



George Mitchell School

Volunteer policy

November 2024

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1. Introduction and aims

We believe that volunteers provide a valuable contribution to the school's work, and that they enrich the school through the breadth of their knowledge and experience.

We are committed to using volunteers in a way that supports the school's strategic aims and vision, as well as its School development plan.

The aim of the volunteer policy is to:

- Encourage the wider community to engage with the school, thereby enhancing the curriculum, raising achievement and promoting community cohesion
- Ensure that volunteers support the school's vision and values, and adhere to our policies
- Provide staff, volunteers and parents with clear expectations and guidelines
- Set a clear, fair process for recruiting and managing volunteers

This policy has been developed in line with the statutory safeguarding guidance [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(KCSIE\)](#) from the Department for Education (DfE).

2. How we use volunteers

The distinction between volunteers and visitors.

Visitors are classified as a person or people 'volunteering' at your school on a one-off basis

Volunteers are classified as a person or people who works for the school without being paid for a protracted period.

At George Mitchell School volunteers may:

- Hear children read
- Accompany school visits
- Work with individual children
- Work with small groups of children
- Support specific curriculum areas, such as ICT or art

This isn't an exhaustive list.

Volunteers may be:

- Members of the governing board
- Parents
- Former pupils
- Students on work experience
- Local residents
- Friends of the school/members of the PTA

This is not an exhaustive list.

Members of the governing board working at the school in their capacity as governors (for instance, conducting school monitoring visits or attending meetings), are not covered by this policy. They are covered by our governor code of conduct.

3. How to apply to volunteer

If interested in being a volunteer at the school, you should:

- Email the school's HR adviser, stating the phase that you want to volunteer at and what you want like to do e.g. read to children.
- You will be asked by the school's HR lead to complete an application form (see appendix 1)

4. Appointment of volunteers

Volunteers are appointed by either the Head of School (primary phase) for primary volunteers or the Executive head teacher for secondary volunteers.

Appointment and induction of new volunteers can take up to 6 weeks, and is dependent on the candidate and available spaces within the school.

All appointments are conditional upon the completion of an enhanced DBS check (if appropriate) and other appropriate safeguarding and recruitment checks, and relevant training.

The Head of School (primary phase) or the Executive headteacher reserves the right to terminate a placement at any time.

Enhanced DBS checks for volunteers working in the school through other organisations will be conducted by the relevant organisation, if needed. The school will ask for written confirmation that enhanced DBS checks have been carried out before a volunteer is allowed to start work at the school.

5. Safeguarding

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

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

- Conduct enhanced DBS checks with a barred list check on volunteers who:
 - Work 1-on-1 with pupils unsupervised
 - Work with groups of pupils unsupervised
 - Supervise or accompany groups of pupils on overnight residential visits
- 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
- Provide safeguarding training to all volunteers **on their first day**, including ensuring that they have read and understood part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education. Volunteers have to agree and adhere to our code of conduct (see appendix 2) and to read, and adhere to, the school's policies on:
 - Safeguarding
 - Staff handbook
 - Staff code of conduct
 - Behaviour policies
- Ensure that volunteers without an enhanced DBS check are always supervised, and are never left alone with pupils
- Conduct a risk assessment to determine whether a volunteer who isn't working in regulated activity needs an enhanced DBS check. The risk assessment will consider:

- The nature of the work they will be doing
- What we know about them
- References from employers or other voluntary roles
- Whether the role is eligible for an enhanced DBS check

We legally cannot carry out a DBS check on a child under the age of 16 who is volunteering at our school. We will ensure that children who are volunteering are always under an appropriate level of supervision, and conduct a risk assessment to consider any potential safeguarding issues.

- › The school will accept DBS certificates from another organisation? For instance, a football coach with a DBS through the Football Association? If you accept these, are there guidelines on how old a certificate may be?
- › How will you add details of volunteers to the single central record (SCR)?

6. Induction and training

Volunteers must complete appropriate training prior to beginning work at the school.

Training requirements will be determined by the Head of School (primary lead) or Executive headteacher, or the appropriate member of staff.

All volunteers must have safeguarding training. Other training requirements will be based on the nature of the work the volunteer will be doing.

Induction training will include – safeguarding, health and safety, policy overviews

7. 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 organisation.

If volunteers have concerns, they should raise these with the appropriate member of staff. They shouldn't discuss them with pupils or parents.

This doesn't 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 policy, and inform the designated safeguarding lead (DSL).

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

8. Conduct of volunteers

Volunteers must comply with the staff code of conduct/the code of conduct set out in the staff handbook.

9. Expenses

You're not obligated to cover any expenses for materials used with children. These will be covered by the school. You will be obliged to cover your own expenses to and from work.

10. 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.

11. Data protection and record keeping

We collect information about volunteers.

We will:

- Retain records relating to volunteers in line with our records retention schedule
- Remove details of volunteers from the single central record (SCR) once they no longer work at our school

12. Monitoring and review

This policy has been approved by the governing board and will be reviewed regularly.

There's no required review cycle for volunteer policies. However, we will review the policy every 3 years.

13. Links to other policies

This volunteering policy is linked to our:

- Safeguarding policy and procedures
- Staff conduct

Appendix 1: volunteer application form

Complete the application 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'll only use this data in line with data protection legislation and process your data for 1 or more of the following reasons permitted in law:

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

PERSONAL DETAILS

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

DISCLOSURE AND BARRING SERVICE (DBS) INFORMATION

George Mitchells 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's 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 working in regulated activity 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 George Mitchell School privacy notice.

Do you have a DBS check? (please circle)	Yes/No
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DISCLOSURE AND BARRING SERVICE (DBS) INFORMATION

If yes, what type of check do you have? (please circle)	Basic DBS / Standard DBS / Enhanced DBS / 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 1 term?					

EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS

Do you have experience working as a volunteer, especially with children? If yes, please include details in the box below.

EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS

Why would you like to volunteer at George Mitchell School?

Do you have any particular skills, employment experience or hobbies you would like to share with the school? (For example, languages spoken, sports, scouting, etc.)

Do you have any relevant qualifications?

PREFERENCES

What age group/department would you prefer to work with?

Would you prefer to work 1-on-1 or with a small group?

REFERENCES

Your placement as a volunteer may be subject to satisfactory references. Please give the details of 2 referees who can comment on your suitability (e.g. 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

George Mitchell 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: volunteers agreement

By signing this form, volunteers agree that you have received the following and will adhere to the procedures and guidelines, as set out in the policies and procedures:

1. School rules and policies

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

1.1.1. Safeguarding

1.1.2. Staff handbook including staff code of conduct

1.1.3. Data protection

1.1.4. Whistle-blowing

1.1.5. Behaviour policies

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

2. Confidentiality

2.1. Information about pupils, parents and staff at the school is confidential, and should not be shared with anyone else. Volunteers shouldn't discuss pupils 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

Volunteer name (please print)

X

Volunteer signature

X

Date