



SOMERFORD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Guidance for use of Volunteers in Educational Establishments and other Children and Young People's Settings Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership (BCP Schools)

Updated: March 2025

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(Ref: KCSIE 2024 Part 3 – Safer recruitment)

Volunteers are recognised as a very valuable resource to supplement paid staff within an educational establishment or other setting working with children or young people. They can also provide beneficial links with the local community. Volunteers are seen by children as safe and trustworthy adults and therefore educational and other establishments must ensure high standards of safeguarding practice when recruiting and using volunteers in order to keep children and young people safe.

No one has a right to be a volunteer in a school/setting, or college, the Headteacher makes the decision about whether volunteers would enhance the staff group and if so who those volunteers should be.

The national guidance in relation to safeguarding and volunteers is found in Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) which is updated annually.

Safety checks must be carried out for all volunteers to ensure their suitability to work with children.

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

Volunteers and regulated activity

Regulated activity is set out in Schedule 4 of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012. It is also in KCSiE.

Regulated activity includes

- a) Teaching, training, instructing, caring for (see (c) below) or supervising children if the person is unsupervised, or providing advice or guidance on well-being, or driving a vehicle only for children,
- b) Work for a limited range of establishments (known as 'specified places', which include schools/settings and colleges), with the opportunity for contact with children, but not including work done by supervised volunteers;

Regular volunteers, the 'period condition'

Work under (a) or (b) is regulated activity only if done regularly. The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 provides that the type of work referred to at (a) or (b) will be regulated activity if 'it is carried out frequently by the same person' or if 'the period condition is satisfied'.

The period condition is satisfied if the person carrying out the activity does so at any time on more than 3 days in any period of 30 days and, for the purposes of the work referred to at (a), apart from driving a vehicle only for children (applies if only 1 off). It is also satisfied if it is done at any time between 2am and 6am and it gives the person the opportunity to have face to face contact with children (this would apply where volunteers, even if parents, were helping on a one night residential/camping trip)

Activities which are always regulated activities regardless of frequency or supervision

c) relevant personal care, or health care provided by or provided under the supervision of a health care professional:

- Personal care includes helping a child, for reasons of age, illness or disability, with eating or drinking, or in connection with toileting, washing, bathing and dressing (Personal care is not regulated when for example parent volunteers help with costumes for school plays or helping a child lace up football boots)
- Health care means care for children provided by, or under the direction or supervision of, regulated health care professional

DBS Checks:

- If a new volunteer will be in regulated activity (as defined above) the school/college/setting must obtain an enhanced DBS certificate which should include barred list information
- If a volunteer will not be in regulated activity but will have the opportunity to come into contact with children on a regular basis e.g. supervised volunteers an enhanced DBS certificate not including barred list information, may be obtained. Employers are not legally permitted to request barred list information on a volunteer who, because they are supervised, is not in regulated activity.
- KCSIE advises that the school/setting or college should undertake a risk assessment and use their professional judgement and experience when deciding whether to seek an enhanced DBS check for any volunteer not engaging in regulated activity. It is anticipated by the P-DSCP that a DBS check is likely to be undertaken as part of the recruitment process as below.
- Where checks are carried out on volunteers, schools/settings can record this on the single central record.

Supervised Volunteer

If the volunteer is to be supervised while undertaking an activity which would be regulated activity if it was unsupervised, the statutory guidance provided by the Secretary of State, must be followed. This is detailed in KCSIE with some examples. Key principles are:

- There must be supervision by a person who is in regulated activity
- The supervision must be regular and day to day; and
- The supervision must be 'reasonable in all the circumstances to ensure the protection of children'
- All school/setting staff need to be advised of the status of each volunteer e.g. whether they are in regulated activity, have had appropriate checks and

therefore can be left unsupervised with children. This should depend on the role or activity the volunteer is being asked to fulfil.

1. Recruitment of volunteers

- Occasional volunteers who are not in regulated activity would usually be parents or carers who come in to help on a one-off outing or occasion and would not be recruited as such to the position of volunteer. They would not be required to go through a recruitment process including the taking up of DBS checks. This would be at the Head teacher's, setting Leader (or equivalent) discretion and where there are known concerns about a parent or other occasional volunteer it would be at the Head/Leader's discretion not to engage this person as an occasional volunteer.
- Regular volunteers (see period condition above) would be in a position of trust within the school/setting and even where they are not left unsupervised with children, should always go through a recruitment process. The school/setting should also take into consideration any knowledge they have of the person in their relationship with the school/setting as a parent, grand-parent, previous employee, governor, committee member etc. when deciding if this person will be trustworthy and make a valuable contribution to the school/setting in the capacity of volunteer.

