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**Volunteer Policy**

Isleham Church of England Primary School

September 2020

The aim of this policy is to:

* To provide parents/staff and volunteers with clear expectations, induction and guidelines for working in school.
* To encourage the wider community to engage with children’s learning to raise standards of achievement and promote community cohesion.
* To ensure the highest standards of safeguarding for our pupils by a shared knowledge of procedures.

**Introduction**

Thank you for volunteering to help our support our school community. Volunteers are parents or other unpaid adults working alongside the school staff and students on work experience.

At Isleham C of E Primary School we welcome those wishing to help in the school and value the contribution they make to school life. We believe that the involvement of parents, carers and volunteers in children's education is vital and we encourage active participation in many ways. Some volunteers come to school to help with a variety of tasks such as ICT, art, swimming, cooking, and especially reading, and usually work with individuals or small groups in specific classes. In addition, volunteers often help when the children are taken on educational visits outside school or get involved with the work of our Parent Teacher Association.

These guidelines have been written to ensure that for all concerned – volunteers, teachers and children - the experience is positive and rewarding.

**Aims and Ethos**

Isleham C of E Primary is a good school with wonderful pupils and a great staff and governor team. Our vision is to develop a learning community in which everyone is supported in becoming a caring, collaborative, critical and creative thinker. As an inclusive school we celebrate diversity and value the achievements of all children. We are committed to providing the greatest possible access for all children by providing a broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum which is appropriate for meeting their needs. We particularly want to ensure that parents and pupils are fully participative in the process.

This mission statement and vision, agreed by all, is key to the way we work and we expect all staff, governors and volunteers to be committed to it, in total agreement with it, and to work hard to achieve it! Our motto is ‘Working together; achieving the best.’

**Safeguarding**

As part of our commitment to safeguarding and child protection, volunteers who are not already known to the school will be asked to attend a short informal meeting to go through this policy and other vital information for helpers in school, to ensure that the aims and intentions of the school and the volunteer are compatible. The Headteacher has the authority not to accept the help of volunteers if he or she believes that it is not in the best interest of the children. We carry out a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check for all volunteers who have regular contact with children. All schools need to hold a register of the checks undertaken. In order for you to work in school as a volunteer, you will need to complete a DBS online check. We will help you get the process started. Please be assured that all information will be treated in the strictest confidence and that these checks are done only in the best interests and safety of the children. Mrs Dunbavin or Mrs Dennis will help you with this process.

Those who help out at specific events e.g. school fair etc who do not have unsupervised access to children do not need a DBS but must not have unsupervised access to children.

**Becoming a Volunteer in School**

Anyone who wishes to volunteer in our school should complete the School Volunteer Request Form enclosed in Appendix 1. As part of their initial meeting in school, volunteers will be asked to attend an induction meeting which will cover the following topics:

* Confidentiality
* Safeguarding & Child Protection, including the Prevent Duty
* Health & Safety; evacuation & invacuation

You will be provided with a current Behaviour Policy, Safeguarding Policy, Log of Concern form & Evacuation/ Invacuation Procedures

**Deployment of Volunteers**

Volunteers will be asked to support in classes/areas of the school where there is the most need for support. Parent volunteers should be aware that we ask for parents volunteering on a regular basis that work is undertaken in another area of the school to the parent’s own child’s(/children’s) class, (with the exception of swimming and woodland trips). This is because for some children it can be difficult to have their parent in the classroom, and perhaps can place the class teacher and parent in a difficult situation.

It is helpful if you can explain to your child that you will be coming into school to help all of the children and that he/she will not always be able to work with you. We may from time to time ask you to support another class during a visit if extra adults are required for a specific activity (e.g. supporting practical science work).

During a visit to the school each volunteer should be designated to a specific member of staff to whom he or she will be directly responsible. It is essential that the volunteer is clear as to which member of staff has this responsibility.

