



Lumen Learning Trust

Learning together for a brighter future

Volunteer Handbook

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

We want you to enjoy your time with us and we have produced this guide to make sure you feel comfortable, supported and appreciated and the time you give can have the maximum benefit on our children's learning opportunities.

There are two main ways of helping in school:

- Occasional support e.g. at sports events or school trips. These are individual events and generally volunteers only commit themselves to one event at a time
- Regular support. This is when volunteers offer regular weekly support to the school for a set period of time. Usually, the commitment will be for a term or longer and will consist of a timetabled weekly session.

Any time you give will be welcomed! We appreciate the many demands on your time in terms of work and family commitments so as much or as little you can give to volunteering in school will be gratefully received.

Before you begin your volunteering in school:

We are bound by a number of safeguarding regulations in place to protect both the children and the adults working with them. Before you begin your support in school we need:

- Enhanced DBS clearance with children's barred list. This is an online process and our school office staff will help you with this
- 2 references (only applicable for those volunteers working in 'regulated activity')
- Evidence of your right to remain in the UK
- A completed Childcare Disqualification Declaration Form

You will be required to read a number of policies and complete Child Protection training via the SSS Learning Portal. In advance of starting, we will also arrange a short briefing session with one of the school's senior leadership team.

In addition, we need the volunteer agreement to be signed and returned. We will ensure you have provided us with emergency contact details before you start. It is your responsibility to inform us should these details change. Please be assured that all contact information you give us is for our use only, and will never be passed on to anyone else without your permission.

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 therefore ask that you follow this simple routine every time you visit the school:

- Only enter the school via the front entrance
- Sign the visitors book and collect a visitors' badge
- When you have finished, please return to the school office, sign out and return the badge

Attendance

If for any reason you cannot help as planned, please let the school know as soon as possible. This is for two reasons: the teacher will have planned for your support as part of the learning for that session; we will be worried as to your wellbeing if you simply don't turn up.

Please could you come in just a little before the session starts so that the teacher can give you the relevant information and instructions. Once the lesson has started, it is very difficult for the teacher to stop to speak to you.

Parking

If you drive to the school, there is no parking on site.

Belongings

It is not advisable to bring too many personal belongings and valuables to school with you, however you will be advised when you start where you can leave your coat and bag etc. If you take your bag to the classroom, please ensure it is kept well away and out of reach of the children. Young children are naturally inquisitive and handbags can be a source of particular interest!

Toilets

When you arrive, you will be shown where the staff toilets are. Please note that adults are not allowed to use the children's toilets.

Training

Other than the Safeguarding training, there is no other compulsory training required. There may be whole staff training sessions on generic aspects of provision e.g. Behaviour Management which we may invite our volunteers to.

Movement around the school

Most of the time you will be working with a designated staff member in their classroom. Teaching staff will direct you to specific tasks and areas to work in. If you need to visit other classrooms (e.g. to collect children for reading), please be as discreet as possible while lessons are taking place. Please help yourself to tea and coffee from the staffroom kitchen at break time but do not carry hot drinks around the school unless they are in a safety cup.

Activities

The activities you will be asked to support may be wide-ranging however are most likely to be around one-to-one support or small group support in a particular area of learning. This support may look like 'playing' at times and not what you would describe as real 'work', however be assured all activities have been planned by the teacher with a clear purpose in mind. The teacher will give you clear instructions about the activity but if you are unsure about anything please do **ASK**. You may also be asked to help with the myriad of organisational activities that are part of the day-to-day running of a classroom including filing, backing boards, mounting display work, mixing paint – the list is endless!

At the end of a session working with the children, the teacher is likely to ask you how the child/ren responded to the activity – please be prepared to pass on this information however try to refrain from judgments about either the quality/nature of the task or the child.

If you are given an activity and, for whatever reason, have difficulties with it, speak to the class teacher.

Emergencies/Accidents

If the fire alarm goes off the expectation is that everyone evacuates the building from the nearest exit point. Children are expected to line up in silence and exit with the adults. Please familiarize yourself with the emergency evacuation procedures.

