

Volunteer Helpers in School Policy

Governing Body
October 2026

Volunteer Helpers in School Policy

Vision

We want our federation to be open and welcoming to all who would like to support the children. We would like to encourage parents and other adults to help the federation in a variety of ways. We believe that parents and carers can add enormous value to children's learning opportunities and experiences. Our overriding concern is for the safety and security of the children in our care. Our policy is to ensure that the children benefit from as much help and support as necessary while being ensured of the best security possible.

Aims of Volunteer Helpers Policy

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

Volunteer helpers are

- Parents or other adults working alongside the teachers
- Students on work experience

This policy applies at Low Road and Windmill Primary Schools, including Windmill Daycare and reception provision. Student placements require age-appropriate arrangements agreed with the sending school or college.

Volunteer helpers support the school in a number of ways

- Supporting individual pupils within classrooms
- Hearing pupils read
- Helping with classroom organisation
- Helping with supervision of children on school visits
- Helping with group work
- Helping with art or other practical subjects (cooking etc)

Role boundaries and arrival arrangements

Volunteer helpers are not allowed to do the following activities

- Take responsibility for all or some of the class
- Change very young children or supervise them changing
- Supervise children engaged in PE or other specialist activities
- Take the children off the school site without a teacher in charge

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

Volunteers work under an identified member of staff within agreed tasks and supervision arrangements. They must not undertake intimate or personal care, administer medication, provide healthcare or transport pupils in a private vehicle as part of this volunteer role. They must seek staff assistance whenever a task exceeds their agreed role.

Signing in

When any helper arrives in the school, they must sign in at the school office and collect their visitor/parent helper badge which must be worn at all times in school. Volunteers must also sign out which will log the time when they are leaving the school premises.

Safeguarding checks

Before agreeing a placement, the Headteacher or delegated leader will record the proposed duties, frequency, duration, supervision and access to children. The school will establish identity, discuss suitability face to face, obtain appropriate references and determine the lawful DBS check for the role. Knowing an applicant personally does not replace safer recruitment checks. Regular volunteers will provide two referees; the school will verify references directly and resolve relevant concerns before approval.

From 1 September 2026, supervision no longer exempts the relevant activities from regulated activity. Teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervising children is regulated activity when undertaken frequently, on more than three days in any 30-day period, or overnight under the statutory period condition. The overnight condition includes activity between 2am and 6am with an opportunity for face-to-face contact with children. Weekly reading helpers and volunteers helping on overnight school trips require an enhanced DBS check with children's barred list information. Relevant volunteering across different settings counts towards the period condition.

The school will also consider other regulated activities under the current definition, including advice or guidance on children's wellbeing and driving a vehicle only for children. Relevant personal care and healthcare can be regulated activity even once; these are outside the volunteer role allowed by this policy.

A barred person must not undertake regulated activity. A children's barred list check must only be requested where the person is undertaking or seeking to undertake regulated activity. A DBS check is one part of the suitability assessment.

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.

Trainee/student teachers

Where applicants for initial teacher training are salaried by the school or college, the school or college must ensure that all necessary checks are carried out including an enhanced DBS check (including children's barred list information).

Where trainee teachers are fee-funded, it is the responsibility of the initial teacher training provider to carry out the necessary checks. Schools and colleges should obtain written confirmation from the provider that it has carried out all pre- appointment checks that the school or college would otherwise be required to perform, and that the trainee has been judged by the provider to be suitable to work with children.

There is no requirement for the school or college to record details of fee- funded trainees on the single central record. However, schools and colleges may wish to record this information under non statutory information, see paragraphs

Volunteers

Regular or overnight volunteers

The Crime and Policing Act 2026 made changes to regulated activity, meaning that any person volunteering in a school or college in a role that involves teaching, training, instructing or supervising children frequently or on more than 3 days in a 30-day period or overnight is now in regulated activity (see paragraph 315 for more information on regulated activity). Where this applies, schools or colleges should obtain an enhanced DBS check with children's barred list information

Where an individual meets the period condition (more than 3 days in a 30- day period) by volunteering at multiple settings, the school or college should work with the other settings to decide who should apply for the enhanced DBS check with barred list information, and that information should then be supplied by the individual to each setting. Volunteers may also choose to join the DBS Update Service at the point that a DBS check is applied for. This is free for volunteers and allows portability of a DBS check across different education settings

Existing volunteers in regulated activity

Where a school or college has an existing volunteer who will now be in regulated activity from 1 September 2026 because of the changes brought in by the Crime and Policing Act 2026, they must check their children's barred

list status. This should be done by obtaining an enhanced DBS check with children's barred list information. Schools and colleges are able to obtain a standalone barred list check. They may do this where either:

- the school or college wishes to allow the volunteer to undertake regulated activity prior to obtaining the enhanced DBS check certificate; or
- the school or college has recently obtained an enhanced DBS check without children's barred list information, and there has been no break in service since that certificate was issued.

