Fairlawn Primary School Volunteer Policy

1.1 Purpose

This policy sets out the procedures and expectations for volunteers working at Fairlawn Primary School. It applies to all adults who work in the school but are not employed by the school, including:

- Parents and carers
- Students on work experience
- Trainee teachers
- Extra-curricular activity leaders
- Community volunteers
- Researchers
- Other visitors who work directly with children

1.2 Our Commitment

Fairlawn Primary School values and welcomes the contribution of volunteers in supporting our children and enhancing their educational experience. We are committed to ensuring that all volunteers can contribute safely and effectively, and that robust safeguarding procedures are in place to protect our children.

2. Safeguarding and Child Protection

2.1 Our Safeguarding Responsibility

The safety and welfare of our pupils is our paramount concern. All volunteers must:

- Understand and comply with the school's safeguarding and child protection policy
- Read and understand Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)
- Complete safeguarding induction training before starting their volunteer role
- Know who the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and deputy DSLs are
- Report any safeguarding concerns immediately to the DSL

2.2 If a Child Discloses Information

If a child tells you something that concerns you, you must:

- **Listen** carefully without interrupting
- **Reassure** the child they have done the right thing in telling you
- **Never promise** to keep a secret
- **Not question** the child or investigate further
- **Report** the information to the DSL immediately
- **Record** what the child said using their exact words as soon as possible

3. Recruitment and Vetting Procedures

3.1 Application Process

All prospective volunteers must:

1. Complete a **volunteer application form** including:
    - Personal details and contact information
    - Details of the volunteer role they wish to undertake
    - Names and contact details of two referees if applicable
    - Self-declaration of any criminal convictions or cautions
2. Attend an **informal meeting** with a member of the senior leadership team to discuss:
    - Their motivation for volunteering
    - The volunteer role and expectations
    - Safeguarding responsibilities
    - Appropriate boundaries with children
    - Complete forms
3. Provide **proof of identity** (passport, driving licence, or birth certificate plus utility bill)
4. Provide **references** - we will contact at least two referees before a volunteer placement begins

3.2 DBS Checks

Enhanced DBS checks with barred list checks are required for volunteers who:

- Work unsupervised with children
- Have one-to-one contact with children
- Volunteer regularly (once a week or more frequently)
- Accompany children on overnight trips
- Provide personal care to children

DBS checks are not required for volunteers who:

- Are always supervised by a member of staff
- Volunteer occasionally (less than once a week)
- Do not have direct contact with children

The Headteacher and DSL will conduct a **risk assessment** for each volunteer role to determine the appropriate level of checks and supervision required.

3.3 Supervision Requirements

Volunteers, who do not have an enhanced DBS check, must be **supervised at all times**. Supervision means:

- A member of staff who has received appropriate safeguarding training is present and can see and hear the volunteer's interactions with children
- The volunteer is never left alone with a child or group of children
- The volunteer does not have one-to-one contact with children
- The supervising staff member remains responsible for the children at all time

3.4 Disqualification by Association

Volunteers who work in early years settings (Reception) or with children under 8 in before/after school care may be subject to disqualification by association rules. These volunteers must:

- Complete a **self-declaration form** regarding any cautions, convictions or disqualification orders
- Declare if anyone in their household has relevant cautions, convictions or disqualification orders

The school will determine if a disqualification waiver is needed from Ofsted.

3.5 Single Central Record

All volunteers will be recorded on the school's Single Central Record, including:

- Identity checks completed
- DBS check details (where applicable)
- Risk assessment outcome
- Safeguarding training completion date
- References received

4. Induction and Training

4.1 Safeguarding Induction

Before starting, all volunteers must complete a **safeguarding induction** covering:

- The school's safeguarding and child protection policy
- Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)
- How to recognise signs of abuse and neglect
- What to do if they have concerns about a child
- Who the DSL and deputy DSLs are
- The school's behaviour policy
- The volunteer code of conduct
- Health and safety procedures, including fire evacuation

Volunteers must sign to confirm they have received and understood this induction.

