Learning in Harmony Trust

Volunteer and Work Experience Policy

Date	Changes
01/09/2022	Policy Implementation Date
July 2026	Policy Update in line with changes to DBS requirements for volunteers

Purpose:

To ensure that the Trust reviews, monitors and evaluates the role of volunteers within the day-to-day life of its schools, ensuring that appropriate procedures are in place to safeguard children, comply with the requirements of the Crime and Policing Act 2026, and promote the wellbeing of volunteers.

A volunteer may be defined as someone who commits time and energy for the benefit of others, who does so freely, through personal choice and without expectation of financial reward, except for payment of out-of-pocket expenses.

We recognise that volunteers provide a valuable source of support to the school and can bring great benefits to our pupils. We also recognise that volunteering is a two-way exchange of skills which should benefit both the school and the volunteer.

We are committed to providing good management to volunteers to enable them to experience a sense of achievement in their role.

Responsibilities:

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher/Safeguarding Lead of each trust school to:

- Take general responsibility for volunteer placements within the school, ensuring that this policy is followed;
- Determine vetting requirements based on the updated legal definitions of regulated activity. The Crime and Policing Act 2026 has removed the "supervision exemption"; any volunteer who frequently teaches, trains, instructs, cares for, or supervises children must receive an Enhanced DBS check with a Children's Barred List check, regardless of whether they are supervised by a staff member.
- Undertake a risk assessment for any voluntary role;
- Be accountable for the volunteer and ensure that they are supported within the school.
- This will include clear management and reporting arrangements for the volunteer, which are made known to both the volunteer and the relevant member of staff;
- Ensure that the volunteer is made aware of the school's Health and Safety and Child
- Protection policies and procedures. This must include an explicit briefing on their personal statutory Mandatory Reporting Duty regarding child sexual abuse and identifying who the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is;
- Ensure that whilst there is no employment relationship with the volunteer, their health, safety, and welfare at work are dealt with in the
- same way as for employees;
- Ensure that volunteers receive appropriate training for their role, including basic induction to the school and its policies. The principle for volunteer training will be that any training available to employees will also be available to volunteers if it is appropriate to the tasks they are carrying out.

Other school staff

It is the responsibility of other employees to:

- Understand the role of the volunteer within the school and recognise the benefits of
- their involvement;
- Support the volunteer in their role and explain any areas where the volunteer may be unsure;
- Introduce the volunteer to pupils;
- Give general awareness of safeguarding and safety procedures within the classroom;
- Cooperate fully with any volunteer executing their statutory reporting duties. Staff are reminded that under the Crime and Policing Act 2026, it is a criminal offence to intentionally prevent, deter, delay, or obstruct any individual from making a mandatory report regarding child sexual abuse.

Volunteers

It is the responsibility of volunteers to:

- Follow the instructions or guidance given to them by members of the school staff;
- Follow the policies and procedures of the school, as appropriate, for their role;
- Ensure that they consider the health, safety, and welfare of themselves and others as they undertake their role;
- Undertake any training deemed necessary for their role by the Headteacher.

Procedure:

Work Experience

- Follow the instructions or guidance given to them by members of the school staff;
- Follow the policies and procedures of the school, as appropriate, for their role;
- Undertake any training deemed necessary for their role by the Headteacher;
- Never disclose sensitive information regarding pupils, staff, or school operations to anyone outside the school, including families and friends, or on personal social media accounts.
- Attend the placement on the agreed days and times. If they are unable to attend due to illness, they must notify the school placement coordinator as early as possible before the school day starts.
- Remember that they are in a position of trust. They must maintain professional boundaries with pupils, which includes a strict ban on exchanging personal contact details, connecting on social media, or interacting with pupils outside of structured school activities.
- **Students Under 16:** Must immediately tell their supervising teacher or the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) if a pupil tells them something worrying, or if they notice any signs of harm or peer-on-peer abuse.
- **Students Over 16:** Must actively comply with the Mandatory Reporting Duty under the Crime and Policing Act 2026. If they witness child sexual abuse, receive a

disclosure, or see abusive sexual material (including digital or AI-generated content), they must report it to the DSL or the authorities as soon as reasonably practicable.

Volunteer appointment

When a volunteer is offering to make a regular commitment within the school over a period of several weeks or more, the volunteer must be interviewed by the Headteacher/School Safeguarding lead and must provide identifying information (and, if unknown to the school, character references).

All regular volunteers (defined as those helping more than 3 days in a 30-day period) or anyone participating in overnight/residential trips will be subject to an Enhanced DBS with a Children's Barred List check prior to commencing their role. Compliance with this check is mandatory under the 2026 Act.