All volunteers should be within earshot of the supervising staff member when working with children. This is to ensure that volunteers are not left without a witness and another adult to support if any emergency or drama should arise. It is important that the parameters of their role within the school are clearly defined from the outset in order to avoid the possibility of misunderstanding. Volunteers should be given access to any school policies and procedures that are relevant to their roles and any support or supervision that is necessary for the success of their activities. Many of the school’s policies and procedures are available on our school website or can be provided on request.

a) Volunteers should not be asked to carry out duties which:-

* Fall normally within a teacher’s responsibility under *loco parent*is;
* Fall normally within the job description of a teacher or a member of staff i.e. they must not be asked to cover the absence of staff from school;
* Would normally be performed by a contractor/ staff member engaged by the Local Authority or by the school e.g. maintenance/ cleaning work;
* Require them to have unsupervised access to children;
* It should be noted that the class teacher remains responsible for the organisation of the class and methods of work.

**Volunteer Roles in School**

Many of the activities that we ask you to help with are the sorts of things that parents do with their own children at home. We might ask you to become involved in a variety of activities such as:

* Sharing books (see Appendix 2);
* Working on the iPads;
* Playing games;
* Making things;
* Cooking;
* Gardening;
* Sewing;
* Topic related studies;
* Coming with us on visits (see Appendix 3);

The teacher will give you:

* Clear guidelines about the activity;
* All the materials you need.

Where a volunteer does not wish to support in a requested area, or wishes to offer their own particular skills or knowledge and these do not match the current need of the school, the offer of help may be declined.

**Procedures and Protocols**

**Health and Safety/Safeguarding**

When a volunteer arrives in the school they must sign in at the school office. Please indicate your arrival time and which class/person you will be supporting. Volunteers must also sign out and state the time when they are leaving the school premises. Signing in and out is important in the event of an emergency so that staff and emergency services know who needs to be accounted for. A visitor badge must be worn at all times in school. Volunteers with a DBS clearance will have been identified to staff members.

The Headteacher has the authority withdraw the help of volunteers if he or she believes that it is not in the best interest of the children.

Volunteers are asked to maintain safe working practices at all times, and only demonstrate activities or skills to children as they have been shown to do by a supervising staff member, using appropriate tools/ equipment, in a manner they are fully comfortable with. Any concerns about safety must be reported straightaway to the Headteacher. Any broken or dangerous items are also to be reported straightway to the office staff or Headteacher in line with the school’s Health & Safety procedures.

No medicines or items for personal use by volunteers of their family should be kept in the classroom or within reach of children. They must be left at home or left in the office where they can be safely locked away. Please see the Health & Safety poster displayed in the staffroom for further guidance.

**Confidentiality**

It is very important that all staff, parent volunteers and other adults working in the school work to a policy of confidentiality. While in school you may become aware of issues relating to individual children. You may see children struggling with work, be upset or misbehaving or hear/see other information concerning a child while you are with us in school, which you would otherwise not have known about.

It is vital that you do not share anything you have discovered as a result of your volunteering in school about specific children with anyone, including friends or family or a child’s parent if you know them. Similarly, if any paperwork is shared with you for use during your visit or a school trip, it should not be taken home or kept after the visit by a volunteer, including on electronic devices. Please return any documents containing pupil names to the class teacher/ group leader for the trip.

The teachers have the responsibility of informing parents of any concerns about a child, and ensuring that parents receive a consistent message about their child, and can be assured that information about their child is not shared with anyone unnecessarily. Volunteers working in classrooms do so on the understanding that they support the teaching staff and will not pass opinion on such matters as discipline or teaching styles outside the school. If you ever have any concerns about a child, please speak to the class teacher as soon as possible after the disclosure in an appropriate setting so that others cannot overhear. In the unlikely event that you had any concerns about a teacher or staff member as a result of something which happened during your visit, you should highlight this straightaway to the Headteacher, and avoid talking about this to anyone else.

Volunteers are asked to sign a ‘Volunteer in School Protocol’ (see Appendix 4) a copy of which will be kept in school.

