



## Chertsey and Dorking Nursery Schools and Mole Valley Family Centre

### VOLUNTEER POLICY

Chertsey and Dorking Nursery Schools and Mole Valley Family Centre (the centre) recognises the important and unique role which our volunteers play in enhancing the quality of provision within the centre. The volunteering experience should be beneficial to volunteers, in terms of their personal experience as well as being of value to the Centre.

This policy sets out clear guidelines regarding the involvement of volunteers in order to ensure their fair and equitable involvement, supported in line with good practice and in a manner that minimises risk for all concerned.

It also aims to make clear to all volunteers the hopes and expectations that the Centre has of them and also to ensure that all volunteers understand what they in turn can expect from the Centre.

Volunteers are covered by Health & Safety and Data Protection laws but there is currently no legislation that specifically covers volunteers. However, the Centre is committed to providing volunteers with fair and equitable treatment as described in this Volunteers Policy.

The relationship between the Centre and its volunteers is non-contractual and any commitments are not intended to be legally binding. If the relationship between the Centre and a volunteer is found by a tribunal to be legally a contract of employment, the volunteer would be entitled to the full range of employment rights, including the right to claim unfair dismissal and minimum wage.

Volunteers will be provided with training that is directly relevant to their role.

The Centre welcomes interest from the community and recognises the value in having a diverse workforce of volunteers. Every volunteer must agree to a DBS check (Disclosure and Barring Service) and references being sought. They will only be allowed to volunteer on the premises once this has been shown to be satisfactory and meets all the criteria relating to the centres safeguarding and child protection policy.

#### **Under-18**

Under-18s are classed as vulnerable and the Centre will take this into account when involving them as volunteers. Every effort will be made to ensure that a proper judgement can be made of whether placing a young person in a voluntary role would place them or the people with whom they were volunteering at risk.

Under-18s who volunteer will be under constant adult supervision.

#### **Volunteers from Overseas**

There is no restriction on people from EU and EEA countries coming to the UK to volunteer.

People from outside the EU and EEA who have a visa to work or study in the UK may volunteer as long as they are still undertaking the activity that is stated on their visa.

It is possible to get a visa to come to the UK to volunteer, however this must be arranged in advance and certain restrictions apply.

A DBS check may not provide a complete picture of any criminal record that may exist for overseas applicants. When looking to involve a volunteer from overseas in a role that requires a DBS check, guidance should be sought from the Resourcing Team. Further information can be found at the Overseas Information Service on the DBS website.

Where an individual presents a disclosure, or other equivalent information in any other form from another country, The Centre will contact the issuing body and consult with the DBS to check the validity of the document.

### **Student and Work Placements**

People who are also completing a related course of study, e.g. NVQ's, may fulfil volunteer opportunities. Arrangements may be set out in a placement agreement of some kind. This type of volunteer may require more from their supervisors in terms of support and monitoring, and supervisors may also be expected to commit to a number of meetings with placement coordinators or external assessors. The Centre cannot guarantee that a supervisor will be available to support a student and as such individuals will be considered on a case by case basis taking into account the resources available at the given time.

Placements where there is a requirement or compulsion to attend (e.g. if it is a condition of receiving state benefits), are not considered to be volunteering and are not covered by this policy.

Work Experience placements are not covered by this policy.

### **One off volunteering**

Occasionally the Centre may involve people in a one-off volunteering activity, e.g. supporting a particular event. This type of volunteer involvement may not be subject to the full range of procedures outlined in this policy.

Such volunteers should still have a named supervisor responsible for their involvement and they should receive an induction meeting with a Senior Leader.

### **Opportunities for Paid Employment**

The Centre recognises that some people take up volunteering as a route to employment and, whilst the organisation cannot make any guarantees that volunteering will lead to paid employment, it is committed to helping such volunteers gain skills and experience that will make them more employable.

Volunteers are entitled to apply to become bank or temporary staff within the Centre.

In the event that volunteers become paid staff in this way, then the organisation should ensure there is complete clarity in regard to the different activities, rights and responsibilities of any paid job in relation to the volunteering role.

