

PER0008	Last Reviewed: January 2017 Reviewed By: Personnel	
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Volunteers in School

Purpose

The School has established a policy in support of Parents (and other adults) wishing to work as volunteers in School. There are many ways volunteers can contribute to life in School, particularly in the following areas:

1. In the classroom and grounds alongside a teacher.
2. On school trips and or driving pupils to off-site activities.
3. In mandate groups, PTFA and as class representatives.
4. As a trustee.
5. On organised community days.
6. As part of fundraising activities.
7. Manning the School Shop on site and at off site marketing or fundraising events.

We encourage and recognise parents as educators and as such we always welcome parents into school. We offer work experience for young adults in training as well as young people wishing to have a working experience of school life.

Our responsibilities to volunteers:

- To give appropriate information to volunteers to allow them to work safely and effectively, in line with the Health & Safety policy and guidance.
- To work positively with volunteers and listen to what they have to say, encouraging two-way open communication.
- To try and resolve any concerns fairly and reasonably.
- To provide clear guidance on the expectations and aspirations of the teacher or mandate holder with whom the volunteers are working.
- To celebrate success and recognise loyalty and dedication.
- To offer equal opportunities to all volunteers in line with our Equal Opportunities Policy

Our expectations of volunteers:

- All volunteers who are expected to come into contact with children who are under the supervision of the school, need to produce a recent enhanced Disqualification and Barring Service (DBS) certificate (undertaken by Alder Bridge School), Update Service details or be willing to undergo an enhanced DBS check. Details of this will be added to the Single Central Register (further information relating to both DBS checks and the Single Central Register [SCR] can be found in the Alder Bridge School's Disqualification and Barring Service Policy).
- To sign the school's confidentiality agreement.
- To complete a Disqualification by Association declaration form if providing provision for childcare or is in regulated activity with children.
- Volunteers are requested to indicate the level of commitment they can offer in order for the school to plan and organise work and support for the pupils effectively.
- To respect the work of the staff and to be able to work under direction.
- Volunteers are expected to abide by the school's code of conduct and to:
 - Voice any concerns about children they work with, or come into contact with, to the appropriate staff member and not to the parents or other people outside of the school;
 - Raise concerns about anything another adult does or says in school with the Education Manager, Chair of College, Chair of Trustees or Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- To support and respect Alder Bridge School's policies, guidelines and management decisions; including all aspects of safeguarding, equal opportunities, health and safety and data protection

PER0008	Last Reviewed: January 2017 Reviewed By: Personnel	 Alder Bridge Steiner-Waldorf School
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Community Days

Volunteers, as well as all parents, are encouraged to participate in community days. These events are great social occasions where the school community come together for the benefit of the school to join in refreshing and enhancing the school buildings and grounds; as well as sharing a well earned meal. Community is an important feature of school life. It can also be an opportunity to learn new skills.

Expectations are that:

- All families participate in at least one work day a year where possible.
- Children at work days are under the supervision of the parent and carers who are responsible for ensuring the children abide by the school's code of conduct.
- Volunteers and other adults should ensure they are working in a safe manner; and within the scope of the Risk Assessment for the activity. If there are any doubts, guidance should be sought from the responsible person.

Procedures

- Volunteers are requested to complete a Volunteer Form.
- Volunteers must produce a recent DBS certificate (undertaken by Alder Bridge School), Update Service details or apply for a DBS before they can work in the school.
- Volunteers should be give copies of the following documents, which they should sign to show that they have read and understood them:
 - Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
 - Health and Safety Policy.
 - Keeping Children Safe in Education.
 - Confidentiality Agreement.
 - Fire Evacuation Plan.
- Volunteers must provide certificates or undertake the following training before they start volunteering:
 - Face to face Safeguarding training with the DSL.
 - Channel awareness.
- All volunteers should report to the School Office and sign in before joining the class or group they are here to work with. Visitor badges must be worn at all times whilst on site.
- Volunteers who are required to transport pupils to off-site activities or organised trips must have the appropriate car insurance and car seat arrangements.
- Any expense incurred as part of the work undertake as a volunteer, such as mileage, travel costs or materials can be claimed back.

Approved by:

Next review date: February 2018

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Appendices

Sample Letter and FAQs

Welcome to our School

Thank you for your interest in volunteering in school.

Volunteering can take many forms and we appreciate the help that our volunteers give us to support the work of the school.

We value our volunteers and we hope that you will enjoy working with us. We have produced this guide to help you feel comfortable working in school and we hope that you will also feel able to ask any questions as they arise.

The points of contact for volunteers in school are as follows:

- the class teacher you work with
- the school office
- the School Administrator

It is important for school security and fire regulations that all staff, visitors and volunteers to the school can be identified and located at all times and we ask you to follow the simple routine of: -

- a) Signing in and out when coming into and leaving the premises
- b) Wearing the Visitor badge we give you at all times whilst in school

Where can I work?

The short answer is — Almost anywhere!

