



St. Mary's CE Primary School
Voluntary Helpers
Code of Practice



Date reviewed: June 2024

Date due for review: June 2026

Introduction

The school values the significant contribution made by voluntary helpers. This code of practice aims to clarify the roles of voluntary helpers, their working practices and important notes.

A volunteer is any person who carries out duties in a school on an unpaid basis, or plans to do so, regularly (e.g. once a week or more often).

The use of volunteers will be in accordance with any required Local Authority code of practice.

Voluntary helpers will be assigned to a member or members of staff, who will oversee the activities they do. All activities requested by a member of staff will be carefully explained to the volunteer.

The volunteer must work under the supervision (and sight) of a member of staff at all times when working with pupils. Volunteers may work in corridors/school halls where there is passing human traffic. This is in order to comply with child protection and safeguarding legislation.

Volunteers will work within the health and safety legislation and guidelines, which will be made available to them. They will not be in a position to be responsible for the security of the children, school premises or equipment. They will not have access to personal files of pupils or staff.

Voluntary work

Activities may include -

- Governor visits
- Assisting pupils with set tasks e.g. reading with pupils.
- Assisting in tasks to help enable the school staff to focus on work with pupils e.g. mounting work for display, housekeeping.
- Sharing skills with pupils e.g. literacy, numeracy, science or talking about your career.
- Assisting with supervision on educational visits.
- Work not involving children e.g. library tasks.
- Helping with events both during and outside school hours.
- The Friends of St Mary's.
- Maintenance or improvement work around the school e.g. painting or gardening

Selection

Selection of voluntary helpers is according to need by the Assistant Headteacher for Teaching and Learning, who coordinates the work of voluntary helpers and the Headteacher. This need varies from time to time. Parents, carers and others are free to volunteer their services at any time, or as a result of a request in a school newsletter.

St Mary's CE Primary School will ensure any volunteers, via their induction, are aware of school policies and expectations in respect of Safeguarding, Conduct and Whistleblowing.

School will undertake a risk assessment informed by professional judgement when deciding whether to obtain an enhanced DBS certificate for any volunteer not involved in regulated activity as outlined in Part 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

If it is decided that in certain circumstances that a DBS check is not required for specific events or volunteers, the volunteers and supervising staff are made fully aware of the expectations and responsibilities involved in such arrangements, to ensure that there are no situations where such volunteers are in unsupervised contact with children.

All volunteers are subject to scrutiny. This will involve the completion of a number of forms including enabling the disclosure of criminal records (DBS check) and these are to comply with health and safety legislation, child protection and safeguarding legislation and for security purposes. Details on these forms, which will be kept in the school office, will be confidential.

Prior to starting to work as a voluntary helper all volunteers must meet with the Assistant Headteacher for Teaching and Learning for an induction. This will include a discussion of issues raised in this document and consider the role of voluntary helpers in the school. In particular the induction will include matters of confidentiality, child protection, discipline and health and safety issues.

In cases where there is any doubt about the suitability of a volunteer, the school reserves the right to seek written references.

Arrival

All volunteers are to enter the building via the main reception and sign in using the electronic register. All volunteers must wear a badge at all times. In the event of a fire, the volunteers would evacuate with the rest of the school and report to a member of the admin staff at the fire meeting point.

Insurance

The Council provides insurance cover for personal accident and third-party insurance for damage or accident to other persons or property. It is not possible for the school to cover the cost of any damage to the property or clothing of volunteer helpers and this should be considered when they attend school.

Facilities for voluntary helpers

There are drinks available for voluntary helpers in the staff kitchen and at breaks helpers are welcome to join the staff here. Hot drinks must not be brought out of the staff kitchen unless in a covered insulated beaker. They should not be consumed during lesson times. Voluntary helpers are asked to maintain complete discretion when sharing this facility, particularly in matters where children are being discussed by staff.

Responsibility

In most cases the volunteer will be working with a member of staff who has the overall responsibility for any activities. Any issues, such as those noted under the next four items, should be referred to the responsible member of staff whenever possible and appropriate.

If a voluntary helper feels that he or she is being asked to do something which they should not do, or do not feel able to do, this should be discussed with the responsible member of staff if possible, if not, then it should be discussed with the Assistant Headteacher for teaching and learning.

Discipline

Volunteers must accept that they work to the same standard of care as the staff in the school i.e. the standard of 'the reasonable parent'. However, matters of concern including discipline of children are the responsibility of the school staff. Any volunteer who experiences difficulties with children of any kind must report this immediately to the responsible member of staff. The relevant Assistant Headteacher is usually available to discuss any cause for concern with the volunteer. If not, the volunteer helper should report that they have a concern to the reception desk and an appropriate senior member of staff located.

Confidentiality

Volunteers may be in possession of sensitive information which they are expected to respect. All such information is considered confidential and should not be discussed outside the school. If this ever becomes a problem volunteers must discuss the matter with the relevant Assistant Headteacher. Pupil records are confidential and volunteers should never be asked to help maintain these. The only minor exception to the child's reading card or record, which voluntary helpers can complete.

Health and Safety

Volunteers must follow the school's health and safety procedures. Health and safety will be discussed at the initial meeting. Volunteers should act responsibly with regard to their own health and safety and that of others in the school. In practice this means taking safe action to resolve any health and safety issues, for example moving things which may be a trip hazard. If safe action cannot be taken, the matter must be reported to the Headteacher or caretaker.

Child Protection and Safeguarding

This code of practice is informed by the school's strategic child protection and safeguarding policy. Volunteers need to be aware of the school's child protection and safeguarding procedures and these will be outlined briefly at the initial meeting. Volunteers should report any indication of any form of abuse or neglect which they become aware of. If children talk about any form of abuse it is essential that the volunteer listens, does not ask leading questions, does not make promises and immediately reports any such instance, (this is known as a disclosure). All child protection issues must be reported to the DSL, or in their absence the DDSL/Headteacher.

Review

This code of practice is subject to review as appropriate, at regular intervals.