



YourHR

Appointing volunteers including governors guidance

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1. Purpose of Guidance

The purpose of the guidance is to promote consistent practice when appointing volunteers and conducting safeguarding checks on Governors within the establishment.

A volunteer or Governor is not an employee and will not have a contract of employment with the establishment. This means that they will not benefit from any of the establishments' terms and conditions of employment, such as payment for work, holidays or sickness.

This guidance provides an outline of a good practice process through which volunteers can be engaged.

The establishment will agree a role with the volunteer and there will be an expectation that the volunteer will meet the requirements of the role. It is advisable that the establishment hold a portfolio of volunteer role profiles.

The volunteer is free to refuse to fulfil the role and the establishment is not bound to provide the opportunity. It is expected that both the establishment and the volunteer will give as much notice as possible if unable to meet these expectations. Volunteers are not, and must never be, a substitute for employees.

This guidance, in its entirety, does not apply to Governors. Sections 6 and 7 should be referred to for Governors in relation to appropriate safeguarding checks which should be implemented once the individual has been identified. No other parts of this guidance apply.

2. Scope of Guidance

A volunteer can be any person who gives their time, skills and experience freely to the establishment without expectation of financial reward. Volunteering can take various forms, some tasks may require particular skills whereas others require no specific skills. Volunteering can be a one-off activity, for a limited time or carried out on a frequent basis.

The establishment encourage the appropriate use of volunteers and recognise the substantial benefits that volunteers can bring and the links that they make between the establishment and the local community.

In return the establishment hopes to give its volunteers an opportunity to exercise their skills in a different environment and to undertake new experiences.

3. 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, should be directed to discuss the role and volunteering agreement with the Headteacher (or nominated member of staff).

Unless the volunteering opportunity is a one-off event, a person seeking to become a volunteer should complete a volunteer application form. The applicant should be asked to identify areas in which they would like to volunteer. A template Volunteer Application form is available as a separate document.

If there is a suitable volunteering opportunity an informal interview should be conducted to gauge the person's expertise and suitability.

4. Volunteering Checks

Depending upon the nature of the opportunity, the prospective volunteer may be subject to the following checks:

- References. At least two references covering a three year period should be sought (refer to section 7).
- Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). This is mandatory where the volunteer will have unsupervised contact with children. It is the responsibility of the Head Teacher to ensure that the statutory DBS requirements are met.
- Where DBS clearance is required the individual must not commence any unsupervised voluntary activities prior to receipt of satisfactory clearance.
- The DBS details of volunteers should be recorded on the establishment's Single Central Record.
- Where identified, the volunteer will be required to complete the childcare disqualification form.
- Irrespective of the nature of the volunteering role, Volunteers with a teaching qualification will have suitability checks undertaken via the Teaching Regulation Agency.
- Where identified through the volunteer application form, a risk assessment may be undertaken where the volunteer has declared a medical condition which should be taken into consideration.
- Volunteers will be subject to right to work checks.
- Volunteers will be required to fully complete and agree to adhere to the volunteers agreement.
- Volunteers will be required to sign to indicate they have read, understood and agree to act within the guidance of Safer Working Practices.

5. One-off volunteering opportunities.

Some activities may involve volunteers on a one-off, short-term basis. If the volunteering opportunity is of one day's duration or less and not likely to recur, the appointment process outlined in section 4 will not apply.

In such cases the Head Teacher or appointed member of staff should consider whether all volunteers involved in the event will complete the off site volunteers registration form (separate form available) to record the volunteer's attendance.

