

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me"
Philippians 4:13



The Federation of St Mary's Catholic Schools

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Respect

Compassion

Resilience

Visitor, Student and Volunteer Policy

Approved by Governors:

October 2023

Next review due by:

October 2024

Summary

This policy has been put in place to ensure that we protect our children and our Volunteer and Visitors at all times. It is written using KCSIE 2023. It is designed so that all Students, Volunteer helpers and Visitors will have a clear understanding of their expectations and responsibilities.

Students and Adult Volunteer Helpers

Introduction

We want our school to be open and welcoming to all who would like to support the children. We also want to encourage parents and other adults to help teachers in a variety of ways. However, our overriding concern is for the safety of the children in our care. This document sets out our school's policy, which is to ensure that the children benefit from as much help and support as possible, and safeguarding remains the highest priority.

The school has a variety of adults working on the premises at any one time. They can be categorised as follows:

- Paid full- or part-time staff employed by the school:
- teachers;
- learning assistants;
- caretaker;
- cleaners;
- mid-day supervisors;
- school office staff;

Adult workers employed by another organisation:

- peripatetic music teachers;
- trainee teachers;
- LA advisers and inspectors;
- health visitors;
- grounds maintenance staff;
- contract workers (e.g. an electrician/heating engineer/builders etc.)
- sports coaches

Volunteer helpers:

- parents or other adult helpers working alongside teachers;
- students on work experience.
- Adults working towards teaching assistant qualifications

This policy sets out the arrangements for volunteer/student helpers only.

Volunteer and Student helpers

- Volunteer helpers support the school in a number of ways, including:
- supporting individual pupils;
- hearing pupils read;
- helping with classroom organisation;
- helping with the supervision of children on school trips;
- helping with group work;
- helping with art or subjects involving other practical activities.

Volunteers and Students are not allowed to do the following activities:

- take responsibility for all or some of the whole class;
- be involved in any personal care for any child;
- supervise children engaged in PE or other specialist activities;
- take children off the school site without a teacher in charge.
- be on the playground during play times and lunch times.
- to be alone with a child at any point including escorting children around school.

The responsibility for the health and welfare of the child remains with the class teacher at all times.

Before starting any volunteering or student placement

Mrs Morris, our School Business Manager based at the Infant site and Mrs Walker, office manager based at the Junior site will invite the student or volunteer in for a pre-visit. During this visit, Mrs Morris/Mrs Walker will ask for the following information:

- Proof of ID
- DBS (if applicable)
- Evidence of name and address

The information will be collated and stored on our Staff Safe system. If the volunteer/student is DBS checked, they will be issued with a green lanyard which indicates to staff that the volunteer is DBS checked. This means they are able to walk to and from their classrooms without a chaperone. If the student/volunteer are not DBS checked, they will be issued with a red lanyard which indicates to staff that the student/volunteer needs to be chaperoned/supervised at all times.

Mrs Morris/Mrs Walker **will set out the following guidelines on the pre-visit.**

- 1. Child Protection Policy and Procedures**
- 2. Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure**
- 3. Volunteer and Student Handbook**

Signing in

When volunteers and/or students arrive in the school, they must sign in at the reception desk. They will be given a coloured lanyard based on the DBS status which they should wear at all times. The signing-in system will give the date and time of arrival. They must also sign out, stating the time they are leaving. When an adult volunteer or student first arrives, they should be given a Volunteer Handbook from the office.

Safeguarding

For the children's safety, all volunteer and students **must always** be under the supervision of school staff. The head teacher has the authority not to accept the help of volunteers if she believes it will not be in the best interests of the children.

Deployment of volunteer helpers

It is the policy at the federation of St Mary's Catholic Primary School that parent helpers can support in their own child's classroom, but if this proves to be distracting or places the class in an uncomfortable situation this would be reviewed and they will be asked to support in a different class. The class teacher is responsible for asking permission from Mrs Morris/Mrs Walker before parents can come into school to help.

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Monitoring and review

The day-to-day monitoring of this policy is the responsibility of the Head of Schools under the guidance of the Executive Headteacher.

This policy will be reviewed by the governing body every year as it is closely linked to our safeguarding process and procedures .

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Volunteer/Student Handbook

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Thank you for your interest in volunteering at our school. We appreciate the help that all our volunteers give in supporting the work of the school.

We want you to enjoy your time with us, and we have produced this guide to make sure you feel comfortable, supported and appreciated. There is a lot of information here, but please don't hesitate to ask questions if you are unsure about anything!