The recruitment process should include:

- DBS checks when appropriate (as in 1 above)
- Informal Interview with Head teacher/Leader or nominated senior member of staff to include discussion about safeguarding and advise of the School's safeguarding policy, confidentiality, being in a position of trust, any transferable risks.
- Providing details of 2 references (one of which should, where possible, relate to involvement with children/young people) This should relate to recent paid work or volunteering wherever possible including the last known employer
- Completion of a volunteer recruitment form which includes personal details, background, skills, types of activities they would like to help in, times they are available
- Where volunteers have been recruited by another organisation and work in an educational establishment, e.g. sports coaches from a local club or early years activity provider, the establishment should obtain assurance from that organisation that the person has been properly vetted and has the correct level of DBS required for their role.

2. Recruitment and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks

DBS Checks are checks carried out to identify whether or not individuals working in an unsupervised activity with children are suitable to do so. This is because it is known that a small minority of people use this route to gain the confidence of children before causing them harm. See 1 above

Having a criminal record does not automatically prevent an individual from being a volunteer. The Headteacher and Governing Body would consider the details of the criminal record and balance this against the activities the individual is to undertake. Advice may be required from HR services in order to make this decision.

If a volunteer commits a criminal offence during their time as a volunteer they must disclose this to the Head Teacher in the same way that any employed member of staff should. The Headteacher will assess whether it is acceptable to continue with the volunteering role, whether the activities should be changed, or whether it is the best interests for all concerned to no longer act as a volunteer. HR advice may be required.

3. Information for volunteers

As part of an induction process volunteers should be given verbal and written information about the school/setting. This would include;

- Volunteer agreement with terms and conditions to sign which would include confidentiality
- Schools/settings expectations of volunteers
- What a volunteer can expect from the school/setting
- School/setting vision, aims and values
- Health and safety issues e.g. what to do if there is a fire, Lock down procedures, site/premises security, access to staff room, other staff areas, hot drinks on site,
- Code of conduct (including staff behaviour codes) etc e.g. polite, courteous, self-discipline, respectful, being an appropriate role model, language, dress, rules around smoking, use of mobile phone, alcohol and illegal substances
- Child protection policy, practices and responsibilities including the Prevent agenda, this could be 'signed up to' as evidence that the policy has been read and will be complied with.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education part 1 (including flowchart)
- What to do if..... guidance
- Behaviour policy and Anti bullying policy
- Internet/ On-line Safety Policy and Acceptable User Policy (where appropriate)
- Guidance for safer working practice for adults who work with children and young people
- Explain the DBS requirements, that regular volunteering is subject to satisfactory clearance and the expectation that once cleared the volunteer will advise the Head teacher/line manager if their position changes e.g. if they commit an offence

4. Safeguarding issues

- Volunteers should be supervised by a member of staff in regulated activity. They should be working in a setting where there is always a paid member of staff present. Even where DBS checks have been undertaken, volunteers should not be left unsupervised for long periods
- Occasional volunteers should never be left unsupervised, would not take children to the toilet or be left in charge of a small group of children on an outing away from teacher/teaching assistant/ setting staff member supervision
- Volunteers must be advised about physical contact with children in the same way as employed staff
- Volunteers should use the staff toilets and staff room for any breaks rather than using the children's toilets or play areas unless separate toilets are not available
- Volunteers must be advised that if a child discloses any information relating to potential abuse that they must bring this to the attention of the teacher/designated safeguarding lead (DSL) immediately
- All volunteers should be given a basic safeguarding briefing by the DSL. It may also be appropriate for volunteers to attend any staff training sessions on safeguarding

5. Managing the behaviours of Children

- Volunteers should be made aware of the behaviour management policy of the school/setting
- Volunteers must be advised that it is not their role to discipline children
- If a potential discipline situation occurs, even where this involves their own child, they must bring this to the attention of the teacher/staff member to resolve or if it has been dealt with at the time, as soon as possible after the incident
- They must be advised that they must maintain their composure at all time and if things become difficult, they must immediately inform another member of staff.
- Volunteers should be advised of the anti-bullying policy and bring any situations of conflict, bullying or prejudice to the attention of the teacher/staff member.

6. Confidentiality

- Volunteers must be advised that all information about the children and the school/setting in which they are volunteering is confidential and must not be discussed outside of the school/setting, or with children, parents or other visitors to the school/setting
- It is advised that volunteers are asked to sign to say they have understood and agree to abide by the code of conduct of the school/ settings.
- They should not have access to school/setting's records, children's personal details etc.
- Any information should be shared on a 'need to know' basis e.g. child's medical condition such as diabetes, ADHD where this may affect their behaviour or well-being.
- Volunteers would not usually attend staff and/or parent meetings but there may be exceptions on a 'need to know' basis
- The volunteer must not take any notes/files about children outside of the school/setting
- At no time should volunteers be permitted to take photographs, films or recordings of children unless on school/setting equipment and requested to do so by a regulated member of staff. This equipment must not be taken home by the volunteer.
- Volunteers should be referred to the relevant school/setting policy on the taking, storage and disposal of images of children
- Volunteers should abide by the school/ setting Internet-Safety/mobile phone policy. Personal mobile phones and other personal hand-held electronic devices should not be brought into the class room/setting

