



'Academies in Christ'
Part of the Archdiocese of Southwark

Volunteer Policy

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1.0 Introduction

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

A volunteer is an unpaid individual who provides support to one of our academies.

2.0 Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is:

- to demonstrate the Trust's commitment to its academies and individual volunteers
- to ensure consistency that all volunteers are treated equally and fairly
- to offer security to volunteers so that they know how they can expect to be treated, and where they can turn to if they feel that things are going wrong, and
- to help ensure that paid staff, senior management and Directors fully understand why volunteers are involved and the role they have within the Trust.

3.0 Scope

Volunteers may include:

- Directors of the Trust Board (excluding Partnership and Principal Directors)
- Governors including co-opted, foundation and parent
- Parents of pupils
- Ex-pupils
- Ex-members of staff (refer to section 5)
- Local residents
- Friends of the academy / Trust.

4.0 Why does the Trust have volunteers?

Involving volunteers can add great value and support to the Trust and its academies and assists in the achievement of the Trust's mission and strategic objectives.

By allowing the contribution of volunteers, the Trust is able to:

- Engage a more diverse range of skills, experience and knowledge
- Assist staff to raise the standards of education within the Trust
- Assist pupils to fulfil their potential
- Build relationships within the community and support others within the community.

5.0 Becoming a volunteer

Individuals who wish to become a volunteer within an academy/ the Trust either for a one-off event such as a school visit or on a regular basis should approach the Headteacher/Principal or Class Teacher in the first instance or a senior member of the Trust Office team.

At all times the potential impact on pupils should be assessed.

5.1 Ex-members of staff

Where an individual who is an ex-employee of an academy wishes to volunteer at the same academy, the Executive Principal/Headteacher must contact the Trust Office to confirm the suitability and applicability of such individual.

6.0 Avoiding job substitution

The Trust are particularly keen that concerns over job substitution are addressed. Apart from the potential legal risks, the majority of volunteers will not wish to be classified as employees and paid staff should be undertaking the work that they are paid for.

7.0 Recruitment of regular volunteers

Before the recruitment of volunteers, it is important to ensure that academies are clear about the role that a volunteer will play and that volunteers are clear on the role and support they can receive from the Trust.

Key questions to ask;

- How will the academy / Trust support the involvement of volunteers?
- Why is the academy / Trust recruiting a volunteer?
- How will the volunteer add value for pupils / the academy/ the Trust?
- How will you reassure staff about job security?
- What roles are appropriate for volunteers and what roles are not? (refer also to section [7.6,7.7, 7.8]).

7.1 Insurance of volunteers

The Trust provides a range of insurances for its academies. For volunteers, they will be covered by:

- **Public liability or employers' liability insurance** – this provides cover for the Trust if a volunteer is harmed due to negligence.
- **Public liability insurance** – this covers the Trust and the volunteer if a third-party is injured through the volunteer's actions.

If any academy or the Trust owns a vehicle which is being used by a volunteer as part of their volunteering activities for the academy/Trust, the Trust is responsible for arranging insurance.

If the volunteer owns the vehicle which is being used by them as part of their volunteering activities for the academy/Trust, the volunteer is responsible for arranging insurance and they should inform their insurer that they are using the vehicle as part of a volunteering role.

The Association of British Insurer's Volunteer Driving – The Motor Insurance Commitment lists insurances companies which do not charge extra premiums for volunteer driving.

7.2 Before recruiting regular volunteers

It is important that volunteers are clear about their roles and the support they can expect from the academy/the Trust. Those individuals who donate their time will want to be sure that it is time well spent and that the work is well organised and their contribution is valued.

The National Council for Voluntary Organisations outlines eight key features that make up a quality experience for volunteers:

1. **Inclusive**: welcome and accessible to all
2. **Flexible**: takes into account people's individual life circumstances
3. **Impactful**: makes a positive difference
4. **Connected**: gives a sense of connection to others, to the cause and/or an organisation
5. **Balanced**: does not overburden with unnecessary processes
6. **Enjoyable**: provides enjoyment, people feel good about what they are doing
7. **Voluntary**: the volunteer has freely chosen to do it
8. **Meaningful**: resonates with volunteers' lives, interests and priorities.

