

The Grange School

Volunteer Adults Policy

October 2017

To review October 2020

USE OF VOLUNTEERS IN SCHOOLS

CODE OF PRACTICE

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The County Council adopted a Code of Practice relating to the use of volunteers in schools in 1984. Reference should also be made to the Policy and Good Practice Guidelines document entitled "Volunteering with the County Council" which was launched in March 1997 and sent to all school. Locally managed schools will need to consider their policy in relation to volunteers and this document is intended to provide guidance for Governors.
- 1.2 There is considerable involvement by parents and others in helping the daily life and work of schools. The use of volunteers can be an important factor in enriching the curriculum, as well as supporting other activities that take place in schools. Pupils are brought into contact with a greater number of adults in a wide variety of learning situations, both in school time and during extra curricular activities.
- 1.3 The use of volunteers allows a more effective development of schools as a community resource with local people participating in their life and activities to the mutual benefit of pupils, staff and parents.
- 1.4 When volunteers are used in any school, it is important that that staff accept their involvement for the venture to be successful. The use of volunteers should be in addition to normal levels of staffing for teaching, educational support and other staff provided from the school's delegated budget. It is important that staff should not regard volunteers as substitute labour.

1.5 *School based Volunteers and School Governors*

As far as County Council schools are concerned, responsibility for policy in the use of volunteers rests with the Governors and is the subject of the Code of Practice issued in 1984. It is hoped that in drawing up their policies on the use of volunteers schools will adopt the principles set out in the document referred to in 1.1.above.

Schools Governors should not be regarded as volunteers. The appointment and election of Governors is regulated by the relevant acts of Parliament.

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2. Appointment of Volunteers

The following are designed to provide suitable reassurance:

- 2.1 There should be full consultation with members of staff who would work with a volunteer in advance of the volunteer being introduced into school.
- 2.2 The Head or his/her representative should involve the relevant members of staff in selecting volunteers to work in an area for which the member of staff has responsibility.
- 2.3 When recruiting volunteers it is important to refer to the checklist of requirements detailed on pages 6 and 7 of the document referred to in 1.1 above. Particular attention should be paid for the need for Police Checks when substantial unsupervised access to children may be required.
- 2.4 No member of staff should be obliged to work directly with a volunteer if this is against his/her expressed wish.
- 2.5 Where volunteers are used in a teaching area, individual class teachers will continue to carry the responsibility for the teaching programme and supervision of pupils.
- 2.6 Where volunteers are used in an area or activity which is the responsibility of educational support staff, the latter members of staff will continue to carry responsibility for the area or activity involved.
- 2.7 Volunteers should be allocated to and supervised by a member of staff.
- 2.8 Volunteers should not be used as a substitute for staff but should supplement staff resources provided from the school's budget. It follows that staff should not suffer loss of hours or status as a consequence of the use of volunteers in a school.
- 2.9 Staff with whom volunteers are working should have the right, in the light of experience, to request the discontinuance of the use of voluntary help to the Head Teacher, if it is not found to be valuable.
- 2.10 For volunteers who are likely to be unsupervised for any period of time in direct contact with children, police clearance is required.
- 2.11 For volunteers who are likely to spend significant time working in the school, medical clearance should also be sought.

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3. Use of Volunteers

- 3.1 The extent to which volunteers are involved in the life of a school will be a matter for individual Governing Bodies to determine. Use of clear guidelines as to how volunteers will be used is recommended, taking account of the following points:-
- 3.2 Volunteers should not be used in an activity which is beyond their capacity.
- 3.3 Volunteers should not have access to confidential material, including the records of all staff and pupils. They should be sensitive to, and informed about, their role as voluntary helpers.
- 3.4 Volunteers should be given information about the school and its objectives.
- 3.5 Head Teachers should be aware of the requirements of the Health and Safety at work Act insofar as it relates to volunteers.

4. Induction and Training

- 4.1 All new volunteers should be given an induction session when they join the County Council. This should provide them with information about the job and introduce them to the policies and practices within your school. It will also be an opportunity for them to formally meet staff and other volunteers with whom they will be working. It may also be useful to provide an information sheet for all new volunteers giving them some basis information e.g. insurance, claiming expenses, health and safety procedures.
- 4.2 It is important to be clear at the outset what training, if any, is needed for the volunteer to undertake the task. For some particularly skilled tasks, e.g. teaching skills, training is essential in order to carry out the work effectively. Once volunteers have become involved, the need for additional training and instruction should be discussed with the volunteer. When providing training, thought should be given to the location and timing of the event.

5. Insurance

- 5.1 Volunteers working for the County Council are covered by two types of insurance cover, public liability and personal accident insurance.

The public liability insurance covers all employees and volunteers working for the County Council in respect of:-

- i) loss of damage to property not owned by, or the responsibility of, the Council.
- ii) Death, injury or disease to persons other than employees/volunteers

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In order to succeed in any case the Council, a claimant must prove that the Council was negligent whilst carrying out its activities and responsibilities.

The personal accident insurance covers all employees of the County and all volunteers for the time in which they assist the County Council in the course of its business.

- 5.2 It is important that volunteers are made aware of the extent of their insurance cover as part of their induction. To ensure that volunteers are adequately protected at all times, it is the responsibility of the volunteer to stay within the boundaries of their role identified by the school. Volunteers should also be informed of the need to notify their insurance company if they intend to use their own car for voluntary work.

6. Index of Volunteers

- 6.1 An index of volunteers in each school should be maintained.

7. Grievances

- 7.1 Problems and conflicts can arise when working with volunteers, as they do with paid staff. If the role of volunteers in the organisation is clearly communicated to all staff and volunteers then conflicts are less likely to rise. If things do go wrong, the first stage should be to try and sort out the problem through the normal channels of supervision. In situations where this may fail to work, it may be appropriate to put in place procedures to deal with situations when a volunteer has a grievance against the County Council or if a complaint is made against a volunteer. It is important to investigate any complaint or grievance properly and to respect the feelings of both sides of any dispute.

8. Health and Safety Procedures

- 8.1 The same legislation on health and safety applies to volunteers involved with your establishment as it does to paid staff. The County Council has a “duty of care” to ensure, as far as possible, that no-one is exposed to risks to their health and safety. Volunteers should be provided with information and training on health and safety to prevent problems occurring. Volunteers should never be put in situations of greater risk than would be acceptable to paid staff.

9. Policy Statement

- 9.1 Governors should determine a Policy Statement concerning the use of volunteers in school taking account of the points included in this guidance paper.