Mrs J. Kellett.
Headteacher

Our Commitment to You

As one of our valued volunteers, we are committed to giving you the following:

- a friendly and supportive working environment;
- enthusiastic and cooperative children;
- a mentor and link staff member to support you in your volunteering;
- recognition for the work that you do and its impact on learning;
- a reference if you apply for paid work here or elsewhere.

Your Commitment to Us

We are well aware that your time is given freely and willingly. Most volunteers/students work in school at a set time each week, and if you can commit to this for at least half a term, we would find this helpful.

However, we do not insist that you commit to working for a fixed or indefinite period of time or give notice when you wish to stop volunteering the Federation of St Mary's Catholic Schools. However, we do ask that you agree to and abide by the guidance found in this handbook and the accompanying policy.

We would also ask that you let us know if you have made an arrangement that you later find you cannot keep. Your work is valuable to the school and your link staff member may have been counting on you to help with an activity. Just give us a call as soon as you know you cannot come. In addition, when you do wish to cease volunteering, please communicate this to your mentor, link staff member or the volunteer coordinator.

Setting up a Placement

All volunteers must come through the school office – Mrs Morris/Mrs Walker. They will ask for details such as:

- **Name**
- **Contact Details**
- **Reason for Placement/Volunteering**
- **What year group you will be placed**
- **What day you will attend school and for how long**

Pre-visit

Mrs Morris/Mrs Walker will make a mutually convenient time for you to attend school to go through our protocols for volunteering at St Marys

During this visit, Mrs Morris/Mrs Walker will ask for the following information:

- Proof of ID
- DBS (if applicable)
- Evidence of name and address

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The information will be collated and stored on our Staff Safe system. If you have a DBS, you will be issued with a green lanyard which indicates to staff that you have a DBS check. If you are not DBS checked, you will be issued with a red lanyard. This is part of our safeguarding procedures and you must wear the lanyard at all times.

Mrs Morris/Mrs Walker **will also set out the following guidelines on the pre-visit.**

4. Child Protection Policy and Procedures
5. Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure
6. Volunteer and Student Handbook

Key Contacts

Mrs Morris/Mrs Walker will provide the name of your link teacher at the initial stage of this process. While you are working at St Marys, your other contacts will be:

your link staff member; Katherine Grange – head of school (Infants) and Nicola Follin – head of school (Juniors)

Signing In and Out

It is important for security and fire regulations that all volunteers working in the school can be identified and located at all times. We ask you to follow this simple routine every time you visit the school: only enter the school via the front entrance; sign the visitor's system and make sure you are wearing your volunteer lanyard

Child Protection

Because of the school's duty of care to all pupils and adults in the school, we must ensure that your volunteering does not put anyone at risk. The school's designated officers are Mrs Curley and Mrs Kellett; the deputy designated officers are Mrs Follin and Mrs Grange. It is possible that children may tell you (or try to tell you) things relating to some form of abuse. If this happens, let your link staff member know immediately, and allow them to deal with it. While you cannot promise confidentiality to the child, (i.e. you must make it clear to the child that you'll have to tell someone), you must ensure that once you have passed the matter on you do not discuss it with anyone else. If you are in any doubt about the safety of a child, immediately tell your link staff member, Mrs Curley or Mrs Kellett.

You must never be left to supervise children on your own! This includes supervising children around the building. If this happens, please inform Mrs Curley/Mrs Kellett/Mrs Grange/Mrs Follin. This is to protect you and our children

Where can I...?

This section is designed to answer some of the common questions new volunteers/students ask. If you have other questions, do ask your link staff member.

Where can I park?

If you do drive to school, please park in car park at the back or side of school. The staff car park is well used, and also provides fire access to the playground areas.

Where can I leave my belongings?

It's not a good idea to bring too many personal belongings and valuables to school with you. However, your link staff member will let you know where you can leave your coat and bag, etc.

Where can I work?

The teacher with whom you are working with will give you a suitable space to work in.

Where can I go?

Most of the time, you will be working in your link staff member's classroom or shared spaces. If you need to visit other classrooms, please be as discreet as possible while lessons are taking place. At break times, we want you to feel relaxed and comfortable and therefore you are welcome to use the staff room for somewhere to

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sit. You may use the staff room at break times but work experience students are asked not to use the staffroom at lunch times. Work experience students are also asked not to go onto the playground at lunch times. You are free to go home at lunch time. There are tea and coffee making facilities in there, so make yourself a drink, or alternatively you could sit quietly in the classroom where you have been based.

Where can I go to the toilet?

There are toilets by the staff room which you are welcome to use, but please do not use the children's toilet

Working with Children

Whether you have previous experience of working with children or not, here are some guidelines to help you be successful in your voluntary work.

