



ST. MARY'S
ACADEMY TRUST

St. Mary's Academy Trust

VOLUNTEER POLICY

Date agreed by HR Committee: May 2020

Date to be reviewed: May 2022

1. Introduction

Our schools benefit from well organised, active voluntary links. Contribution given from volunteers in the activities of our schools provides valuable support in the education of our pupils. St Mary's Academy Trust takes the view that volunteers are an appreciated resource for supporting pupil's achievements by strengthening the activities developed by teaching staff in providing the curriculum to all pupils. Volunteers provide a variety of capabilities and experience which can enrich the learning opportunities of all pupils at our schools without encroaching on the professional teaching responsibilities of teaching staff. St Mary's Academy Trust therefore, welcomes and encourages volunteers.

Volunteers may include:

- Parents of pupils
- Students on work experience
- Ex-members of staff (where appropriate)
- Local residents

The recruitment of volunteers can take up to 4 weeks and the intake of new volunteers is dependent on the candidate and availability in our schools. The smooth functioning of our schools alongside the safety of our pupils will always be of significance. Senior Management reserves the right to decline volunteers and also end placements.

The types of activities that volunteers can participate in include:

- Volunteer Role: Accompanying school trips
- Volunteer Role: Reading with pupils
- Volunteer Role: Golden Learning
- Volunteer Role: After school clubs

2. Our Aims

All individuals who work in our schools, whether a paid member of staff, or a volunteer are expected to work and act in such a way as to promote our vision as follows,

'St Mary's Academy Trust is a family of schools founded upon our key values, delivering educational excellence in order that each child thrives within our safe and nurturing environment'

Our values are as recognised below:

'children first; lead bravely; own it; straight talking; community'.

3. Becoming a Volunteer

Individuals wanting to become a volunteer, either for a one-off event such as a school trip or on a more regular basis, for example, listening to pupils read, should visit St Mary's Academy Trust online to acquire a copy of their Volunteer Application Form. A completed Volunteer Application Form should be given to the Headteacher of the school they wish to volunteer at. It is then the school's decision to take on volunteers and this is dependent on the time of year, the number of volunteers they already have and the possible impact on the pupils.

4. Child Protection and Safeguarding

Safeguarding is our priority at St Mary's Academy Trust, therefore we follow secure recruitment guidelines to guarantee we are committed to safeguarding pupils, and expect volunteers to share the same commitment. The process of the recruitment of volunteers reflects the process for paid employees to guarantee the most appropriate individuals for our schools.

To guarantee the safety of our pupils, we must follow the following procedures:

- All volunteers acquire a copy of the "Volunteer Policy" and are to sign the "Volunteer Agreement" (see attached);
- All volunteers will receive an I.D badge and sign in at reception when entering the building;
- All volunteers will sign out at reception when leaving the building;
- All volunteers volunteering on a frequent or intensive basis must have been cleared by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS);
- Volunteers must read the guidelines of their voluntary role.
- Staff made aware who the volunteer is and the boundaries of their role.
- It is suggested volunteers are easily recognizable for example by a different coloured lanyard.

5. Online Safety

Online safety, concerns the teaching and learning of technology, in a responsible and safe environment, aiming to raise awareness of the core messages of safe content, contact and conduct. This involves accessing websites and online content, email, accounts, online chat rooms, mobile phones, gaming and games consoles, social networking sites, instant messaging, viruses and spam.

Volunteers are expected to abide by the Online Safety Policy and our Acceptable Use Policy at all times.

6. Frequent Volunteers

Activity which is described as 'frequent' and 'intensive' covers the meaning given in the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006.

- Frequent activity can be defined as, once a week or more often on an ongoing basis.
- Intensive activity can be defined as, three or more occasions in a 30-day period.

A volunteer taking part in a 'one-off' activity such as a school trip, could be required to have a DBS check. Headteachers should undertake a risk assessment and use their professional judgement and experience to decide if the volunteer requires a DBS check. Volunteers which aren't required to have a DBS check will be under the constant supervision of paid staff, and must read and sign a 'one-off' activity agreement (see attached).

7. The Process of Recruiting 'Frequent' or 'Intensive' Working Volunteers

1. Anyone interested in volunteering should be directed online to read a copy of the Volunteer policy. If they wish to apply as a volunteer, they are required to complete the volunteer's application form and return it to the Headteacher.
2. A reference should be requested.
3. The applicant will attend an informal meeting with the Headteacher to ensure the applicant is appropriate.
4. A DBS check is completed.
5. The applicant is informed of their role and responsibilities they will be undertaking.
6. The applicant receives an induction in accordance with the induction policy and checklist.
7. The applicant signs the appropriate "Volunteer agreement".
8. If successful, the volunteer should complete the Equality Monitoring form and return it to H.R.

8. 'One-Off' Activity Volunteering

Volunteers participating in 'one-off' activities will be briefed on the risk assessment, daily schedule and any other important pieces of information and who to report to. A staff member must be identified who has the ultimate responsibility for the pupils. Pupils should never be left with a volunteer unsupervised.

9. Confidentiality

Volunteers in schools must abide by a conduct of confidentiality. Any concerns that volunteers have regarding a pupil should be spoken about with the designated supervisor and not with the parent of the pupil. Volunteers who have concerns about anything in the school they are volunteering that might impact their work should raise the concern with the Headteacher. Any information obtained should remain confidential.

10. Supervisor's Responsibilities

All volunteers will work under the supervision of a teacher or a member of staff at all times. Teachers retain the ultimate responsibility for pupils at all times.

Teachers or a member of staff will:

- Possess a timetable of when volunteers are due to attend;
- Organise activities for volunteering including learning outcomes;
- Clarify with the volunteer the activities and expected outcomes;
- Directly supervise volunteers;
- Not leave volunteers unattended with pupils.

11. Volunteer's Responsibilities

Volunteers will:

- Inform their designated supervisor in advance when they will be volunteering;
- Contact the school's office via telephone or email if they are unable to volunteer as planned;
- Avoid inappropriate physical contact with a pupil;
- Speak to their designated supervisor if they are concerned about a pupil's behaviour, welfare or understanding of a task;
- Update their designated supervisor at the end of the session;
- Keep information about pupils or staff, confidential.

12. Health and Safety

Our Health and Safety Policy is available to volunteers working within our schools. The designated supervisor will ensure the volunteer is clear about emergency procedures and about any safety aspects for example, using equipment. Volunteer's need to exercise due care and attention and report any hazards to their designated supervisor. In the event of a fire alarm, lead the children to the designated assembly point.

13. Pandemic's

In the event of a pandemic, e.g. COVID-19, volunteer's duties will come to a halt to prevent the spread of such disease and protect the health and safety of all those in schools.

14. Insurance

Volunteers are covered by Public Liability Insurance.

15. Expenses

St Mary's Academy Trust can opt to pay reasonable expenses to volunteers; these must only be out of pocket expenses such as travel for which receipts must be provided.

16. Monitoring and Review

This policy has been approved by the H.R Committee and will be reviewed every 2 years.

17. Data Impact Assessment

At all stages of this procedure data obtained will be used only for the purpose for which it is intended and will be stored securely with restricted access to those involved in the process. Following the process data will be stored on the electronic personal file for the duration of the employees' employment with the Trust and for 6 years thereafter. The data will be destroyed at this time using a confidential shredding service.

18. Equality Impact Assessment

This policy has been impacted assessed by the HR Committee, if on reading this policy you feel there are any equality and diversity issues, please contact HR who will if necessary ensure the policy is reviewed.