Sandy Lane Nursery and Forest School
"Nurturing curiosity and inspiring imagination"



2026-27
Volunteer Policy

DOCUMENT STATUS

Produced By	Version	Date	Action
Sandy Lane Nursery and Forest School	2	07.11.22	Approved by Teaching and Learning Committee
	3	10.11.25	Reviewed by Teaching and Learning Committee
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Review
This policy and procedure will be reviewed to respond to any changes and at least every three years.

Links to other policies

- Privacy Notice for Governors and Volunteers

Amendments

v4 Highlighted in yellow:

- DBS checks required for all volunteers
- Volunteers will be required to submit all information requested by school to complete the DBS process
- Name of link governor for safeguarding
- No devices allowed whilst conducting volunteer activities

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Sandy Lane Nursery and Forest School

Volunteer Policy and Procedures

Purpose

This policy sets out the approach Sandy Lane Nursery and Forest School takes when recruiting parent and carer volunteers and how they are utilised within the school.

A volunteer is a person who offers time freely to support an activity, project or programme on an unpaid basis, though out-of-pocket expenses may be payable.

Volunteers offer a diverse, broad range of experiences and skills which can be drawn upon and developed to have a positive impact on a range of school activities.

Applicability

Volunteers at Sandy Lane Nursery and Forest School do not undertake activities in the classroom as part of their role. Dependant on the role they have, there may be occasions where volunteers are unsupervised for short periods of time in an area not used by children, eg, in the staffroom preparing resources. In cases such as these, school staff are made aware, a member of staff is assigned to 'check in' with the volunteer at regular intervals during their time in school and the volunteer is easily identified by wearing the appropriate lanyard.

This policy, and procedure stated, apply ONLY to school employees engaging with and supporting volunteers and all such volunteers spending time in school.

It is the responsibility of each employee and volunteer to familiarise themselves with and adhere to this policy and procedure.

This policy does not apply to people completing work placements or secondments, including placements of school-age children.

Policy

The school recognises the importance of ensuring volunteers are involved in appropriate activities and also ensures that suitable checks and safeguarding measures have been put in place prior to them commencing their period of volunteering.

The school acknowledges the positive impact volunteering can bring to well-being and mental health. As a result of volunteering, volunteers may decide to undertake further study or seek employment due to their experiences in school.

Regulated activities are not included in the school's volunteer offer to volunteers.

The school accepts its duty of care to volunteers and the importance of ensuring that appropriate health and safety measures are implemented.

Volunteers are not employees of the school and, therefore, do not benefit from any of the terms and conditions of employment such as payment for work, paid holidays or paid sick leave.

Volunteers may receive reimbursement for expenses where appropriate and previously agreed with the deputy headteacher.

Volunteers will not be used to replace staff or carry out duties that would ordinarily be undertaken by paid staff.

Volunteers are included in the council's current insurance arrangements for public liability and personal accident.

Insurance

The school's insurance policy does cover volunteers in the event of an accident or emergency.

If a volunteer is working at the school through another organisation, we will also check that organisation's insurance arrangements.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding our pupils is of paramount importance and our volunteers must share our commitment to child protection.

To ensure we are upholding our responsibility to keep our pupils safe, we will:

- Conduct enhanced DBS checks on all volunteers, regardless of their role
- Consider the results of any DBS checks that return with unspent and spent listed convictions, and assess these on a case-by-case basis, with regard given to the nature of the conviction and the nature of the work the volunteer will be involved in
- Require volunteers to agree and adhere to our code of conduct (see appendix 2) and to read, and adhere to, the school's policies on:
    - Safeguarding and child protection
    - Low Level Concerns
    - Use of mobile phones
    - ICT and internet acceptable use
    - Online safety
    - Behaviour
    - British Values
    - Data protection/confidentiality
    - Whistleblowing and complaints

- Health and safety
- Accessibility
- Violence and aggression
- Smoking

Any other relevant policies

Confidentiality

Information about pupils, parents and staff is confidential. Volunteers are not permitted to discuss issues related to pupils, parents or staff with those outside of the school.

If volunteers have concerns, they should raise these with the appropriate member of staff. They should not discuss them with children or parents.

This does not prevent volunteers from adhering to the school's safeguarding policy (with regard to reporting safeguarding concerns or disclosures).

If concerns relate to safeguarding, volunteers must follow the guidance in our safeguarding and child protection policy and inform the designated safeguarding lead.