- Be friendly and encouraging with the children, especially when working with them for the first time.
- Expect them to be a little nervous – introduce yourself and explain that you will be helping them with their reading/spelling etc.
- Remember that though we need to be friendly, we are not making friendships, and it is important that the children give the same amount of respect as other adults in the school.
- Expect children to use your 'grown up' name, e.g. Mrs Smith.

Our children are usually enthusiastic and cooperative. You are **not responsible** for managing their behaviour beyond making a reasonable attempt to help the child focus on their task. Be positive and clear in your explanations, and remember you are not there to negotiate about what the children have to do.

If a child is over-enthusiastic and silly, ask them politely to settle down to help them and others concentrate. If a child is not engaging at all with their work, remind them of the purpose of the activity and that you are there to help them.

If your reasonable attempts to help the child engage with their task are not working, use a final reminder, e.g. 'If you can't settle down you will have to go back to see your teacher.' Please don't get into arguments with the children, make threats or issue punishments. If you have any concerns at all, go and get help from a member of staff immediately. The children know you are not a teacher, so don't feel embarrassed or disappointed if you need to seek extra support.

Simply ask the child to return to class and explain to their teacher why they have been sent back. You should check later on that they did so. When you have finished working with a child, it is good to reflect on how the activity has gone. Praise the children when they have done well with their learning and attitude; when they haven't use phrases like 'Next week you should think about...' and 'I think it would help your learning if...'

Remember that the children are always watching – it's good to let them see you interacting respectfully and cooperatively with other adults in the school.

For more information you can read the school's behaviour policy. If you are apprehensive about this area, the best advice is to watch your mentor or other adults working with children, even for the first few weeks. If it just isn't working with a particular child or group, don't be ashamed to let someone know.

Training and Development

Your voluntary work is important to us – so we want to help you do it to the best of your ability

Further Training

For some jobs you might like to consider more formal training for which you gain certificates or accreditation. This could be especially valuable to you if you want to learn new skills to use in our school or elsewhere. Many

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volunteers find that they would like to work as teaching assistants (or even as teachers) in the future. While we can't promise to employ any of our volunteers, we can advise you about how you might achieve your goals.

Health and Safety

You must comply with the school's health and safety policy (available on the school's website or paper copy on request), observing any specific requirements whilst volunteering. Do not take part in, or ask anyone else to take part in, any action that might cause you or another person to be put at risk of injury or harm. You should always advise a member of the school's senior leadership team of any potential hazard or situation that you feel puts people at risk. They will then report this as necessary.

Equal Opportunities

At our school we do not tolerate discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, race, ethnic background, colour, religion, gender, sexual orientation, history of illness, non-relevant criminal records or your marital, employment, financial or social status. As a volunteer you must treat people with respect at all times and ensure that there is no unlawful discrimination, abuse, harassment or bullying in your dealing with children, colleagues or others at the school. If you feel that you have been unfairly discriminated against, please discuss this with Mrs Morris/Mrs Walker. You can also contact your local volunteer centre or Volunteer Bureau listed in the local telephone directory. Our equal opportunities policy is available from the office and on our website.

Checks

The type of work you will be allowed to undertake is restricted. This means that you must not be left unsupervised with a child at any time. We will ask for your details to enable us to process a DBS certificate. This is a check to ensure you are safe to work with children.

Safe Practice

To protect the children you are helping and yourself from any false accusation, follow these simple steps:

- only work in public areas such as classrooms and corridors;
- always work close to where other volunteers or staff members are working; avoid any physical contact with the children;
- try to ensure that your conversation with children is friendly but not over-familiar; never accompany children into the toilets.

Confidentiality

The information we hold about you and your volunteering is confidential, and as such, will not be shared with any third parties without your consent. We ask that you respect the confidentiality of staff and pupils at the federation of St Marys Catholic Primary Schools by not discussing things you have seen and heard while volunteering, especially when sensitive information about pupils is involved.

Insurance

You will be insured for the same activities as teachers. As long as you follow the guidelines in this booklet and in the relevant policies, you will be covered by the school's insurance for most occurrences. If you use your own vehicle to transport children other than your own on school activities, you need to check your insurance policy.

Dealing with Problems

Though we expect your experience of voluntary work at federation of St Marys Catholic Primary Schools to be very enjoyable and rewarding, it is possible that some problems may occur. Lines of communication are always open, and we would much rather hear about things quickly, so that they can be resolved quickly. Here are some of the possible problems, with possible solutions.

I'm in conflict

Some activities might bring volunteers into conflict with paid employees, who feel their toes are being stepped on. Alternatively, you may find you disagree with other volunteers about how work is being carried out. If this occurs and you haven't been able to resolve it between yourselves, please speak to someone outside the situation. For example, if you have fallen out with your mentor, speak to your link staff member, and vice versa.

