



# St John with St Michael

## VISITOR AND VOLUNTEERS POLICY

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## 1. Rationale and Aims

Forward As One CE MAT and its schools have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of our children. This includes a duty to take all reasonable steps to ensure that adults who come into the building or grounds are not a risk to the children or young people. Our schools are welcoming places and visitors enhance the provision of education. The schools are also fortunate to have parents and other volunteers who help in the classroom and with other activities.

Some of our visitors are local authority colleagues and visit routinely for fixed appointments. Many of our parent helpers and other volunteers are well known to the schools. Other volunteers come to us and we do not know them at all.

It is important to have a policy that includes measures to ensure the suitability of all volunteers and visitors. This is a streamlined procedure because it is not necessary to impose onerous requirements on our staff or our volunteers and visitors. However, we do need to recognise that visitors and volunteers are seen by children as safe and trustworthy adults and sensible precautions are needed.

Our aim is to operate a sensible and proportionate procedure to identify people who may be a risk to our children and to have a system in place that will deter people who might abuse children or are otherwise unsuited to work with them. We aim to strike the right balance between protecting our children/young people's safety and welfare and not being unnecessarily burdensome.

## 2. Objectives

The objectives of this policy are to:

- Maintain a safe environment for our children/young people
- Explain what volunteer checks are required and in what circumstances
- Give guidance on assessing any relevant information provided by checks
- Remind colleagues of the importance of existing security and safety procedures and practices.

## 3. Definitions

- Responsibilities

The headteacher in each of our schools has overall responsibility for the operation of this procedure.

## 4. Procedures and practice

### Becoming a Volunteer

Anyone wishing to become a volunteer, either for a one-off event such as a school visit, or on a more regular basis, e.g. hearing children read, should approach the School Admin Officer directly to discuss their availability and their skills.

### Volunteer Induction

All volunteers in school will receive induction from the Admin Officer or Member of the SLT, who manages volunteers in school and student placements in school. This and other related policies are shared, expectations and procedures are made clear and guidelines are given.

### Confidentiality

Volunteers in school are bound by a code of confidentiality. Any concerns that volunteers have about the children they work with/meet should be voiced with the Class Teacher and NOT with the parents of the child/persons outside school.

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 issues 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 or another member of the SLT.

### Supervision

All volunteers work under the supervision of the Class Teacher of the class to which they are assigned. Teachers always retain responsibility for children, 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.

## 5. Health and Safety

Forward As One CE MAT and its schools has a Health and Safety Policy, and this is made available on request to Volunteers working in the school. Induction will 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/companying children on visits). Volunteers need to exercise due care and attention and report any obvious hazards or concerns to the class Teacher/Head Teacher.

## 6. Safeguarding

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.
- Volunteers must have a current DBS that the school has requested. This includes checks to ensure that individuals are not disqualified under the 2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations and Childcare Act 2006.
- All Volunteers will apply to the school and the school will carry out the appropriate safeguarding checks including employment history and obtaining relevant references before a volunteer place is offered.
- Carry out a risk assessment when deciding whether to seek an enhanced DBS check without barred list information for any volunteers not engaging in regulated activity. We will retain a record of this risk assessment
- Where a volunteer is engaged in a 'one-off' activity e.g., helping supervise a group of children as part of a class visit, no formal checks are carried out on these volunteers. The Class Teacher will ensure that these volunteers are kept under constant supervision of school staff. Such Volunteers will be restricted to Parent Volunteers only.

## 7. DBS checks

In deciding whether to seek a DBS disclosure from a volunteer, we will take the following factors into consideration:

- The duration, frequency and nature of the volunteer's contact with children; and then
- What the school knows about the volunteer, including formal or informal information offered by staff, parents and other volunteers
- Whether the volunteer is well known to others in the community who are likely to be aware of behaviour that could give cause for concern
- Whether the volunteer has other employment, or undertakes voluntary activities where referees would advise on suitability
- Any other relevant information about the volunteer or the work they are likely to do.

The following people do not need to apply for a DBS disclosure or register with the VBS:

- Visitors who have business with the headteacher or other staff or who only have brief contact with children with a member of staff constantly present
- Visitors or contractors who come on site only to carry out emergency repairs or service equipment and who would not be expected to be left unsupervised on establishment's premises
- Volunteers or parents who only accompany staff and children on one-off outings or trips that do not involve overnight stays, or who only help at specific one-off events, for example a sports day or fete

- Secondary pupils aged under 16 on Key Stage 4 work experience in other schools; secondary pupils in another school as part of voluntary service, citizenship or vocational studies
- People who are on site before or after hours and where there is no opportunity for contact with children, for example local groups who hire premises for community or leisure activities, or cleaners who only come in after children have gone home or before they arrive.

A volunteer who has not obtained a CRB disclosure because they only have infrequent contact with children should **not** be left unsupervised with children.

