Volunteer Policy and Procedures

This policy was adopted on 24th February 2022

Signed on behalf of Emmanuel Community School ……..

Review date: October 2027

Volunteer Policy and Procedures

Policy owner: Headteacher | Updated: October 2026

Approving body: Board of Trustees or authorised committee

Revision approved on: _____ Effective from: _____

Signed on behalf of the school: _____

Review date: October 2027, or earlier if guidance or practice changes.

1 Purpose and scope

Thank you for offering your time and skills. Volunteers enrich children's learning and strengthen our school community. This policy explains how we welcome, check and support volunteers while keeping children safe.

It applies to regular and occasional volunteers, including parents and carers, community members, former staff, trustees helping with school activities, and work experience students. Governance duties and paid roles have their own recruitment requirements.

Agreed activities may include reading, classroom support, creative work, clubs and educational visits. Placements reflect children's needs and may be outside a volunteer's own child's class. The Headteacher decides whether a placement is suitable.

2 Responsibilities

The Headteacher authorises placements and oversees this policy. The Office Manager coordinates applications and check records. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) leads safeguarding induction and support. A named member of staff briefs and supervises each volunteer.

Teachers retain responsibility for pupils, teaching and behaviour. Trustees oversee the policy and receive a termly update on volunteering through the Headteacher's report.

3 Becoming a volunteer

Contact the Office Manager on 020 8520 0775 or admin@emmanuelcommunityschool.co.uk. Complete Appendix 1 and discuss the role, availability and any support you need. The school will explain its decision and next steps.

Checks before starting

The school records a written assessment of the role, tasks, frequency, age of pupils, contact with children and supervision. It considers relevant activity in other settings, information already known about the applicant and suitable references.

For regular placements, the school verifies identity, discusses suitability and obtains two references directly from appropriate referees. Concerns or discrepancies must be resolved. The assessment records proportionate arrangements for occasional helpers. Further checks are considered for time lived or worked overseas.

Regulated activity: from 1st September 2026, supervision no longer exempts qualifying volunteer work from regulated activity. Teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervising children frequently, on more than three days in any 30-day period, or overnight falls within this definition. Qualifying activity across settings counts towards the period condition. Other activities, including relevant personal care, qualify regardless of frequency.

The school obtains an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check with children's barred list information for volunteers in regulated activity. It reviews existing volunteers affected by the September 2026 change. Barred list information must only be requested where the role is legally eligible.

School rule: a volunteer must not begin regulated activity until the required certificate and barred list information have been received and assessed, and all other required checks are complete. Supervision or a risk assessment does not replace these checks. A barred person must never undertake regulated activity.

For roles outside regulated activity, the school records which checks are appropriate and legally available, which may include an enhanced check without barred list information or a basic check. An unchecked volunteer must never be left unsupervised or undertake regulated activity.

Where applicable, the school also checks childcare disqualification requirements for regular work in Reception or childcare for children under eight. No person disqualified from relevant childcare may undertake it without an applicable Ofsted waiver.

Starting and continuing safely

Before the first session, agree the role and supervision, complete safeguarding induction and sign Appendix 2. The Headteacher records authorisation in Appendix 4. A DBS certificate alone does not establish suitability; any Update Service use requires the correct certificate, identity and eligibility checks and the individual's consent.

Work experience placements for under-18s require a separate assessment and agreed provider and parent/carer arrangements. DBS applications cannot be made for under-16s. Young volunteers must not have sole responsibility for pupils.

4 Safeguarding and reporting concerns

Children's welfare comes first. Act on concerns about abuse, neglect, exploitation, discrimination, bullying, online harm or unsafe adult behaviour. You do not need proof before reporting. Follow the school's safeguarding policy and the steps below.

If you are worried about a child

1. Tell the DSL or a deputy immediately. Do not wait until the end of the session or assume someone else has reported it. Reception can locate a safeguarding lead; do not rely on an unread email for an urgent concern.
2. If a child speaks to you, listen calmly, take them seriously and reassure them that telling you was right. Explain that you must share the information with someone who can help. Never promise secrecy or ask leading questions.
3. Record the child's words and your observations as soon as possible, including the date, time and people present. Distinguish facts from your view. Give the record securely to the DSL and confirm it has been received. Do not investigate, confront anyone or contact the family yourself.
4. If no safeguarding lead is available, seek a senior member of staff and contact children's social care or the police where needed. Anyone can make a referral. Tell the DSL as soon as possible afterwards. Follow up if a concern is not being addressed.