Where schools are also subject to the EYFS framework, volunteers will not be permitted to begin working within the settings covered by the EYFS framework until the school has received the volunteer's enhanced DBS certificate including barred list information (where the volunteer is in regulated activity).

Volunteers will also be asked to disclose any health issues which might be relevant to their role. Reasonable adjustments will be considered for potential volunteers with a disability. The volunteer must be made aware of the cover which is provided for them in their role by the school's insurance policies, and of areas which are not or may not be covered. Once all checks and clearances are completed successfully, the volunteer will be asked to sign a Volunteer Agreement before undertaking any voluntary work. This agreement includes a mandatory, legally binding declaration acknowledging their understanding of the 2026 statutory mandatory reporting regulation and the 3-Day Frequency Threshold.

Work Experience Placements

In line with KCSIE 2026 and the Crime and Policing Act 2026, vetting and mandatory reporting rules differ depending on whether the placement student is under or over the age of 16.

Placements for Students Under 16

- Students under the age of 16 undertaking work experience are legally minor pupils themselves and cannot be subject to Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks.
- Under-16 students must be supervised at all times by a designated member of school staff and must never be left in a position of unregulated or unmonitored authority over other pupils or where they could be in contact with pupils.
- While they cannot be subject to criminal record vetting, they must receive an age-appropriate safeguarding induction on Day 1. This must include identifying who the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is and understanding how to immediately pass on any peer-on-peer or child protection concerns.

Placements for Students Over 16

Vetting Requirements (KCSIE 2026 Compliance): For students aged 16 or older, a risk assessment will be performed based on the nature and frequency of the placement:

- Regulated Activity: If a placement student over 16 frequently (more than 3 days in a 30-day period) teaches, trains, instructs, cares for, or supervises children, an Enhanced DBS check with a Children's Barred List check is mandatory before the placement starts.
- Non-Regulated Activity: If the over-16 placement does not meet the frequency threshold or specific criteria for regulated activity, an Enhanced DBS without a Barred List check may be considered based on the risk assessment.

Grievances

- Should a problem arise concerning a volunteer, this should be dealt with in line with the discipline and grievance policy and procedures for employed staff. The final decision as to the suitability of the volunteer rests with the Headteacher.
- Following appropriate investigation, If a volunteer is found to have intentionally failed to execute their statutory Mandatory Reporting Duty regarding child sexual abuse, the Headteacher will immediately terminate their placement and is legally obligated to refer the individual to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) for suitability assessment.
- Should a volunteer have a complaint or grievance they wish to raise, they should initially refer the matter to the Headteacher. If the problem is not resolved, the issue may progress in line with the discipline and grievance policy and procedures for employed Staff.

Reimbursement of expenses

The Headteacher will agree with individual volunteers whether expenses apply and what the limitations are. The Headteacher will also explain the procedure by which expenses may be authorised and claimed, and the method by which payments will be made.

Termination of service

Volunteers who wish to terminate their involvement with the school should give the Headteacher as much notice as possible so that alternative arrangements can be made. There is, however, no formal notice period and no legal obligation for the volunteer to give any notice.

The school reserves the right, in exceptional circumstances, to ask a volunteer to withdraw their help without notice and will be open about the reasons for this decision. Volunteers have no legal entitlement to notice.

Appendix A - Risk Assessment for Volunteers working in schools who are NOT in Regulated Activity (less than 3 days in a 30-day period)

This risk assessment template may be used by schools for volunteers who are NOT engaged in regulated activity, in line with the Crime and Policing Act 2026 and Keeping Children Safe in Education [para 381] 2026. This would NOT be appropriate for Volunteers who assist with daytime school trips.

Name of volunteer		Start date	
Person completing the risk assessment			

Is the volunteer going to be working in Regulated Activity as defined in KCSIE (2026)?

Yes

If the answer is yes, an enhanced DBS including the Barred List check should be obtained. The remaining sections of this form should not be completed.

If the answer is no, you may choose to obtain an Enhanced DBS certificate **without** a Barred List check, based on the risk assessment below and your professional judgement.