Safeguarding concerns including those regarding the Prevent Duty (see Appendix 5) about a child must be shared immediately with one of the designated safeguarding leads (DSLs) in school as soon as possible after the disclosure. The DSLs are: **Mrs Sarah Skillern, Headteacher, and Ms Dawn Deacon, Deputy Headteacher.**

**Guidelines for Supporting Children in School**

* It is vital to encourage the children to talk about what they are doing in order to support them in using the correct vocabulary. Please follow and reinforce the guidance offered by school staff.
* There is no rush. We give the children plenty of time to complete a task and they will often need to return to it over several occasions.
* Always encourage the children to do things for themselves. It is important that they are independent and although some children may need help and supervision, the end result should always be their own work. Please don’t be tempted to do the work for them! The learning that goes on while the children are doing an activity is often much more important than the end product!
* When playing games with the children, try and encourage the idea of taking turns, sharing and being a good loser.
* It is important that all children in school are given equal time and attention.
* Please do not lift, carry or move a child in any way.
* Avoid over-familiarity- pet names which you may call your own or friends’ children outside school. Slang terminology, inappropriate language or topics of conversation & first names for staff must be avoided in the school setting too. Children are asked to refer to school staff and volunteers as Mr/Mrs/ Ms/ Dr etc rather than by their first names
* The behaviour in our school is usually very good. However, if you witness any poor behaviour or overhear any bad language by pupils, you are encouraged to report this to the class teacher straightaway so that it can be dealt with promptly in line with our behaviour policy. Please do not issue any warnings to pupils, or physically intervene e.g. if two children are physically fighting. Similarly, please do not cuddle, hug, kiss or place children on your knee in the school setting, including your own children.

**Housekeeping**

* Mobile phones

We would be most grateful if you could keep your mobile phone switched off whilst helping in school, and place the phone in a secure place like the school office, or a bag in the staffroom which is not accessible to children. If you are accompanying a school trip, your phone should not be used during the visit, except in an emergency.

You are reminded that the use of cameras/ mobile phones/ electronic devices which can capture electronic images is not permitted in any circumstances during the school day or on school-led visits by visitors without the written permission of the Headteacher.

* Tea / Coffee arrangements

If you are in school over the break period, there are tea and coffee making facilities for visitors in the staffroom which you are welcome to use. If you are a regular visitor then please ask our office manager, Mrs Dunbavin about contributing to tea and coffee funds.

* Photocopier

The photocopier is located in the main school house- on the second floor above the Headteacher’s office. Photocopier use is restricted to school staff only as each teacher has their own keycode for the machine. Please ask the class teacher with whom you are working or the school office staff if you need to photocopy anything.

* First Aid

Please do not administer First Aid to children whilst you are volunteering in school. Almost all school staff hold certificates for paediatric first aid and/or first aid at work. Please talk to the class teacher or any other staff member if you are approached by a child or adult on site with an ailment or injury.

* Fire alarm/ evacuation of building

If the fire alarm sounds, please make your way safely to the nearest exit, guiding the child(/ren) you are working with. Please ensure you are aware of the fire exit procedures for each of the classrooms in which you work. Instructions for exit are by the door of classrooms, and the muster point for everyone when they are evacuated from the building is the playground/ The Beeches car park if we need to evacuate to a more distant location. You are asked please to vacate the building straightaway and not collect any personal belongings on the way.

* Lockdown/ invacuation of building

If it is necessary to ‘lock down’ the school and stay inside e.g. due to gas leak outside or wild animal on site, you will hear long blasts of a whistle and shouting of ‘Lockdown, lockdown- please return to the classrooms, and shut all windows and doors’. In this situation, please stay with the class to which you have been assigned, and reassure children along with the class teacher. Stay as far away from the windows as possible, and shut the blinds, windows and doors until you are given the all clear that the lockdown threat is no longer in place.

* Security

Your support in keeping the school site secure is greatly appreciated. If you are given access to any keys or keypad codes, you are asked to ensure these are not shared with anyone else, or used in any way beyond your visit.