Immediate danger or urgent medical help: call 999 and alert school staff.

Concerns about an adult

Report any concern about a member of staff, volunteer or other adult working for the school to the Headteacher immediately. This includes a small concern about professional boundaries, often called a low-level concern. Do not decide for yourself that it is too minor to report.

If the concern is about the Headteacher, contact the Chair of Trustees directly through the confidential route given at induction. If that route is unavailable, conflicted or unsafe, contact the local authority designated officer (LADO) directly. Do not raise the allegation with the person concerned.

The Headteacher or Chair follows the school's allegations and low-level concerns procedures, seeking LADO advice within one working day where an allegation may meet the harm threshold, and promptly if unsure. Volunteers must not investigate. The school makes a DBS referral when the legal conditions are met, including where someone leaves before a decision to remove them from regulated activity.

Who to contact

School DSL: Mr Tayo Fagbemiro, Headteacher — 020 8520 0775. The names and contact routes for deputies and the Chair are provided at induction.

Waltham Forest children's social care (MASH): 020 8496 2310. Urgent concerns outside office hours: 020 8496 3000.

Waltham Forest LADO: 020 8496 3646; LADO@walthamforest.gov.uk. Volunteers may use this route if they cannot raise concerns internally or believe the response is inadequate.

5 Conduct and everyday working

We ask volunteers to be kind, dependable and respectful. Treat every child fairly and support the school's inclusive Christian ethos, welcoming children and families of all faiths and none.

Professional boundaries

- Follow staff instructions and the agreed role. Ask for help if an activity, behaviour or instruction is unclear. Staff manage behaviour concerns; never use humiliating language, punishment or unnecessary physical contact.
- Do not take charge of a class, provide intimate care or toileting support, or undertake specialist activities beyond your agreed competence. Do not take pupils off site or transport them independently.
- Work in the agreed, visible location. Do not arrange private meetings, closed-door sessions, personal messages or social media contact with pupils. Tell the supervisor about an existing family or personal connection that may affect the placement.
- Do not give personal gifts, money, food or treats to pupils without staff approval. Staff must consider allergies and individual needs. Avoid favouritism and keep adult matters out of conversations with children.
- Keep personal phones away during activities. Only take or use images with prior school authorisation, on approved school equipment and through the school's consent procedures. Never use personal devices to photograph or record pupils.
- Do not smoke, vape, drink alcohol or use illegal drugs on school premises or visits. Never attend while impaired or unfit to carry out the agreed role safely.

Confidentiality and information

Keep information about children, families and staff private, including after the placement ends. Discuss learning and behaviour only with the relevant staff member. Refer enquiries from parents to staff. Safeguarding concerns must be shared through section 4; confidentiality must never prevent a report.

Use only the records and school systems authorised for your role. Do not copy pupil information to personal email, devices, cloud accounts, social media or AI tools. Return school records and report any lost information or accidental disclosure immediately to the Office Manager and DSL where a child may be at risk.

Attendance and safety

Sign in at reception, wear the issued badge, sign out and return the badge when leaving. Keep to agreed times and let the school know promptly if you cannot attend. Do not bring other children or visitors into the placement without prior permission.

Follow fire, evacuation, lockdown and first-aid instructions. Know your assembly point, supervisor and how to summon help. Report accidents, near misses, hazards or illness promptly. Stop an unsafe activity and ask staff for help; do not use equipment without the required briefing.

The school will discuss reasonable adjustments and check appropriate insurance arrangements for the agreed duties. Volunteering is unpaid and does not promise employment. Expenses are reimbursed only where agreed in advance under school procedures.

6 Educational visits

A staff visit leader remains responsible for the visit. Volunteers must sign Appendix 3 and receive a briefing on their group, staff contacts, route, headcounts, meeting points, emergency arrangements and relevant medical or access needs. The school assesses staffing and first-aid arrangements for each visit, including any Early Years Foundation Stage requirements.

