



Hillcross Primary School

School Volunteer Policy

Mission, Vision and Culture

At Hillcross we nurture our children to think critically and creatively within a collaborative community.

Our outstanding practice ensures our children meet their full potential, both personally and academically, and provides opportunities for them to develop their unique talents and skills. As a nationally recognized Thinking School, we nurture an empathetic community of creative and critical thinkers. We achieve success for all through our dynamic and ambitious curriculum, inclusive learning, promoting fairness and celebrating diversity.

Through our school culture of high aspiration, embracing challenge, acting with compassion, a shared responsibility and by showing respect for all, we aim to develop a resilient school community of compassionate global citizens.

Aims

The aim of this policy is:

- To provide parents, staff and volunteers with clear expectations, guidelines and an overview for induction for working in our school.
- To encourage the wider community to engage with children's learning to raise standards of achievement, enhance children's well-being and to promote community cohesion.

Introduction

Volunteers are all adults, including parents and students, who work collaboratively with the school staff team to support children with their learning and development.

At Hillcross Primary School we welcome those wishing to support the school and value the contribution they make to school life. We believe that the involvement of parents, carers and volunteers in children's education is vital and we encourage active participation in many ways.

- Supporting lessons such as ICT, art, cooking, playing games, gardening, sewing, .
- Listening to children read or helping them to access ICT based support.
- Supporting individual children or groups to access their learning.
- Helping with classroom organisation or the preparation of resources;
- Volunteering in the library
- Volunteering in the allotment/woodland area.
- Supporting educational visits outside school.
- Supporting Sports Competitions/lessons (e.g. helping with the walk to and from the swimming baths)
- Getting involved with the work of the Friends of Hillcross (Parent Teacher Association).
- Offering a specific skill or area of expertise which they could share with/demonstrate to the children on a less frequent basis e.g. a dentist talking about oral hygiene, a musician playing a live performance, offering technical advice in relation to an aspect of school life.

These guidelines have been written to ensure that for all stakeholders, the experience is positive and rewarding.

Safeguarding



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As part of our commitment to safeguarding, the School will request an enhanced DBS disclosure and Children's Barred List information for all volunteers undertaking 'regulated activity' with pupils at or on behalf of the School. Involvement will amount to "regulated activity" if it is carried out:

- frequently, meaning once a week or more; or
- overnight, meaning between 2.00 am and 6.00 am; or
- satisfies the "period condition", meaning four times or more in a 30 day period; and
- provides the opportunity for contact with children.

Roles which are carried out on an unpaid/voluntary basis will only amount to regulated activity if, in addition to the above, they are carried out on an unsupervised basis. The School is not permitted to check the Children's Barred List unless an individual will be engaging in "regulated activity". However, the School can carry out an enhanced DBS check on a person who would be carrying out regulated activity but for the fact that they do not carry out their duties frequently enough i.e. roles which would amount to regulated activity if carried out more frequently. Under no circumstances will the School permit an unchecked volunteer to have unsupervised contact with pupils.

In addition the School will seek to obtain such further suitability information about a volunteer as it considers appropriate in the circumstances. This may include (but is not limited to the following):

- formal or informal information provided by staff, parents and other volunteers;
- character references from the volunteer's place of work or any other relevant source; and
- an informal safer recruitment interview.

Volunteers who are involved in regulated activity with children, will be required to complete an application form via a google form (see end of policy for the google link) and will be asked to attend an informal interview to ensure that the aims and intentions of the school and the volunteer are compatible. The Headteacher has the authority not to accept the help of volunteers if he or she believes that it is not in the best interest of the children, or where there may be a conflict of interest.

Please be assured that all information will be treated in the strictest confidence and that these checks are done only in the best interests and safety of the children. All schools need to hold a register of the DBS checks undertaken.

As part of your induction you will be asked to read and sign a declaration that you have understood the following policies that relate to safeguarding:

- **Part One of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' DfE, (2024)**
- **Appendix A of 'Keeping Children safe in Education' DfE, (2024)**
- **Safeguarding Policy**
- **Staff Code of Conduct**
- **Children Missing Education**
- **The use of Mobile Technology & Digital Images Policy**
- **Behaviour Policy**
- **Confidentiality Policy**

You will also be required to complete a Volunteer Policy Declaration and an Emergency Contact via a google form, an electronic copy of each will be kept in school.



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In special circumstances such as if a parent steps in to support a trip at short notice, volunteers or parents without a DBS enhanced check may help out if they have had a clear list 99 check. One of the admin team will contact the relevant agency to obtain this once you have provided them with the necessary information. It can take some time for this check to be carried out so the school will usually ask for two weeks' notice in advance.

