

# **CHULMLEIGH ACADEMY TRUST**

## **VOLUNTEERS IN SCHOOLS POLICY**

**Adopted by Resources Committee on behalf of the Board of Directors:29.1.13**

# VOLUNTEERS IN SCHOOLS

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# VOLUNTEERS IN SCHOOLS

## Introduction

Volunteers are a welcome resource for helping to raise children's achievement, complementing the work of teachers and support staff. There is no doubt that an individual school will benefit greatly from developing well-planned, active parental and community links through participation by adults in the activities of the Academy on a voluntary basis. It should be emphasised that the role of volunteers in the Academy provides for the enrichment of the pupil's learning experiences, but must not encroach on or restrict professional teaching duties.

The deployment of any volunteer, whether for one day or for a number of sessions over a longer period, must be managed with care; in particular taking account of the needs of the pupils and the staff to whom they are assigned.

The Executive Headteacher and Directors should be mindful of deploying volunteers appropriately. Volunteers should not be asked to replace paid staff or be given responsibility within the Academy that would normally be associated with paid employees.

These guidance notes are offered for the guidance of the Executive Headteacher and the Board of Directors.

## 1 Deployment

- a. Volunteers should not be asked to carry out duties which:-
- fall normally within a Teacher's responsibility under *loco parentis*;
  - fall normally within the job description of a Teacher or member of support staff, ie they must not be asked to cover the absence of staff from School;
  - would normally be performed by a contractor engaged by the LA or by the School;
  - require them to have unsupervised access to children;

- it should be noted that the Class teacher remains responsible for the organisation of the class and methods of work.
  
- b. During a visit to the Academy each volunteer should be designated to a specific member of staff to whom he or she will be directly responsible. Whilst there should be no significant addition to the workload of the staff member taking responsibility for the volunteer, it would be expected that time is taken to ensure the volunteer is adequately inducted into the role and that there is mutual agreement and understanding. This additional responsibility is not compulsory for staff and should only be delegated with the agreement of the employee concerned. It is however essential that the volunteer is clear as to which member of staff has this responsibility.
  
- c. All volunteers need to be made to feel welcome. It is important that the parameters of their role within the Academy are clearly defined from the outset in order to avoid the possibility of misunderstanding.
  
- d. Organisations usually use application forms when recruiting paid staff because it is not possible to interview every applicant, and some will not meet the requirements. Most organisations do not have large numbers of volunteers applying for individual positions so do not need to use volunteer application forms in this way. However, most volunteer application forms are based on forms used for paid staff and many ask for more information than is needed or is appropriate. A logical first step when dealing with potential volunteers is to get them to fill out an application form. This is a good way of recording basic information like name, address etc. but in most cases it is not the best way of assessing a volunteer's suitability for a role.

Most organisations find that it is possible to get the information they need when they meet the volunteer in person, rather than getting them to fill out a form themselves. By asking someone to fill out a complex form you may be unintentionally putting barriers in the way for people who have problems with their sight, for whom English is not their first language, or whose level of literacy is not high (all of whom may have lots of other skills and experience that you would not want to lose). Remember that the overall aim of any fair selection process is to allow all potential volunteers to give the best of themselves; application forms do not allow everybody to do this.

Forms can also be off-putting for people. They look very formal, take a long time to fill out and have definite associations with applying for paid work. Remember that at this stage potential volunteers are still making their minds up about your organisation. An unnecessary application form could put them off. You may find that people are much more forthcoming about why they want to volunteer and their skills and experience when chatting to you, than on paper.

If you are going to use a form to take details, be clear about what information you need and why. For example, many organisations ask for a volunteer's date of birth when all they actually need to know is if someone is above or below a minimum or maximum age.

Information you need for equal opportunities monitoring purposes should be asked on a separate form kept separately from other personal details and the reasons for asking should be clearly stated.

- e. It is strongly recommended that the Academy issues all volunteers with an induction pack that includes support materials. However, where a volunteer's particular skills or knowledge do not match the current needs of the Academy, the offer of help should be declined.

### **3 School Regulations and Other**

#### **Information**

- a. In fairness to all concerned, volunteers must be made aware of the rules governing behaviour at the Academy; the key 'dos' and 'don'ts' for children and adults. This should include procedures designed to avoid hazards or risks associated with the tasks that they are being asked to carry out and, importantly, details of first aid and emergency arrangements such as procedures to follow in case of fire.
- b. As part of their induction to life at the Academy, volunteers should also be provided with basic information such as a plan of the campus and details of those facilities available to them eg staff room, toilets etc.
- c. It is important that volunteers are made aware of the following procedures:-
- expectations with regard to confidentiality;
  - access to information related to pupils and/or staff;
  - expected level of behaviour and an awareness of Professional Codes of Conduct;
  - Equal Opportunities policy – especially focussing on issues relating to discrimination and the use of appropriate language;
  - the Complaints procedure;
  - the Disciplinary procedure.