Keep the allocated group together and within the agreed supervision arrangements. Do not change groups or leave the party without the visit leader's permission. Do not bring additional siblings. Tell the visit leader immediately if a pupil is missing, injured, distressed or behaving unsafely.

If separated, stay with the children in a safe place and contact the visit leader or school. Follow the agreed missing-child procedure; never leave the rest of the group to search alone. Call 999 where there is immediate danger.

Medicines and first aid are managed under the school's relevant policies and individual healthcare arrangements. Volunteers must not administer medicines or undertake first aid unless specifically authorised and appropriately trained. Being a child's parent does not automatically authorise medicine administration during a school visit; any arrangement must be agreed beforehand.

7 Support and concerns about a placement

Speak to your supervisor or the Office Manager if you need guidance or an adjustment. Use the school's complaints procedure for general complaints. Safeguarding concerns follow section 4 immediately and must not wait for a complaints process.

The Headteacher may provide further guidance, change duties, pause a placement or end it where necessary. Safeguarding allegations are managed through the appropriate procedures, with fair treatment and support. Ending a placement does not end any duty to report concerns. Volunteers may also end their placement; please give notice where possible and return all school property.

8 Records and review

The school keeps application, check, induction and supervision records securely, with access limited to those who need them. It records checks on the single central record where required. Information is handled under the school's privacy notices and retention schedule; unnecessary copies of DBS certificates are not retained.

Volunteers must tell the Headteacher promptly about a change that may affect suitability or the agreed role. The school reviews checks and supervision when duties, frequency or circumstances change, and when concerns arise. This policy is reviewed annually and when relevant guidance changes.

Related policies and guidance

Read alongside the school's safeguarding, safer recruitment, staff conduct, allegations and low-level concerns, whistleblowing, behaviour, health and safety, visits, first aid, medicines and data protection procedures. Copies and accessible formats are available from the office.

School safeguarding information and current contacts

DfE — Keeping children safe in education 2026

DfE — Regulated activity and the September 2026 supervision change

DfE — Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006

Appendix 1 Volunteer information form

Please return this form to the Office Manager. Ask if you would like help completing it or need another format. Completing the form does not confirm a placement.

Full name

_____

Home address and postcode

_____

_____

Telephone number and email address

_____

_____

Age group: under 16 [ ] 16–17 [ ] 18 or over [ ]

Role or activities you would like to support

_____

Relevant skills and experience, including work with children

_____

_____

_____

Available days and times, proposed frequency and any overnight visits

_____

_____

Other work or volunteering with children, including setting and frequency

_____

_____

Are you a parent/carer of a pupil or otherwise connected to the school? Yes [ ] No [ ]

If yes, please give brief details

_____

Appendix 1 References and declaration

Please give two referees who can comment on your suitability. They must not be relatives. Include a current or recent employer, volunteer supervisor or education provider where possible. The school will agree suitable alternatives if needed and contact referees directly.

Referee 1

Name and role or organisation

_____

Relationship to you and how long they have known you

_____

Email address and telephone number

_____

Referee 2

Name and role or organisation

_____

Relationship to you and how long they have known you

_____

Email address and telephone number

_____

Support and other arrangements

Please tell the Office Manager privately about any adjustments that would help you take part safely. Do not include detailed medical information or criminal record information on this form. Where required, the school will explain the appropriate confidential disclosure and checking process.

For work experience applicants: education provider and placement contact

_____

Declaration

I confirm that the information I have given is accurate to the best of my knowledge. I understand that the school will contact my referees and complete checks appropriate to the role. I will tell the school about relevant changes and will not start until authorised.

Applicant signature: _____ Date: _____

The school uses this information to consider and manage your placement and meet its safeguarding duties. Ask the Office Manager for the relevant privacy notice, retention information and secure arrangements for returning personal information.

Appendix 2 Volunteer agreement and induction

Volunteer name and agreed role

_____

Start date: _____ Agreed days and times: _____

Named supervisor and supervision arrangements

_____

_____

Please read the policy and discuss anything that is unclear before signing. The school and volunteer should each keep a copy of this agreement.