Volunteers not in regulated activity

Under no circumstances should a volunteer on whom no checks have been obtained be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

Whilst volunteers play an important role and are often seen by children as being safe and trustworthy adults, the nature of voluntary roles varies, so schools and colleges should undertake a written risk assessment and use their professional judgement and experience when deciding what checks, if any, are required.

The risk assessment should consider:

- the nature of any work with children,
- what the establishment knows about the volunteer, including formal or informal information offered by staff, parents and other volunteers,
- whether the volunteer has other employment or undertakes voluntary activities where referees can advise on their suitability, and
- where the role is not regulated activity, whether another level of DBS check might be appropriate, such as:
 - an enhanced DBS check without barred list information, for volunteers who would be in regulated activity but do not volunteer frequently, or
 - a basic DBS check for any other volunteer who may have access to children.

Details of the risk assessment should be recorded

Completing checks and assessing occasional roles

Before volunteering starts

As a federation safeguard, volunteers will not start a role requiring a DBS check until the school has received and assessed the required certificate and completed other relevant checks. Waiting for completed checks is adopted as federation best practice. In settings covered by the EYFS framework, the school must receive the enhanced DBS certificate including barred list information before the volunteer begins working there.

Existing volunteers whose roles became regulated activity on 1 September 2026 must have their children's barred list status checked. Where a recent enhanced DBS check without barred list information has been obtained and there has been no break in service, the school may obtain a standalone children's barred list check through DfE's Check a teacher's record service in accordance with DfE guidance. The decision and supporting checks will be recorded.

Where an existing certificate or the DBS Update Service is used, the school will check identity, inspect the original certificate, confirm the appropriate workforce and check level, obtain consent for any Update Service status check and record the outcome. Further overseas checks will be considered where relevant. Any applicable childcare disqualification requirements will be assessed for the role.

Volunteers outside regulated activity

Occasional day-trip or event helpers are not automatically required to have an enhanced DBS check with barred list information. The school will make and retain a written risk assessment for each proposed role outside regulated activity. It will consider duties and access to children, frequency across settings, what is known about the volunteer, relevant reference information, supervision and whether the role is eligible for an enhanced DBS check without barred list information or whether a basic check is appropriate.

Under no circumstances may a volunteer on whom no checks have been obtained be left unsupervised or allowed to undertake regulated activity. An occasional role must be reassessed before its duties or frequency change. Supervision must be suitable for the task and pupils and must not be used to avoid a required barred list check.

Students on work experience

A named member of staff will supervise each student. The school and sending institution will agree duties, safeguarding induction, emergency contacts and arrangements for reporting concerns. Placements involving students under 18 must also protect the student as a child. DBS checks cannot be requested for anyone under 16; such students will not be given unsupervised responsibility for pupils. For students aged 16 or over, checks will be determined by the actual role and current eligibility rules. Work experience and course placements are not automatically eligible for free volunteer DBS checks.

Confidentiality

We recognise that for staff and parents of other children to be confident about helpers in school all volunteers will need to agree to a protocol about confidentiality and conduct. Volunteer helpers are asked to sign a 'Volunteer Helpers Protocol,' a copy of which will be kept in school.

Confidentiality must never prevent a safeguarding report or lawful sharing with the appropriate safeguarding professionals. Volunteers will only receive information needed for their role and must not retain pupil information on personal devices or disclose it to other parents.

Safeguarding induction and reporting

Before starting, each volunteer will receive an induction appropriate to their duties. The school will explain its current safeguarding and child protection procedures, safer working expectations, behaviour arrangements, online safety, confidentiality, mobile technology rules, first aid, fire evacuation and other emergency procedures. The school will provide the relevant safeguarding reading and check the volunteer's understanding. Induction and subsequent updates will be recorded.