Risk Factors	Details	Risk scores 1=low risk 2=medium risk 3=high risk	Risk score
Will the volunteer have direct contact with children?		1=no contact 2=some contact 3=regular contact	
How frequent is the direct contact with children?		1=never/rarely 2=occasionally 3=frequently	
Age range of children		n/a	
Is there any contact with particularly vulnerable children?		1=no contact 2=some contact 3=regular contact	
Is the volunteer required to assist with any personal care?	If the answer is **yes,** then it is classified as regulated activity, and a full DBS as identified in A above should be completed.	1=no personal care	
What tasks will the volunteer be doing?		1=low risk/simple tasks	

		2=moderate risk/more complex tasks 3=high risk/complex tasks	
How frequently will they be working in the school?	If the answer is **more than 3 days in a 30-day period,** then it is classified as regulated activity, and a full DBS as identified in A above should be completed.	1= occasionally 2=2-3 times a term 3=weekly+	
Will they be working with children outside of school hours? when?	(Overnight work is Regulated Activity, select option A above)	1=None 2=Occasionally 3=Frequently	
Will they be working with children off school premises? Where? When?		1=Never/rarely 2=Occasionally 3=Frequently	
What is the association of the Volunteer with the school?		1=strong links eg ex staff 2=some eg parent/ex pupil 3=none or weak link	
How well does the school know the history of the Volunteer?		1=Well Known 2=Some knowledge 3=Little or none	
What has been stated as the reason for volunteering?		1=positive/sound reasons 2=acceptable/neither good nor bad 3=not known/personal gratification	
Can the volunteer provide a relevant reference from someone they have worked or volunteered for?	[Reference information should be saved with this risk assessment form]	1=Yes 3= No	
Can the volunteer provide a reference from someone who knows their work with children?	[Reference information should be saved with this risk assessment form]	1=Yes 3= No	
Does the volunteer have a history of paid or voluntary work with children?		1=Currently working 2=Worked within 5 years 3=Over 5 years ago 4=Never worked with children	

Does the Volunteer have a recent DBS certificate from another role?	[record the DBS details and confirm that the person completing this risk assessment has seen the physical copy of the certificate]	1=Yes within 12 months 2=Yes over 12 months 3=No	
Is the Volunteer currently signed up to the DBS update service?		1=Yes for a similar role 2=Yes for different role 3=No	
Are there any known or suspected concerns around working with children?		1=No concerns 2=Don't Know 3=Some concerns	
Any other factors to be taken into account.			
Total Risk Rating [total up the risk scores for each factor]			
Overall Risk level [tick one box - refer to the guide below]	High		

Guide to assessing risk level

(remember this is only a rough guide and individual schools should determine their own risk levels)

>30

Low Risk. A score of less than 30 points suggests the volunteer is well known to the school, has probably got some experience of previous work with children and can provide a reference and is generally working on school premises and within normal school hours with children who are not deemed particularly vulnerable. They may be a previous employee, governor or volunteer and/or well known to staff or colleagues. They may hold a recent DBS certificate which has been seen or a portable DBS

Action: there is no legal requirement to carry out a further DBS check but if the person doesn't hold a portable DBS they may wish to consider carrying out an enhanced DBS check with NO Barred List check

30-40

Moderate Risk. A score between 30-40 points suggests the volunteer has some connection with the school, perhaps as a parent and may have done some similar voluntary work in the past. No particular issues have come to light and there are no concerns over their suitability. The person has provided suitable references. They may work regularly with children where occasionally some of these children are deemed vulnerable. They do not have recent or portable DBS check.

Action: there is no legal requirement to carry out a further DBS check however the school may wish to consider carrying out an enhanced DBS check with NO Barred List check

41+

High Risk. A score of above 40 points suggests that the volunteer has no previous connection with the school and is not known to staff at the school and cannot provide relevant references as to their suitability to work with children. They do not hold a current DBS or portable DBS check or they may be expected to work directly with children who may be particularly vulnerable or off school premises and out of hours.

Action: there is no legal requirement to carry out an enhanced DBS check, however it is recommended that the school consider carrying out an enhanced DBS check with NO Barred List check.

Agreed action Enhanced DBS check required

Comments/further information:

Sign off:

Name of person signing off risk assessment _____

Role _____

Signature _____

Date _____

This risk assessment should be saved in a shared location on the school Google Drive and should be accessible to those with safeguarding responsibilities. If a volunteer is carrying out regulated activity, their details should also be recorded on the school single central register.

Appendix B - Example Volunteer Agreement

Volunteer and Placement Agreement

This agreement is between:

(Volunteer/Placement name) …….

and XXXX School

Volunteer

I agree to offer my services as a volunteer to the school and will do this from

(date)…… until either I or XXXX school end this agreement.

I am willing to volunteer to (*please describe)*:

I will discuss my availability for volunteering with the School Volunteer Coordinator and/or class teacher.

