the Governing Body
- Parents of pupils
- Ex-pupils
- Students on work experience
- University / college students
- Local residents
- Friends of the school
- Sports coaches

The types of activities that volunteers engage in, on behalf of the school, include:

- Hearing pupils read
- Working with small groups of pupils to assist them in their learning
- Working alongside individual pupils, as an additional tutor
- Accompanying school visits

Volunteer helpers are not allowed to do the following activities on their own

- Take responsibility for all or more than a small group
- Change very young children or supervise them changing
- Supervise children engaged in PE or other specialist activities
- Take the children off the school site without a teacher in charge

The responsibility for the health and welfare of the children remains with the class teacher at all times.

Vision

We want our school to be open and welcoming to all who would like to support the children. We would like to encourage parents and other adults to help the school in a variety of ways. We believe that parents and carers can add enormous value to children's learning opportunities and experiences.

Our overriding concern is for the safety and security of the children in our care. Our school policy is to ensure that the children benefit from as much help and support as necessary while being assured of the best security possible.

Becoming a Volunteer

Anyone wishing to become a volunteer, either for a one off event such as a school visit or on a more regular basis, e.g. hearing pupils read, usually approaches the Headteacher, office staff, Senior member of Staff or Class Teacher directly.

All voluntary helpers will be asked to complete an on-line application for DBS Clearance using the SMBC guidance notes which are available from the School Office. All applicants will need to provide three forms of identification to the school office (please ask the school office for guidance). Once received, the applicant's application can be processed onto the next stage prior to the commencement of checks by other authorities. SMBC will send notification to the school once DBS clearance has been obtained.

If the DBS contains information, it will be the responsibility of the Headteacher to decide whether the offences shown make the person unsuitable to work with children in school.

Definition

Activity which is described as 'frequent' or 'intensive' covers the meaning given in the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006.

'frequent' – once a week or more often on an ongoing basis; and

'intensive' – overnight (between 2am – 6am).

Process for recruiting a Volunteer who will be working frequently or intensively

- A) Staff member contacts the candidate/s for an informal discussion to ensure the applicant is suitable for the role
- B) DBS Check & Confidential Declaration Form completed
- C) The volunteer will be made aware of the role and responsibilities they will be undertaking
- D) If appropriate, 2 References should be sought where the volunteer arrangement will continue on a regular basis, or if overseas checks are unavailable, a reference will be sought from the relevant class teacher
- E) Induction - School and corporate policies are identified and made available on the school website. These to include Health and Safety, Confidentiality Policy, Behaviour Policy, Code of Conduct Policy and SMBC Whistleblowing Policy
- F) Volunteer records to be kept in a central place within the school (the school office) and the Single Central record updated accordingly

The school will seek DBS clearance for a volunteer **before** they come into school, to make an informed decision when accepting volunteers to work with children.

Confidentiality

Volunteers in school are bound by a code of confidentiality. Any concerns that volunteers have about the pupils they work with/come into contact with should be voiced with the designated supervisor and NOT with the parents of the child/persons.

Volunteers who are concerned about anything in the school, which may affect their work should raise the matter with the Head teacher or appropriate senior member of staff. Any information gained at the school about a child or adult should remain confidential. More information regarding this can be found within the school's Confidentiality policy.

Supervision

All volunteers work under the supervision of a teacher or full time member of staff. Teachers retain ultimate responsibility for pupils at all times, including the pupils behaviour and the activity they are undertaking.

Volunteers should have clear guidance from the designated supervisor as to how an activity is carried out/what the expected outcome of an activity is. In the event of any query/problem regarding the pupil's understanding of a task, behaviour or their welfare, volunteers must seek further advice/guidance from their designated supervisor.

Health & Safety

The school has a Health & Safety Policy and this is made available to volunteers working in the school. An appropriate member of staff will ensure that volunteers are clear about emergency procedures (e.g. Fire Alarm Evacuation) and about any safety aspects associated with particular tasks (e.g. using D&T equipment/accompanying pupils on visits). Volunteers need to exercise due care and attention and report any obvious hazards or concerns to the designated Supervisor/Head teacher. Volunteers are covered by SMBC's Health & Safety Statement and indemnity and Public Liability Insurance. Should the fire alarm sound leave the building via the closest emergency exit and assemble on the top playground, making your way to the class teacher you are working with.

Child Protection

The welfare of our pupils is paramount. To ensure the safety of our pupils, we adopt the following procedures:

- All volunteers are given a copy of the Volunteer Helper Policy to read and asked to complete a declaration form, including Emergency Contact details.
- All of our volunteers will have completed a DBS check.
- Any concerns a volunteer has, about child protection issues, should be referred to the designated supervisor or Head Teacher.
- Any volunteer that has difficulty reading English should discuss the policy with the class teacher.