The volunteer must be introduced to the DSL and deputies, given their current contact details and shown how to report and record concerns. A volunteer must report any concern about a child immediately to the DSL or a deputy. If neither is available, they must contact the Headteacher or another senior leader without delay; absence of the DSL must not delay protective action. Where a child is in immediate danger, contact the police on 999. The school's current Leeds referral routes will be provided at induction.

If a child makes a disclosure, the volunteer must listen calmly, avoid leading questions, never promise secrecy, record the child's words and the circumstances accurately and pass the information promptly through the school's safeguarding procedure. Volunteers must not investigate or approach parents about a safeguarding concern themselves.

Concerns about adults and whistleblowing

Concerns or allegations about staff or volunteers must be reported immediately to the Headteacher.

Concerns about the Headteacher or Executive Headteacher must be reported to the Chair of Governors. Where there is a conflict of interest in reporting to the Headteacher, contact the Leeds LADO directly. Low-level concerns must be reported through the federation's current low-level concerns procedure; volunteers must not decide to ignore a concern because it seems minor.

The responsible leader will follow KCSIE Part four and Leeds allegations procedures. Allegations meeting the harm threshold will be referred to the Leeds LADO within one working day. Where there is uncertainty about the threshold, the leader will seek LADO advice. The federation will make a DBS referral when the statutory referral conditions are met, including where a volunteer leaves before removal from regulated activity would have occurred.

Volunteers must know how to raise concerns about unsafe practice or safeguarding failures under the federation's whistleblowing arrangements, including external routes if they cannot safely raise a concern

internally. Confidentiality and the volunteer agreement do not restrict lawful safeguarding reports or whistleblowing.

Deployment of Parent Helpers

It is the policy of the school to ask parents not to support in their own child's classroom, as this can be distracting for the child and perhaps can place the class teacher in a difficult situation. Helpers will be asked to support in classes where there is the most need for individual support.

Appendix A

Records monitoring and review

The school will keep a secure record of each volunteer's role, checks and dates, suitability decision, risk assessment where applicable, named supervisor, induction and signed protocol. As federation practice, regular volunteers and volunteers in regulated activity will be recorded on the Single Central Record; occasional helpers will have an accessible separate record. Volunteer entries on the SCR are a local recording choice, not a blanket statutory SCR requirement. Records of DBS checks for volunteers in regulated activity must be readily available for authorised inspection.

The Headteacher and Leadership Team will monitor implementation and report annually to governors on volunteer numbers, impact and safeguarding assurance. This policy will be reviewed annually and earlier when legislation, guidance or local procedures change. Personal and criminal-record information will be securely restricted and retained only for the appropriate period under data protection and DBS requirements.

Printed name _____ Signature _____

Date policy agreed _____ Next review _____

Volunteer Helpers in School Protocol

Please read and sign the document below to confirm your agreement with the following school expectations as a volunteer helper:

As a school we agree to

- Explain your tasks/jobs carefully so that you are clear about what we would like you to do with the children
- Share the school behaviour and ethos policy with you to help you understand how we manage behaviour
- Provide a named supervisor and staff support when behaviour or another situation is beyond your volunteer role.
- Treat you with the highest respect and care
- Share relevant information about the children you are working with
- Let you know in advance the overall plan for the day and let you know if this changes.
- Treat information you tell us sensitively and share it only when necessary, including for safeguarding or other lawful purposes.
- Complete and assess the required checks before approving your role, provide safeguarding induction and explain the reporting routes for child concerns, adult concerns and whistleblowing.

We agree not to ask you to:

- Deal with difficult or challenging behaviour
- Carry out a task that you feel unprepared to complete

Signed _____ Date _____ Class _____

Teacher/Headteacher

As a volunteer helper I agree to

- Use the school behaviour and ethos policy and inform the teacher if I see any inappropriate behaviour
- Report child safeguarding concerns immediately to the DSL or deputy and follow the reporting routes in this policy for concerns about adults or unsafe practice. Never promise secrecy or investigate concerns myself.
- Keep information confidential while sharing safeguarding concerns with the appropriate people.
- Inform the school if I am unable to come into school for any reason by 8.00am in the morning
- Respect and listen to the guidance of the teacher at all times
- Cooperate with the lawful DBS and suitability checks identified for my role and tell the Headteacher promptly about relevant changes affecting my suitability or my volunteering duties or frequency, including volunteering elsewhere. I am not required to disclose protected convictions or cautions.
- Follow the Mobile Technology Policy and Safeguarding Policy, including switching off personal mobile devices as required. Do not photograph, film or audio-record pupils using personal devices, including smart watches.