### **Assessing DBS disclosures**

A volunteer's criminal record does not automatically make that person unsuitable for work with children. Schools must make a judgment about the volunteer's suitability, taking into account only those offences that may be relevant to the particular role or situation in question. In deciding the relevance of convictions, a number of points should be considered:

- the nature of the offence: in general, convictions for sexual, violent or drug offences are particularly strong contra-indications for work with children
- the nature of the volunteer's role: serious sexual, violent, drug or drink offences would be a particular concern for a role involving close contact with children
- the age of the offence: offences from many years ago have less relevance than recent offences but convictions for offences such as serious violent or sexual offences are more concerning than, for instance, an isolated case of dishonesty when the person was young – rehabilitation must be weighed against the need to protect children
- the frequency of the offence: a series of offences over a period of time is more likely to give cause for concern than an isolated minor conviction.

Please refer to the following sections for further guidance on certain visitors and volunteers.

### **Supply staff**

The same range of checks required for permanent employees are also required for supply staff, including those employed via employment agencies. Before taking on a supply teacher provided by an employment agency, the school requires written confirmation from the agency that the supply staff has the qualifications required for the post.

The school also requires agencies to provide confirmation that all the checks required have been satisfactorily completed. If a DBS disclosure is pending, this must be notified to the school together with the date the disclosure was sought and subsequent confirmation of clearance. If the disclosure raises concerns the individual will be withdrawn pending further inquiries.

In any case, where the school engages supply staff directly, it is the school's responsibility to complete all relevant checks, including confirmation of ISA registration, as for other employed staff.

### **Student teachers**

When a student on initial teacher training comes into school, the training provider should provide details of the enhanced DBS disclosure. This check should ideally be completed before the trainee starts. If this is not possible, the school can allow the trainee to begin making sure that the trainee is appropriately supervised.

### **Professional staff**

Psychologists, nurses, dentists, centrally employed teachers and other local authority staff will have been checked by their employing organisation. The school just needs confirmation that checks have been carried out and take a note of this on the SCR.

### **Visiting speakers**

The school does not require a visitor to obtain a DBS disclosure or to register with the VBS if they will only have contact with children on an ad hoc or irregular basis for short periods of time. Visitors such as police officers, sporting or other celebrities, authors and musicians who go into different schools/providers to work with different children or young people are not required to be checked unless their contact with the same children is frequent or intensive as defined earlier in this policy. It is likely that these visitors see any child/young person only once or very occasionally and will be with children in groups rather than alone. They are unlikely to have any opportunities to build up a relationship of trust that could be abused.

### **Exam invigilators**

Exam invigilators are required to have an enhanced DBS disclosure. This is because an invigilator could be away from the school for an extended period and a DBS enhanced disclosure is required to ensure that their criminal record and suitability to work with children have not altered in the time that they have been away from the school.

### **Governors and the clerk to the governing body**

We require our school governors and the clerk to the governing body to obtain an enhanced DBS disclosure.

### **Contractors**

Workers who come on to the premises to carry out emergency repairs do not require DBS or ISA checking. But if the school/provider engages contracted building work it is very important to ensure in the contractual arrangements that the contractor confirms their staff are appropriately checked. The contractor should also ensure that the same procedures are followed by any sub-contractors and provide a list of its direct employees and those of any sub-contractors before they start work on site.

The school must have a sensible but secure system in place for identity checks to confirm that the individual arriving is the individual confirmed by the contractor. This should be in line with the visitor control systems (see below).

### **Educational trips**

In addition to checking adult volunteers in line with this policy it is important that they are properly briefed beforehand and clearly directed during the visit.

Adult volunteers should be given clear information by the group leader about their role and responsibilities on an educational visit. We expect them to do their best to ensure the health and safety of everyone in the group. They follow the instructions of the group leader and help with discipline and control. Adult volunteers should not be in sole charge of pupils unless this has been previously agreed and for the protection of both adults and children all adult supervisors should ensure that they are not alone with a child/young person unless it is unavoidable.

## **8. Visitor controls**

Notwithstanding the volunteer and visitor checks the school should operate a visitor control system. This is a simple procedure which incorporates knowing who is on the school grounds or within the school and having some control over them. The underlying operational principles are to:

- provide a waiting area for visitors until they can be attended to
- identify legitimate visitors, monitor their arrival, movement around the school and departure time
- make all visitors sign in and give the reason for their visit
- give all visitors a name badge or name tag to wear on school premises. These should be used only once and are not transferable. We tell our children that they should not approach any stranger not wearing a badge. They are told to report all strangers or intruders to a member of staff immediately
- ensure that no visitor is given unrestricted access to the school.

## **9. Complaint's procedure**

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

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

- To speak with a volunteer about a breach of the Volunteer Code 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.

### **Code of Conduct**

All Volunteers will be asked to read and sign to say that they understand and will abide by the Code of Conduct.

## **10. List of other policies**

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Safeguarding.
- Safer Recruitment.
- Security.
- Radicalisation and Extremism;
- Anti-Bullying;
- Behaviour and Exclusion;
- Health and Safety;
- Anti-Harassment & Discrimination;
- Code of Conduct setting out standards and acceptable behaviour for staff;
- E-Safety and ICT acceptable use;
- Managing allegations of abuse against staff;
- Equalities;
- Admission;
- Whistleblowing.