Please let us know if you have a strong preference about the age group with which you would like to work or if there is a particular task on which you would like to focus. You might even have a preference for which class you would like to volunteer. If you would like to share your time between several classes or if you find you do not enjoy the volunteering opportunity we offer, please let us know. We want you to be happy and we want you to know that we value your time and energy

How much time must I give?

Another short answer — It's up to you!

We appreciate all the time you choose to offer. Some volunteers prefer to have a timetable. Some prefer to arrange single visits when they can spare some time.

All we ask is that you let us know if you have made an arrangement with the school but find that you can't come. Your work in school is valuable and the teacher may have been counting on you to help with an activity that cannot go ahead without your help.

School is a work place and you will be supporting children's learning and joining a committed team of staff and volunteers.

Do I need a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check?

A DBS check is not generally required for one-off, supervised visits. If, as part of your help, you will be with the children unsupervised, eg, when transporting children to another venue/activity or the activity is held regularly, then we would request an enhanced DBS check to be completed.

Where can I go in School?

As a volunteer you will be expected to work with the teacher/s whom you have decided to help. For most of the school day, therefore, you will be sharing the classroom with the teacher/s concerned. The teacher will be responsible for you and if you are in any doubt about your role, where you should be working or questions about the school, please ask your teacher. Apart from moving about the school in the normal course of the day, we would expect you to stay with the teacher who is supervising your activities.

If you are with us during break times, you can join your teacher in the staff room. You can use the toilets that the staff use. Please do not use the children's toilets.

What should I do if I have a problem whilst working in School?

We expect all members of the school community to be polite, courteous and self-disciplined. Pupils watch us and follow our example. The same rules apply to staff, children and volunteers working in school. Please discuss problems with the teacher. The teachers in school are expected to act "in loco parentis" — this means in place of the parents. They are responsible for the children whilst they are at school.

- Never tell off a child. The school has a code of discipline which children are expected to follow. As a volunteer you are not expected to discipline children. If there is a problem — tell the teacher straight away.
- Never get into an argument with children or other adults. Teachers are trained to deal with problem situations and they are paid to take responsibility
- The only time we would expect any adult to intervene is to prevent a child hurting themselves or another child. Do this by telling them quietly and firmly to stop. Avoid physically restraining a child unless they will damage another child or themselves and do this with great care.
- Never shout at a child.
- Never hit a child.
- Never threaten to hit or manhandle a child.
- Never be left in sole charge of a child.
- Read the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.
- Read the school's Anti-bullying policy.

Am I insured whilst working at the School?

You will be insured for the same activities as teachers. The school policy is available for you to see in the school office. Please read it and ask the teacher with whom you work if you are unsure about anything. Fundamentally, as long as you follow the guidelines in this booklet you will be covered by the school insurance policy for most ordinary occurrences.

If you transport children either in your own transport or in school transport you will need to be certain that your insurance policy covers you. Please check with the school office or your teacher.

If I am claiming State Benefits such as Jobseeker's Allowance or sickness benefit will I be able to work as a volunteer?

The rules change sometimes and your local Council for Voluntary Service (CVS - number in local telephone directory) will be able to offer you straightforward advice if you have any doubts. The CVS is not a government department.

What work should I not undertake?

Some activities would bring volunteers into conflict with employed persons and may strain industrial relations. The school will know which these are and you can ask to see the guidance notes if you wish.

Health and Safety Regulations will prevent you undertaking some activities. These Regulations are available for you to read if you wish.

PER0008	Last Reviewed: January 2017 Reviewed By: Personnel	
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Some activities could expose you to unnecessary risks and teachers supervising your work should ensure that this does not happen. For example, never be left alone with a child or children. You should be clear about your responsibilities and your role at the school. If in doubt check with the Teacher.

Do I need to fill in any forms?

For legal reasons all adults with substantial and long-term contact with children in the school must undergo an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check unless they are subscribed to the DBS Update Service or already have a recent enhanced DBS Certificate with check done by Alder Bridge School. If you will providing childcare as part of your voluntary role, you will also need to complete a Disqualification by Association declaration form. We will help you fill in the form and explain it you. This is for the safety of the children, which you will agree, is of prime importance. The procedure for this is available from the School Administrator.

Whilst you are working in the school, please tell the teacher or the school office where you will be for your safety and in the event of a fire drill or an emergency.

What about confidentiality?

We expect our volunteers to abide by the same code of confidentiality as our staff are. Before you commence work the School Administrator will ask you to sign a Confidentiality Agreement.

What if I am not happy?

We will ensure that you have an opportunity each half term to discuss how you feel about your volunteering with teachers, administration staff, or other mandate holders responsible for you but if you are unhappy in the meantime please tell us!

Please do not just leave. If it is work or other problems one of us will be pleased to listen and help if we can. It's the least we can do in return for your valuable time and commitment!

And finally...

We would like to thank you for offering to volunteer to help at our school. We regard you as a friend and member of our team. We have a professional duty to you - just as we have to all members of staff — to make your time with us happy and fulfilling.

Together we make a great team!