



West Rainton Primary School

School Volunteer Policy

September 2023- Due for review in September 2024

Mission Statement;

Our objectives are:

- 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.

1. Introduction

Volunteers are parents or other adults working alongside the school staff and students on work experience. Thank you for volunteering to help our support our school community.

At West Rainton 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 Parent, Teacher Association.

These guidelines have been written to ensure that for all concerned – volunteers, teachers and children - the experience is positive and rewarding.

2. Aims and Ethos

West Rainton Primary is a good school with wonderful pupils and a great staff and governor team. Our vision is to develop a learning community in which everyone is supported in becoming a caring, collaborative, critical and creative thinker. As an inclusive school we celebrate diversity and value the achievements of all children. We are committed to providing the greatest possible access for all children by providing a broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum which is appropriate for meeting their needs. We particularly want to ensure that parents and pupils are fully participative in the process.

This mission statement and vision, agreed by all, is key to the way we work and we expect all staff, governors and volunteers to be committed to it, in total agreement with it, and to work hard to achieve it!

3. 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. Mrs McGowan 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.

The school will provide all volunteers with section 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022 and will explain their role in safeguarding within the school during induction. It is important that volunteers understand that school has a duty to log, investigate and address any concerns about adults including those deemed to be of 'low-level'. Please see Appendix 6 of this policy for an explanation of low-level concerns.

4. Becoming a Volunteer in School

All volunteers will be asked to attend an induction meeting which will cover the following topics:

- Confidentiality
- Safeguarding including the Prevent Duty
- e-safety and use of mobile technologies
- Child Protection
- Health & Safety
- Fire

5. 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 always 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. If this is the case, we may 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).

6. 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 (see appendix 2);
- Working on the computer;
- Playing games;
- Making things;
- Cooking;
- Gardening;

- Sewing;
- Topic related studies;
- Coming with us on visits (see appendix 3);

The teacher will give you:

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

7. Procedures and Protocols

Health and Safety/Safeguarding

When a volunteer arrives in the school they must sign in on the digital screen at the school office. This will record your arrival time and your purpose in school. Volunteers must also sign out 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. This badge contains key safety information (covered in your induction) that must be read and agreed to on entry into school.

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.

8. Confidentiality

Governance is considered a high priority in the school and the head teacher expects all staff, parent volunteers and other adults working in the school to treat all information they receive in the strictest confidence. 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' (see appendix 4) a copy of which will be kept in school.

Safeguarding concerns including those regarding the Prevent Duty (see appendix 5) 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 officer for child protection is: Mrs Alison McDonough, Headteacher

In her absence please report to: Mrs Susan Firth, Deputy Headteacher or Mrs Julia Struthers, EYFS lead.

9. Guidelines for Supporting Children in School

- 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 lift, carry or move a child in any way.

10. Housekeeping

- Mobile phones

Mobile phones must be switched off whilst helping in school. Ideally place the phone in a secure area such as the school office. If you require your phone for an exceptional reason, please ask the headteacher's prior permission and you will be shown a suitable venue to make/receive calls.

- Tea / Coffee arrangements

If you are in school over the break period, there are tea and coffee making facilities for visitors in the staffroom which you are welcome to use. If you are a regular visitor then please ask our office manager, Mrs McGowan about contributing to tea and coffee funds.

- Photocopier

The photocopier is located in the school computing suite. 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.

- First Aid

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 yard duty if you are approached by a child with an ailment or injury.

- Fire alarm

If the fire alarm sounds, please make your way safely to the nearest exit, 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.

11. 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.

12. 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.



Appendix 1
School Volunteer Request Form

Volunteer Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

If a parent of a child/ren in the school please give names and classes: _____

Have you read the School Volunteer Policy? _____

Do you understand what constitutes a low level concern about adults in school and what school would do in the event of one occurring? _____

Do you have a current DBS Clearance? _____

An original copy will need to be shown to Mrs McGowan.