Volunteering may be regarded as a way to learn new skills, meet new friends, or make a valuable contribution to a cause. It may lead to employment and new careers.

7.3 Equality and Diversity

The Court of Appeal confirmed in 2011 that the Equality Act does not apply to volunteers in the same way that it applies to employees and therefore volunteers without contracts are not covered by anti-discrimination legalisation for workers.

7.4 Writing volunteer role descriptions

The Trust Company Secretary is responsible for writing volunteer role descriptions for all Board Directors and governors.

Academies should provide written outlines, or descriptions of their volunteer roles which should be consistent with the Trust and comply with this Policy. It is crucial that both staff and volunteers understand their roles.

Written descriptions:

- Allow more information to be provided to the volunteer
- Allows academies to show where the volunteer's work fits in with the work of the academy/Trust
- Provides a list of tasks to the volunteer so they can compare with their skills and experience
- Provides a basis for measuring activity levels and performance
- Describes the outcome of the intended work, and
- Helps others to understand how the voluntary role will apply to their own.

The role description should include:

- Title of the role
- Objective of the role
- A broad outline of activities to be undertaken
- Targets or measuring of performance
- The name of the person who the volunteer reports to
- Location and work hours
- Expectations of behaviours and dress (if appropriate)
- Skills and qualifications (essential and desirable), and
- Required person specifications.

Although volunteer role descriptions can look like job descriptions, they are not. They describe unpaid roles and should only describe the expectation of a role.

Academies must not imply that a volunteer is under contract to perform specific tasks. Academies could find that they have unintentionally breached a number of employment regulations.

It is not envisaged that a full role description is required for one-off volunteers, unless the activity is a recurring activity which can be undertaken by any number of one-off volunteers and where guidance may be required.

7.5 Volunteer Recruitment Process

Safeguarding remains the Trust's priority and recruitment of regular volunteers should follow safer recruitment guidelines. The Trust Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy provides further details on requirements for volunteers.

When recruiting volunteers, the Academy should consult with the Trust office and its own Governing Body/Academy Committee as well as considering the following;

- What is the function of volunteers and what tasks are volunteers suited to?
- What skills and experience would the academy/ Trust like volunteers to bring?
- How will the academy / Trust go about finding volunteers?
- What will the selection process involve?
- If volunteers are successfully recruited, how will the academy / Trust ensure that they remain within the academy / Trust?

Volunteers should complete the relevant application form and the academy/Trust should be mindful of accessibility for individuals with disabilities. For Governors and Directors, they should follow guidance issued in the Governance Handbook or contact the Company Secretary.

'Interviews' for volunteers should not be overly formal as people are offering a gift of time, not seeking paid employment. The purpose of any discussion with a potential application should be to understand more about the individual and give time for questions.

Once you have decided that the applicant has the necessary attributes for the volunteer role, a start date and any necessary induction time should be allocated.

7.5.1 Volunteer references

References for regular volunteers should be sought, depending on the volunteer role. All governor roles, save for staff governors, should have references sought and this will be undertaken either at academy level, Trust level or by the Diocese.

Either a simple letter from two referees or a telephone call with two referees should be suitable to confirm the applicant's suitability and capacity to work within the academy/Trust.

7.5.2 DBS Checks

An Academy should:

- Never leave an unchecked volunteer unsupervised or allow them to work in regulated activity
- Obtain an enhanced DBS check with barred list information for all volunteers who are working in regulated activity (refer to Section 7.8)
- Obtain an enhanced DBS check without barred list information for all volunteers who are not in regulated activity, but who have an opportunity to come into contact with children on a regular basis, for example, supervised volunteers

- Carry out a risk assessment when deciding whether to seek an enhanced DBS check for any volunteers not engaging in regulated activity
- In academies with pupils under 8, ensure that appropriate checks are carried out to ensure that individuals are not disqualified under the Childcare Disqualification (Regulations) 2018 and Childcare Act 2006. Where we decide that an individual falls outside of the scope of these regulations and we do not carry out such checks, we will retain a record of our assessment. This will include our evaluation of any risks and control measures put in place, and any advice sought.

The Trust would not want unnecessary and inappropriate DBS checks to be a barrier to volunteering. Each volunteer role is therefore assessed on its own merits and we will only apply for a DBS check if the role is eligible for one.

