



MORPETH FIRST SCHOOL

Volunteer Policy

The school's Volunteer Policy is part of the school's safeguarding systems.

Introduction

Volunteers at our school bring with them a range of skills and experience that can enhance the learning opportunities of children at our school. We welcome and encourage volunteers from the local community as well as parents of current and past pupil.

Our Volunteers include:

- Members of the Governing Body
- Parents of pupils and ex-pupils
- Ex-pupils
- Students on work experience
- University teacher training students
- Ex-members of staff
- Local residents
- Members of the Parent Teacher Association (PTA)

The types of activities that Volunteers are engaged include:

- Hearing children read
- Working with small groups of children
- Working alongside individual children
- Undertaking art & craft activities with children
- Supervision at school events
- Accompanying school visits
- Sharing careers information
- Supporting PTA events

Becoming a Volunteer

Prospective volunteers will need to complete a DBS form and gain clearance before being able to volunteer either within school on a regular basis, or help on a school trip. Forms for this are available from the school office. Volunteers may be asked to provide references as part of our risk assessment process if they do not have any current familial links to pupils in the school.

Volunteers should complete the *Volunteer Information Form* (Appendix 1) with their contact details, type of activities they would like to help with, and the times they are available to help.

Once DBS clearance has been established, before starting to help in school, volunteers should complete the *Volunteer Agreement* (Appendix 2), which sets out the school's expectations of volunteers and asks Volunteers to confirm they have received a copy of this policy. If they are to become a regular volunteer, they will also be asked to read the school's child protection and safeguarding policy and depending on their role within school, complete some basic online training around safeguarding.

As a school, we have found that placing a parent volunteer in the same class as their child can be problematic. Sometimes the child might find it difficult to accept that their parent might work with other children and not with them, and some children suffer from separation issues when the parent leaves

which can then affect their readiness to learn for the rest of the day. Issues can also arise if other parents feel that some children are getting preferential treatment due to their parents volunteering in the class or assume that volunteers have access to information which is not widely available to all parents. For this reason, we generally do not allow a parent to regularly volunteer in their own child's class unless it is for an educational visit. There are, however, many other opportunities for volunteering in school such as helping to manage the library, 'one off' project or career activities, or supporting the PTA with fundraisers or events.

There are certain times within the school day that are timetabled tightly due to curriculum requirements e.g. phonics, literacy and numeracy lessons. Withdrawing children for small group or individual work with a volunteer during these sessions would be counter intuitive as it may mean that children miss essential key teaching points. Although we will do our best to fit around your schedule, we ask that you understand that there may not be volunteering opportunities at the times that you are available.

Our School Vision, Aims and Values

All adults who work in our school, whether a paid member of staff or a volunteer are expected to work and behave in such a way as to actively promote our school vision.

Our school ethos is based around the development of our character values, and our belief that all children should be 'Treasured, Courageous and Empowered' They are inspired to flourish in a safe and caring environment where they are shown kindness and encouraged to be kind. Children are taught to believe in themselves and demonstrate resilience, confidence, determination. Children feel a sense of pride in themselves and in others and are encouraged to show empathy, integrity and respect. Further information on our Character Values can be found on our school website.

Safeguarding and Child Protection

It is everyone's duty to ensure that children are kept safe.

While you are volunteering, if a child says something, makes an allegation or behaves in such a way that causes you concern regarding their safety or welfare, please report it immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Leads, **Mrs Fielding (Head Teacher)** or **Mrs Bell (Deputy Head)**. Information should be reported as said by the child and you should not attempt to ask probing questions of the child. This information should be kept confidential and not discussed with anyone other than the designated staff who will then follow the safeguarding protocols as set out in the Child Protection policy.

Volunteers who are concerned about anything another adult in the school does or says should raise the matter with the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher.

Volunteers are not allowed to use mobile phones or take photographs whilst on visits or helping in class, this includes taking pictures of their own child. Some parents do not give permission for their child's image to be used other than that agreed with the school and we ask volunteers to abide by these wishes as they may unwittingly be putting children in danger.

Confidentiality

Many children within our school community have different needs (some of which may not be overt). We aim to treat children with equity, recognizing that pupils with different needs may need different

support available to them to access the curriculum or be in a position to learn, and we provide those children with what they need in order to have equal access. This might mean that resources, outcomes, rewards and sanctions may differ according to the child and the circumstance, and we ask volunteers to be supportive of our procedures and approaches in these instances and respect the child and their family's right to confidentiality.

All volunteers in school are bound by a code of confidentiality. Any concerns or comments 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 and / or any other persons outside school. Comments regarding children's behavior, learning or attainment 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.

Supervision

All volunteers work under the supervision of the Class Teacher of the class to which they are assigned. Teachers retain responsibility for children at all times, including the children's behaviour and the activity they are undertaking.

