



St Mark's CE School

Volunteer Policy

Policy Statement and Guidelines

Policy Date: Spring 2025

Review Date: Spring 2028

At St Mark's we recognise that there can be situations in which volunteers can make an appropriate and significant contribution to the work and services of the school. The policy defines the term and sets out the principles, practices and procedures which will be followed in the appointment, management and supervision of volunteers. The contribution of volunteers to the work of the school is especially valued and respected. St Mark's believe that by providing opportunities for volunteers to work alongside complex needs children, the volunteer will gain a range of skills and work experience. They will develop confidence and motivation to try different things and benefit the community they serve. This policy sets out how St Mark's intends to support its volunteers.

Our volunteers include:

- Members of the Governing Body
- Members of the PTA
- University, College and sixth form students
- Ex members of staff
- Members of the local community

The types of activities that volunteers are engaged in might include:

- Hearing children read
- Working with small groups of children
- Working with individual children
- Undertaking arts and crafts activities with children
- Supporting St Mark's staff to run after school clubs
- Working with children on the computer
- Accompanying school visits
- Cooking club/DT/Cooking

Becoming a volunteer

Anyone wishing to become a volunteer, either for a one off event or on a more regular basis should read the information on the school website and complete the online volunteering application form or Governor application form as appropriate. If successful, applicants will be invited to school for an interview. Before starting in school and to ensure the safety of our pupils at all times, volunteers who engage in regulated activity (i.e. teaching, supervising, personal care, health care etc.) with children frequently or overnight will be required to complete a DBS application (Disclosure and Barring Service). This will be arranged with our Director of Operations. The check takes approximately two weeks to process. Induction packs will be issued to all volunteers and confirmation of a starting date will be confirmed in advance of the placement or activity. Volunteers who are involved in a one off event will not be required to complete a DBS check (see staff handbook). Students on their University placements are covered by the DBS check provided by their university.

Confidentiality

St Mark's has a Confidentiality policy and a Data Protection policy. All volunteers will be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement and follow its principles. All volunteers will also be asked to agree to and sign the data protection contract clauses for schools and abide by the Data Protection policy. Volunteers may have access to personal information about some individuals, or other information which may be confidential. St Mark's needs to be able to trust its volunteers with such information. Volunteers who break this confidentiality will be asked to leave. Any volunteer who has acted in a way that breaches the Data Protection policy may make themselves liable for prosecution. Any concerns that volunteers have about the children they work with/come into contact with should be shared with the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher and not with any persons outside school.

Induction

All volunteers will have a full induction before they begin to work with the children. They will go through the induction pack with a School Leader to ensure that they fully understand the policies and procedures that they will be expected to work to. This will include Safeguarding, Health and Safety, Behaviour policy, GDPR policy, Internet use code of conduct, Equal Opportunities policy, what to do in case of absence, Complaints Procedure Volunteer Policy and the Volunteer code of conduct as well as who to go to for advice and guidance when working with our children. All volunteers will be asked to sign to say that they have read and understood the policies and the terms of their volunteering.

Students on placements, be that as part of their training or on a volunteer basis will also undergo a full induction. This will include Safeguarding, Health and Safety, Behaviour policy, Marking and Feedback policy, Teaching and Learning policy, GDPR policy, Internet use code of conduct, Equal Opportunities policy, what to do in case of absence, Complaints Procedure and staff code of conduct. All students will be asked to sign to say that they have read and understood the policies and the terms of their placement whilst at St. Mark's.

A full risk assessment will be carried out as part of the induction

process. **Safeguarding**

All volunteers have the responsibility to report any concern that they may have regarding Child Protection to the Executive Headteacher. It is not the role of the volunteer to investigate concerns. St Mark's Safeguarding policy explains the guidelines and procedures to follow regarding any suspicions. A copy of this policy is available on request.

Issues affecting adults in school

All adults in our school can expect their personal and health issues to remain confidential unless:

- It impinges on their terms of contract

- It endangers pupils or other members of staff
- There is a legal obligation to disclose such information
- It is necessary for legal proceedings
- Despite the duty of confidence the staff member's interest or the wider public interest justifies disclosure.

Volunteers who are concerned about anything another adult in the school does or says should raise the matter with the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher.

Supervision

All volunteers work under the supervision of the class or subject teacher to which they are assigned. Although teachers retain responsibility for children at all times, this does not require volunteers to be in their direct supervision at all times. Volunteers should feel confident to carry out the task they have been assigned and should seek further advice/guidance from the teacher in the event of a query or problem regarding a child's behaviour or understanding of a task.

Health and Safety

The school has a health and safety policy which is available on request. The volunteer coordinator should ensure that individuals are clear about emergency procedures (e.g. fire evacuation) and about any safety aspects associated with a particular task (e.g. using cookery equipment). If a volunteer attends a school trip, their emergency contact details will be requested. Volunteers need to exercise due care and attention and report any obvious hazards or concerns to their assigned teacher or a member of SLT.

Equal Opportunities

St Mark's recognises that the activity of volunteering can provide an individual with experience and opportunities for self and career development. In accordance with the school's Equal Opportunities policy, volunteer placements will therefore be open to individuals irrespective of race, gender, disability, sexuality, age or marital status. Where a prospective volunteer demonstrates hostility to, or a clear lack of support for equal opportunities, she/he will be deemed automatically unsuitable for a volunteer position. All volunteers are required to make a commitment to this policy. A copy can be given on request.

Internet use Code of Conduct

This code exists to safeguard and promote the proper use of the schools internet and email facilities. Volunteers are responsible for using these facilities in an efficient, effective, ethical and lawful manner. Use of the internet and emails may be monitored at any time for legitimate business reasons.

Absence

Volunteers are expected to telephone and inform school, prior to their start time, so appropriate arrangements can be made if any cover is required.

Working Hours

The hours of volunteer work will be discussed and mutually agreed between the volunteer and the school. The volunteer must be committed and adhere to the voluntary placement and allocated working hours. Please remember to sign in and out. Upon signing in you will be issued with a visitors badge which you should wear at all times whilst on the school site. Fire evacuation procedures can be found in the induction pack and a map indicating the safe route of exit in the event of a fire alarm can be found in each classroom; please make yourself familiar with these.

- There is no smoking allowed anywhere on the school site
- Do not use your mobile phones whilst in the vicinity of children
- Do not under any circumstances take photographs in school unless agreed with the Executive Headteacher.

We value having volunteers helping in our school and we want you to feel successful and valued. Please never hesitate to ask if you are not sure about something – or for advice if you feel something you are doing is not working well. We'll do whatever we can to ensure your time with us is rewarding.

Volunteer Code of Conduct

As St Mark's volunteers, everyone is expected to conform to high standards of behaviour and conduct whilst carrying out their duties.

St Mark's school expects that volunteers will:

- Respect other volunteers, students, staff and children and make them feel welcomed and valued
- Be sensitive towards others
- Be approachable and pleasant
- Dress and behave in a manner which promotes healthy and safe working practices
- Maintain the confidentiality of personal information at all times

All volunteers should be aware how their behaviour can affect both colleagues and children. Everyone has the responsibility to avoid becoming involved in situations that could bring the school into disrepute.

Complaints Procedure

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

This policy will be reviewed annually or in light of new guidance from either the DfE or the LA.

Evaluation

To be monitored by the leadership team under careful scrutiny of the Executive Headteacher. The policy will be supported by the confidentiality statement, the data protection contract clauses for schools, the standards and expectations form and the volunteer/work placement evaluation and feedback form.

Signed.....
..... Date.....