* Attendance

If you find that you are not going to be able to come into school on a particular day, or may not be able to stay for the duration of a session as agreed, it is really helpful to know in advance, even if that’s only via a phone message on the morning in question.

* Dress code

Please ensure you are dressed appropriately for a professional work and school environment e.g. sensible footwear, and clothing which is not too revealing!

**References**

Occasionally, volunteers ask the school to provide a written reference when they are seeking employment. We stipulate a minimum qualifying period of three months attendance of regular volunteering (e.g. once a week) before we feel able to provide a work-based reference. We believe that this is fair to both prospective employers and candidates.

**Complaints Procedure**

Any complaints made about a volunteer will be referred to the Headteacher / Deputy Headteacher for investigation. Any complaints made by a volunteer will be referred to the Headteacher / Deputy Headteacher.

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. If the Volunteer wishes to complain about this decision the full Complaints Procedure is set out in the Complaints procedure published on the school’s website

**Monitoring and Review**

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 DfE or LA.

**Thank you!**

In case we forget to say so, please be assured that we really do appreciate your help (we may sometimes forget to say so because we are busy, but we do!!)

If you have any worries or queries, or any good ideas on how we can improve something, please let us know - we are always willing to listen.

Last reviewed: 1.9.20
Date of next review: on or before 1.9.21

**Appendix 1
School Volunteer Request Form**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Volunteer Name |  |
| Address |  |
| Telephone Contacts |  |
| Email Address |  |
| If a parent of a child/ren in the school, please give names and classes |  |
| Have you read the School Volunteer Policy?  |  |
| Do you have a current DBS Clearance for Isleham Primary School or a portable DBS Clearance document? (An original copy will need to be shown to Mrs Dunbavin/ Mrs Dennis in the office )OR Are you willing to complete an online DBS check? Please detail |  |
| Which area/s of the school would you prefer to support?  |  |
| Do you have any specific skills/strength that could be utilised? |  |
| Are there any activities that you cannot support? Please give details |  |
| Are there any activities that you cannot support? Please give details |  |
| When are you available to support in school? Please give days and times |  |

**Appendix 2
What does 'sharing books with children' mean?**

A few quick pointers to help you when you are asked to read or share a book with a child:

* The teacher will indicate whether you should read to the child or the child should read to you. If this is not clear, ask.
* If the child is reading to you, encourage them to point to the words themselves as they read so that you can see where they are!
* If the child appears ‘stuck’, tell them gently to use their phonics and ‘sound it out’ or encourage a sensible guess based on what has already been read or look at the illustrations for clues, and if all else fails, tell them the word. Quite often a lack of confidence will inhibit them from making an attempt and this is what we all try to build up when we hear children read- the idea that taking a risk, even if wrong, will teach us something.
* Encourage the child to predict what might happen next and discuss how they feel about the story and characters.
* Make the experience an enjoyable one- sharing your love of books with the child. This is a moment of quality time for you both.
* Please do not move the child onto another box from the reading scheme. If a child has done particularly well in their reading, please be sure to share this with the class teacher. Equally, please let the teacher know if any problems.
* Please follow any guidance you are given by the class teacher about recording what has been read in the child’s reading record book- you are likely to be asked to record the pages a child has read with you, and perhaps initial the book.

**Appendix 3
Guidance for Volunteers for School Trips**

These guidance notes have been written in conjunction with the school’s policy on off-site visits. If you have any questions about a school trip, please see the class teacher.

We do appreciate your help on school trips – it would be difficult to organise visits outside school without parent volunteers.

