



WOODWATER ACADEMY

POLICY FOR PARENT VOLUNTEERS

1. Introduction

- (a) The value of well-deployed volunteers in Schools is now widely recognised. 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 School on a voluntary basis. It should be emphasised that the role of volunteers in Schools 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.
- (b) Head of Schools and Governors should be mindful of deploying volunteers appropriately. Volunteers should not be asked to replace paid staff or be given responsibility within the School that would normally be associated with paid employees.
- (c) These notes are offered for the guidance of the Head of School and the Governing Body. They have been drafted after detailed survey and research in partnership with staff representatives and the Devon Federation of Parent Teacher Associations (PTA Devon).

2. Schools Policy

- (a) It is strongly recommended that the Governing Body adopts a clear policy statement on the engagement and deployment of volunteers and that this document is included in the staff handbook for the information of everyone.
- (b) It is important that the policy document is drafted in consultation with staff association representatives and current volunteers at the School and that all employees are given the opportunity to comment before the policy is adopted.

3. Deployment

- (a) Volunteers should not be asked to carry out duties which: -
 - i) fall normally within a Teacher's responsibility under loco parentis;

- ii) 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;
 - iii) would normally be performed by a contractor engaged by the LA or by the School;
 - iv) require them to have unsupervised access to children;
 - v) 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 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.
- (c) All volunteers need to be made to feel welcome. It is important that the parameters of their role within the School are clearly defined from the outset in order to avoid the possibility of misunderstanding. It is strongly recommended that the School prepare volunteers with an induction pack that includes support materials.
- (d) Where a volunteer's particular skills or knowledge do not match the current needs of the School, the offer of help should be declined.

4. School Regulations and Other Information

- (a) In fairness to all concerned, volunteers must be made aware of the rules governing behaviour at the School; the key 'dos' and 'don'ts' for children and adults. This should include procedures designed to
- (b) 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.
- (c) As part of their induction to life at the School, 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.
- (d) 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;
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- expected level of behaviour and an awareness of Professional Codes of Conduct;
- School's Equal Opportunities policy – especially focussing on issues relating to discrimination and the use of appropriate language;
- the School's Complaints procedure;
- the School's Disciplinary procedure.

5. Child Protection

- (a) 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. Under the Education (Teachers) (Amendment) Regulation 1998 this now includes volunteers who regularly help:
- i) in the classroom;
 - ii) in extra curricular activities;
 - iii) supervise pupils on School organised holidays or residential visits.

Volunteers that also have ongoing substantial unsupervised access also fall under this category. **Volunteers should be asked to complete a Disclosure Form for an enhanced check.**

Schools planning to work with volunteers falling into any of the above groups should complete a Disclosure check before commencing duties.

IMPORTANT:

It is the Head of School's responsibility to ensure that volunteers do not have unsupervised access to children.

Head of Schools should take all reasonable steps to confirm the identity of the person volunteering. It is recommended that the Head of School view, and take a copy of at least two original documents:

- • Birth Certificate plus if the name has changed:
 - • Marriage Certificate
 - • Copy of Deed Poll or Licence;
 - • Passport;
 - • Driver's Licence.
- (b) These regulations do not apply to volunteers such as those who help organise and run fetes or who may assist the School activities on an irregular or adhoc

basis but should apply to volunteers that drive children in cars or minibuses. However, if the Head of School is unclear about the position in respect of a volunteer, further advice is available from the School's Link Personnel Officer.

6. Insurance

- (a) Volunteers should be informed about the extent of the insurance cover available. Whilst volunteering for the school they are covered by the PAT 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.
- (b) 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.
- (c) The school should carefully consider all aspects of insurance and safety before deploying volunteers to drive a school 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 school.

7. Allowances

- (a) 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 school. If school funds will not allow a policy of general reimbursement, consideration could be given to such payments in exceptional circumstances.
- (b) State benefits claimed by volunteers can be affected by voluntary work and schools are strongly advised to refer volunteers to Form FB26 available from the local Benefits Office 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.