Those who help out at specific events e.g. the school fair or walking with us to the Carol Service do not need a DBS or List 99 check but must not have unsupervised access to children.

Becoming a Volunteer in School

Once the school has received DBS clearance for a volunteer, they will then be required to attend an induction meeting to cover the following topics:

- **Safeguarding & Child Protection** - school specific information (attendance at basic Child Protection training is also arranged as soon as possible after you start your work with the school - this may be virtual via the NSPCC, Introduction to Safeguarding and Child Protection Online course)
- **Questions Volunteers have about the Staff Code of Conduct, including confidentiality**
- **Health & Safety**
- **Fire and Evacuation Procedures**

Deployment of Volunteers

Volunteers will be asked to support in classes/areas of the school where there is the most need for support. **Parent volunteers should be aware that they will not always be able to work in their child's class.** This could be for a number of reasons and if this is the case, we may ask you to help in a different class or area of the school. This is entirely at the Headteacher's discretion. It is helpful if you can explain to your child that you will be coming into school to help all of the children and that he/she will not always be able to work with you.

We may from time to time ask you to support another class during a visit if extra adults are required for a specific activity (e.g. supporting practical learning).

Volunteers do not have to stay for a full morning or afternoon session, even an hour would be appreciated but for regular activity such as reading or helping in the library, we do prefer for volunteers to attend on a regular basis to ensure continuity and to aid planning.

The PA to the Leadership Team will coordinate the support of volunteers across the school. All placements will be authorised by the Headteacher or one of our Assistant Headteacher's.

Volunteer Roles in School

Many of the activities that we might ask you to help with are the sorts of things that parents do with their own children at home. We will never ask you to do something you do not feel comfortable doing and it is important that you ask if there is anything that you are not sure about or if you need help. The appropriate member of staff will give you clear guidelines about the activity and all the materials you need. At the end of a volunteering session, it is very helpful if you can give feedback to the teacher about how the activity went and how you got on. Please agree with the class teacher how and when this should take place as a conversation with them directly may not always be possible.

General guidelines for Supporting Children in School

The appropriate member of staff will explain specific class routines and expectations but the following are applicable more generally:



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- ✓ Please don't teach the children 'shortcuts' or alternative strategies for completing their learning without first discussing this with the teacher - the curriculum is very specific in most subjects and often different to when we were at school.
- ✓ **Always encourage the children to do things for themselves.** It is important that they are independent and although some children may need help and supervision, the end result should always be their own work. Please don't be tempted to do the work for them! The learning that goes on while the children are doing an activity is often much more important than the end product.
- ✓ There is no rush. We give the children plenty of time to answer a question or to complete a task and they will often need to return to it on several occasions.
- ✓ It is vital to encourage the children to talk about what they are doing in order to support them in using the correct vocabulary.
- ✓ When playing games with the children, try and encourage the idea of taking turns, sharing and being a good loser. The real joy of a game is the taking part!
- ✓ Please don't have favourites - it is important that all children in school are given equal time and attention.
- ✓ Please do not lift, carry or move a child in any way.
- ✓ If you have finished your volunteering role and you have additional time, please speak to a member of staff before doing something else so that the appropriate guidelines can be given to you.
- ✓ If when volunteering you have any new ideas or think of ways in which things could be done differently, please speak to a member of staff before implementing it. Whilst we are very open to change, there is often a reason for the way things are done and you may find yourself inadvertently breaking school policy/procedure.

Procedures and Protocols

Health and Safety/Safeguarding

When a volunteer arrives in the school they must sign in via the Inventory system which is located at the front office. Please indicate which Team/person/area you will be supporting, not the person who arranged your volunteering so that we know the area of the school you are likely to be working in. Volunteers must also sign out when they are leaving the school premises. Signing in and out is important in the event of an emergency so that staff and emergency services know who needs to be accounted for.

A visitor badge must be worn at all times in school. Volunteers with a Merton Enhanced DBS will wear a green lanyard; all other types of DBS or a List 99 clearance will wear a badge with a yellow lanyard – this will indicate that they have clearance but do not comply with the additional level of safeguarding required by Merton LA. Other volunteers will wear a red lanyard to indicate that they have been invited onto our school site but they must not be left to supervise children on their own.

Safeguarding concerns about a child must be shared immediately with the class teacher (if possible) and also with one of the Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) as soon as possible after the disclosure. This must be done in an appropriate setting so that others cannot overhear. Please go to the SLT area and the PA to the Leadership Team will locate a DSL for you.

Our Designated Safeguarding Leads



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Lisa Francis
Headteacher



Steph Mayar
Assistant Head



Lee Christy
Assistant Head



Tanja Doig
Assistant Head

The Headteacher has the authority to withdraw the help of volunteers if he or she believes that it is not in the best interest of the children.

