



Volunteer Policy

Approved by the Board of Trustees 8/11/16

Renewal date
November 2016

Policy

Volunteers offer valuable support and enhance service provision by filling a wide variety of roles, which may involve working with staff, children/students etc.

Legislative requirements impact on the use of volunteers who work with children and vulnerable adults, particularly in relation to their suitability for this type of work. A Disclosure and Barring Certificate may therefore be required for this role. Volunteers are also required to evidence their entitlement to live and work in the UK in the same way as paid workers.

In Scope

These guidelines have been developed to cover voluntary workers undertaking duties on behalf of, and in support of, the activities of **Discovery Multi Academy Trust**. These guidelines set the minimum standards expected.

Use of Volunteers

Volunteers make a valuable contribution when supporting contracted staff in providing services to the school.

There are a variety of capacities within which volunteers can be of service, but they cannot replace a member of staff, or to cover a vacant post.

In return for their services, a volunteer will receive a sense of identity/fulfillment, social contact, and involvement within the school, together with an opportunity for personal development or continuing professional practice.

Voluntary work by its very nature is unpaid and should not be issued as a commitment to offering of a permanent position, security or remuneration (other than some expenses, which may have been agreed by the school)

If the volunteer is a relative of a pupil or staff member of the school, they can still work in that area, but will not be asked to carry out any work that impinges upon their relationship.

The school accepts the service of all volunteers with the understanding that such service is at their sole discretion. Volunteers must therefore be advised that at any time, for whatever reason, the school can decide to terminate the relationship.

If a volunteer wishes to end their relationship with the school, they should inform the Head of School as soon as possible.

Any volunteer, who has a conflict of interest with any activity or programme, whether personal, or financial, must declare this to the Head of School.

Recruitment of Volunteers

Head of School must comply with equal opportunities.

Opportunities to undertake a placement should be available to all. However, there may be some occasions where this may not be possible or appropriate due to the nature of the work, or where there is a conflict of interest.

Head of School should ensure a person is suitable for the role. It is important that the Head of School conducts a form of vetting and assessment of skills and suitability. The process should include:

- Volunteer expresses an interest in working at the school. Head of School explain the nature of what is required and the commitment to safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults
- Volunteer completes a form so that the school have their contact details and education/work history
- Head of School conducts an informal face to face interview

Interviewing Volunteers

The interview process should be less formal than for paid staff, however it is important that the Head of School checks that the person is able to undertake the role and understands what will be expected of them. The face to face interview is an important part of a Head of Schools' risk assessment process. Head of School should only place a person in a role that would be suitable and safe for them, and safe for anyone else coming into contact with them.

At interview the Head of School should explain fully their wish to offer voluntary help at the school, especially if they have no previous experience. The interview should also promote the role and explain how the individual is likely to benefit from working in the school and the positive input they can make.

Pre-Employment Checks

The Head of School should take up at least one reference covering at least a 5 year period for volunteers working at the school on a regular or frequent basis. Head of School should also check any entitlement to live and work in the UK.

DBS Certificates will be required for volunteers who regularly or frequently help at the school. Regular contact is defined as three times or more in a 30 day period. The Head of School will be required to explain the reasons for the check and reassure the volunteer that such checks are a standard procedure when working regularly in a school situation; they should also give reassurance that all information will be treated with the strictest confidence and provide information on how the process will work. A criminal record will not be an automatic bar to volunteering, as only relevant convictions will be taken into account.

Some volunteers, such as a parent volunteering to help out on a school day trip, fete or sports day may not require DBS Certificates but will be asked to complete a Safeguarding Working Agreement which must be signed by the volunteer, the Head of School and the responsible adult with whom they are helping.

It is the Chief Executive Officer's responsibility to determine the level of DBS Certificate check required.

A person volunteering in a post should not be permitted to start until appropriate checks have been undertaken.

Volunteers who have an unsatisfactory DBS Certificate or reference will be automatically refused and will be advised of the reason for the decision by the Chief Executive Officer.

Volunteers who do not agree to these checks will be refused the opportunity to work for the school.

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Induction

All volunteers should be subject to a local induction to ensure that they know what is expected of them and what they can expect from the school. Equal opportunities and health and safety within the workplace will be part of the volunteer's induction.

Ideally, a document should be provided to define the expectations and responsibility of the volunteer.

All volunteers are valued for their contribution and will be expected to demonstrate motivation and commitment to achieve the school's objectives. Volunteers will also be required to work within agreed procedures including health and safety requirements, reliability, and punctuality.

The Head of School should provide appropriate training and give a clear indication of the role and the limitations thereof. The volunteer should be treated in a fair and consistent manner in a safe working environment.

Any volunteer working in the school should receive a local safeguarding induction that specifically advises on the safeguarding standards. The induction must also include clear codes of conduct. Head of School should keep records of all training a volunteer receives.

Supervision

Volunteers need to be supervised appropriately within the working environment and receive regular contact with the person responsible for them. They should be advised how they will be supervised and the type of feedback they will receive.

Confidentiality

In the course of their duties, volunteers may need to have access to confidential information. It is the responsibility of the Head of School to determine whether access to confidential information is appropriate and, if it is, to make sure that the information is kept to a minimum. The Head of School must also ensure that the volunteer understands the confidential nature of the information and their responsibilities regarding confidentiality, it may be appropriate for them to be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement.

Health & Safety

The School has legal obligations towards their volunteers and it is good practice to treat volunteers with equal consideration when it comes to health and safety. The school should ensure that, as far as possible, it meets the same health and safety requirements for volunteers as are demanded by law for paid employees.

The Head of School must ensure health and safety training and instruction is given to volunteers as defined on the risk assessments relevant to the activities being undertaken. Records should be kept of the information and training provided. The school will ensure that the risk assessment process always involves employees and volunteers who are involved in the activities which are being risk assessed.

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The Board has overall accountability for health, safety and welfare for the school workforce. It must provide health and safety policies and procedures and ensure through regular monitoring that health and safety policy and procedures are being adhered to.

Training

Volunteers may be required to attend training. Head of School is also responsible for advising volunteers of appropriate codes of conduct and behavioural standards related to safeguarding.

Insurance

The Discovery Multi Academy Trust's employers' liability insurance contains a clause relating to volunteers which is sufficient to fulfill their legal liability in relation to volunteers carrying out work within the remit of their agreed work programme.

Anyone driving a minibus on behalf of the school must comply with the minibus code of practice which sets out the relevant training and license requirements.

Unsuitability of Volunteers

If, after appropriate support and encouragement, it is determined that a volunteer is unsuitable, they should be advised by the Head of School that they are no longer required.

Where a voluntary arrangement is cancelled, or a volunteer chooses to leave, then all authorisation or ID cards, together with any other school property, must be returned.

If a volunteer is asked to leave because they harmed or may harm a child/student, Head of School will be required to refer the details to the relevant authorities such as the Police or the Independent Safeguarding Authority.