7. Health and safety issues

- Volunteers must be aware of health and safety policies and procedures that are relevant and be advised how to act in an emergency situation the same as for any other staff member
- The educational establishment/setting must ensure that the appropriate insurances are in place for the volunteer
- They should be made aware of which staff are first aid trained and of the process when first aid is required rather than undertake any procedure themselves
- Volunteers should be made aware of any medical conditions for children they are working with which may require immediate intervention e.g. diabetes, epilepsy, allergies and how to respond

- Volunteers must sign in and out of the school/setting. They must also wear a name/security badge where required to do so
- If a school/setting is considering involving a volunteer in an activity where there could be a level of risk to themselves or to a child, a risk assessment must be undertaken as for any other member of staff and health and safety advice sought

8. Supervision/mentoring/allegations

- A volunteer should know who their 'contact' person is in the educational establishment or setting. This person would usually be the class teacher or setting leader/manager (or appropriate and identified member of staff)
- The contact person should be available during their volunteer sessions to provide direct support/supervision. There should also be an opportunity for a regular volunteer to be able to discuss any concerns, their contribution, any training needs etc.
- If there are any concerns about the behaviour of the volunteer, there should be a discussion between the volunteer and their supervisor. This may need to involve advice from a manager depending on the concern. This discussion must be recorded together with any actions regarding expected change in behaviour. This will then be reviewed. If the unacceptable behaviour continues the offer of the volunteer placement will be withdrawn.
- A volunteer should know who to go to if they have a complaint or grievance, for example where there may be a conflict situation with another member of staff or volunteer. They should also know who to talk with if they have a concern about the behaviour of a member of staff or another volunteer (whistle blowing) This could be the contact person in the first instance, head of year, Head teacher or setting leader as appropriate, given the nature of the concern
- If a complaint or allegation is made against the volunteer they need to be made aware of how this will be dealt with and offered appropriate support. Any allegation in relation to safeguarding must be referred to a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and treated as for any other member of staff
- If a volunteer is involved in an incident outside of school/college which did not involve children e.g. domestic abuse but could have an impact on their suitability to work with children, this is known as 'transferable risk'. (see part 4, KCSIE). The school/college will need to consider what triggered these actions and could a child in the school trigger the same reaction, therefore being put at risk. This may need to include the LADO.
- If specialist skills are being offered by a volunteer, where necessary appropriate qualifications need to be checked and these activities may need to be supervised by a person who also has these specialist skills.
- Any necessary training should be made available to the volunteer through negotiation with their contact person e.g. safeguarding
- For longer term volunteers a review process would be appropriate. However any safeguarding concerns in relation to the behaviour of the volunteer must be dealt with immediately and not wait for a review period.

9. Transport

- Volunteers must not transport children in their own vehicles unless they have express permission to do so and are appropriately covered with insurance, current driving licence, MOT etc.

- A volunteer would not be expected to take children on school/setting transport or public transport unless accompanied by a member of staff and where a risk management assessment had been made and this met with health and safety regulations

10. Contact with children outside of school/setting

- Volunteers must be reminded that they are in a position of trust and that what they see, hear or are involved in whilst at school must be considered as confidential to the establishment.
- Volunteers must be actively discouraged from forming any friendship relationships with children and their families outside of school/setting. Where people are recruited from the local community and they know some of the children, the impact of this should be talked through with the volunteer as part of their supervision
- The volunteer must not share their personal details such as address, e mail, phone or mobile numbers or engage with pupils/children and young people, or their families, in settings on social network sites. The only exceptions to this would be where the volunteer is a relative or family friend of a child/young person or their parents. This connection must be made known to the Head teacher or setting leader.
- If they become aware of a situation of concern about a child from information received in the community this should be discussed with their contact person or the Head teacher/setting leader

11. Outings and off-site visits

- These may include occasional volunteers as well as regular volunteers
- Occasional volunteers, or others who have not had DBS checks, must not be left unsupervised or alone with children at any time
- There should be a briefing meeting at the start of the outing to ensure that volunteers are clear about the plan for the day, who the team leader is, the children who are their responsibility, any special needs of these children, who to ask for advice, who has the first aid kit, basic road safety advice etc.
- Points 1-11 also apply to outings

References

1. Protection of Freedoms Act 2012.
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2012/9/contents>
2. Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/47/contents>
3. Keeping Children Safe in Education
4. Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>
5. Information sharing; Advice for Practitioners Providing Safeguarding Services
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-practitioners-information-sharing-advice>

6. Inspecting safeguarding in early years, education and skills settings
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/education-inspection-framework?#guidance-for-education-providers>