Confidentiality

It is very important that all staff, parent volunteers and other adults working in the school adhere to confidentiality protocols. While in school you are likely to become aware of issues relating to individual children or groups - you may see children struggling with work, feeling upset or misbehaving; you may hear/see other personal information concerning a child or member of staff.

It is vital that you do not share anything with others, even if you are related to or are friends with another child's parent/carer. The teachers will decide what needs to be shared and are responsible for informing parents of any concerns about a child within the procedures and protocols of the school. Volunteers working in classrooms do so on the understanding that they support the teaching staff and will not pass opinion on such matters as discipline or teaching styles outside the school. If you ever have any concerns about something in school please refer these to the class teacher, or to a member of the Senior Leadership Team if your concern relates to the class teacher.

Housekeeping

- **Attendance** - If you find that you are not going to be able to come into school on a particular day, it is really helpful to know in advance, even if that's only a phone message on the morning in question.
- **Mobile Phones** - You will be required to keep your mobile phone switched off whilst helping in school, and will not be able to take calls or messages when directly working with, or in the vicinity of, children, unless you have been provided permission from the headteacher (please refer to The Use of Mobile Devices and Digital Images Policy).
- **Tea / Coffee arrangements at breaks** - If you are in school over the break period, there are tea and coffee making facilities for visitors in the staff room which you are welcome to use. There is no charge for visitors' tea and coffee. Please respect confidentiality by not looking at/for information that is not clearly on display for all to see.
- **Lunchtime** - When volunteering for a full day, you will be provided with a location in which to eat your lunch. This will not usually be the staff room so that staff have space to relax and talk freely about their personal lives.
- **Photocopier / Laminator** – There are photocopiers and laminators located throughout the school. You may be asked to use these machines to support the class teacher in preparing resources. Please ask in the school office if you are unsure of how to use them.
- **First Aid** - Please do not administer First Aid to children whilst you are volunteering in school. All school staff can administer basic first aid and a number of staff hold certificates for paediatric first aid and first aid at work. Please talk to the class teacher or a member of support staff working in the class in the first instance if a child hurts themselves.
- **Fire alarm** - If the fire alarm sounds, please make your way safely to the nearest exit, guiding the child you are working with if away from the main class area (e.g. hearing readers in the library). We will provide you with information regarding our evacuation/invacuation as part of your induction.



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References

Occasionally, volunteers ask the school to provide a written reference when they are seeking employment. We stipulate a minimum qualifying period of three months regular volunteering attendance (e.g. once a week) before we feel able to provide a work-based reference. We believe that this is fair to both prospective employers and candidates.

Thank you!

In case we forget to say so, please be assured that we really do appreciate your help (we may sometimes forget to say so because we are busy, but we do!!). If you have any worries or queries, or any good ideas on how we can improve something, please let the relevant member of staff know - we are always willing to listen.

Equality Impact Assessment

Under the Equality Act 2010 we have a duty not to discriminate against people on the basis of their age, disability, gender, gender identity, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation. We are committed to treating all members of our school community fairly and challenging negative attitudes about disability and accessibility and to developing a culture of awareness, tolerance and inclusion. This policy has been equality impact assessed and we believe that it is in line with the Equality Act 2010 as it is fair, it does not prioritise or disadvantage any member of the school community and it helps to promote equality and accessibility at our school. The curriculum is planned to be inclusive and meet the needs and interests of a full range of learners. Activities and resources will be differentiated and adult support used to ensure that children assess the curriculum and make the best possible progress.

Safeguarding Commitment

The school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, in line with the most recent version of Keeping Children Safe in Education, and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. We take seriously our duty of care to our pupils and staff which includes safeguarding them from the risk of being drawn into terrorism - this includes not just violent extremism but also non-violent extremism, which can create an atmosphere conducive to terrorism and can popularise views which terrorists exploit. We work closely with social care, the police, health services and other services to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. Radicalisation is recognised as a specific safeguarding issue and is addressed in line with the Government Prevent Strategy and The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015.

Privacy Policy

Hillcross school is committed to ensuring protection of all personal information that we hold. We recognise our obligations under the GDPR and Data Protection act 2018. Our practice is documented in our Data Protection Policy.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Written: June 2016

Reviewed: January 2017, Feb 18, Feb 19, Feb 21, Oct 22, May 2023

Date of next review: May 2025

Action to be taken by potential volunteers

When you have read and understood the terms of our Volunteer Policy and wish to proceed, please click on the link to complete the Volunteer Application and agree to the Volunteer in School Protocol:

Volunteer Application Form Link: <https://forms.gle/CtzDTJgSRS6XhSgP9>