



Volunteers Policy

The Governing Body is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff, volunteers and visitors to share this commitment.

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Introduction

The school benefits greatly from developing well planned, active parental and community links through participation by adults in the activities of the school on a voluntary basis.

Rusper Primary School believes that volunteers are a welcome resource for helping to raise children's achievement by supporting the work of teaching staff in delivering the curriculum to all pupils.

Volunteers bring with them a range of skills and experience which can enhance the learning opportunities of all children at Rusper Primary School without encroaching on the professional teaching responsibilities of the class teacher.

Aim

The aim of this policy is to establish expectations for both staff and volunteers regarding the work undertaken by volunteers and their conduct whilst in school.

Legal Guidance

The compliance elements of this policy are informed by Keeping Children safe In Education 2022. All pre-engagement checks and subsequent expectations on volunteers are based on Keeping children safe In Education.

Categories of Volunteers

School volunteers in school fall into two categories.

1. Those volunteers undertaking regular **regulated** activity with children.

Regulated activity is defined in KCSIE 2022 as

- a) teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervising children if the person is unsupervised, or providing advice or guidance on physical, emotional or educational well-being, or driving a vehicle only for children;
- b) work for a limited range of establishments (known as 'specified places', which include schools and colleges), with the opportunity for contact with children, but not including work done by supervised volunteers.

Work under (a) or (b) is regulated activity only if done regularly.

Some activities are always regulated activities, regardless of frequency or whether they are supervised or not. This includes relevant personal care, or health care provided by or provided under the supervision of a health care professional:

- personal care includes helping a child with eating and drinking for reasons of illness or disability or in connection with toileting, washing, bathing and dressing for reasons of age, illness or disability;
- health care means care for children provided by, or under the direction or supervision of, a regulated health care professional.

2. Those volunteers undertaking one off or irregular (less than 3 times in a calendar month) or supervised activity with children.

Volunteers could include any of the following (this list is not exhaustive):

- Members of the Governing Body
- Parents, carers, guardians, elder siblings or Grandparents of Pupils
- Students on Work Experience or Placement
- University Students
- Ex-members of staff
- Local residents
- Members of the Rusper PTA
- Volunteer drivers for trips or sporting fixtures
- Staff family members

Types of Activities

Activities in which volunteers may be engaged in could include any of the following:

- Hearing children read
- Working with small groups of children
- Working alongside individual children
- Undertaking art and craft activities with small groups of children
- Working with children on computers
- Preparing resources for a future lesson
- Accompanying school visits
- Escorting children on local walks
- Running or assisting with an after school club
- Social activities such as running a disco
- Fund raising activities such as running a cake stall or Summer Fayre
- Interviewing children on a governor visit.

Becoming A Volunteer and Safeguarding law

Anyone wishing to or requested by school to work as a volunteer, who will be in school on a regular basis should seek an initial meeting with the Head teacher to discuss their/school intentions. Following this the school will produce a risk assessment. This risk assessment will include

- The proposed level of activity including frequency and level of supervision.
- Whether or not the volunteer undertakes any other voluntary activity or has any other employment

Safeguarding law, as specified in Keeping Children Safe in Education 22, stipulates that any activity undertaken by a volunteer with children, that is either

- Unsupervised by an existing staff member
- Occurring 3 or more times within 30 days

...requires background checks to be carried out by the school.

If the activity is deemed to be **regulated**, the volunteer will be asked to

- to comply with an enhanced DBS (Disqualification and Barring Scheme) clearance check including a request for 'working with children barred list' information. *For which you will need to provide your full name, birth date and an email address. The DBS check process is done by the school; and you will need to identify a number of pieces of ID when completing your part. These pieces of ID will then need to be brought to the school to be checked independently, after which the process will be completed. Once a clear enhanced DBS certificate has been received, the information from this will be entered into our Management Information System, where it will be kept for the duration of your time as a volunteer.*
- Provide two referees who can provide a character reference advising on the volunteer's suitability for the proposed activity

The exceptions to this are:

- Work Experience Students or University Placements who apply via their educational establishment as it is expected that all necessary safeguarding checks have been carried out by the educational establishment before arriving at Rusper. The student will be expected to adhere to the school's confidentiality policy and will not be placed in a class with any family connection.

If the voluntary activity is a 'one off' or more adhoc, and not deemed to be regulated i.e. assisting with a school walk, a fund raising event or a school visit will not require a DBS check but the volunteer will remain under the continuous supervision of a member of staff undertaking a regulated activity, usually the class teacher. Care should be taken to ensure these volunteers do not have sole responsibility for a group of children or provide any form of intimate care (as directed in the Educational Visits Policy).

All volunteers undertaking non-regulated activity with the school will have their engagement dates tracked by school administrators to ensure that the frequency of their voluntary activity doesn't exceed more than 2 days

within 30. Should the activity become regulated by virtue of more than 2 days in every 30, then the aforementioned checks will need to be completed before further voluntary activity can take place. In this instance the school business manager will make contact with the volunteer to initiate all required checks in a timely manner.