I'm in the wrong job

You may have volunteered for something which has turned out to be unsuitable. It may be that you need further training and support or could move to a different task. Or it may be that you just need time to get used to what you're doing. Just talk to your mentor or your link staff member if you are feeling like this.

I'm not getting on with the children

Working with children is never easy, and even the professionals can find it challenging to build good working relationships with the children. Also, it is quite common for volunteers to find it difficult working with a particular age group, and it's easy enough to move to another team. Give yourself some time, and remember you can always watch other volunteers at work, to see how they handle particular situations.

I'm no good at this

It's common when taking on a new challenge like volunteering in school to feel daunted, and to find things difficult at first. If you feel you really can't do it, you aren't the first, and won't be the last. Talk to your mentor and do as many tasks as possible together – it's what they're there for. Be patient with yourself and persevere – you may be surprised how good a volunteer you will eventually be.

I'm having trouble with my own child

Sometimes, when mum or dad comes to help in the class, their own child can react badly. This may take the form of being extra clingy and jealously guarding their parent or being over enthusiastic about it. Talk to your child and explain that you're there to help all the children. If it isn't working, talk to your link staff member about whether you'd be better off helping in another class.

I'm bored

If you've been hearing readers for a while, you may be fed up. Talk to your link staff member about what else you might do. There are also some ideas on the next page about how you can take your volunteering further.

I'm not appreciated

If no-one has said thank you to you for a while, it can be disheartening; if you spent three hours tidying the library only to find it a tip the next day, it can be frustrating. Please tell someone if it's getting to you – the last thing we want is for our volunteers to feel undervalued, because it's really not true.

I'm too busy this week

We understand that time is often short, and we appreciate that sometimes you will not be able to come in and help. If so, please let the school know as soon as possible. If you find that clashes are happening regularly, you may wish to review the situation with your mentor and try to find a better time.

I'm leaving

Everyone gets to the point where, for whatever reason, they have to stop volunteering at the Federation of St Marys Catholic Primary Schools. We understand this, and don't put any pressure on you to carry on. All we ask is that you let us know when and why you are leaving, so we can thank you properly

Taking it Further

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By simply volunteering at the federation of St Mary's Catholic Primary Schools you are already making an excellent contribution. We would never expect you to give any more time and energy than you do, but if you feel really keen to be involved in the life of the school, here are some other ideas:

PTFA

We have a very active and effective Parent Teacher Association, but they could always use more help whether it's helping at a disco, going to meetings or running a stall at the Christmas Fayre, there's lots you can do.

Governors

Occasionally there is a vacancy for a parent governor. The governors are responsible for overseeing the running of the school and being a parent governor is an excellent way to contribute to this aspect of school life. It is also one way of parents' and carers' voices being heard.

And Finally...

Your induction training is now complete and you're ready to get started! We would like to thank you again for volunteering at our school. We hope you will enjoy being part of our team and have a happy and fulfilling time with us.

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The Federation of St Marys Catholic Primary Schools
Student and Volunteer Agreement

Parent helpers and volunteers are expected to:

- To ensure safeguarding is central – to read our Safeguarding Policy and Part A of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'
- Be outstanding role models for all pupils.
- Work under the professional direction of staff, following school policies.
- Report any issues of concern to teachers (and not directly intervene).
- Allow the teachers to deal with discipline issues that arise.
- Speak in a kind and friendly way to all pupils.
- Maintain confidentiality.
- Establish and maintain a rapport with pupils based on mutual respect.
- Contact the teacher if they are unable to attend.
- Follow the health and safety policy.

Parent helpers and Volunteers have the right to expect:

- Work to be prepared and the teacher organised.
- Good manners and acceptable behaviour from pupils.
- To be treated with respect.
- The teacher to deal with discipline issues that arise.
- Support from the teacher.
- Careful explanations of the tasks expected.
- To be notified if sessions are cancelled or the timetable changes.

As teacher, parents and community members, we expect:

- Our children to be respected.
- Our children to be safe and to feel secure.
- Our children to be protected from inappropriate behaviour and language.

As Headteacher, I ask that all parents and volunteers endeavour to abide by these expectations so that all members of our school community benefit from your valuable work for the pupils of the Federation of St Marys Catholic Primary Schools

Headteacher: Mrs J. Kellett

I have read and understood the contents of this Agreement and the Volunteer/Student Information and Guidance

Volunteer's/Student's Name: _____

Volunteer/Student's Mentor's Name: _____

Induction Completed on Signed: _____ Volunteer/Student

Signed: _____ Volunteer/Student's Coordinator

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