The Free School Norwich

Volunteer Policy

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Statement of intent

At The Free School Norwich, we recognise and value the effort taken by parents and other volunteers who contribute towards our school.

We encourage your assistance and acknowledge that many school activities and processes would be at risk if it were not for your help. As a result, we want to make sure that your time spent in the school is productive and enjoyable.

The development of any volunteer, whether for one day or for a number of sessions over a longer period, must take into account the needs of pupils and the staff to whom they are assigned. We have a duty to ensure that the welfare of pupils is promoted, and that they are safeguarded from harm.

This policy sets out the practices and procedures which will be followed when appointing, managing and supervising volunteers, as well as a code of conduct which all volunteers are required to comply with.

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- The Childcare (Disqualification) and Childcare (Early Years Provision Free of Charge) (Extended Entitlement) (Amendment) Regulations 2018
- The Childcare Act 2006
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- The Data Protection Act 2018
- Data (Use and Access) Act 2025
- Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026
- Crime and Policing Act 2026
- DfE (2023) 'Keeping children safe in education'
- DfE (2018) 'Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006'

2. Volunteer categories

For the purposes of this policy, volunteers are categorised as either **"occasional volunteers"** or **"regular volunteers"**.

Occasional volunteers are individuals who volunteer on an infrequent or one-off basis. This may include, for example, volunteering at a school event, accompanying pupils on a day visit, or supporting another one-off activity.

Regular volunteers are individuals who volunteer on an ongoing or frequent basis as part of the school's normal activities, for example:

- Three or more times in a 30-day period
- Once a month or more
- On an overnight stay.

The categorisation of a volunteer as occasional or regular is for the purposes of managing volunteer arrangements. It does not determine whether the volunteer is undertaking regulated activity or the safeguarding and recruitment checks required.

The school will determine whether a volunteer is undertaking regulated activity, and therefore requires the appropriate pre-appointment checks, following an individual assessment of the role in accordance with current legislation and statutory guidance.

3. Regulated activity and pre-appointment checks

Defining regulated activity

A volunteer will be engaging in regulated activity where, as a result of their volunteering, they:

- Work on a frequent basis in the school.
- Frequently carry out one or more of the following activities involving children:

- Teaching
- Training
- Instructing
- Caring
- Supervision
- Providing advice or guidance relating to children's physical, emotional or educational wellbeing
- Driving a vehicle used only for transporting children

Activity will be regarded as frequent where it is carried out on more than three days in any 30-day period.

The following activities will be deemed as regulated activity regardless of how often they are carried out:

- Providing relevant personal care, including assisting a child with eating or drinking because of illness or disability, or helping with toileting, washing, bathing or dressing because of age, illness or disability.
- Providing healthcare to children by, or under the direction or supervision of, a regulated healthcare professional.
- Any overnight activity involving children.

Pre-appointment checks

Before a volunteer is appointed, the school will determine whether the role constitutes regulated activity by carrying out an individual assessment of the proposed role, taking account of the nature of the activities to be undertaken, the frequency of the role, the opportunity for contact with children, and whether the role involves any activities that are always regulated.

Any volunteers engaging in regulated activity will be required to obtain an enhanced DBS check with children's barred list information before commencing their role. This requirement applies regardless of whether the volunteer will be supervised.

Where a volunteer is not undertaking regulated activity, the school will determine, following an individual assessment of the role, whether an enhanced DBS check is appropriate in accordance with current legislation, statutory guidance and the school's Safer Recruitment Policy.

Volunteers will not commence their role until all required pre-appointment checks have been completed and the school is satisfied that it is appropriate for them to do so.

All pre-appointment checks will be recorded and retained in accordance with the school's Safer Recruitment Policy.

4. Application to be a volunteer

Occasional volunteers

Occasional volunteers may be appointed at the Principal's discretion. The school will determine the appropriate recruitment process and whether any pre-appointment checks are required in accordance with Section 3 of this policy.