Volunteers should have clear guidance from the Teacher as to how an activity is carried out or what the expected outcome of an activity is. Volunteers are encouraged to seek further advice or guidance from the Teacher in the event of any query or problem regarding children's understanding of a task or their behaviour.

Teachers plan and organise their lessons with the utmost professionalism and have extensive classroom experience and knowledge of the children they teach. You may notice that as part of their job, they have to juggle and manage a huge range of factors which can change rapidly or unexpectedly. Please be assured that they have carefully chosen a specific approach for each lesson and it is not within a volunteer's role to question or critique this, offer advice, or discuss their opinion of a lesson with others outside school. If volunteers feel it necessary, they are free to make an appointment with the Head Teacher to discuss this.

Health & Safety

The school has a Health & Safety Policy and this is made available on request to Volunteers working in the school. Class Teachers ensure that Volunteers are clear about emergency procedures (e.g. fire alarm evacuation) and about any safety aspects associated with a particular task (e.g. using DT equipment / accompanying children on visits). Volunteers need to exercise due care and attention and report any obvious hazards or concerns to the Class Teacher / Headteacher.

Child Protection

The welfare of our children is paramount. To ensure the safety of our children, we adopt the following procedures:

- All Volunteers will be provided with a copy of the Volunteer Policy and asked to sign a *Volunteer Agreement* (Appendix 2). Depending on their role, they will be provided with a copy of the school's Child Protection Policy (also available on the school website). They may be asked to complete online safeguarding training.
- To ensure the safety of our pupils at all times, all of our Volunteers, who have regular contact with pupils, must have been cleared by an enhanced DBS. A certificate is issued to the individual **and the original copy** must be verified by the school office before you are cleared to volunteer.

- Those volunteers who support school trips must also read and sign our *Off-site visit agreement* (Appendix 3).

Complaints Procedure

Any complaints made about a Volunteer will be referred to the Headteacher / Deputy Headteacher for investigation. 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.
- Depending on the allegation, this may result in the volunteer being referred to the police in certain circumstances or to the Local Authority Designated Officer.

Any complaints made by a Volunteer should be referred to the Headteacher in the first instance. The full Complaints Procedure is available from the school office or on the website.

Monitoring and Review

This Policy has been approved by the Governing Body. It will be reviewed regularly (every 2 years) and updated in the light of any incident or new guidance from either the DfE or LA.

Volunteer Information Form

I will be willing to help in a classroom on a weekly basis on _____(day) mornings
afternoons

I can offer the following skills _____

I would like to support a small group activity organised by the teacher or support with 1 to 1 activities

I would like to help with School Trips

I would like to help with PTA activities

I understand that I will be required to undergo a Disclosure and Barring Service check to advise the school of my suitability as a volunteer.

I have completed a DBS form via school and this has been verified by the school Office

I need to complete a DBS form

Parent of _____ Class _____

I understand that I will not be placed as a volunteer in my child's class

Signed _____

Name _____

APPENDIX 2

MORPETH FIRST SCHOOL

VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT

Thank you for offering your services as a Volunteer at Morpeth First School. 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.

- I have received a copy of the School's Volunteer Policy
- I agree to support the School's Aims and Core Character Values
- I agree to treat information I learn from being a Volunteer in school as confidential
- I recognise my responsibilities in terms of safeguarding children
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Signed: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX 3

MORPETH FIRST SCHOOL

OFF-SITE VISITS VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT

School trips are an integral part of learning at our school and afford many children 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 school trip.

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

Role of the Volunteer Helper

- to be responsible and look after, in equal measure, all of the children in your group
- to stay with your allocated group of children, ensuring that their well being 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 school!
- 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

Working alongside school staff

School staff expect volunteer helpers to:

- comply with all of the above whilst being under the direct line management of school staff
- show a commitment to their group, an interest in the focus of the visit and assist children in their learning by helping them to read signs/labels/information, asking questions that encourage children to think about the task and help to explain areas of interest
- follow guidance from the school staff

What is not permitted

- physical contact with children unless in an emergency situation or as directed by a teacher
- to bring additional siblings on the school trip.
- to re-organise school visit groups.
- to smoke, drink alcohol or engage in any illegal practices or be under the influence of such when they attend.
- to take photographs of children including your own child.
- To use personal mobile phones during the trip unless in an emergency and as directed by the Class Teacher
- to give/buy their group treats e.g., ice-creams, biscuits, sweets, souvenirs – before, during or after the school trip.

First Aid

All members of staff have undertaken first aid training. 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 it is your 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 box(es) will be carried by staff.

Emergencies

Please contact the school as soon as possible if you are unable to attend a trip. There are strict guidelines for ratios so another volunteer may have to be sourced for the trip or event to take place. You are expected to inform a member of staff as soon as possible if an emergency arises during a trip/event.

If you have become separated from the rest of the school 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 occasion
- I will treat any information I may hear about children as confidential and will not discuss it out of school

Signed : _____ **Date :** _____