My agreement

- I have read and understood this policy and the safeguarding and conduct information provided for my role. I know how to report a concern immediately and will use those routes, including for concerns about an adult.
- I will follow the agreed duties and supervision, maintain professional boundaries, protect confidential information and use only authorised school systems and equipment.
- I will sign in and out, follow safety procedures, report absence and tell the Headteacher promptly about changes that may affect my suitability or role.
- I understand that a placement depends on satisfactory checks, induction and school authorisation. I may ask for support or end the placement.

Volunteer signature: _____ Date: _____

Induction record for the school

The supervisor confirms each item has been explained and understood. Record any follow-up action before authorising the start.

[ ] Role and boundaries [ ] Safeguarding reporting and recording

[ ] Adult concerns and whistleblowing [ ] Confidentiality and devices

[ ] Behaviour and inclusion [ ] Signing in and out

[ ] Fire, lockdown, first aid and hazards [ ] Any adjustments or training

[ ] Safeguarding reading provided, including KCSIE Part one for regular volunteers

DSL and deputy names and immediate contact route

_____

Chair of Trustees confidential contact route for concerns about the Headteacher

_____

Induction led by: _____ Date: _____

Supervisor signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix 3 Educational visit volunteer agreement

Volunteer name, visit and date

_____

Visit leader, contact number and school emergency contact

_____

Allocated group and staff supervisor

_____

Thank you for helping with this visit. Please read section 6 and agree the arrangements below with the visit leader before departure.

Before departure

[ ] Checks and authorisation confirmed [ ] Group and supervision agreed

[ ] Route, meeting points and headcounts [ ] Emergency and missing-child plan

[ ] First aider identified [ ] Relevant health, allergy and access needs explained

[ ] Safeguarding reporting route [ ] Behaviour and activity instructions

My agreement

- I will stay with my allocated group, follow staff instructions and keep pupils within the agreed supervision arrangements. I will not change groups or leave the party without permission.
- I will tell staff immediately about an injury, missing child, behaviour issue or safeguarding concern. If separated, I will keep the children together in a safe place and contact the visit leader or school.
- I will follow the school's rules on photographs, personal phones, food and gifts. I will not bring additional siblings, smoke, vape, drink alcohol or attend while impaired.
- I will not administer medicines or provide first aid unless specifically authorised and appropriately trained. Any arrangement for my own child must be agreed with the visit leader beforehand.
- I will keep pupil information confidential and return any group lists or school equipment after the visit.

Additional instructions or agreed support

_____

_____

Volunteer signature: _____ Date: _____

Visit leader signature: _____ Date: _____

The visit leader retains this agreement with the visit records. An overnight role requires the appropriate regulated activity checks, even for a single trip.

Appendix 4 School appointment and review record

For school use. Keep this completed record securely with the supporting assessment. Record evidence and dates, rather than treating a tick as proof. Do not publish completed forms.

Volunteer, role, pupil age group and planned start date

_____

Tasks, frequency and relevant activity in other settings

_____

_____

Regulated activity decision and reasons, including DBS eligibility

_____

_____

Required DBS level: _____ Children's barred list: Yes / No

Original certificate seen and assessed by: _____ Date: _____

Certificate reference and date / secure record location: _____

Barred list status checked by and date, where eligible: _____

Update Service identity, consent and status check, if used: _____

Identity verified by and date: _____

References verified and concerns resolved by and date: _____

Overseas / childcare disqualification checks, where relevant: _____

Young volunteer / provider arrangements, where relevant: _____

Supervision, boundaries, adjustments and any further safeguards

_____

_____

Induction and agreement completed: _____ Visit agreement, if needed: _____

All required checks satisfactory: Yes / No Outstanding actions: _____

Decision: Authorised [ ] Not authorised [ ] Further information needed [ ]

Headteacher signature: _____ Date: _____

Permitted start date: _____ Review date: _____

Do not authorise regulated activity while required checks are outstanding. Reassess when the role, frequency, supervision or suitability information changes. Record the decision and any action taken; do not rely on the expiry of a fixed review period.