* Parents may not always have their own child in their group.
* The teacher will give parent helpers a list of children for whom they are responsible.
* All children are told that they must stay with their group and the group adult at all times.
* If the trip involves a coach journey, please help the children in your group put on their seatbelts. Children are not allowed to eat or drink on the coaches. The class teacher has sick bucket/bags, if needed.
* The class teacher is responsible for ALL first aid and medication.
* The class teacher sets and leads the rules, routines and expectations for the day.
* Please help the teacher by ensuring your group follows all instructions e.g. when to eat and drink.
* If there is a medical or other emergency, let the class teacher know immediately. The class teacher is responsible for contacting the school and associated parents in emergency situations.
* Mobile phones and electronic devices should not be used except in an emergency and with the knowledge and agreement of the group leader.
* If you need to leave your group for any reason, e.g. to take a child to the toilet, please inform another adult, and wherever possible, please ensure children and supervising adults are together rather than being isolated from the main group.
* Parent volunteers are asked to keep the same degree of confidentiality on visits as in school. If you have any queries or problems concerning the trip, please direct these in the first instance to the class teacher, or if you would rather, the Headteacher on return from the trip.

**Appendix 4
Volunteer in School Protocol**

Please read and sign the document below to confirm your agreement with the following school expectations as a volunteer:

As a school we agree to:

* Explain your tasks/jobs carefully so that you are clear about what we would like you to do with the children
* Share the school behaviour policy with you to help you understand how we manage behaviour
* Ensure that the children you work with behave and work well
* Treat you with the highest respect and care
* Share relevant information about the children you are working with, as needed
* Let you know in advance the overall plan for the day and let you know if this changes!
* Treat anything you tell us with confidentiality

We agree not to ask you to:

* Deal with difficult or challenging behaviour
* Carry out a task that you feel unprepared to complete
* Work on your own out of earshot with children

Volunteer Helper: …………………………………………………………………………………………… (Printed Name)

As a volunteer helper I agree to:

* Use the school behaviour policy and inform the teacher if I see any inappropriate behaviour
* Inform the Teacher/Designated Safeguarding Lead if I observe anything that concerns me in school & adhere to the school’s current Safeguarding Policy
* Treat any information with total confidentiality
* Inform the school if I am unable to come into school for any reason by 8.30am in the morning
* Respect and listen to the guidance of the Teacher at all times
* Complete the appropriate DBS safeguarding checks
* Disclose any criminal allegations to the Headteacher prior to starting as a volunteer helper

I agree not to:

* Look at or compare children’s work, records or staff records
* Share any information about a child or member of staff with anyone outside the school staff team

Signed:………………………………………………………………………..………………….. Date: ………………………………..

**Appendix 5**

**Safeguarding including the Prevent Duty**

Everyone has a duty to keep children safe. Children may disclose information or worries at any point during the school day. It is not unusual for children to disclose information to volunteers and visitors in school if they happen to be nearby when a child wants to talk, and anything could trigger this.

If a child says something that concerns you:

DON’T make promises of secrecy

DON’T ask questions of the child

DON’T appear shocked or terrified but instead remain calm and reassuring

DON’T delay in reporting the disclosure

DO listen closely and carefully to everything the child says

DO report it to one of the school’s designated officers for child protection immediately

DO complete a record of concern form as soon as possible noting the date, time and as close to the exact wording as you can of the child’s disclosure.

The school’s designated safeguarding leads (DSLs) are: Mrs Sarah Skillern (Headteacher) and Mrs

Dawn Deacon (Deputy Headteacher)

The records of concern form can be found in the school office, staff room and group room. These will be shown to you on your induction.

**The Prevent Duty**

School’s also have a duty to provide a form of safeguarding to recognise children at risk of, or who may be vulnerable to, potential radicalisation. While Isleham and Cambridgeshire remain a lower risk area for this type of radicalisation we need to remain mindful of this risk to children and be aware of signs that could warrant early intervention.

This very much follows the same procedures as above in school and should be reported in the same manner.

Signs could include:

* Expressing extreme views regarding people of other ethnicities, cultures or faiths.
* Unusual or unsafe online activity.
* Disclosures regarding family members views or behaviours towards other ethnic groups.
* Signs of isolation, fear or rejection of peer groups
* Recent political or religious conversion
* Conflict with family over political or religious views

**Volunteers are asked to read the school’s Safeguarding Policy which is updated annually in September each year.**