

Visitor and volunteer policy and good practice guide

Date: reviewed regularly; see date in document label for most recent update

Introduction

In addition to adults employed by Sphere Federation, there are often adults and young people who spend some time at our schools. Visitors and volunteers have an important role to play in bringing a range of skills and experience that enhance and promote learning opportunities.

Safeguarding

Sphere Federation is committed to the safeguarding of pupils and everyone who works here. We expect visitors and volunteers to share this commitment and follow policies and procedures in relation to this. The Safeguarding checklist (Appendix 1) and Visitors to School Flowchart (Appendix 2) gives further guidance on DBS checks for visitors and volunteers in school. This policy should be read in conjunction with other related federation policies: including Safeguarding and Child Protection; Positive Relationships, Guidance for Safer Working Practice, and various Health and Safety policies.

For safeguarding reasons, volunteers and visitors (including parents/carers and regardless of the nature of activity) must have prior agreement before entering school.

Volunteers and visitors

Visitors include:

- supply teachers
- NHS staff
- agencies running specific events
- local authority representatives
- catering staff
- building and maintenance companies

The types of activities that visitors engage in include working with whole classes, small groups or with individual pupils (eg supply teacher, school nurse, speech and language therapists, theatre companies, music teachers, sports coaches), and leading after-school clubs.

Volunteers include:

- members of the Governing Board
- parents of pupils
- students on work experience
- university students
- local residents
- friends and supporters of the school

The types of activities that volunteers engage in include listening to pupils read, working with small groups of pupils to assist them in their learning, working alongside individual pupils as an additional tutor, and assisting with extra-curricular activities

Volunteers

Anyone wishing to become a volunteer at one of our schools should complete a Volunteer Application Form (Appendix 3) and the Volunteer Agreement (Appendix 4) which sets out our expectations of volunteers and confirms that they have received a copy of this Visitor and Volunteer policy and good practice guide.

If the volunteer will be in school on a frequent or regular basis (three or more days in any 30-day period), we take the following safeguarding actions before the volunteer starts working:

- undertake DBS Enhanced Disclosure
- check children's barred list
- request and check references are checked

If successful, an induction takes place (not required where a volunteer participates in a one-off activity):

- the volunteer is made aware of their role and responsibilities
- relevant school policies and documentation are explained and issued; these include those relating to safeguarding
- an appropriate member of staff ensures that volunteers are clear about emergency procedure (eg fire alarm evacuation) and about any safety aspects associated with particular tasks (eg using equipment or accompanying pupils on visits)

Volunteer records are kept centrally within the school.

Visitors

Schools receive a range of visitors, including professionals such as educational psychologists, social workers, and other education-related practitioners, as well as educational visitors like guest speakers or performers. The following applies to visitors such as these, and not visitors such as children's relatives or other visitors attending a school event.

Before a visitor is invited to the school, there must be a discussion with the Head of School to make sure that any safeguarding issues can be addressed and to make sure the content of the visit is appropriate and fit for purpose. The following guidance is in place to support arrangements:

- the year group(s) involved
- date and time
- name of visitor and company
- reason for visit
- what is the purpose and proposed activity
- whether parents need to be consulted
- informing the visitor of restricted parking
- whether any equipment is needed
- clarification on whether DBS or risk assessment is needed
- whether there are any costs involved

Permission must be granted by the Head of School before a visitor is arranged. The following must be adhered to:

- formal visitors representing the LA, businesses, contractors, outside agencies etc are required to present formal photographic identification
- all visitors must enter the school building through the main gate and report to the office to sign in
- all visitors must state the purpose of their visit and who has invited them or who they wish to see
- all visitors must wear a visitor lanyard
- all visitors are directed to the information on their visitor badge

On departing, visitors leave via the office, recording their departure time and returning the visitor lanyard.

Upholding the school ethos

We want Sphere Federation schools to be happy and healthy places to learn (St James' CE Primary: ...to achieve and believe). All adults and young people in Sphere Federation, including visitors or volunteers, are expected to behave in such a way as to promote our aims and educational purpose. The following points should be adhered to:

- your help will bring you into close contact with staff and pupils; much of what you see in school is confidential and should remain so
- all adults in school should behave as role models for our pupils
- you are not expected to make judgments about pupils' abilities or behaviour; any personal views you may have about a pupil's ability should not be disclosed to anybody except a member of the school's teaching staff
- do everything possible to avoid any physical contact with pupils
- you should not get drawn into inappropriate topics of conversations with pupils; if a pupil begins to talk to you about matters which concern or disturb you, please talk to a member of staff, or the Head of School
- all personal belongings (bags, valuables and medications) must be kept with you at all times or locked away securely (a member of staff will help you with this)
- mobile phones, personal cameras and recording devices must be locked away, out of the reach of children during school hours, and must never be used to take photographs of pupils, whether in school or out on a school trip or other event
- if you are in doubt about anything, always ask the advice of a member of staff or the Head of School

Many of the above standards are there not only for the protection of our children, but also for your own; a breach of any of the standards set out above might lead to a visitor or volunteer being removed and considered an unsuitable candidate for further involvement.

For visitors and volunteers whose children are pupils at the school, it is important to behave impartially when working with children. Although it may be tempting, please do not seek to use your time in school as an opportunity to discuss personal issues such as your child's educational progress (this can be distracting for teachers during school time).

Supervision

Visitors and volunteers work under the supervision of a teacher or other member of staff. Staff retain ultimate responsibility for pupils at all times, including pupils' behaviour and the activity that they are undertaking. Visitors and volunteers should have clear guidance from the designated supervisor as to how an activity is carried out and the expected outcome of the activity. In the event of any query or problem regarding the pupil's understanding of the task, their behaviour or welfare, visitors and volunteers must seek guidance from their designated supervisor.

Health and safety

Visitors and volunteers need to exercise due care and attention and communicate any obvious hazards or concerns to their designated supervisor or other senior member of staff. Visitors and volunteers are covered by the school's Indemnity and Public Liability Insurance.

Concerns and complaints

Any complaints made about a visitor or volunteer will be referred to the Head of School or delegated to a senior member of staff for investigation. Any complaints made by a visitor or volunteer will be dealt with in the same way. The Head of School or designated member of staff reserves the right to take the following action:

- speak with the visitor or volunteer about the incident, and in the case of volunteers the breach of the Volunteer Agreement, and seek reassurance that this will not happen again
- offer an alternative placement for the visitor or volunteer (eg helping with a different activity or in another class)
- end the relationship and therefore no longer agree for the individual to be in school

At Sphere Federation, we value the diversity of individuals within our school and do not discriminate: no member of the school community should experience harassment, less favourable treatment or discrimination. We respect protected characteristics. Any concerns should be reported to the Head of School or Head of Federation.

Visitors and volunteers are provided with Sphere Federation's Complaints Policy and Procedures if requested.

Finally...

We hope that you find this guidance helpful and that you will keep it in mind throughout your time in school. We are confident that you will enjoy the experience of working as a volunteer, satisfied in the knowledge that you are making a positive contribution.