If there is any doubt as to the level of checks required, a decision should be sought from the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Safeguarding Induction

All volunteers are required to read the following documents (which can be found within the School Policy area of the website):

- Information for Volunteers guidance at the end of this policy
- Staff Acceptable Use Policy
- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Keeping children Safe in Education 2022, Section 1 (p5-14)

Once completed, volunteers are asked to e-sign a disclaimer from ([here](#)) to confirm that the above documents have been read and understood.

School Values

At Rusper Primary School we encourage all of our school community to shine and encourage the best in everyone.

When our children leave our school we want our children to be:

- **Curious:** Our school will provide opportunities which promote exploration and lead to innovation
- **Enthusiastic:** Our curriculum will excite and engage our children to want to learn more and take their learning beyond the school day. We will provide exciting opportunities for children to experience.
- **Independent:** Our pupils will be successful and displaying attributes that enable further learning and contribution to society.
- **Collaborative:** Our will encourage effective team working in order to achieve more collectively
- **Respectful:** Our school will be a caring community where everyone feels safe, secure and included. We will develop an understanding of diversity and personal choices.

Volunteers' Expectations from School

Volunteers in school should expect to:

- be recognised for their valuable contribution to the learning experience for the children they support
- be assigned worthwhile tasks
- access any school policies or procedures that are relevant to their role
- access any training that is necessary for the success of their activities
- claim any expenses incurred such as travel (where a personal car is being used for a school trip) or purchases made on behalf of the school and on the instruction of the class teacher.

School's Expectations from Volunteers

- School expects all volunteers to:
- Adhere to the name protocol for staff i.e. Miss Smith, Mr Brown.
- Adhere to the school's Dress Code.
- Adhere to the school's Health and Safety Policy, Safeguarding Policy, Data Protection Policy, Confidentiality Policy and ICT Acceptable Use (where appropriate).
- Read and work within the Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who work with Children and Young People in Education Settings (March 2009) and Keeping Children Safe in Education (2022)..
- Be role models for the children they work with i.e. consider the language they use, only walk in school, no smoking or swearing and dress appropriately.
- Refer any behavioural or safeguarding concerns to the class teacher (See Appendix B)
- Advise school as soon as possible when it is not possible to attend.
- Annually disclose any information of a criminal nature.

Security

All volunteers must be signed in and out at the school reception and wear a visitor badge for the duration of their volunteering session.

Complaints Procedure

Any complaints made by a volunteer or about a volunteer will be referred to the Headteacher or School Business Manager for investigation.

The Headteacher (or School Business Manager in his / her absence) reserves the right to take the following action:

- To speak with a volunteer about the complaint or behaviour and seek reassurance it will not be repeated
- Offer an alternative placement or activity for a volunteer
- Inform the volunteer that the placement has been withdrawn.

Information for Volunteers

Thank you for giving your time to support Ruser pupils – your time is of benefit to their learning.

These notes are intended as both a guide and an agreement on your part to what to expect and what is expected of you in this role, both on and off-site:

- ⇒ The teacher retains ultimate responsibility for the children at all times so it is important to follow their direction
- ⇒ The teacher will explain the purpose of the activity they would like you to undertake – please ask if anything is not clear
- ⇒ The teacher will make you aware of any relevant medical issues for pupils you are working with
- ⇒ You should adhere to the name protocol for staff eg Mr. Jones or Miss. Boniface etc
- ⇒ Any information you receive about pupils should be treated as confidential
- ⇒ Sharing of information about school activities and on any form of social media, including text messages could be detrimental to pupil safeguarding and is not permitted
- ⇒ The welfare of pupils is paramount. If you have any concerns about an individual child, you should make their teacher aware of these (including topics of conversation and/or observations about behaviour). We have procedures for recording any concerns and disclosures which the teacher will follow. You may be asked to contribute to these
- ⇒ Children may go to the toilet at their own request. You do not need to accompany them in school, but please check procedures with the teacher for off-site visits
- ⇒ Photography other than with a school camera/device is not permitted
- ⇒ Food must not be offered to pupils unless authorisation has been gained from a member of staff, who will check for allergies
- ⇒ First Aid can only be administered by school staff
- ⇒ If the fire alarm should sound, leave the building by the nearest exit and make your way to the top playground. Do not return to the classroom first. Take any children you are with you and report to the class teacher in the playground
- ⇒ Read the school's policies on matters such as Child Protection and Health & Safety as detailed above in the policy
- ⇒ If you have any medical conditions that you feel it is necessary for the school to know about, then please inform them immediately. Emergency contact details and any other relevant information needed for emergency services would be useful.
- ⇒ Make contact with the school in the event of not being able to attend so that alternate provision can be put in place.

