



## Volunteers Policy

### Policy for Alternative Provision Providers used by County Durham Schools

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This policy sets out the provision's approach to recruiting, managing and supporting volunteers within Education Plus and is part of the provision's safeguarding systems.

### **Introduction**

Volunteers at Education Plus bring with them a range of skills and experience that can enhance the learning opportunities of children at our provision. We welcome and encourage volunteers from the local community.

The types of activities that volunteers are engaged in include: (edit list below as appropriate)

- Working with small groups of students
- Working with individual students
- Accompanying educational visits
- Sharing their skills/knowledge by talking to the group

### **Becoming a volunteer**

The provision is committed to delivering a good volunteering experience and aims to ensure that volunteering is open to everyone, whatever age, skill level or background.

Anyone wishing to become a regular volunteer will be asked to complete a Volunteer Application Form with their contact details, type of activities they would like to help with and the times they are available to help. The provision will also require the contact details of 2 referees. A referee should not be a family member and will preferably be a previous employer or representative of an organisation where the applicant has previously volunteered but can also be a character reference.

Regular volunteers will also be required to complete a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) application form or provide details of an existing DBS certificate registered with the DBS update service. It is the headteacher's responsibility to co-ordinate this and the provision will pay for any associated costs.

Before starting to help in the provision, volunteers must accept and meet the provision's expectation of volunteers and asks volunteers to confirm they have received a copy of this policy. The volunteer agreement can be ended at any time.

Those wishing to volunteer on a one-off basis e.g. for a class talk or visit, should speak to the Centre Manager. Where a volunteer is engaged in a one-off activity, they will usually be under the constant supervision of employees from the provision, therefore no formal checks will be carried out. If this is not the case, a DBS check will be required.

### **Volunteering Policy**

Volunteers without a DBS check cannot be left unsupervised or alone with children and will not be allowed to carry out duties such as escorting students to the toilet or leading a small group of students. They must also read and sign our Educational Visits Policy.

### **Managing volunteers**

The volunteer must be provided with advice, support and appropriate training to assist them to undertake their activities.

Training activities should be identified and made accessible for volunteers in relation to their volunteering roles. Volunteers are to be encouraged and supported to undertake appropriate training which may enhance their skills and experience and contributions they can make to the provision.

All volunteering activities that form part of the volunteering agreement are intended to bring value to the provision therefore it is important to refresh, review and change/move the role if it helps the volunteer or the provision. Similarly, any review that identifies that the volunteering agreement is not adding value to the provision either due to the performance or conduct of the volunteer the agreement can be immediately ended.

### **Supervision**

Volunteers should have appropriate support from within the provision and should feel valued for the contributions they make.

Volunteers should have clear guidance from the Centre Manager as to how an activity is carried out and what the expected outcome is. Volunteers are encouraged to seek further guidance from the staff where there is any issue regarding student's understanding of a task or behaviour.

All volunteers in the provision will work under the supervision of the staff. Teachers/Staff always retain responsibility for students, including the student's behaviour and the activity they are undertaking.

### **Confidentiality**

Volunteers in the provision are bound by a code of confidentiality. Any concerns volunteers have about a student they are working with should be raised with the staff, the Designated Safeguarding and Child Protection Lead or the Centre Manager.

Volunteers should not speak with parents/carers of the student or other people outside of the provision about concerns.

### **Health and safety**

The provision has a health and safety policy and this is made available to volunteers working in the provision. Staff ensure that volunteers are clear about emergency procedures e.g. fire alarm evacuation and about any safety aspects associated with a particular task e.g. using equipment or accompanying students on visits.

Volunteers should exercise due care and attention and report any obvious hazards or concerns to the staff or Centre Manager.

### **Child protection**

All regular volunteers or volunteers who will be left unsupervised with students will be subject to clearance checks and will be:

- Given a copy of this policy and asked to sign to indicate they understand the content;
- Made aware of our child protection and safeguarding policies;
- Told who our designated safeguarding members of staff are.

### **Insurance**

The provision maintains insurance against risks including loss and damage to or destruction of its property, the injury or death of members of the public affected by its activities and its employees and volunteers undertaking authorised work.

For the cover to apply the volunteer must be:

- formally acknowledged by the provision;
- deemed to be qualified/competent to carry out the voluntary duties;
- under the control and direction of the provision.

It is important that volunteers comply with the conditions of the provision's insurance and do not do anything, which might result in the provision or the volunteer not being covered. It is not expected that volunteers will transport students to any given locations beyond the provision.

### **Complaints procedure**

Any complaints made about a volunteer will be referred to the Centre Manager for investigation. The Centre Manager may then take the following action:

- Speak with the volunteer about a breach of policy and seek reassurance that it will not happen again;
- Offer an alternative placement for the volunteer e.g. helping with a different activity or in a different class;
- Inform the volunteer that the provision no longer wishes to use them.

Any concerns by a volunteer should be referred to the Centre Manager in the first instance. A formal complaint can be raised under the provision's Complaints Procedure.