If concerns are related to whistle-blowing, volunteers must follow the guidance in our whistle-blowing policy.

Implementation

This policy is supported and implemented by the procedures for engaging volunteers (see relevant section below).

Roles and Responsibilities

The governing body is responsible for reviewing this policy and procedures, in line with changes to legislation and codes of practice.

The headteacher/room leader is responsible for:

- Ensuring volunteer roles are clearly defined and that volunteers are not used to replace paid staff or do work that should be undertaken by paid staff;
- Ensuring equality of opportunity for prospective volunteers;
- Ensuring volunteers are easily recognisable throughout school by wearing the appropriate lanyard;
- Ensuring volunteers receive a suitable and sufficient induction, including appropriate health and safety instruction, gaining an understanding of relevant policies and procedures;
- Ensuring volunteers are sufficiently skilled to undertake the tasks required;

- Ensuring volunteers receive appropriate information, support, guidance and equipment;

- Confirming the details of longer-term voluntary placements with the volunteer, either verbally or in writing;

- Maintaining up-to-date records of volunteers, including records of work undertaken (see volunteer record template, appendix 4);

- Ensuring volunteers receive previously agreed out-of-pocket expenses in a timely manner and ensuring a budget is available to cover these expenses.

Volunteers are responsible for:

    - Providing the headteacher/office manager with original documentation prior to commencing their placement as required and as part of the engagement process (eg, DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) certificate where applicable);

- Adhering to relevant policies and procedures, including health, safety and welfare, equality and diversity, safeguarding and data protection legislation;

- Complying with the school's guidelines and instructions;

- Ensuring that the privacy, property and confidentiality of others is respected;

- Informing the school, via the office, as soon as possible if they are unable to attend on an agreed day or time;

- Reporting any concerns to the relevant room leader or, in the case of a safeguarding concern, to a member of the school's safeguarding team (ie, designated safeguarding leads (DSLs), currently the headteacher, deputy headteacher, deputy SENDCo).

Procedure for engaging volunteers

All volunteers should complete a volunteer application form (see appendix 1).

The headteacher/room leader should assess which tasks are suitable to be completed by a parent/carer volunteer and what supervision will be needed. All volunteers will also be required to submit information the school needs in order to complete documentation stipulated by the Disclosure and Barring Service.

The headteacher/room leader must consider the appropriate method of attracting volunteers, ensuring quality of access.

Volunteers will be encouraged to volunteer with a range of activities. Methods to promote this will be via approaching an individual, advertising in the school newsletter and related posts on Tapestry.

Volunteers will be advised of the types of work available. These roles include photocopying/scanning and document preparation, classroom resource preparation and outdoor gardening jobs. Those interested in taking part will be invited to speak to the room leader, headteacher or deputy headteacher. Part of this discussion will help to determine whether the volunteer has the appropriate skills to complete the task alongside any training needs as part of the role.

The headteacher/room leaders must ensure that volunteers are given an appropriate induction and other relevant training. In deciding what is appropriate, the headteacher/room leader should consider the length of time the volunteer will be volunteering for, the type of activities they will be undertaking and the amount of supervision they will require. The headteacher/ room leader should make volunteers aware, as part of the induction process, what procedures to follow in the event of a safeguarding concern, health and safety, data protection, confidentiality or equality and diversity issue. This can be done verbally and/or through sharing the relevant documents.

Where the period of volunteering is very short and a full induction is not practicable, the headteacher/room leader must ensure that measures are put in place to protect the health and safety of the volunteer, pupils, employees, others within the school and the public, and to ensure that other practices and procedures relevant to the volunteer work are complied with.

The headteacher/room leaders should ensure that appropriate support and supervision is available to the parent/carer volunteer for the duration of their role.

A member of the school's administration staff should ensure the volunteer's details and the date and details of voluntary work undertaken are recorded on the volunteer record and, where appropriate, on the school's single central record (see appendix 4).

The headteacher/room leader should speak with the volunteer regularly to gather feedback and offer support and guidance as appropriate. In addition, the volunteer questionnaire should be completed at the end of the role (see appendix 5).

Maintaining records of volunteers

The lead administrator logs records of volunteers via the volunteer record (appendix 4).

Details of volunteers in regular contact with children should also be entered onto the single record of pre-employment checks for inspection by Ofsted.