Personal Mobile Devices (including phones)

Volunteers must not use their mobile phones whilst in the classroom or in the vicinity of the children. Visitors will be asked to turn off their mobile phones and for them to be out of sight of the children whilst in school. Information to this effect is displayed to inform visitors of our expectations.

Staff are asked to check with any such visitors when they arrive and to enforce this policy if they see somebody using a mobile phone while in the vicinity of children.

The use of mobile devices while in the staffroom is considered acceptable.

Please see further information in the Mobile Device Policy.

Complaints Procedure

Any complaints made about a volunteer will be referred to the Headteacher or appropriate senior member of staff, for investigation. Any complaints made by a volunteer will be dealt with in the same way.

The Headteacher or designated member of staff reserves the right to take the following action-

- To speak with a volunteer about a breach of the Volunteer Agreement and seek reassurance that this will not happen again
- Offer an alternative placement for a volunteer, e.g. helping with another activity or in another class
- Based upon the facts identified in the investigation it may be necessary for the School to inform the volunteer that the school no longer wishes to use them
- Provide the volunteer with a copy of the school's full Complaints Procedure

Monitoring and Review

This policy has been approved by the Governing Body and will be regularly reviewed and updated.

Policy to be reviewed: October 2026

APPENDIX 1

Off-Site Visits Volunteer Agreement

School trips are an integral part of learning at our school and afford many pupils opportunities which are outside their usual experiences. We are pleased that you have come forward as a volunteer helper; you will have an important role to play in the success and safety of this school trip.

Please read and return this appendix, and sign and return the helper's slip.
This is part of our school's risk assessment planning and safeguarding arrangements.

Role of the Volunteer Helper

- To be responsible and look after, in equal measure, all of the pupils in your group under the instruction of the Leader of the school trip
- To stay with your allocated group of pupils, ensuring that their wellbeing and safety is maintained for the total duration of the school trip
- To promote polite, respectful and courteous behaviour towards each other and members of the general public. We all go as ambassadors of our school!
- To ensure that your group keep up with the body of the school visit party, be it walking, entering or exiting from transportation or following speakers for the trip
- To contact your child's class teacher/member of staff if there are issues with first aid, safety and/or behaviour

Working alongside school staff

School staff expect volunteer helpers to:

- Comply with all of the above whilst being under the direct supervision of school staff
- Show a commitment to their group, an interest in the focus of the visit and assist pupils in their learning by helping them to read signs/labels/information, asking questions that encourage pupils to think about the task and help to explain the areas of interest
- Follow guidance from the school staff
- I will support the young people in enjoying the trip and actively contribute to the smooth running of the event.

What is not permitted

- Volunteer helpers are not allowed to bring additional children e.g siblings or children in the care of the volunteer on the school trip
- Volunteer helpers are not allowed to smoke, drink alcohol or engage in any illegal practices whilst undertaking their volunteer duties
- Volunteer helpers are not permitted to take photographs of pupils
- Volunteer helpers are not allowed to give/buy their group treats e.g. ice creams, biscuits, sweets – before, during or after the school trip

First Aid

You will be informed if any child in your group has medication/needs. If medicine needs to be administered, this will be done by a member of staff unless you are the Parent/ Carer of the child who requires medicine, in which case you will be asked to administer this and be responsible for carrying the medicine.

All other medicines and first aid box(es) will be carried by staff.

Emergencies

You are expected to inform a member of staff of emergency as soon as possible after becoming aware. If you have become separated from the rest of the school party, please telephone the school office on 0121 704 9123.

Declaration

I confirm have read and understood the Volunteer Helper Policy and have received the Health & Safety Visitor leaflet.

I agree to the terms and conditions as stated in the policy.

I will ensure my mobile phone is turned off whilst in class and in the vicinity of children. The use of mobile phones in the staff room is acceptable.

If I have any further questions or concerns, I will ask a member of staff.

I will treat any information I may hear about pupils as confidential and will not discuss or disclose it out of school.

I will keep this policy with me and refer to it as necessary throughout my time at Oak Cottage.

I have read the following policies on the school website:

Behaviour Policy; Confidentiality Policy; Data Protection Policy; Health & Safety Policy; SMBC Whistleblowing Policy

In case of emergency, contact name and telephone number:

Do you wish to declare any medical conditions, eg asthma? If so what medication might you need in an emergency and where is it kept:

Y/N _____

Name & Address: _____

Purpose of Volunteering : _____

Year Group _____ Associated Pupil (s) _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Please print: _____