Reporting Low Level Concerns

Staff are expected to report concerns, no matter how small, about their own behaviour or that of another member of staff, volunteer, supply teacher, contractor or other person working in school. This is to help create and embed a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which the clear values and expected behaviour set out in the “Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings” (May 2019) (sometimes called the safeguarding code of conduct) are lived, monitored, and reinforced. This section should be read in conjunction with the current statutory guidance – “**Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2021**” Part 4, Section 2.

As with all other elements, this framework applies to all staff and other individuals who work or volunteer in school.

A low-level concern is any concern, no matter how small, even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a ‘nagging doubt’, that a person working in or on behalf of the school may have acted in a way that:

- *is inconsistent with the “Guidance for safer working practice” (May 2019), including inappropriate conduct outside of work, and*
- *does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to make a referral to the LADO)*

Examples of behaviour that could require reporting of a low-level concern include, but are not limited to:

- being over friendly with children;
- having favourites;
- taking photographs of children on their mobile phone;
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door; or,
- using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language.

Such behaviour can exist on a wide spectrum, from the inadvertent or thoughtless, or behaviour that may look to be inappropriate, but might not be in specific circumstances, through to that which is ultimately intended to enable abuse.

It is crucial that any such concerns, including those which do not meet the harm threshold (see Part Four - Section one), are shared responsibly and with the right person, and recorded and dealt with appropriately. Ensuring they are dealt with effectively should also protect those working in or on behalf of schools and colleges from potential false allegations or misunderstandings.

Reporting low-level concerns

- Where a low-level concern has been identified, this will be reported as soon as possible to the headteacher. However, it is never too late to share a low-level concern if this has not already happened.
- Where the headteacher is not available, the information will be reported to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy), ie the most senior member of SLT acting in this role.
- Low-level concerns about the Designated Safeguarding Lead will be reported to the headteacher and those about the headteacher will be reported to the Chair of Governors.
- Where the low-level concern has been reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, they will inform the headteacher of the details as soon as possible.

Recording concerns

- A summary of the low-level concern should be written down, signed, timed, dated and shared by the person bringing the information forward.
- Where concerns are reported verbally to the headteacher a record of the conversation will be made by the headteacher which will be signed, timed, and dated.

Responding to low-level concerns

Where a low-level concern has been raised this will be taken seriously and dealt with promptly. The headteacher will:

- Speak to the person reporting the concern to gather all the relevant information
- Speak to the individual about the concern raised to ascertain their response, unless advised not to do so by the LADO or police (HR advice may also need to be taken)
- Where necessary further investigation will be carried out to gather all relevant information. This may involve speaking to any potential witnesses

- The information reported and gathered will then be reviewed to determine whether the behaviour:
 - i. is consistent with the “Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings” (May 2019): no further action will be required
 - ii. constitutes a low-level concern: no further action is required, or additional training/guidance/support may be required to rectify the behaviour via normal day to day management processes. The employee should understand that failure to improve or a repeat of the behaviour may lead to further action being taken, e.g. either via the Performance Management Policy or Disciplinary Policy
 - iii. is serious enough to consult with or refer to the LADO: a referral should be made to the LADO and advice taken from HR. In this case the school’s Managing Allegations procedure within the Safeguarding Policy and Disciplinary Policy will be followed
 - iv. when considered with any other low-level concerns that have previously been raised about the same individual, should be reclassified as an allegation and referred to the LADO or Police: a referral should be made to the LADO and advice taken from HR. In this case the school’s Managing Allegations procedure within the Safeguarding Policy and Disciplinary Policy will be followed.

- Records will be made of:
 - i. all internal conversations including any relevant witnesses
 - ii. all external conversations, eg with the LADO
 - iii. the decision and the rationale for it
 - iv. any action taken.

Can the reporting person remain anonymous?

The person bringing forward the concern will be named in the written record. Where they request to remain anonymous, this will be respected as far as possible. However, there may be circumstances where this is not possible, e.g. where a fair disciplinary investigation is needed or where a later criminal investigation is required.

Should staff report concerns about themselves (ie self-report)?

It may be the case that a person finds themselves in a situation which could be misinterpreted, or might appear compromising to others; or they may have behaved in a manner which on reflection they consider falls below the standard set out in the “Guidance for safer working practice”. In these circumstances they should self-report. This will enable a potentially difficult situation to be addressed at an early opportunity if necessary.

Where behaviour is consistent with the “Guidance for safer working practice” (May 2019)

Feedback will be given to both parties to explain why the behaviour was consistent with the “Guidance for safer working practice”.

Should the low-level concerns file be reviewed?

The records will be reviewed periodically, and whenever a new low-level concern is added, so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified and referred to the LADO if required. A record of these reviews will be retained.

References

Low-level concerns will not be included in references unless a low-level concern, or group of concerns, has met the threshold for referral to the LADO and found to be substantiated.