Privacy notice for volunteers

Throughout the volunteer application process, we ask for some personal data about you. We will only use this data in line with data protection legislation and process your data for one or more of the following reasons permitted in law:

- You have given us your consent
- We must process it to comply with our legal obligations

You will find more information on how we use your personal data in our privacy notice for volunteers. If you have not already received a copy, please request one from the school office.

Expenses

It is important that volunteers are not financially 'out-of-pocket' and that expenses are paid promptly. The headteacher should ensure an appropriate budget is available to cover this expenditure. Where expenses are to be paid, this should be discussed and agreed before the volunteer commences their role. Mileage rates should not exceed the Warrington Borough Council casual user rate.

Failure to comply with this policy and procedures

This document provides staff and others with essential information regarding engaging volunteers and sets out conditions to be followed. It is the responsibility of all to whom this policy and procedures document applies to adhere to these conditions. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action for school staff members and termination of the role for volunteers.

Appendix 1: volunteer application form

Complete the form in full.

Please note that the school may not be able to accommodate all preferences.

Data protection notice
Throughout this form, we ask for some personal data about you. We will only use this data in line with data protection legislation and process your data for one or more of the following reasons permitted in law: • You have given us your consent • We must process it to comply with our legal obligations You will find more information on how we use your personal data in our privacy notice for volunteers. If you have not already received a copy, please request one from the school office.

Personal details	
Name:	
Date of birth:	
Gender:	
Telephone number:	
Email address:	
Home address:	

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) information
The school is legally obligated to process an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check before making appointments to relevant posts. The enhanced DBS check will reveal both spent and unspent convictions, cautions, reprimands and final warnings and any other information held by local police that is considered relevant to the role. Any information that is "protected" under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 will not appear on a DBS certificate. Volunteers will also require a barred list check.

Any data processed as part of the DBS check will be processed in accordance with data protection regulations and the school's privacy notice.	
Do you have a DBS check? (please circle)	Yes/No
If yes, what type of check do you have? (please circle)	Enhanced DBS with barred list information
Date of check:	
Certificate number:	

Availability					
	Monday	**Tuesday**	**Wednesday**	**Thursday**	**Friday**
AM					
PM					
Before school					
After school					
Lunchtimes					
How many hours per week/month can you volunteer?					
Can you commit to at least one term?					

Experience and qualifications
Do you have experience working as a volunteer, especially with children? If yes, please include details in the box below.
Why would you like to volunteer at Sandy Lane Nursery and Forest School?
Do you have any particular skills, employment experience or interests you would like to share with the school? (For example, languages spoken, gardening, etc)

Do you have any relevant qualifications?

References	
Your placement as a volunteer may be subject to satisfactory references. Please give the details of two referees who can comment on your suitability (for example, employers, colleagues, teachers, etc)	
Name:	**Name:**
Relationship to you:	**Relationship to you:**
Address:	**Address:**
Telephone number:	**Telephone number:**
Email address:	**Email address:**

Disability and accessibility
The school is committed to ensuring that applicants with disabilities or impairments receive equal opportunities and treatment. If you have a disability or impairment and would like us to make adjustments or arrangements to assist you, please state the arrangements you require:

Appendix 2: code of conduct for volunteers

By signing this form, volunteers agree to the following:

1. School rules and policies

Volunteers will follow all school rules and policies, including those on:

1.1. Safeguarding and child protection
1.2. Use of mobile phones
1.3. ICT and internet acceptable use
1.4. Online safety
1.5. Behaviour
1.6. British Values
1.7. Data protection/confidentiality
1.8. Whistleblowing and complaints
1.9. Health and safety
1.10. Accessibility
1.11. Violence and aggression
1.12. Smoking
1.13. Any other relevant policies

Copies of the school policies are available online or from the school office

2. Professional conduct

2.1. Volunteers must accept and follow instructions provided by supervisors and ask for guidance or clarification if required. Questions can be directed to the supervising member of staff or to the deputy headteacher as the school's volunteer co-ordinator.

2.2. Behaviour management is the responsibility of school staff. If volunteers witness behaviour that is in breach of the school's behaviour policy or if they were struggling to manage the behaviour of any children with whom they are working, they should alert the class teacher immediately. Volunteers should not attempt to reprimand children or issue sanctions.

