



Greenfields Primary School
Volunteering Policy

Introduction

This policy sets out the broad principles for voluntary involvement in Greenfields Primary School. It is of relevance to all within the organisation, including volunteers, staff and governors. This policy is approved by the Governing Board and will be reviewed annually to ensure that it remains appropriate to the needs of the volunteers at the school.

Commitment

Greenfields Primary School acknowledges that volunteers contribute in many ways, that their contribution is unique and that volunteering can benefit the children and staff as well as the volunteers themselves. The school values the contribution made by volunteers and is committed to involving volunteers in appropriate positions and in ways which are encouraging, supportive and which develop volunteering.

Greenfields School recognises its responsibility to arrange its volunteering efficiently and sensitively so that the valuable gift of the volunteers' time is used to the mutual advantage of all concerned.

Definition

Volunteering is an important expression of citizenship as well as an important component of democracy. Volunteers are unpaid people who, of their own free will, contribute their time, energy and skills to benefit the community.

Statement of values and principles

Volunteering is a legitimate and crucial activity that is supported and encouraged by Greenfields Primary School and is not intended to be a substitute for paid employment. The role of volunteers complements but does not replace the role of paid staff.

Appropriate steps will be taken to ensure that paid staff are clear about the role of volunteers, and to foster good working relationships between paid staff and volunteers.

Volunteers will not be used during times of industrial action to do the work of paid staff.

The volunteer role is a gift relationship, binding only in honour, trust and mutual understanding. No enforceable obligation, contractual or otherwise, can be imposed on volunteers to attend, give or be set a minimum amount of time to carry out the tasks involved in their voluntary activity. Likewise the organisation cannot be compelled to provide either regular tasks, payment or other benefit for any activity undertaken by the volunteer.

Although volunteers offer time freely and willingly without binding obligation, there is a presumption of mutual support and reliability. Reciprocal expectations are acknowledged – both of what the organisation expects of volunteers and what volunteers expect of the organisation.

Volunteer Co-ordination

All volunteers will have a nominated member of staff or volunteer to offer guidance and advice to help the volunteer carry out tasks effectively. Volunteers will be informed of who to contact to receive support and supervision.

The nominated post holder with overall responsibility for the development of voluntary activities within the organisation is Helen Cook, the Headteacher. This person is responsible for the management and welfare of the organisation's volunteers.

Recruitment and Selection

Greenfields Primary School is committed to equal opportunities and believes that volunteering should be open to all regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, political beliefs or offending background that does not create a risk to vulnerable groups including children. The acceptance of volunteer assistance for a particular role is made on merit, the sole selection criterion being the individual's suitability to carry out agreed tasks. Information about the volunteer not relevant to the performance of the volunteering tasks concerned will be disregarded by the organisation in terms of recruitment and selection.

Volunteering opportunities will be widely promoted in ways that makes them accessible to all members of the community.

Volunteers who are considered unsuitable for a particular task will either be offered alternative voluntary involvement with the organisation or referred to the nearest Volunteer Centre. Volunteers will be asked to produce two references and will be invited to attend an informal interview. As volunteers will be working in a school with access to vulnerable groups (children and/or adults) they will be required to undergo our safer recruitment procedures including asking a volunteer to complete an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS) check.

Volunteers will have a clear and concise task description, which can be reviewed at any time, particularly if the volunteers' circumstances change. The task description will be prepared in conjunction with the volunteer and the designated person referred to above.

New volunteers will be properly inducted into the organisation. Volunteers will be properly briefed about the activities to be undertaken and given all the necessary information to enable them to perform with confidence.

Training & Development

Volunteers will be made aware of and have access to the organisation's relevant policies, including those relating to volunteering, health & safety, safeguarding vulnerable groups and equal opportunities.

The development of training and support for volunteers is a priority for the organisation in order to equip them with the necessary information and skills to carry out their tasks. It will be the responsibility of the designated person referred to above to offer any relevant training which may be needed. It is the responsibility of the volunteer to attend relevant training.

Training in the supervision of volunteers will be provided for those who have direct contact or responsibility for volunteers.

Support, Supervision and Recognition

Volunteers will have a named person to whom they can take their volunteering concerns and seek guidance and support.

Volunteers will have access to regular support and supervision. This will enable the volunteer and the supervisor to identify, monitor and evaluate the volunteer's involvement, recognise achievements and identify individual training needs, including that relevant to their particular volunteering role and to their wider personal development. The frequency, duration and format of these sessions will be negotiated between the volunteer and the designated officer referred to above.

Volunteers will be given the opportunity, where relevant, to share their views and opinions with the organisation's wider staff, at staff meetings etc.

Formal recognition of the contribution of the organisation's volunteers will be made as appropriate (e.g. internal awards, newsletters, Headteacher's reports, thank you letters etc.)

Insurance

The organisation's liability insurance policies include the activities of volunteers and liability towards them. The organisation does not insure the volunteer's personal possessions against loss or damage

Confidentiality

The organisation will advise the volunteer on its confidentiality policy and procedures, where relevant. This would include those relating to personal information held by the organisation relating to the volunteer. Volunteers will be asked to sign the school's Confidentiality Agreement. Any breach of confidentiality could result in the volunteer being asked to stop their voluntary activity in the school.

Settling Differences

The organisation aims to treat all volunteers fairly, objectively and consistently. The organisation seeks to ensure that volunteers' views are heard, noted and acted upon promptly and aim for a positive and amicable solution based on the organisation's guidelines for settling differences. The designated officer referred to above is responsible for handling problems regarding volunteer complaints or conduct and these should be referred to him/her. In the event of a problem, all relevant facts should be obtained as quickly as possible. Support will be provided by the organisation to the volunteer while it endeavours to resolve the problem in an informal manner. If an informal resolution proves impossible, the organisation's wider grievance or complaints policies and procedures (which include volunteers) will be referred to. If a volunteer's behaviour is repeatedly or seriously unacceptable, they may be asked to change their role, or to leave the organization.

Rights and Responsibilities

The organisation recognises the rights of volunteers to:

- know what is (and what is not) expected of them
- have adequate support in their volunteering
- receive appreciation
- volunteer in a safe environment
- be insured (other than for loss of personal possessions)
- know their rights and responsibilities if something goes wrong
- receive relevant out-of-pocket expenses, as previously agreed with the school
- receive appropriate training
- be free from discrimination
- be offered the opportunity for personal development

The organisation expects volunteers to:

- be reliable
- be honest
- respect confidentiality
- make the most of training and support opportunities
- carry out tasks in a way that reflects the aims and values of the organisation
- carry out tasks within agreed guidelines
- respect the work of the organisation and not bring it into disrepute
- comply with the organisation's policies
- sign the Volunteer's Code of Conduct