The decision to request an Enhanced DBS check for any volunteer is made by the Executive Principal/Headteacher based on consideration of the following:

- The duration, frequency and nature of contact with children
- What the school knows about the volunteer, including formal or informal information offered by staff, parents or other volunteers
- Whether the volunteer is well known to others in the school or community who are likely to be aware of behaviour that could give cause for concern
- Whether the volunteer has other employment or undertakes voluntary activities where referees would advise suitability
- Any other relevant information about the volunteer or the work they are likely to do.

The Trust will always tell the applicant why they are being checked and where they can get independent advice.

7.5.3 Refusing volunteers

If the academy or Trust decides that an applicant is not suitable for the volunteer role available, they should explain to the applicant the reasons that they will not be accepted as a volunteer.

7.6 Suitable Roles for Volunteers

Volunteers within academies may be asked to undertake activities such as:

- Hearing pupils read
- Reading with pupils
- Working with small group of pupils;
- Undertaking arts and crafts activities with pupils
- Supporting teachers to undertake after school clubs;
- Individually arranged projects
- Accompanying school visits or one-off activities.

7.7 Unsuitable Roles for Volunteers

Volunteers within academies should not be asked to undertake activities such as:

- Teaching
- Safeguarding activities
- Operational activities

- Any activity which allows the individual to access sensitive personal data or personal data of pupils.

7.8 Regulated activities

Regulated activities are as follows:

- Teaching, training or instruction of children, carried out by the same person frequently
- Care or supervision of children if carried out by the same person frequently, or if the following is only done once:
 - Relevant personal care.
 - Physical help with eating or drinking due to illness or disability.
 - Physical help with toileting, washing, bathing or dressing.
- Day-to-day management of people doing the above jobs
- All forms of health care relating to physical or mental health.
- Advice or guidance provided wholly or mainly for children relating to their physical, emotional or educational wellbeing if carried out by the same person frequently
- Moderating a public electronic interactive communication service likely to be used wholly or mainly by children, carried out by the same person frequently.
- Driving a vehicle being used only for conveying children and carers or supervisors.
- Early years or later years child-minding.

8.0 Visits to academies

Volunteers must adhere to the Academy Visitor Protocol. Directors and Governors must also adhere to the Trust's Visitor Protocol when visiting an academy.

9.0 Confidentiality

Volunteers will be subject to the Trusts' Privacy Notice and will be asked to abide by the Trust's Code of Conduct.

All members of staff, volunteers and any visitors to the academy/Trust should be aware that information relating to pupils or members of staff is and should remain confidential at all times.

Whilst in academies, volunteers may hear conversations which are of a confidential nature covering aspects such as pupils' academic progress, misbehaviour, home circumstances or medical needs. All information remains confidential and volunteers must abide by this.

Where a volunteer has a concern about a pupil that they come into contact with, this should be raised with the class teacher and not with the parents of the pupil or any external person outside of the academy. Comments, particularly if taken out of context, can cause distress to the parents if not heard directly from the academy.

A situation may arise in an academy where the duty to the pupil is greater than the parent. Where a pupil discloses something, this information should be shared with the pupil's teacher or headteacher. Volunteers who become concerned about anything another adult or volunteer does or says within the academy should raise the matter immediately with the Headteacher.

10.0 Supervision

All volunteers are required to work under the supervision of the class teacher to which they are assigned. For governors/ directors, please refer to the relevant Academy visitor policy or Trust guidance on Governor Visits which outlines the visit protocol for such volunteers.

Although teachers will retain responsibility for pupils within academies, this does not require volunteers that have a valid enhanced DBS certificate to be in their direct supervision at all times.

Volunteers should be asked if they feel confident to carry out the task that they have been assigned and should seek further guidance or advice from the teacher in the event of any query or problem regarding the pupil's behaviour or the understanding of a task.

11.0 Volunteer conduct

Volunteers must abide by the Trust Code of Conduct.

Governors and Directors are required to abide by the Governor Code of Conduct or Director Code of Conduct.

All volunteers should sign a volunteer agreement (see Appendix 1).

All volunteers assisting off-site visits should sign the off-site visit volunteer agreement (See Appendix 3).

Where a volunteer is deemed to breach any part of the Code of Conduct or Volunteer Agreement, they may be asked to stop volunteering at the Academy / Trust.

