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reflect DBS and May  
2014 to reflect DfE  
Statutory Guidance)



# Volunteer Policy For Schools

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## **Introduction**

Safeguarding children is everybody's responsibility; good practice has to be built into routine practice and procedures. Nowhere is this more important than in the recruitment and vetting of people who have contact with children. Volunteers are seen by children as safe and trustworthy adults and therefore it is vital that schools adopt robust recruitment and vetting procedures for volunteers that minimise the risk of using a volunteer who might abuse children or is otherwise unsuited to work with them.

This policy contains the basic information required in order to appoint volunteers, and is compliant with DfE Statutory Guidance. Advice on all aspects of this policy can be sought from your HR Service.

## **Child Protection**

This policy document should be read in conjunction with the DfE statutory guidance Keeping children safe in education (April 2014), and the school Recruitment and selection policy and procedures.

All aspects of this policy are geared toward recruiting only volunteers that are capable and prepared to uphold the highest standards of safety, protection and welfare of children.

## Recruiting Volunteers

Volunteers fall into four categories and this document provides guidance on the process which should be followed:

### Individuals not known to the school

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.

### Individuals known to the school

If for example 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 persons aptitude and suitability;
- undertaking a Disclosure & Barring Check (where applicable).
- ensuring that the individual has a legal right to live and work in the UK (Asylum & Immigration check)

### One off Volunteers

In circumstances where a volunteer's role will be 'one off' – e.g. helping at a concert or school fete, accompanying teachers and pupils on a day outing, the measures shown above will not be necessary provided that the person is not to be left alone/unsupervised in charge of children. ***This does not include trips which involve an overnight stay.***

### Volunteers recruited by other Organisations

Where volunteers recruited by another organisation work in schools, eg sports coaches from a local club, the school should obtain assurances, in the form of written confirmation from that organisation that the volunteer has undergone the appropriate clearance checks. Checks should be in line with those required for record keeping under the Single Central Record.

## Vetting

### Application Form

All volunteers are required to complete a [Volunteer Application Form \(Schools\)](#). A copy of this form should be forwarded to the HR Service Centre in order for the DBS and Asylum & Immigration checks to be processed.

### Verification of Identity

It is important to be sure that the person is who they claim to be, the school must see proof of identity, which should include photographic proof and proof of address.

## Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) Check

DBS requirements for volunteers falls into two categories:

- (1) Supervised – Where a volunteer is supervised this no longer meets regulated activity. There is no requirement to obtain an Enhanced DBS certificate, however, one may be obtained, but without a check on the ‘Children’s Barred List.’

and

- (2) Unsupervised – An unsupervised volunteer meets regulated activity and an Enhanced DBS Certificate with a check against Children’s Barred List must be obtained.

Where required, all checks must be obtained prior to commencement. There is no charge for DBS checks for volunteers, as long as the criteria laid down by the DBS is met.

The Police Act 1997 (Criminal Records) Regulations 2002 defines a Volunteer as:

***‘A person engaged in an activity, which involves spending time, unpaid (except for travel and other approved out-of-pocket expenses), doing something which aims to benefit some third party other than or in addition to a close relative.’***

The position or activities of a student or work placement do not therefore meet this criteria and the charge of a DBS Clearance will need to met by the school.

***It is important not to rely solely on a DBS check to screen out unsuitable volunteers. This is an essential safeguard, but will only pick out those abusers who have been convicted or come to the attention of the Police.***

### **The Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006,**

The act requires organisations to confirm that the volunteer has a legal right to live and work in the UK. This check can be undertaken at the same time as the DBS check prior to commencement.

### **References**

Two specific references should be sought for a volunteer, by the School. Reference enquiries should include a request for a specific statement about whether the referee knows of any reason why the person might be unsuitable for work relating to children, and if so details of those concerns. The school must not accept a testimonial eg to whom it may concern letter, under no circumstances should a reference from a relative be accepted.

[A template Volunteer Reference Request can be found on the HR Virtual Office.](#)

### **Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975**

All volunteers requiring a DBS Check will be informed that the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 is not applicable to them and will be asked to detail any convictions or cautions on their application form, even if these would in other circumstances be considered spent.

### **Record Keeping**

Schools must include details of checks made on volunteers in their single central record.

## **Post Appointment**

### **Induction**

There should be an induction programme for all volunteers; the purpose of induction is to:

- provide training and information about the schools policies and procedures;
- support individuals in a way that is appropriate for their role in the school;
- confirm the conduct expected within school;
- provide opportunities for the volunteer to discuss any issues or concerns about their role;
- enable the school to recognise any concerns or issues about the person's ability or suitability at the outset and address them immediately.

The content and nature of the induction process will vary according to the role and previous experience of the volunteer, but as far as safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is concerned the induction programme should include information about, and written statements of:

- policies and procedures in relation to safeguarding and promoting welfare eg child protection, anti bullying, anti racism, physical intervention/restrain, intimate care, internet safety and any local child protection/safeguarding procedures;
- safe practice and the standards of conduct and behaviour expected of staff, volunteers and pupils in the establishment;
- how and with whom concerns about those issues should be raised.

### **Health and safety**

Schools have a duty of care to avoid exposing volunteers to risks to their health and safety. Schools should ensure that volunteers are made aware of the schools health and safety policy and practical safety issues as part of their induction.

## **Grievance and Disciplinary**

Schools should have a clear procedure in place to deal with complaints by or about volunteers. These procedures should be separate to the procedures for paid staff to maintain a distinctiveness between staff and volunteers.

## **Confidentiality**

Volunteers should be bound by the same requirements for confidentiality as paid staff and schools must ensure that this is explicit when using volunteers.

## **Expenses**

The school can choose to pay reasonable expenses to volunteers; **these must only be out of pocket expenses** e.g. travel for which receipts must be provided.