



Mayflower  
Community  
Academy

# Volunteers Policy

## VERSION CONTROL SHEET

**POLICY NAME:** Volunteers Policy

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Document date	Filename	Meeting submitted	Summary of changes required
November 2014		July PSG	New policy
March 2016		Policy Review Day	No changes
December 2017		LGB	No changes
July 2019		LGB	Updated
March 2021		LGB	No changes

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.

These guidelines have been developed to cover voluntary workers undertaking duties on behalf of, and in support of, the activities of Mayflower Community Academy. 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 Headteacher 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 Headteacher.

## **RECRUITMENT OF VOLUNTEERS**

Headteachers 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.

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

- Volunteer expresses an interest in working at the school. Headteacher explains 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
- Headteacher 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 Headteacher 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 Headteachers' risk assessment process. Headteachers 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 volunteer should explain fully their wish to offer voluntary help at the school to the Headteacher, especially if they have no previous experience. The Headteacher should also promote the role at interview and explain how the volunteer is likely to benefit from working in the school and the positive input they can make.

## **PRE-EMPLOYMENT CHECKS**

The Headteacher should take up references covering at least a 5-year period for volunteers working at the school on a regular or frequent basis. Headteachers should also check any entitlement to live and work in the UK.

DBS Certificates will be required for volunteers. Headteachers 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. However, a person who regularly or frequently helps at the school will be subject to DRB checks. Regular contact is defined as three times or more in a 30-day period. It is the Headteachers' responsibility to determine the level of DRB 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 DRB Certificate or reference will be automatically refused and will be advised of the reason for the decision by the Headteacher.

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

## **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 Headteacher 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. Headteacher 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 Headteacher 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 Headteacher 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 AND 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 Headteacher 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 responsibilities of the Governing body depend on whether the Governing Body is the employer. Where the Local Authority is the employer, the Governing Body is responsible for ensuring that all activities undertaken adhere to the LAs health and safety policy and procedures. Where the Governing Body is the employer, it 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. Headteachers are also responsible for advising volunteers of appropriate codes of conduct and behavioral standards related to safeguarding.

## **INSURANCE**

Plymouth City Councils 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 Headteacher 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, Headteachers will be required to refer the details to the relevant authorities such as the Police or the Independent Safeguarding Authority.

Relevant Legislation: [www.volunteering.org.uk](http://www.volunteering.org.uk)