6. Governor Checks

Newly appointed Governors from September 2016 will complete a Governor Appointment Record. The following checks should be completed in line with safer recruitment practice:

- References. At least two references covering a three year period should be sought (refer to section 7).
- Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). It is mandatory to undertake an enhanced DBS check. Where the governor may have unsupervised contact with children this check should include a barred list check.
- The DBS details of Governors will be recorded on the establishment's Single Central Record.
- Where identified, the Governor will be required to complete the childcare disqualification form.
- Where identified through the Governor Appointment Record, a discussion will take place about how the establishment can accommodate any needs and where appropriate a risk assessment will be undertaken.
- Governors will be subject to right to work checks.
- Governors will be required to sign to indicate they have read, understood and agree to act within the guidance of Safer Working Practices.

7. Governor/Volunteer Reference Checks

Two satisfactory references should be recorded for all volunteers including Governors. At least one of the referees should be from the individual's current, or if not in employment, previous employer.

References should cover a full period of 3 years prior to the date of application.

A reference must be sought from the most recent employer where the applicant worked with children, even if this means obtaining more than 2 references and references outside of the 3 year period as stated above. If the reference being taken is for a Governor and that individual has governed previously at another school, it should be ensured that one reference is obtained from that school.

Where the individual has no previous work experience or the individual has been out of work for a significant period of time, discussions should take place whether references can be provided by a school employee, local community or religious leader or a suitable character reference. Should none of these options prove to be possible it should be recorded what options were explored and the circumstances as to why no references were taken.

8. Health and Safety

The establishment will provide any reasonable training required for the role, including health and safety training.

The establishment has a responsibility for the health and safety of volunteers. Volunteers should at all times follow the health and safety policies and procedures. The establishment have a Health and Safety Policy and this is made available to volunteers carrying out tasks as part of their volunteering pack.

Volunteers have a duty to take care for themselves and others who might be affected by their actions. Volunteers must be advised that they are not permitted to act outside their authorised area of activity. Volunteers must report all accidents and 'near miss' incidents to a member of staff.

9. Recompense

Volunteers are unpaid and will not be eligible to receive expenses.

10. Policies and Procedures

Volunteers are expected to comply with all statutory regulations whilst they are on the premises or undertaking any volunteering duties, including health and safety, equality and diversity and information governance.

The Head Teacher or delegated member of staff will ensure that the induction includes an explanation of these policies and procedures and any other documents that are relevant to the volunteering e.g. safeguarding, safer working practices.

11. Confidentiality

Through their role Volunteers may become aware of confidential information about the establishment its employees, pupils, parents, customers and suppliers. Volunteers must not disclose this information or use it for their own or another benefit without the consent of the party concerned.

Volunteers should not speak to the press or communicate with any other media on matters which directly relate to the affairs of the establishment, nor share details /comment on Social Media platforms. Volunteers must not discuss individual pupils with any person outside of establishment including their parents/carers.

12. Supervision of Volunteer

A member of staff will be designated to support and direct the volunteer. The staff member will review the arrangements on a regular basis. If the volunteer has any queries or would like to change their role this should be discussed with the member of staff.

Volunteers should have clear guidance from the member of staff as to how an activity is to be carried out/what the expected outcome of an activity is. In the event of any query/problem regarding their role, volunteers must first seek further guidance/advice from the member of staff.

13. Safeguarding

If a volunteer has any concerns that a pupil is in need because they are suffering or likely to suffer harm, they should bring the matter to the immediate attention of the Designated Safeguarding lead.

14. Raising a concern

If a volunteer has any concerns or complaints they must raise it immediately with their supporting member of staff. The member of staff will deal with any concerns or complaints raised in a timely manner.

15. Volunteer's pack

On commencing the voluntary role, the volunteer will be given an appropriate induction to the service area and (unless the volunteering opportunity is for a one-off event) a pack containing:

- General information about the establishment, as appropriate
- A copy of this volunteering guidance
- A standard volunteering agreement
- A copy of Safer Working Practices
- Safeguarding reporting guidance for visitors/ volunteers

16. Records

A record of volunteer and a filed record of volunteer agreement and associated documents, as appropriate will be maintained by the Head Teacher (or appropriate nominated officer) in accordance with the GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) 2018.