OR

Are you willing to complete an online DBS check? _____

Which area/s of the school would you prefer to support? _____

Do you have any specific skills/strength that could be utilised? _____

Are there any activities that you cannot support? Please give details. _____

Do you have any particular health needs that we need to be aware of to best support you in school?
Please give details _____

When are you available to support in school? Please give days and times. _____

Appendix 2

What does 'sharing books with children' mean?

A few quick pointers to help you when you are asked to read or share a book with a child:

- The teacher will indicate whether you should read to the child or the child should read to you. If this is not clear, ask.
- If the child appears 'stuck', tell them gently to use their phonics and 'sound it out' or encourage a sensible guess based on what has already been read or look at the illustrations for clues, and if all else fails, tell them the word. Quite often a lack of confidence will inhibit them from making an attempt and this is what we all try to build up when we hear children read- the idea that taking a risk, even if wrong, will teach us something.
- Encourage the child to predict what might happen next and discuss how they feel about the story and characters.
- Make the experience an enjoyable one, sharing your love of books with the child. This is a moment of quality time for you both.
- Please do not move the child onto another box from the reading scheme. If a child has done particularly well in their reading, please be sure to share this with the class teacher. Equally, please let the teacher know if any problems.

Appendix 3

Guidance for Volunteers for School Trips

These guidance notes have been written in conjunction with the school's policy on off-site visits. If you have any questions about a school trip, please see the class teacher. We do appreciate your help on school trips – it would be difficult to organise visits outside school without parent volunteers.

- Parents may not always have their own child in their group.
- The teacher will give parent helpers a list of children for whom they are responsible.
- All children are told that they must stay with their group and the group adult at all times.
- If the trip involves a coach journey, please help the children in your group put on their seatbelts.

Children are not allowed to eat or drink on the coaches. The class teacher has sick bucket/bags, if needed.

- The class teacher is responsible for ALL first aid and medication.
- The class teacher sets and leads the rules, routines and expectations for the day.
- Please help the teacher by ensuring your group follows all instructions e.g. when to eat and drink.
- If there is a medical or other emergency, let the class teacher know immediately. The class teacher is responsible for contacting the school and associated parents in emergency situations.
- If you need to leave your group for any reason, e.g. to take a child to the toilet, please inform another adult.
- Parent volunteers are asked to keep the same degree of confidentiality on visits as in school. If you have any queries or problems concerning the trip, please direct these in the first instance to the class teacher, or if you would rather, the Headteacher on return from the trip.

Health and Safety policies and risk assessments must be adhered to at all times.

Appendix 4

VOLUNTEER IN SCHOOL PROTOCOL

Please read and sign the document below to confirm your agreement with the following school expectations as a volunteer:

As a school we agree to:

- Explain your tasks/jobs carefully so that you are clear about what we would like you to do with the children
- Share the school behaviour and ethos policy with you to help you understand how we manage behaviour
- Ensure that the children you work with behave and work well
- Treat you with the highest respect and care
- Share relevant information about the children you are working with
- Let you know in advance the overall plan for the day and let you know if this changes!
- Treat anything you tell us with confidentiality

Carry out induction training with you

We agree not to ask you to:

- Deal with difficult or challenging behaviour
- Carry out a task that you feel unprepared to complete

Signed: Date:

Class Teacher/Volunteer Co-ordinator/Headteacher

Volunteer Helper: (Printed Name)

As a volunteer helper I agree to:

- Use the school behaviour and ethos policy and inform the teacher if I see any inappropriate behaviour
- Inform the teacher/Designated Teacher if I observe anything that concerns me in school
- Treat any information with total confidentiality
- Inform the school if I am unable to come into school for any reason by 8.30am in the morning
- Respect and listen to the guidance of the teacher at all times
- Complete the appropriate DBS safeguarding checks
- Adhere to school policies and procedures
- Adhere to the guidance provided in both my induction and on the visitor lanyards.
- Disclose any criminal allegations to the Headteacher prior to starting as a volunteer helper

I agree not to:

- Look at or compare children's work, records or staff records
- Share any information about a child or member of staff with anyone outside the school staff team

Signed: Date:

Appendix 5

SAFEGUARDING INCLUDING THE PREVENT DUTY

Everyone has a duty to keep children safe. Children may disclose information or worries at any point during the school day. It is not unusual for children to disclose information to people they feel less affiliated to and anything could trigger this.