If a child needs low level medical attention (cuts or grazes) or isn't feeling well, please take them to the school office and they will be attended to by staff there. Please don't be surprised if the child is sent back to class – the school staff are excellent judges as to whether or not a child is well enough to stay in school or whether a parent should be called. We all work hard to ensure children attend at least 95% of their school year.

If you are injured whilst on the school site, please report this to the school office so that it can be logged.

Insurance

You will be insured in the same way as members of staff. Basically, as long as you follow the guidelines in this booklet, you will be covered by the school insurance policy for most ordinary occurrences.

Equal Opportunities

At our schools we do not tolerate discrimination of any kind either - explicit or implicit.

Working with children

Whether you have previous experience of working with children or, not here are some guidelines to help:

- Be friendly and encouraging with the children, especially when working with them for the first time. They may be a little nervous – introduce yourself and explain what you will be doing with them that day
- Parent volunteers need to be aware they may not be working with their child or their child's class. If they do find themselves working with their child please treat them like all the other children particularly in terms of discipline and rewards when you are supporting in school.
- Remember that although we need to be friendly, we are not making friendships, and it is important that the children give the same amount of respect as the other adults in the school. The children will be expected to call you by your title and name e.g. "Mrs. Briars" – even if they know you well outside of school by your first name.
- Our children are usually enthusiastic and co-operative. If a child becomes overenthusiastic and the behaviour becomes inappropriate – ask them calmly to settle down to help them and others concentrate. If a child continues not to engage, remind them what they are doing and that you are there to help.
- If your reasonable attempts to help the child engage with their learning do not work, use a final reminder e.g. *"If you can't settle down to your learning, you will have to go back to the class to see your teacher and I will help someone else instead"*
- Please don't get into arguments with the children, make threats or issue punishments. If you have any concerns at all, ask for help from a member of staff
- The children know you are not a teacher so please don't feel embarrassed or disappointed if you need to seek extra support

- Please don't use the word "naughty" or "bad" and instead use the language of choice; children make poor choices or good choices. Praise them for the good choices and let them know if the behaviour is indicative of poor choices rather than "naughty"
- 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 effort. If it hasn't gone so well use phrases like *"next week you could think about..."* and *"I think it would help your learning if..."* rather than telling them off
- Please do not cuddle, hug or pick up the children.
- Remember that we are the children's role models

Dress code

Volunteers are not required to adhere to the dress code of staff members however for a number of reasons we would ask that you do not wear the following:

- Long maxi skirts or dresses which could form a trip hazard on the stairs if trying to evacuate the building in an emergency
- Mini-skirts;
- Lycra cycling shorts
- Transparent or 'see-through' blouses, dresses or shirts;
- Clothing with tears, holes and rips;
- Low-cut T-shirts or blouses;
- Spaghetti/shoestring or other strapped tops or dresses;
- Strapless tops
- Crop-tops;
- Badges or emblems or logos which may cause offence;
- Indoor wearing of baseball caps/hats;
- Clothes which restrict movement and which can easily snag on equipment e.g. loose pockets, sequins, large buttons etc;
- Underwear should not be worn in a revealing manner.

Confidentiality

In becoming a volunteer in one of our schools you are effectively entering into a professional relationship which brings with it the same expectations regarding confidentiality. Please do not discuss things you have seen and heard, especially when sensitive information about pupils is involved. If you are a parent volunteer, other parents (including spouses) may ask questions about individual children or staff in school either in person, via email or a social media site. Please remember to discuss such matters in this way would be considered a breach of confidentiality and trust.

Parent volunteers wanting to discuss something with their child's class teacher need to make an appointment as is the proper process for all parents, rather than catching the teacher when they come in to volunteer.

Child Protection

If a child tells you something that makes you wonder whether or not they are safe from harm or neglect in any way, please let the class teacher know as well as one of the schools' Designated Safeguarding Leads. Please take care to ensure that once you have passed the matter on, you do not discuss it with someone else. The decision to act on the information or to log it as part of an ongoing record will be down to the Designated Safeguarding Leads. Please do not worry if it does not appear that anything has been done. **All** concerns are logged and considered in the context of other information we have about the child.

The basic safeguarding training ensures you are aware of all we can do to ensure our children are safe.