An occasional volunteer will always be supervised by a member of staff, unless the appropriate DBS checks have been obtained.

Regular volunteers

Regular volunteers will normally be required to complete the school's volunteer recruitment process, which may include:

- An informal discussion with a member of the SLT.
- Provision of references where appropriate.
- Completion of the relevant pre-appointment checks.
- Completion of any required induction and training before commencing the role.

Safeguarding checks

Under no circumstances will a volunteer on whom no checks have been obtained be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

The school will conduct a risk assessment and use its professional judgement to decide what checks are required. The risk assessment will consider:

- The nature of the work with children, especially if it will constitute regulated activity, including the level of supervision.
- What the school knows about the volunteer, including formal or informal information offered by staff, parents and other volunteers.
- Whether the volunteer has other employment or undertakes voluntary activities where referees can advise on their suitability.
- Whether the role is eligible for a DBS check, and if it is, the level of check required.

Details of the risk assessment will be recorded and any DBS checks applied for will be recorded on the school's Single Central Record.

If a volunteer will be working in regulated activity, an enhanced DBS check with children's barred list information will be required. The school will not request barred list information on a volunteer if they are supervised, as they are not considered to be engaged in regulated activity.

For volunteers who are not in regulated activity, but who have the opportunity to come into contact with pupils on a regular basis, it is at the discretion of the school to decide whether or not a DBS check is required.

Volunteers will not be re-checked if they have already had a DBS check; however, the school will consider obtaining a new DBS check, at the level appropriate to the role, if there are concerns about a volunteer.

All checks will be conducted in line with the school's Safer Recruitment Policy.

5. Supervision

Volunteers will be appropriately supervised by school staff in accordance with the nature of their role and the needs of pupils. Supervision supports safe practice and effective safeguarding but will not affect whether a volunteer is undertaking regulated activity for the purposes of DBS eligibility.

When determining what supervision is reasonable, the school will take the following factors into consideration:

- The ages of the pupils, including whether there is a large gap in their ages
- The number of pupils with whom the volunteer is working
- Whether there are other staff members present during the activity
- The nature of the volunteer's work and the opportunity for contact with pupils
- Whether the pupils are considered vulnerable
- How many volunteers would be supervised by each member of supervising staff

6. Induction

Volunteers will be required to read and agree to the Staff Code of Conduct before starting their role at the school. All volunteers must comply with this Staff Code of Conduct.

All volunteers will be required to make themselves familiar with school procedures as part of their induction, including, but not limited to the following:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Low-level Safeguarding Concerns Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

Volunteers will be required to read Part 1 of 'Keeping children safe in education' as part of their induction.

All volunteers will be provided with a point of contact within the school who they can go to if they have any questions or issues they need to discuss.

7. Safeguarding

Volunteers will be provided with safeguarding information as determined by the governing board, using a proportionate, risk-based approach.

The school will ensure that activities are planned properly and safely, and that volunteers are informed of these plans. The school will ensure that volunteers have access to a member of school staff, should they wish to discuss difficulties or report on issues that may arise.

All volunteers are required to be identified and located at all times. For this reason, the following process will be adhered to:

- Volunteers will sign in and out of the building at the school office
- Volunteers will wear a visitor's badge at all times
- The Principal will be made aware of where the volunteer is working

Volunteers will be made aware that they must report any safeguarding concerns in line with the school's Safeguarding Policy. The identity of the school's DSL and any deputies will be made known to all volunteers.

Any safeguarding concerns or allegations raised regarding a volunteer will be dealt with in line with the Low-level Safeguarding Concerns Policy and/or the Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy.

8. Health and safety

Volunteers will be required to read the Health and Safety Policy prior to undertaking any activity on behalf of the school.

Volunteers will ensure that they are familiar with emergency procedures, e.g. evacuation, and of any health and safety procedures relating to the activity they will be undertaking, e.g. whilst in a cookery class.

If a volunteer notices any potential hazard which may put another individual at risk of harm, they will report this immediately to the class teacher or a senior member of staff.

