

CHULMLEIGH ACADEMY TRUST

VOLUNTEERS IN SCHOOLS POLICY

**The policy was adopted by the Senior Leadership Team in July 2025
To be reviewed: July 2028**

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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. Applying to be a Volunteer

- a) All volunteers should complete an application form which will be reviewed by a member of SLT and is available via the school direct. Each applicant is required to provide 2 referees that will be checked prior to start dates.
- b) All volunteers are required to complete an application for a DBS even if they hold one in a setting outside of the Trust, unless they have subscribed to the appropriate DBS update service (Enhanced Child Workforce).
- c) When both of these have been completed – the volunteer will be invited into the school for an induction and child protection training.
- d) The induction will cover all aspects of the safe running of schools and their policies. As part of this volunteers will have a discussion about the importance of confidentiality and the volunteer will be asked to read and sign an agreement. If volunteering at one of the Trust primary schools a Disqualification Declaration will be required.

- e) All volunteers are required to undertake annual data collection, safeguarding and policy compliance.

2 Deployment

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.

During a visit to a Chulmleigh Academy Trust school, 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

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.

3 School Regulations and Other

Induction

- a. In fairness to all concerned, volunteers must be made aware of the rules governing behaviour at the school where they are working; the key 'dos' and 'don'ts' for children and adults. This should include procedures designed to avoid hazards or risks associated with the tasks which 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 school and details of those facilities available to them e.g. staff room, toilets etc.
- c. It is important that volunteers are made aware of the following procedures and expectations with regard to confidentiality;
 - Signing in/out (volunteer lanyard) and Door entry and gate access (not letting people in)
 - access to information related to pupils and/or staff; Data Protection
 - expected level of behaviour and an awareness of Professional Codes of Conduct including discrimination and behaviour
 - Health and Safety

4. Child Protection

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

This includes volunteers who regularly help:-

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

Volunteers who help organise and run fetes or who may assist the activities of Trust schools on an irregular or ad-hoc basis do not require to complete a DBS and the full Volunteer process but should be supervised by Trust staff at all times. However, if they are driving children in cars or minibuses the full Volunteer process applies. See Section 5 regarding insurance.

Volunteers are seen by children as safe and trustworthy adults, and as such the Trust should adopt the same recruitment measures as it would for paid staff

In other circumstances, e.g. where volunteering will be one off, such as accompanying teachers and pupils on a day outing or helping at a concert or school fete, these 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 a 'letter of assurance' from that organisation that the person has been properly vetted, and this will be recorded on the Single Central Record (SCR).

If a volunteer has no contact with any of the 4 trust schools or CAT preschools for 3 months or more they will be taken off the SCR, and they will need to complete another DBS check before starting to volunteer again.

Safer Recruitment training provides valuable information on a safer school culture and advice and guidance to strengthen safeguards against recruiting 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.

5 Insurance

- Whilst volunteering for the school, volunteers are covered by the Trust's insurance.

- 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. Volunteers are also required to complete a driver declaration form.

- 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 undertake 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 upon a receipt and provided the expense has been authorised by the Head of Department or Head of School.

State benefits claimed by volunteers can be affected by voluntary work and schools are strongly advised to draw this to volunteers attention and if necessary 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.