### **4. Child Protection**

The law requires checks to be made on anyone with responsibilities in a School which can give them regular unsupervised access to pupils under the age of 19.

This includes volunteers who regularly help:-

- i. in the classroom;
- ii. in extra curricular activities;
- iii. supervise pupils on Academy organised holidays or residential visits.

Volunteers that also have access which is ongoing, substantial and unsupervised also fall within this category.

If planning to work with volunteers falling into any of the above groups the Academy should complete a 'Corporate Record Disclosure Form' to enable suitable checks to be made.

These regulations do not apply to volunteers such as those who help organise and run fetes or who may assist the Academy activities on an irregular or ad-hoc basis but should apply to volunteers that drive children in cars or minibuses.

Volunteers are also seen by children as safe and trustworthy adults, and if a school is actively seeking volunteers and is considering candidates about whom it has little or no recent knowledge, it should adopt the same recruitment measures as it would for paid staff. In other circumstances, for example where a school approaches a parent who is well known to the school to take on a particular role, a streamlined procedure can be adopted: seeking references, checking to ensure others in the school community know of no concerns and can make a positive recommendation, conducting an informal interview to gauge the person's aptitude and suitability, and undertaking a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) disclosure. In other circumstances, e.g. where a volunteer's roles will be one off, such as accompanying teachers and pupils on a day outing or helping at a concert or school fete, those kind of measures would be unnecessary provided that the person is not to be left alone and unsupervised in charge of children. Where volunteers recruited by another organisation work in a school, e.g. sports coaches from a local club, the Academy should obtain assurance from that organisation that the person has been properly vetted

**IMPORTANT:**

**It is the Executive Headteacher's responsibility to ensure that volunteers do not have unsupervised access to children.**

Executive Headteachers should take all reasonable steps to confirm the identity of the person volunteering. It is recommended that the Executive Headteacher view, and take a copy of at least two original documents. At least one document must show a current address and at least one document must show the volunteers date of birth.

- Birth Certificate
- **plus if the name has changed:**
- Marriage Certificate
- Copy of Deed Poll or Licence
- Passport
- Driver's Licence (A photo card is only valid if the individual presents it with the counterpart licence)

A full list of acceptable Valid Identity Documents can be found on the leaflet “**An Applicants Guide to Completing the CRB Application Form**” or alternatively visit the website [www.crb.gov.uk](http://www.crb.gov.uk)

Safer Recruitment training provides valuable information on a safer school culture and advice and guidance to strengthen safeguards against employing unsuitable people in schools. The training will help schools demonstrate that they have effective recruitment and selection processes in place that ensure learners are both well taught and protected. Further information on this can be found at:-

[http://www.ncsl.org.uk/managing\\_your\\_school/safer-recruitment/index.cfm](http://www.ncsl.org.uk/managing_your_school/safer-recruitment/index.cfm)

## 5 Insurance

- Volunteers should be informed about the extent of the insurance cover available. Whilst volunteering for the school they are covered by the LA for third party liability only and the limitations of this insurance should be explained carefully to volunteers. They may wish to make their own arrangements for insuring against theft, personal injury or damage to their own property.
- Volunteers using their own car to transport children other than their own children to school events, (sport, music etc) should be made aware of the school policy and advised to check with their car insurance company to ensure that they do not contravene their insurance policy conditions.
- The Academy should carefully consider all aspects of insurance and safety before deploying volunteers to drive the minibus. All parties should be made fully aware of the regulations and drivers should be offered appropriate training and instruction before taking children on journeys in vehicles owned by the Academy.

## 6 Allowances

Although there is no obligation to make Financial reimbursement to volunteers it would be appropriate to consider paying out-of-pocket expenses connected with the tasks they undertake for the Academy. If Academy funds will not allow a policy of general reimbursement, consideration could be given to such payments in exceptional circumstances.

State benefits claimed by volunteers can be affected by voluntary work and schools are strongly advised to refer volunteers to the leaflet from DWP “**A Guide to Volunteering whilst on Benefits**”

<http://www.volunteering.org.uk/NR/rdonlyres/D1C7064B-561C-4057-84ED-77AF8CEEDA93/0/VG12006.pdf>)-

and discuss any voluntary work with their Personal Advisor to see how this may affect any possible benefits if they are in any doubt about work they may undertake voluntarily. The main points for consideration are that volunteers should remain available for work if claiming unemployment benefits and that disabled volunteers should not undertake voluntary work of a nature similar to that for which they are receiving disability benefit.