12.0 Health and Safety

The Trust has a Health and Safety Policy which is available to academies and volunteers. Teachers should ensure that volunteers are clear about emergency procedures such as fire evacuation and about any safety aspects associated with a particular task.

If a volunteer attends an educational visit, their emergency contact details will be requested and will be kept on file in accordance with the Data Protection Policy.

13.0 Complaints Procedure

Any complaint made by a volunteer or about a volunteer will be referred to the Headteacher/Academy Principal of the Academy in the first instance.

The Trust and any academy has the right to take the following actions;

- Speak with the volunteer about a potential breach of their conduct
- Offer an alternative placement for a volunteer
- Inform the volunteer that they are no longer required to help in an academy.

Any complaint made by a governor or director or about a governor or director should be referred to the Company Secretary of the Trust in the first instance. Refer to the Trust Complaint Policy.

Appendix 1 – Volunteer Agreement

Dear

Thank you for offering your services as a volunteer at [Academy Name].

Your offer of assistance is greatly appreciated, and we hope that you will gain much from your experience.

Please read and sign this Volunteer Agreement sheet and return it to the Academy. You will receive a copy for your records.

- I will follow the Trust's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy at all times;
- I have received a copy of the Trust's Volunteer Policy;
- I agree to support the aims of the Trust and the academy;
- I will follow the Visitors Code of Conduct;
- I am aware of the academy's health and safety procedures;
- I agree to treat information obtained from being a Volunteer within the academy/the Trust as strictly confidential.
- I understand that an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check will be undertaken where required.
- I have been made aware of my role as a volunteer and of my designated supervisor / point of contact.

Signed: _____ Name: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 2– Off-site Volunteer Agreement

Off-site visits are an integral part of learning at our academy and afford many pupils opportunities which are outside their usual experiences.

We are pleased that you have come forward as a volunteer helper; you will have an important role to play in the success and safety of this academy's visits.

Please read and return this appendix, and sign and return the helpers slip. This is part of our school's risk assessment planning and safeguarding.

Role of the Volunteer Helper

- To be responsible and look after, in equal measure, all of the pupils in your group under the instruction of the Leader of the trip;
- To stay with your allocated group of pupils, ensuring that their wellbeing and safety is maintained for the total duration of the school trip
- To promote polite, respectful and courteous behaviour towards each other and members of the general public. We all go as ambassadors of our academy and Trust!
- To ensure that your group keep up with the body of the school visit party, be it walking, entering or exiting from transportation or following speakers for the trip.
- To contact your child's class teacher/member of staff if there are issues with first aid, safety and/or behaviour.
- To follow the academy's Online Safety policy on the use of mobile phone procedures.
- Working alongside academy staff.

The Academy staff expect volunteer helpers to:

- Comply with all of the above whilst being under the direct supervision of academy staff.
- Show a commitment to their group, an interest in the focus of the visit and assist pupils in their learning by helping them to read signs/labels/information, asking questions that encourage pupils to think about the task and help to explain the areas of interest.
- Follow guidance from the school staff

What is not permitted;

- Volunteer helpers are not allowed to bring additional children e.g. siblings or children in the care of the volunteer on the trip
- Volunteer helpers are not allowed to smoke, drink alcohol or engage in any illegal practices whilst undertaking their volunteer duties
- Volunteer helpers are not permitted to take photographs of pupils
- Volunteer helpers are not allowed to give/buy their group treats e.g. ice creams, biscuits, sweets –before, during or after the school trip.

First Aid

You will be informed if any child in your group has medication/needs.

If medicine needs to be administered, this will be done by a member of staff unless you are the Parent/ Carer of the child who requires medicine, in which case you will be asked to administer this and be responsible for carrying the medicine.

All other medicines and first aid boxes) will be carried by staff.

Emergencies

You are expected to inform a member of staff as soon as possible.

If you have become separated from the rest of the party, please telephone one of the members of staff on your contact list or telephone the school.

- I have read the Volunteer Policy.
- I agree to the terms and conditions as stated in the Policy
- I will support the young people in enjoying the trip and actively contribute to the smooth running of the event.
- I will treat any information I may hear about pupils as confidential and will not discuss or disclose it out of academy.

Signed: _____ Date: _____ Name:

Designation: