Recruiting and managing volunteers – guidance

Signed by:			
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Recruiting and managing volunteers G120

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1. Introduction

1.1 Volunteers are a welcome resource for helping to raise children's achievements, complementing the work of teachers and support staff. This document provides guidance on the deployment of volunteers to help ensure that those people who pose a risk of harm are prevented from working with children. Different guidance may apply for occasional or one-off volunteers, where this is the case it will be made clear.

1.2 The DfE document 'Keeping children safe in education' places a responsibility on Governing Boards to ensure all employees who work with children undergo statutory checks to prevent people who pose a risk of harm from working with children. Governing Boards must ensure volunteers are appropriately recruited, vetted, supervised and managed to safeguard children and young people. Appropriate safeguarding checks should be undertaken in accordance with current statutory guidance.

1.3 The Headteachers should also ensure that no volunteer replaces paid employees or takes on work normally given to a paid employee.

2. Recruitment of Volunteers

2.1 For some types of voluntary work, the recruitment process can be very informal. However, because the volunteer role in a school, in most cases, have some degree of responsibility (e.g. working with pupils), selection processes need to be robust to ensure only the right volunteers are recruited. The Headteachers will need to satisfy themselves that the volunteer is of good character. It is recommended that the recruitment process should include the following:-

- Application form - any gaps or anomalies should be explored at interview. CV's should not be accepted alone but can be accepted alongside a completed application form.

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- Two satisfactory references - requests for references should include asking for details on the prospective volunteer's behaviour and interaction with children and young people.
- Interview - the Headteachers (or other employee with delegated authority) or intended supervisor should meet with the volunteer for a discussion of the proposed role, its requirements and expectations.
- DBS checks - Volunteers who teach, train, instruct, care for or supervise children may be engaging in regulated activity where the activity is carried out frequently (more than three days in a 30-day period) or includes overnight activity. Where a volunteer is undertaking regulated activity, an enhanced DBS check with children's barred list information must be obtained. For volunteers who are not undertaking regulated activity, the Headteachers may determine that an enhanced DBS check is appropriate based on a risk assessment and the nature of the role. Existing volunteers will not automatically require a new DBS check because of legislative changes, however volunteer roles should be reviewed to ensure the appropriate checks are in place. For further information regarding volunteers and DBS checks see Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) checks model policy and procedure P112 on InfoSpace.
- Verification of the volunteer's identity and where relevant, verification of qualifications and professional status.
- Childcare (disqualification) regulations 2009 declaration – The same criteria apply to volunteers as employees in terms of who should be checked. Any information provided by volunteers or prospective volunteers should be assessed in line with the guidance issued in relation to employees. See *Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations requirements guidance G112b* on InfoSpace for further information.
- Equality of opportunity – Governing Boards have responsibility for applying their policy on equal opportunities to avoid unlawful discrimination.

2.2 The Headteachers will be responsible for ensuring these checks have been completed where they are appropriate. Evidence of all volunteer recruitment should be recorded on the single central record.

2.3 Where a one-off or occasional volunteering opportunity arises, for example where a parent who is well known to the school is approached 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, and conducting an informal interview to gauge the person's aptitude and suitability.

3. Management of volunteers

3.1 The monitoring of volunteers continues beyond recruitment. Volunteers should have a planned induction. Safeguarding protocols and monitoring of performance are both important and will be ongoing whilst the volunteer is volunteering in the school.

3.2 the Senior Leadership Team is responsible for:
- ensuring the volunteer understands their volunteering role by outlining specific and general tasks, responsibilities and who they will report to,
- organising a planned induction to the school, including explaining relevant policies and procedures (including safeguarding, safer working practice/the Code of

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Conduct, Health and safety, data protection, sickness absence reporting) and the duties and tasks agreed,

- ensuring that volunteers are aware of their agreed responsibilities with regards to confidentiality and relations with the media,
- ensuring that volunteers have adequate work space, equipment and services necessary to perform their tasks effectively and safely including personal identification where appropriate,
- arranging a short trial period during which volunteers will receive close support and mutual feedback, including the chance for them to feedback their views providing regular support,
- making sure that the volunteer, their role and activities are reviewed and monitored,
- organising appropriate training to make sure that volunteers can carry out their activities effectively. This training must directly relate to the activity for which they volunteer.