I agree to provide the school with:

- Name, address, e-mail (if appropriate) and telephone number
- Next of kin and/or emergency contact names and contact details and I will advise the school if these details change.

I agree to follow school policies and procedures relevant to my volunteering opportunity. I understand that the policies are available on the school or trust website.

I have read and understand the following policies:

- Safeguarding
- Whistleblowing and Speak Up
- Health and Safety

- If at any time a disclosure is made by a child, under no circumstance will I discuss the information with anyone other than my assigned teacher or the Headteacher (Safeguarding Coordinator). The disclosed information should be taken to your assigned teacher in confidence who will ensure the Headteacher is notified and the correct forms are completed in line with school policy.
- In the event of the fire bell sounding I understand that I need to exit the building via the nearest fire exit and proceed to the fire assembly point. If I am working with children I will ensure they accompany me to the assembly point where they will be handed over to their

class teacher. I must then make myself known to the office staff who will have the volunteer signing in sheet.

- As a volunteer I am responsible for behaving in a safe manner while at school. I should not attempt to lift or carry heavy items, must act as a role model at all times and must ensure that I am confident to use equipment before attempting to do so.
- I understand that I must NOT pick up children, hug/cuddle or have them sitting on my lap undirected. I should also avoid holding hands with any children, unless directed by a member of staff. I must not attempt to restrain a child.
- If a child is injured, I must inform the nearest member of staff. If appropriate, they will contact the school office where qualified first aider will assess the needs. Records of all accidents and emergencies are kept.
- I understand that I will not be left on my own with children or be asked to deal with behaviour issues which will be managed by a member of staff.
- I agree to maintain confidentiality in accordance with the school's policy both during my time at school and also once I have left.
- I agree to take responsibility for my attendance, punctuality and behaviour throughout the placement and will ensure that I am well presented (appropriate dress - no jeans, trainers, short skirts, low cut tops etc.)
- I agree to sign in at the school office every day and wear a volunteer/visitor badge.
- I understand that in line with school policy, telephones can only be checked at break times and should remain on silent. If I am expecting an urgent call this will be discussed with the class teacher / named contact.
- I understand that photographs must not be taken of children.
- I understand that personal processions are left at my own risk and I have been advised not to bring valuables into school.
- I agree to volunteer within the role described. If I have any concerns about aspects of the role I will speak initially to the class teacher(_____) to seek clarification.
- I will give the school as much notice as possible if I cannot be available for a session.
- I agree to let the School Volunteer Coordinator and/or class teacher know if I need any resources or support for my volunteering opportunity.
- I understand that volunteering positions are offered on a temporary basis and can be withdrawn at any time depending on the needs of the school and suitability of the applicant.

School Coordinator

On behalf of the school I agree to:

- advise the volunteer of their named contact for all of their dealings whilst at school and provide them with contact details, including in case of emergency (e.g. if they are unwell and cannot fulfil a commitment).
- organise orientation for volunteers: advice re: signing in/out and access to facilities, provision of school policies and procedures relevant to the volunteering role and location (e.g. fire procedures and exits).
- ensure that volunteers are introduced to office staff, teaching staff and pupils with whom they will be involved as part of carrying out their volunteering role.
- ensure that volunteering opportunities and roles are clearly defined, explained and supported e.g. ensuring that resources and materials are made available as appropriate.
- ensure that all staff are supportive throughout your time at the school.
- Under statutory safeguarding guidance, the threshold for "Regulated Activity" is met if you provide teaching, training, instruction, care, or supervision to children on more than 3 days in any 30-day period, cumulatively across all settings.

Please check the appropriate box and sign below:

- [ ] I confirm that I do not currently volunteer or work with children at any other school, club, or organisation, and my volunteering at [School Name] will not exceed 3 days in any 30-day period.
- [ ] I confirm that I do volunteer or work with children at other settings, but my *total cumulative* volunteering across all organisations (including [School Name]) will not exceed 3 days in any 30-day period.
- [ ] I notify the school that my total volunteering across all settings (including [School Name]) will or may exceed 3 days in a 30-day period. I understand that I cannot begin volunteering until an Enhanced DBS check (including a Children's Barred List check) has been processed and cleared.

Ongoing Duty to Disclose:

I agree that if my volunteering patterns change or if I take up additional volunteering/work with children elsewhere that causes me to meet or exceed the "more than 3 days in 30 days" threshold, I will immediately notify the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) before my next volunteer session.

Signed

Volunteer name: _____

School representative: _____

Position: _____

Date: _____