

Lydgate Junior School Volunteer Policy

- Article 28: 'Every child has the right to an education'
- Article 2: 'Every child has the right to be treated equally and with respect'
- Article 31: 'Every child has the right to play in a safe environment'
- Article 12: 'Every child has the right to be heard and listened to'

INTRODUCTION

Volunteers at our school bring with them a range of skills and experience that can enhance the learning opportunities of children at our school. We welcome and encourage volunteers from the community.

We aim to treat all volunteers as members of staff. They may be unpaid but we have high expectations of them, and they can hold the same of us.

We hope volunteers will give us reliable, quality support, and that they can demonstrate high levels of skills that enhance school's provision.

We aim to provide volunteers with an enriching experience, where they know their role, and are valued in return.

Volunteers include:

- Members of the Governing Body
- Parents of pupils
- Ex-pupils
- Ex-members of staff
- Local residents
- Friends of the school

The types of activities that volunteers might engage in include:

- Hearing children read
- Working with small groups of children
- Working alongside individual children
- Undertaking art & craft activities with children
- Accompanying school visits
- Undertaking Food Technology activities with small groups of children
- Administration tasks in the School office
- Library tasks
- Preparing or maintaining resources
- Supporting extra-curricular activities

- Fund raising
- Support social and cultural enrichment events

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 children read, usually approaches a member of the Senior Leadership Team, the class teacher or the school office.

Volunteers for one off school visits and events should complete a reply slip on the relevant letter or form sent out by class teachers or the office. Volunteers who would like to help more regularly should complete the Volunteer Application Form with their contact details, why they would like to be a volunteer and type of activities they would like to help with.

Safeguarding procedures must be followed for all volunteers and so before starting to help in school, all volunteers should complete and return the Code of Conduct for Adults, which sets out the school's expectations of volunteers and asks volunteers to confirm that they agree to abide by these expectations and that they have received the 'Information for Volunteers'.

Proper Safeguarding procedures will require many volunteers to undertake a DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check. Satisfactory clearance will be needed, in most cases, prior to starting a placement. Volunteer roles, it must be stressed, enhance school's provision and what staff can provide. Volunteers will not be used to carry out tasks which are the professional responsibility of school staff, e.g. taking the register or leading a whole class without a teacher present.

They should also receive Information for Volunteers (Appendix 2). Volunteers who will be in school at least 4 times in a month will have a short, informal interview. This will be conducted by the Business Manager and will include a safeguarding question.

An information pack including information about safeguarding and emergency procedures will be given at this interview and the information will be highlighted to the volunteer.

STUDENTS

Teaching students and work experience students have a placement arranged as part of their course. Safeguarding checks are carried out by their course providers. Students are given the essential information booklet prior to or on their first day in school. This includes a copy of Code of Conduct for Staff and information about emergency procedures and safeguarding.

School, of course, retains the right to decide on whether to offer a volunteer placement or not. Having a volunteer in school does require extra work from school staff and this might stop us accepting an offer, for example. Likewise, it is for school to decide where, and in what role, a volunteer helps in school. The Headteacher carries the responsibility for making these decisions, but may delegate some of the role.

INFORMATION FOR VOLUNTEERS

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 our school.

All adults who work in our school, whether paid members of staff or a volunteer are expected to work and behave in such a way as to actively promote our school vision:

We are a Rights Respecting School that delivers an engaging and exciting education for all.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Volunteers in school are bound by a code of confidentiality as they may be party to privileged or potentially sensitive information. Any concerns that volunteers have about the children they work with / come into contact with should be shared with the class teacher and NOT with the parents of the child or persons outside school. Comments regarding children's behaviour or learning can be highly sensitive, and, if taken out of context, can cause distress to the parents of a child if they hear about such issues through a third party rather than directly from the school. Volunteers who are concerned about anything another adult in the school does or says should raise the matter with the Headteacher.

SUPERVISION

Volunteers work generally under the supervision of the class teacher of the class to which they are assigned. Teachers retain responsibility for children at all times, including the children's behaviour and the learning they are undertaking. Volunteers should have clear guidance from the teacher as to how an activity is carried out / what the expected outcome of an activity is. Volunteers are encouraged to seek further advice / guidance from the teacher in the event of any query / problem regarding children's understanding of a task or behaviour.

HEALTH & SAFETY

The school has a Health & Safety Policy, this is available on request to volunteers working in the school (please ask at the office). Class teachers ensure that volunteers are clear about emergency procedures (e.g. fire alarm evacuation) and about any safety aspects associated with a particular task (e.g. using DT equipment/accompanying children on visits). Volunteers need to exercise due care and attention and report any obvious hazards or concerns to the class teacher/Headteacher.

SAFEGUARDING

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

- All volunteers are given a copy of this information sheet and asked to sign a 'Code of Conduct for Adults'
- All our regular volunteers must have been checked with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and a suitable report returned to school. Please note that a 3 month or more break in volunteering will necessitate a new DBS check.

- Where a volunteer is engaged in a 'one-off' activity where children will not be left unsupervised with the volunteer, e.g. helping supervise a group of children as part of a class visit, ID and proof of address will be checked.
- The Headteacher will risk assess other situations to decide on whether a DBS check is necessary.

SIGNING IN

When helpers arrive in the school, they must sign in at the reception desk. They will be given a visitors badge, which they should wear at all times. The signing-in sheet will give the date and time of arrival. They must also sign out, stating the time they are leaving, and return their badge before they leave.

OFF-SITE VISITS

School trips are an integral part of learning at our school and afford many children opportunities which are outside their usual experiences.

Role of the Volunteer Helper

- To be responsible and look after, in equal measure, all of the children in your group.
- To stay with your allocated group of children, ensuring that their well-being 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 line management of school staff.
- Show a commitment to their group, an interest in the focus of the visit and assist children in their learning by helping them to read. signs/labels/information, asking questions that encourage children to think about the task and help to explain areas of interest
- Follow guidance from the school staff.

What is not permitted

- Volunteer helpers are not allowed to bring additional siblings on a school trip.
- Volunteer helpers are not allowed to re-organise school visit groups.
- Volunteer helpers are not allowed to smoke, drink alcohol or engage in any illegal practices.

- Volunteer helpers are not permitted to take personal photographs of children.
- 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 it is your child who requires medicine in which case you will be able 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 as soon as possible.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Any complaints made about a volunteer will be referred to the Headteacher or other member of the Senior Leadership Team for investigation. Any complaints made by a volunteer will be referred to the Headteacher/or other member of the Senior Leadership Team.

The Headteacher reserves the right to take the following actions as he/she deems appropriate:

- To speak with a volunteer about a breach of the Code of Conduct 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.
- Inform the volunteer that the school no longer wishes to use them.

The full Complaints Procedure is set out on the school website.