



# Policy for Volunteers in School

## At St. Mary's School we aim to:

- Create a caring Christian community in which everyone is valued and able to learn and grow together;
- Inspire all our children to develop enquiring minds and a lifelong love of learning;
- Release potential through a broad and creative curriculum;
- Sustain an environment in which independence, respect and resilience will flourish;
- Nurture strong relationships between home, school, church and the wider community;
- Empower the children to become responsible local, national and global citizens.

**"Be the best I can in the love of Christ"**

## **Volunteers in School**

*NB Governors are also volunteers but when acting as governors this policy does not apply to them.*

Volunteer helpers may be either

- parents or other adult helpers working alongside teachers;
- students on work experience.

Just as we want our children to be active members of our community, we welcome into the school members of that community who wish to help and support our children. But our overriding concern must be for the safety of the children in our care.

This policy sets down the basic guidelines on the role, recruitment and deployment of volunteers at St Mary's. More detailed advice is given to volunteers during their induction.

### **1) Value of volunteers in school**

#### **a) Impact on the school**

The value of well-deployed volunteers in schools is widely recognised. Volunteers are a welcome resource in helping to raise children's achievement, complementing the work of Teachers and Teaching Assistants. St Mary's C of E Primary School recognises that there is no doubt that the school as a whole benefits greatly from developing well planned, active parental and community links through participation by adults in the activities of the School on a voluntary basis. Volunteers in school provide for the enrichment of the pupils' learning experiences, but must not encroach on or restrict professional teaching duties.

#### **b) Impact on the volunteer**

It is hoped that not only will volunteers gain a valuable insight into the work of the school and how education works, but also that they will thoroughly enjoy the experience. Perhaps their work in school may open doors for them.

#### **c) Impact on the community**

The use of volunteers allows a more effective development of school as a community resource with local people participating in our school lives and activities to the mutual benefit of pupils, staff, parents and the volunteers themselves.

### **2) Role of the volunteer**

- a) Volunteer helpers support the school in a number of ways, including:
1. supporting individual pupils;
  2. hearing pupils read;
  3. helping with the supervision of children on school trips;
  4. helping with group work;
  5. helping with art or subjects involving other practical activities.

- b) Volunteer helpers are **not** allowed to do the following activities:
1. take responsibility for all or some of the whole class;
  2. change very young children, or supervise them changing;
  3. supervise children engaged in PE or other specialist activities;
  4. administer first aid;
  5. see children out at the end of the day (from class or the gate);
  6. engage/play with children during break times, indoors or on the playground;\*
  7. discipline or issue disciplinary measures against the children;
  8. take children off the school site without a teacher in charge.

\*Our school and college work experience volunteers (i.e. 18 years old or younger) are exempt but child protection and safeguarding principles still apply at all times.

- c) The responsibility for the health and welfare of the child remains with the class teacher at all times.

### **3) Deployment of volunteers**

- a) The headteacher has the authority not to accept the help of volunteers if he or she believes it will not be in the best interests of the children.
- b) Helpers will be asked to support in classes where there is the most need for individual support.
- c) **Each volunteer is responsible to a designated member of staff.** Whilst there should be no significant addition to the workload of the staff member taking responsibility for the volunteer, it would be expected that time is taken to ensure the volunteer is adequately inducted into the role and that there is mutual agreement and understanding. This additional responsibility is not compulsory for staff and should only be delegated with the agreement of the employee concerned. It is however essential that the volunteer is clear as to which member of staff has this responsibility.

### **4) Volunteer's agreement.**

All volunteers are required to read and sign the Volunteer's Agreement at Appendix A.

### **5) Child protection**

- a) There is a requirement for schools to carry out a Disclosure and Barring (DBS) check for all staff and volunteers who have regular contact with children. All schools need to hold a register of the checks undertaken. In order for you to work in school as a volunteer, you will need to complete an enhanced DBS check through West Sussex County Council (ask at the school office). Please be

assured that all information will be treated in the strictest confidence and that these checks are done only in the best interests and safety of the children.

## **6) Induction and support**

Volunteers will be made aware of the rules governing behaviour at the school, and the key policies that affect what they do.

### **Attendance**

- a) **Signing in:** When helpers arrive in the school they must sign in at the reception desk. They will be given a visitor's badge, which they should wear at all times. The signing-in sheet will give the date and time of arrival. They must also sign out, stating the time they are leaving, and return their badge before they leave.
- b) **If you are unable to come when expected** please make every effort to give as much notice as possible. The teacher may have planned work that relies on your presence.