If a child says something that concerns you:

- **DON'T make promises of secrecy**
- **DON'T ask questions of the child**
- **DON'T appear shocked or terrified but instead remain calm and reassuring**
- **DON'T delay in reporting the disclosure**

- **DO listen closely and carefully to everything the child says**
- **DO report it to one of the school's designated officers for child protection immediately**
- **DO complete a record of concern form as soon as possible noting the date, time and as close to the exact wording as you can of the child's disclosure.**

The school's designated officer for safeguarding is: Mrs Alison McDonough (Headteacher)
In her absence please report to: Mrs Susan Firth or Mrs Julia Struthers

The records of concern form can be found in the school offices, staff room, kitchen and tea club room. These will be shown to you on your induction.

The Prevent Duty

Schools also have a duty to provide a form of safeguarding to recognise children at risk of, or who may be vulnerable to, potential radicalisation. While County Durham remains a low risk area for this type of radicalisation we need to remain mindful of this risk to children and be aware of signs that could warrant early intervention.

This very much follows the same procedures as above in school and should be reported in the same manner.

Signs could include:

- Expressing extreme views regarding people of other ethnicities, cultures or faiths.
- Unusual or unsafe online activity.
- Disclosures regarding family members views or behaviours towards other ethnic groups.
- Signs of isolation, fear or rejection of peer groups
- Recent political or religious conversion
- Conflict with family over political or religious views

Appendix 6

Low level concerns about adults in school

All staff and volunteers at West Rainton Primary will receive appropriate and up-to-date safeguarding advice and training on induction. All staff and volunteers will receive copies of KCSIE 2023 part 1 to read and adhere to on induction. Staff and Volunteers will also be made aware of the school's safeguarding policies and procedures on induction to the school and will then receive at least annual updates.

As part of our safeguarding culture, ALL concerns regarding adults are shared responsibly in line with our school's safeguarding reporting systems and will be recorded in writing and held securely on our **record keeping system-CPOMS**. Records will be reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified and appropriate actions taken.

We will ensure that:

- volunteers are clear about what appropriate behaviour is, and are confident in distinguishing expected and appropriate behaviour from concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour, in themselves and others;
- volunteers know how to share any low-level safeguarding concerns and are empowered to do so;
- unprofessional behaviour is addressed and the individual is supported to correct it at an early stage;
- we will provide a responsive, sensitive and proportionate handling of such concerns when they are raised;
- we will use concerns to help identify any weakness in the school safeguarding system.

We will instil a culture where adults feel safe to report any concerns using our safeguarding reporting system identified in this policy. We would also encourage the volunteer themselves to report any behaviour that could be classed as a low level concern. Where the report has been made by a third party, as much evidence as possible will be gathered by the head teacher/principal from the person reporting the concern, the individual named and any witnesses. All of this will be recorded to determine whether any further action needs to be taken alongside a recorded rationale as to the decisions taken.

In the case of reports about supply staff and contractors, we will report any concerns to their line managers so that any concerning, problematic or inappropriate patterns of behaviour can be identified.

We will retain information regarding low level concerns until **the person no longer volunteers in the school**.

Low level concerns will not be recorded on any references given unless they meet the threshold for reporting to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

What is a low level concern?

The term 'low-level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant, it means that the behaviour towards a child does not meet the threshold set out at paragraph 338. A low-level concern is any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' - that an adult in the school or college may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work; and
- does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

- being over friendly with children;
- having favourites;

- taking photographs of children on their mobile phone;
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door; or,
- using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language.

Such behaviour can exist on a wide spectrum, from the inadvertent or thoughtless, or behaviour that may look to be inappropriate, but might not be in specific circumstances, through to that which is ultimately intended to enable abuse.

It is crucial that any such concerns, including those which do not meet the harm threshold are shared responsibly and with the right person, and recorded and dealt with appropriately. Ensuring they are dealt with effectively should also protect those working in or on behalf of schools and colleges from potential false allegations or misunderstandings