4.2 Role-Specific Induction

The class teacher or activity leader will provide role-specific induction including:

- The specific tasks the volunteer will undertake
- Relevant curriculum or activity information
- Any specific needs of children they will work with
- Classroom or activity routines and expectations

4.3 Ongoing Training

Regular volunteers (those who volunteer once a week or more) must:

- Receive **refresher safeguarding training annually**
- Be kept informed of any policy updates
- Attend additional training relevant to their role if required

5. Volunteer Code of Conduct

All volunteers must sign and adhere to the volunteer code of conduct.

6. Volunteer Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 Types of Volunteer Activities

Volunteers at Fairlawn Primary School may undertake various activities, including:

- Hearing children read
- Supporting small group activities under teacher supervision
- Helping with art, craft or DT activities
- Assisting with school trips and visits
- Helping with school events (fairs, performances, sports days)
- Gardening and outdoor learning activities
- Administrative tasks (preparing resources, displays)

6.2 Working in Classrooms

When volunteering in classrooms:

- Always follow the class teacher's instructions
- Ask the teacher if you are unsure about anything
- Support the teacher's approach to learning and behaviour management
- Do not undermine the teacher's authority
- Refer any issues or concerns to the class teacher

Parent volunteers: To avoid potential conflicts of interest, parent volunteers should not work in their own child's classroom unless specifically agreed with the Headteacher.

6.3 Extra-Curricular Activity Leaders

Individuals who run paid or unpaid extra-curricular clubs (breakfast club, after-school clubs, sports clubs, etc.) are providing a **regulated activity** and must:

- Have an **enhanced DBS check with barred list check**
- Have appropriate qualifications, training, and insurance for their activity
- Follow the school's safeguarding, behaviour, and health and safety policies
- Take responsibility for the children in their care, including:
    - Taking a register at the start of each session
    - Following up on absent children
    - Ensuring children are collected safely at the end of the session
    - Staying with children if they are not collected on time and following the school's late collection procedure

- Report any incidents or concerns to the Headteacher or DSL

The school retains overall responsibility for safeguarding during these activities.

6.4 Work Experience Students

We welcome work experience students aged 14-18. All placements must:

- Be organised through the **Lewisham Work Experience team** (even for 'own-find' placements)
- Be approved by the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher before starting
- Include a meeting with a member of the senior leadership team before the placement begins

Work experience students must:

- Complete a volunteer application form and sign the code of conduct
- Receive safeguarding induction training
- Be supervised at all times by a member of staff
- Have an enhanced DBS check if aged 16+ and on an extended placement (more than 3 days)
- Behave professionally and as a role model to pupils

Students aged under 16 or on shorter placements must be supervised at all times and do not require a DBS check.

If a student fails to comply with the volunteer code of conduct, they will be asked to leave and their school will be notified

7 Health and Safety

7.1 General Health and Safety

All volunteers must:

- Be familiar with the school's fire evacuation procedures and know the nearest fire exit
- Never allow children to undertake activities that could put them in physical danger
- Never allow children to:
    - Stand on furniture
    - Use toxic or dangerous materials unsupervised
    - Carry electrical or heavy loads
    - Plug in or unplug electrical equipment
- Never leave children unsupervised
- Not send children to collect equipment from storage areas unsupervised
- Report any health and safety concerns to the class teacher immediately
- Follow any specific health and safety guidance for their activity (e.g., food hygiene, sports safety)

7.2 First Aid and Medical Needs

- Only trained first aiders should administer first aid
- If a child is injured or unwell, inform the class teacher or nearest member of staff immediately

- Do not give children any medication
- Be aware of any medical needs or allergies of children you work with (the class teacher will inform you)

7.3 Accidents and Incidents

All accidents and incidents involving volunteers or children must be:

- Reported to the class teacher immediately
- Recorded in the school's accident book
- Reported to parents if a child is injured

8. Educational Visits and Off-Site Activities

8.1 Volunteer Responsibilities on Trips

Volunteers who accompany children on educational visits play a vital role in ensuring children's safety and must:

- Attend a pre-trip briefing with the trip leader
- Receive and read a copy of the **risk assessment**
- Understand their specific responsibilities and the group of children they are supervising
- Sign a code of conduct for trips
- Follow the trip leader's instructions at all times
- **Never deviate** from the agreed plan without permission from the trip leader

9. Policies and Procedures

9.1 Relevant Policies

Volunteers should familiarise themselves with the following school policies relevant to their role:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- SEND Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Data Protection Policy

These policies are available from the school office or on the school website.

9.2 Equality and Inclusion

Fairlawn Primary School is committed to equality and inclusion. All volunteers must:

- Treat all children fairly and with respect, regardless of race, religion, gender, disability, sexual orientation or background
- Challenge discrimination and report concerns to the class teacher or Headteacher
- Support the school's inclusive ethos

- Be aware of and respect children's individual needs, including SEND, cultural and religious needs

10. Managing Concerns About Volunteers

10.1 Concerns About a Volunteer's Conduct

If a member of staff has concerns about a volunteer's conduct, they should:

- Report concerns to the Headteacher or DSL immediately
- Record their concerns in writing
- Not confront the volunteer directly if there are safeguarding concerns

10.2 Allegations Against Volunteers

If an allegation is made against a volunteer, the school will:

- Follow the same procedures as for allegations against staff
- Contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for serious allegations
- Suspend the volunteer's placement immediately pending investigation
- Conduct a thorough investigation
- Keep the volunteer informed of the process (unless this would compromise the investigation)
- Make a decision about the volunteer's future involvement with the school

Allegations may result in:

- Additional training and supervision
- Termination of the volunteer placement
- Referral to the DBS or police if appropriate

10.3 Concerns Raised by Volunteers

If a volunteer has concerns about:

- A child's welfare - report to the DSL immediately
- Another adult's conduct - report to the DSL or Headteacher immediately
- Health and safety - report to the class teacher or Headteacher
- Any other matter - speak to the class teacher or Headteacher

Volunteers should feel confident that concerns will be taken seriously and handled appropriately.

10.4 Termination of Volunteer Placement

The school reserves the right to terminate a volunteer placement at any time if:

- The volunteer does not comply with this policy or the code of conduct
- The volunteer's conduct raises safeguarding concerns
- The volunteer is unreliable or does not fulfil their commitment
- The volunteer's skills or approach are not suitable for the role
- The volunteer’s role is no longer needed

11. Support and Supervision for Volunteers

11.1 Ongoing Support

All volunteers will receive:

- A named contact person (usually the class teacher or activity leader)
- Regular feedback on their contribution
- Support to develop their skills and confidence
- Recognition and thanks for their contribution

11.2 Supervision Arrangements

- Regular volunteers will have periodic review meetings with their supervising teacher or the volunteer coordinator
- Volunteers should feel able to ask questions and raise concerns at any time
- The school will monitor volunteer arrangements to ensure they are working effectively

12. Insurance and Expenses

12.1 Insurance

All volunteers are covered by the school's public liability insurance while undertaking approved volunteer activities on school premises or on school-organised trips.

12.2 Expenses

Volunteers give their time freely and are not paid. However, the school may reimburse reasonable out-of-pocket expenses (e.g., travel costs for trips) at the Headteacher's discretion. Volunteers should seek approval before incurring expenses.

13. Data Protection

13.1 Volunteer Information

The school will collect and store information about volunteers in accordance with data protection legislation (UK GDPR). This includes:

- Personal details and contact information
- DBS check information
- References
- Training records

This information will be:

- Stored securely
- Only accessible to authorised staff
- Retained in the office which is locked