9. Absence

Volunteers are required to inform the school office as soon as possible if they are unable to attend at the agreed time.

Failure to inform the school may result in the volunteer being unable to attend the school on any further occasions.

If a volunteer is called away in the event of an emergency while volunteering, they will inform the class teacher or senior leader, and will sign out of the building before leaving the premises.

10. Confidentiality

All volunteers will be required to act in line with the Staff Confidentiality Policy.

Volunteers will not be permitted to discuss any confidential information regarding a pupil or member of staff with any other individual.

Information will be shared with volunteers on a need-to-know basis, and they will not have access to the school's records unless access is required to fulfil their role.

Any volunteer who breaches the confidentiality rules will be asked to leave the premises and will not be able to return to undertake any further activity.

There may be instances where a volunteer is required to pass information to a member of staff, such as if they notice a pupil being bullied or subjected to harm. Volunteers will report any concerns to a member of staff and are instructed not to notify the parents. If concerns relate to safeguarding, volunteers must follow the guidance in the Safeguarding Policy and inform the DSL.

If concerns are related to whistleblowing, volunteers must follow the guidance in the Whistleblowing Policy.

11. Complaints

Any complaints made in relation to a volunteer will be managed in line with the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.

The school's privacy notice for volunteers explains what information will be collected about volunteers and why the school collects this. The school will retain records relating to volunteers in line with the school's records retention schedule.

Details of volunteers will be removed from the SCR once they are longer volunteering at the school.

12. Monitoring and review

The Principal will review this policy every two years and will communicate any changes to all members of staff, existing volunteers and relevant stakeholders.

All volunteers will be required to read this policy prior to their attendance at the school.

Principal: Darren Webster
Policy Approved: July 2026
Policy Review Date: July 2028

Appendix A

Volunteer code of conduct

All volunteers are expected to maintain high standards of behaviour and conduct when undertaking any activity at the school.

Volunteers will:

- Observe the high standards of behaviour and ethical conduct mandated by the school.
- Respect other volunteers, members of staff and pupils, and make them feel valued.
- Be approachable, pleasant and positive role models for pupils.
- Adhere to all school policies, including the Safeguarding Policy.
- Maintain confidentiality of personal information at all times, unless there is a need to report an issue to a member of staff.
- Treat all pupils and members of staff equally.
- Report any incident of bad behaviour to the class teacher or a senior member of staff immediately.
- Dress appropriately and behave in a manner which promotes healthy and safe working practices.
- Accept and follow directions from the supervisor and seek guidance through clarification where uncertain of tasks or requirements.
- Observe safe working practices which avoid unnecessary risks, apply reasonable instructions given by supervisors, and report any potential hazards in the workplace to the supervisor.
- Avoid waste or extravagance and make proper use of the resources.
- Conduct work in a cooperative manner.
- Turn off mobile phones while on school premises.

Volunteers will not:

- Discipline pupils; if there are any problems, the class teacher or a senior member of staff will be informed immediately, and they will manage the situation.
- Shout at, hit, threaten or handle a pupil.
- Take photographs in school without the prior permission of the Principal.
- Develop ‘personal’ or sexual relationships with pupils.
- Work with pupils when not in the proper physical or emotional state to do so, e.g. under medication which causes drowsiness, or under extreme stress which may impair judgement.
- Behave in an illegal, improper or unsafe manner, e.g. smoking or drinking alcohol.
- Share personal contact details with pupils or make personal arrangements to meet pupils outside school.
- Express any extremist or discriminatory views, or any views that would offend others.
- Make inappropriate jokes or remarks of a sexual, racial, intimidating, discriminatory or offensive nature.

- Behave in a manner which may bring the school into disrepute when representing the school.
- Give or receive (other than ‘token’) gifts, unless arranged through the Principal, e.g. giving an outgrown sports kit, football boots or uniform to a pupil.

I, _____, have read the code of conduct and agree to abide by the rules outlined in this policy.

Signed: _____ **Date: _____**