3.3 One off or occasional volunteers should be made aware who to report to and who they will be supervised by. They should also fully understand what is expected of them, be briefed on safeguarding protocols, health and safety and safer working practices and how to safely access any equipment or services required.

4. Conduct, monitoring performance and complaints

4.1 Volunteers will not be subject to disciplinary procedures nor have access to the grievance procedures as these are for employees only. However, volunteers will be given an opportunity to discuss any concerns that they may have about their volunteering and consult with the school generally.

4.2 Volunteers should raise any complaints or concerns with their supervisor. If this is not appropriate or they are not happy with how this is dealt with, volunteers should take their complaint to the Headteachers or follow the complaints procedure.

4.3 If there are concerns about the conduct or performance of a volunteer, their supervisor should investigate. This should include talking with the volunteer concerned.

4.4 If conduct or performance is unsatisfactory, the volunteer should be informed that they will be offered additional support for an identified period of time. The object of the support will be to encourage improvement.

4.5 If a volunteer does not meet the standards of performance, and the steps taken to encourage them to improve does not work, the volunteer should be offered more suitable alternative voluntary activities or asked to leave with one week's notice.

4.6 If behaviour, which in the Headteachers' view, is equivalent to gross misconduct has occurred, the volunteer activity will be terminated immediately.

4.7 In the event of conduct concerns and doubt as to the procedures to follow, advice should be sought from the HR provider.

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5. Ending involvement

5.1 Either the Headteachers or the volunteer can end the volunteering at any time and without any notice. However, unless there is an emergency or misconduct, the volunteers should be given 2 weeks' notice, if possible.

5.2 In all cases the Headteachers should provide the volunteer with details of the reasons why their involvement is no longer needed.

5.3 If asked, the Headteachers should provide volunteers with a certificate giving details of all the activities that they have successfully undertaken.

6. Health and safety

6.1 The Governing Board has a duty to look after the safety and wellbeing of volunteers. The *Recruiting volunteers compliance code P656* on InfoSpace provides information on what health and safety considerations need to be addressed.

7. Repaying volunteers their expenses

7.1 Whilst unpaid, volunteering should not leave volunteers out of pocket. Therefore, it is good practice to reimburse a volunteer for the expenses they incur while working for the school. However, caution should be exercised when it comes to refunds. Paying 'expenses' automatically, without justification, can be seen in tribunals and by HM Revenue and Customs as the equivalent of paying a salary and could therefore potentially give volunteers employment rights, have tax implications for the school and affect a volunteer's benefit claim (if applicable). The safest course is to reimburse only actual expenses, preferably against receipts.

7.2 Individual arrangements and procedures for claiming should be explained to volunteers before they start their volunteering activity. When claiming, volunteers should attach corresponding receipts, travel tickets or other evidence of the actual expenditure incurred.

8. Insurance

8.1 The Headteachers must ensure that their insurance covers all volunteer activities carried out for the school. This is likely to be covered under the public liability insurance as long as:

- volunteers were acting within their authority at the time of the incident giving rise to the claim,
- the school would have been covered for the claim had the claim been made against them,
- Where Norfolk County Council organises the insurance, it has full conduct and control of any claim.

9. Data protection act and Freedom of Information act

9.1 Any personal information held regarding volunteers should be stored and used only in compliance with data protection law. Volunteers should be made aware that

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information produced by them in the course of their volunteering may be made available to the public under the Freedom of information act 2000.

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Appendix 1 – Table of changes

Date of change	Paragraphs affected	Summary of update
15/07/2026	1.2 and 2.1	Updated to reflect removal of the supervision exemption for volunteers under the Crime and Policing Act 2026 and revised DBS requirements for volunteers undertaking regulated activity.
22/05/2025	All	Review of whole document and terminology to ensure consistency across all policies and procedures.
17/06/2022	2.1	Updated to state that CV's can only be accepted alongside completed application forms and that existing volunteers will not need further checks unless there are concerns.
30/08/2018	5	Removal of reference to *Recruiting Volunteers –Health and Safety Checklist (C656)* as this no longer exists.
01/03/2017	All	New formatting due to launch of new HR website, HR InfoSpace – no change to content.

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