## **7) Confidentiality**

Volunteers in school are bound by a code of confidentiality. Any concerns that Volunteers have about the children they work with / come into contact with should be voiced with the Class Teacher and NOT with the parents of the child or persons outside school. Comments regarding children's behaviour or learning can be highly sensitive, and if taken out of context, can cause distress to the parents of a child if they hear about such issues through a third party rather than directly from the school. Confidentiality applies equally to forms of communication (e.g. direct comments to parents/carers, discussions with third parties, sharing information/views on social media etc.) Volunteers should not post or share any information on social media (including photos or video clips) relating to their role at school. This includes trips, sporting events, performances or other school events taking place offsite.

## **8) Staffroom and breaks**

In order to allow members of staff to speak freely about professional matters volunteers are not invited into the staffroom during breaks although of course a place to relax and take refreshment will be provided for volunteers who are at school for extended periods. Drinks making facilities are available for volunteers in the kitchen area at the rear of the hall.

Like all staff, volunteers must not use mobile phones in public areas of the school. Phone calls should be made in private but it is also important that devices with photographic/video capability are not in use around the children.

## **9) Health and safety**

Safe practice must be promoted at all times. The school has a Health and Safety policy and maintains records of Risk Assessment. All volunteers will have their attention drawn to identified risks, the teacher will explain to the volunteer the risk and any specific actions which should or should not be taken by the volunteer.

## **10) Complaints Procedure**

Any complaints made about a Volunteer will be referred to the Headteacher /Deputy Headteacher for investigation. Any complaints made by a Volunteer will be referred to the Headteacher / Deputy Headteacher.

The Headteacher reserves the right to take the following action:

- To speak with a Volunteer about a breach of the Volunteer Agreement and seek reassurance that this will not happen again;
- Offer an alternative placement for a Volunteer, e.g. helping with another activity or in another Class;
- Inform the Volunteer that the school no longer wishes to use them.

The full Complaints Procedure is set out on the School Website

## **11) Insurance**

Whilst volunteering for the school they are covered by the LA for third party liability. Volunteers are insured to the same extent as school employees (excluding Land Charges). They may wish to make their own arrangements for insuring against theft, personal injury or damage to their own property.

## **12) Financial implications**

State benefits claimed by volunteers can be affected by voluntary work and schools are strongly advised to refer volunteers to Form FB26 available from the local Benefits Office if they are in any doubt about work they may undertake voluntarily. The main points for consideration are that volunteers should remain available for work if claiming unemployment benefits and that disabled volunteers should not undertake voluntary work of a nature similar to that for which they are receiving disability benefit.

## **13) Monitoring and review**

The day-to-day monitoring of this policy is the responsibility of the headteacher. This policy will be reviewed by the governing body every two years, or earlier if considered necessary.

Appendix A

**ST MARYS C E AIDED PRIMARY SCHOOL VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT**

Thank you for offering your services as a Volunteer at St Mary’s C E Aided School, Horsham. Your offer of help is greatly appreciated and we hope that you will gain much from your experience here.

Please read and sign this Volunteer Agreement Sheet and hand it in at school. You will receive a copy of it for your records.

1. I have received a copy of the School’s Volunteer Policy and the Child Protection Policy.
2. I agree to support the School’s Aims and Core Values.
3. I understand that I am required to undergo a DBS check to advise the school of my suitability as a volunteer.
4. I understand the following important principles:
  - a. I must inform another member of staff if I experience behaviour difficulties that I feel unable to deal with so that the child can be dealt with appropriately.
  - b. For my own protection I will make sure that I am never alone with one child behind a closed door.  
(Sadly we are working in times when you can’t afford to take any chances.)
  - c. I will avoid all physical contact with the children.
  - d. I will keep confidential conversations that I hear or am part of that relate to children or staff
  - e. I will not discuss with others outside school the progress/difficulties of individual children.
  - f. I recognise that I may witness inappropriate behaviour that the school is already working on closely with the child, parents and outside agencies to support and improve. I may not always be aware of this, as such information is highly confidential. It is easy to make judgements without being fully aware of the facts contributing to the child’s difficulties.
  - g. If I have concerns about any child I will speak to the headteacher.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_