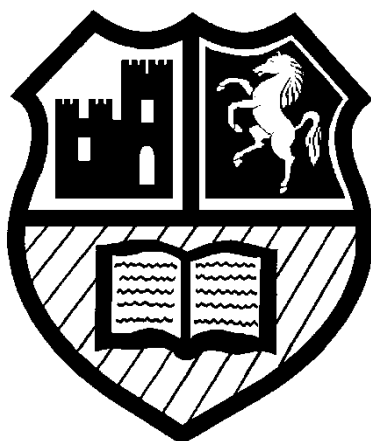


Otford Primary School



Volunteer Policy

Date Autumn 2025

For review Autumn 2027

THE SCHOOL'S VOLUNTEER POLICY IS PART OF THE OTFORD PRIMARY 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.

Our Volunteers include:

- Member of the Governing Body
- Parents of Pupils
- Ex pupils
- Students on work experience
- University students referred to us by Student Volunteer Services
- Ex members of staff
- Local residents
- Friends of the school

The type of activities that Volunteers are engaged in, include:

- Hearing children read, working alongside small groups of children
- Working alongside individual children
- Accompanying school visits, Forest school sessions
- Support with transport to off-site activities e.g. minibus driving, subject to necessary qualification
- Workshop topics relevant to the school curriculum

BECOMING A VOLUNTEER

All parents will receive an invitation to become a volunteer, explaining what is involved. Volunteers should complete the *Application form for New and Existing Volunteers* (Appendix 1) with their contact details, type of activity they would like to help with and the times they are available to help.

The Office will decide alongside the headteacher to organise the appropriate level of clearance needed unless a parent offers to bear the costs of a full enhanced DBS check. Schools will refer to guidance from KCSIE (Keeping Children Safe in Education).

Before starting to help in school, volunteers should complete the *Volunteer Agreements* (Appendix 2) which sets out the school's expectations of volunteers and asks volunteers to confirm they have received a copy of this policy.

The school will seek enhanced DBS clearance for volunteers who wish to help regularly (more than three times per month) in school, as well as clearance against the ISA barred list.

OUR SCHOOL AIMS

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 be familiar with and seek to promote our school ethos and educational purposes identified below:

- Nourish the diverse talents of our children, widen their horizons, and develop their appetite for learning enabling them to live life to the full.
- Bring to an individual the feeling that they can cope with their environment with a sense of confidence in themselves as a significant, competent person.
- Encourage children to feel capable of handling situations which challenge their intellectual, personal, spiritual and moral values, to show tolerance of others, so they are ultimately to be equipped for adult life and work in the fast changing society.

OUR EDUCATIONAL PURPOSE IS:

- To teach the national curriculum in a manner this excites the interest and commitment of the children and meets their present and future needs.
- To develop attitudes, skills and knowledge which will be relevant to our learners as they prepare to meet the widening expectations of a changing society. We regard personal development as a lifelong learning process.
- To value all children equally and not to be discriminated against on the grounds of class, gender, religion or disability.
- To provide a partnership between school, parents and the wider community each having contributions to make to the development of the other.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Volunteers in school are bound by a code of confidentiality. Any concerns that volunteers have about the children they work with/come in contact with should be voiced with the Class Teacher and NOT with the parent of the child/persons outside school. If it is a comment which a child makes which gives rise to concerns, then the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Deputy Headteachers) or the Deputy Designated Lead (Head teacher) should be informed directly.

Comments regarding children's behaviour or learning can be highly sensitive, and if taken out of context, can cause distress to the parents of a child if they hear about such issued through a third party rather than directly from the school. Volunteers who are concerned about anything another adult in the school does or says should raise the matter with the Head teacher. Volunteers will be required to sign a Confidentiality Agreement to this effect.

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/what the expected outcome of an activity is. Volunteers are encouraged to seek further advice/guidance from the Teacher in the event of any query/problem regarding children's understanding of a task or behaviour. Volunteers are not permitted to use their mobile phones or devices during the time with children either in school or on a school trip. If a Volunteer needs to make an urgent call they should ask the Classteacher if they can find a private place for this to take place.

HEALTH & SAFETY

The school has a Health & Safety Policy and this is made available upon 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/Head Teacher.

CHILD PROTECTION

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

- All volunteers are given a copy of the Volunteer Policy and asked to sign a *Volunteer Agreement* (Appendix 2).
- The volunteers will be required to have a DBS check if the activity in school meets regulated activity requirements.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Any complaints made about a volunteer will be referred to the Head Teacher for investigation. Any complaints made by a volunteer will be referred directly to the Head Teacher.

The Head Teacher reserves the right to take the following actions:

- 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.

The full Complaints Procedure is available from the Head Teacher.

MONITORING AND REVIEWING

This Policy has been approved by the Governing Body and will be reviewed annually and updated in the light of new guidance from either the DCSF or LEA.

APPENDIX 1

VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT/DECLARATION ABOUT CONFIDENTIALITY FOR 2025

Thank you for volunteering your services at Otford Primary School.

Your offer of help is greatly appreciated and we hope that you will gain from your experience here. Please read and sign this Volunteer Agreement Sheet and hand it into the Head Teacher. You will receive a copy of it for your records.

- I have received and read a copy of the School's Volunteer Protocol.
- I agree to support the school's aims.
- I agree to treat information I learn as confidential.
- I understand that I am required to undergo a Disclosure and Barring check.
- I will provide two character references (as attached).
- I am happy to be placed in a classroom other than my child's.

CONFIDENTIALITY

I understand the school's views on Confidentiality in school stated below:

By spending time in school a volunteer may have access to all kinds of information. Therefore, it is vital that by inviting you into our workplace and school we have mutual trust of each other. As a helper you will be expected to treat all that you see, hear and read a strictly confidential to the school.

If, when working with a child, you have concerns about them, these should be discussed with the teacher at the end of the lesson. Concerns should never be discussed with the child's parent, even if they are close personal friends of yours. Any discussion of this kind with a child's parents must be instigated by the teacher.

In my capacity as a volunteer in school, I agree to abide by these guidelines.

Signed _____

NAME _____ DATE _____

APPENDIX 2

OFF SITE VISITS – VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT

School trips/Forest school are an integral part of learning at our school and afford many children opportunities which are outside their usual experience. 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 slip.

This is part of our school's risk assessment planning and safeguarding arrangements.

ROLE OF THE VOLUNTEER

- 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 control and direction of school teaching staff.
- Show a commitment to their group, an interest in the focus of the visit and assist 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

Volunteer helpers are NOT allowed to:

- Bring additional siblings on the school trip.
- Re-organise school visit groups.
- Smoke, drink alcohol or engage in any illegal practices.
- Take photographs of children using mobile devices.
- Give/buy their group treats e.g. ice creams, biscuits, sweets before, during or after the school trip.
- Use of mobile phone, watch or device during the activity

FIRST AID

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.

EMERGENCIES

You are expected to inform a member of staff as soon as possible.

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 _____

NAME _____