2.3. Volunteers must conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times. This includes:

2.3.1. Dressing in a way that is professional and appropriate to the work they are doing
2.3.2. Refraining from using inappropriate language
2.3.3. Setting an example for children by acting in a way that reflects the school's ethos and values
2.3.4. Behaving in a way that is appropriate for the role they are undertaking

2.3.5. Ensuring that comments, including those made on social media, do not bring the school into disrepute

2.4. Volunteers must not accept gifts from, or give gifts to, children. The exception is small tokens, such as those exchanged during the holidays or as a way of saying “thank you”.

2.5. Parent volunteers with children at the school must not act in a way that favours their own child and should not approach their child unnecessarily during the school day. They may not use their time as a volunteer to discuss their child’s education with school staff.

2.6. If a volunteer is unable to come to school when they are expected/scheduled to be in, they must contact their supervisor or the school office as soon as possible. Inconsistent attendance may result in the placement being reviewed or terminated.

3. Safeguarding

3.1. Volunteers must be familiar with, and adhere to, the school’s safeguarding and child protection policy. Safeguarding training will be provided to all volunteers before they begin their placement.

3.2. If volunteers have concerns about the welfare of a child or if a child makes a disclosure, they should speak directly to the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or deputy DSL. The DSL is Kirsten Matthews, Deputy Headteacher/SENDCo, and the deputies are Marcia Atherton, Headteacher, and Nikki Carney, Deputy SENDCo. The governor responsible for safeguarding is Craig Burgess.

3.3. Volunteers must not form personal relationships with children or their parents/carers, either inside or outside of school, with whom they do not already have a personal relationship.

3.4. Volunteers are asked to leave their personal phone or other such devices in the main office on signing in and to collect them on leaving. No such device should be used whilst conducting volunteer activities.

4. Health and safety

4.1. Volunteers must abide by the school’s health and safety and first aid policies. Volunteers are not to administer first aid, except in an emergency where none of the designated first aiders are available.

4.2. Volunteers must be familiar with the school’s fire safety and emergency evacuation procedures.

4.3. Volunteers must sign in and sign out at the beginning and end of every visit and must wear a visitor badge at all times.

5. Confidentiality

5.1. Information about children, parents and staff at the school is confidential and should not be shared with anyone else. Volunteers should not discuss children with parents or other children. If parents approach volunteers for information, they should be directed to speak to a class teacher or the headteacher.

Failure to adhere to this code of conduct may result in the termination of the placement. In more serious cases, misconduct will be treated in line with the school's staff disciplinary procedures.

Please sign and date below:

X _____ X _____

Volunteer name (please print) Volunteer signature

X _____

Date

Appendix 3: requesting a volunteer (information for staff)

If you'd like assistance from a volunteer in your classroom, or for a specific activity or trip, fill out the form below and submit to the deputy headteacher.

Volunteer request form

Activity details	
Year group/class	
Activity details	
Date(s) and time(s)	
Is this activity… (circle one)	One-off/Daily/Weekly/Other If other, please explain:
Will there be any costs for the volunteer (such as entry fees to museums, materials, or travel)?	
Volunteer details	
How many volunteers do you need?	
Do you need your volunteers to have any specific skills or experience?	

Submitted by: …….

Date: ……

Appendix 4: volunteer record template

(can be created as an Excel spreadsheet)

Name	**Child's name and room** (if appropriate)	**Contact number**	**School contact**	**Date of activity**	**Volunteer activity**
Sue Smith	*Charlie Smith – Garden Room*	*077……*	*Jamie GR*	*01.10.22*	*Laminating*

Appendix 5: volunteer feedback template

Thank you for the work you have done as a volunteer at our school. Whatever role you have completed, your support has benefitted the work of the school and had a positive impact on our children and families. We value our volunteers and aim to make the experience a positive and enjoyable one. We would appreciate some feedback on how you have found the experience: it will help us to recognise the things we do well and those we can improve on.

Marcia
Headteacher

Name: **Date:**

What did you volunteer to do?

Did you enjoy your work as a volunteer and feel valued?	
Were you happy with the information shared about the role and what was required during your induction?	
Did you find the school staff welcoming and supportive?	

How has being a volunteer at Sandy Lane been of benefit to you?
(Well-being, improved confidence, friendship, work experience…)

Would you be interested in joining our Friends of Sandy Lane group to continue to support the work of the school which benefits all our children?

WHAT NEXT - Is there any further support we can give you to access more volunteer opportunities, further training or return to work guidance?