Volunteer protocol continued

I agree not to:

- Access or compare children's work or records beyond the tasks authorised by the teacher, or access staff records.
- Share information about children or staff outside authorised school arrangements, except for lawful safeguarding reporting or whistleblowing.
- Undertake any social media activity with children or about the federation schools
- Arrange private contact with pupils, exchange personal contact details with them or use personal accounts to message them.
- Undertake a task outside my agreed role or work without the agreed supervision.

Signed _____ Date _____ Volunteer Helper
_____ Printed Name

Induction record to be completed by school

Named supervisor and role

DSL and deputy names and how to contact them

Headteacher and Chair of Governors reporting contacts

Current Leeds child protection and LADO referral routes supplied

Induction and relevant reading completed on _____

Understanding checked by _____ Volunteer
signature _____

Work Experience or Volunteer Application Form

Low Road and Windmill Music Federation is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all employees and volunteers to share this commitment.

Applicant personal details

Surname and first names

Title and address

College or school address and contact name and telephone number

Email address and landline or mobile phone number

Are you under 16 or under 18 at the proposed start date

Application details and references

Why are you applying for a placement at the school

Please complete the relevant sections below, continue on an additional sheet if required.

Tell us about any previous volunteering/employment experience. For a placement please tell us why you want to work at our school.

Are you applying for or studying for a course? If yes please provide details. What are your aspirations?

Please explain what you want to achieve from your placement or why you want to volunteer, including how this could benefit the children in our school.

Placement requirements as a volunteer or student

Please specify the kind of placement you require, for example year group or particular curriculum area.

Length of placement and number of hours needed

Please give details of preferred dates, days and times of placement

Other roles involving children at other settings and their days or frequency

Further personal information

We would not normally provide placements in a class in which you have a relation. Please provide details of any relations at the federation.

Please tell us about any adjustments or support you would like for the application process or placement. You may discuss this confidentially with the school.

References

Please provide two references. Please let your referees know that we may contact them.

Reference 1 name, address, telephone number and capacity in which they know you

Reference 2 name, address, telephone number and capacity in which they know you

Please also provide referee email addresses. Referees should be able to comment on suitability for this role; a relative must not be used as a referee.

Declaration

I declare that the information given in this application form is true and correct.

Signed _____ Print name _____

Date _____

Confidential suitability declaration

To be issued separately to shortlisted applicants where relevant to the proposed role. Return confidentially to the Headteacher. The school will confirm the lawful disclosure level before this form is completed. Do not disclose protected convictions or cautions or provide a blanket history of unsubstantiated allegations.

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

For a role involving regulated activity with children only: are you barred from regulated activity with children?
Yes / No

Are you currently subject to a relevant prohibition, disqualification or restriction that prevents you undertaking the proposed role? Yes / No / Not applicable

Criminal records self declaration

Where the school confirms the role is eligible for an enhanced DBS check: do you have convictions or adult cautions, whether spent or unspent, that are not protected under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 as amended? Yes / No

Where the role is not eligible for a standard or enhanced DBS check and the school requests a declaration: do you have any unspent convictions or unspent conditional cautions? Yes / No

Complete only the question appropriate to the role. You are not required to disclose protected cautions or convictions. The school will not take protected matters into account if disclosed inadvertently. Current DBS filtering guidance is listed in the reference section.

If you answer yes to a relevant question, provide details separately in a sealed envelope marked confidential or by a secure route agreed with the school.

I understand that the school will determine appropriate checks for the role and that a DBS check may be required. I confirm that my answers are true and complete within the lawful disclosure requirements.

Signed _____ Print name _____ Date _____

School approval record

Role and frequency assessed including other settings and overnight duties

Regulated activity decision and required checks including references

Checks completed and assessed by and date

Written risk assessment reference where applicable and supervision agreed

Suitability approved by and date and authorised start date

Related federation procedures

Read alongside the current adopted safeguarding and child protection procedures, safer working practice, behaviour, mobile technology, online safety, whistleblowing, data protection and educational visits arrangements. Induction must identify the applicable procedures and reporting contacts.