### **Benefits**

People who receive State benefits can volunteer and, in nearly all cases, their benefits will not be affected. However, there are some cases where benefits can be affected.

People can volunteer as many hours as they like while they're getting benefits as long as they keep to the rules for getting them.

Volunteers will still need to be looking for paid work. They must be free to go to an interview if given 48 hours' notice and they must be able to start work within one week of being given notice.

For more information please read the DWP leaflet (1023) 'Volunteering While Getting Benefits'

### **Insurance**

All volunteers are covered by the organisations Public Liability, Products Liability and Employers' Liability insurance.

## **Health and Safety**

It is the duty of all volunteers to take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of other people who may be affected by their acts or omissions whilst volunteering. All volunteers have a duty to cooperate with the Centre, as far as is necessary, to enable safe and healthy conditions prevail. Volunteers are expected to comply with the Centre Health and Safety procedures.

## **Procedures**

### **PLANNING VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT**

Any part of the Centre planning to involve volunteers must commit appropriate resources to their support in terms of staff and management time, training and materials.

Existing staff, volunteers and participants in the Centre should be involved in discussing the rationale for involving volunteers and can contribute ideas as to the kinds of activities volunteers could undertake.

### **RECRUITMENT**

Ideally, each volunteering opportunity will be defined by following the Induction procedure.

Opportunities should be promoted in ways that are accessible to all sections of the community, e.g. local/national advertising; [www.do-it.org.uk](http://www.do-it.org.uk); use of Volunteer Centres; direct contact with local organisations (e.g. community centres, colleges); posters in local area(s); mailing; internal memos; open information sessions; and liaison with businesses/organisations with an interest.

At times recruitment may be targeted toward individuals with specific skills, or individuals and groups under-represented within the current service.

Occasionally a volunteering opportunity may be created in response to an approach from someone with particular skills or interests. However, there remains a responsibility to check that this person is suitable for the tasks identified.

There are various tools to enable the organisation to identify whether a person is suitable for a volunteering opportunity. These include; application form, informal interview, CRB check and references.

A member of the Senior Leadership Team will be involved in selecting volunteers, using a fair and transparent decision-making process, with constructive feedback offered to those who are not selected to volunteer.

### **SUPPORT & TRAINING**

#### **Induction**

Volunteers will be briefed on their role and be able to ask any questions relating to it.

Volunteers should be asked to read any relevant policies and legislation pertaining to their area of volunteering.

Volunteers should have the opportunity to shadow relevant members of staff or existing volunteers.

#### **Training**

Volunteers will be given appropriate training that is relevant to their role, for example Safeguarding and Food Hygiene.

All volunteers should be made aware of all the Centre's policies and procedures.

The Centre will always endeavour to signpost volunteers towards available training and/or extended learning courses.

## MONITORING & RECOGNITION

The views of volunteers, and those that supervise volunteers will be represented through mechanisms such as team meetings, reviews, annual reports and exit interviews. These mechanisms should also ensure that the volunteering relationship remains mutually beneficial. The above monitoring mechanisms should be used by The Centre to recognise the value of volunteers and to thank them for their support.

## VOLUNTEER COMMITMENT & CONDUCT

Volunteers are expected to make a genuine commitment to the aims and values of the Centre; uphold centre policies, procedures and decisions; and should not do anything, which actually or potentially may put the centres reputation at risk.

Volunteers should be reliable and trustworthy and should show courtesy, efficiency, reliability, and punctuality.

As part of their induction volunteers will be made aware of the organisation's expectations in relation to punctuality, absence-reporting and general conduct as well as sign relevant paperwork and Volunteer Agreement.

## RESOLVING PROBLEMS

The relationship between the Centre and its volunteers is entirely voluntary and does not imply any contract. However, it is vital that the Centre maintains agreed standards of service to its visitors and participants, and that volunteers should feel safe and supported in making their contribution to this service. It is hoped that any problems encountered can be dealt with fairly, transparently and, in the first instance, informally. However, if a problem persists, the Centre Grievance procedures should be followed. At all times the volunteer should be enabled to freely state their case and may be accompanied by a friend if they wish.

**Approved by the Governing Body:** November 2023

**To be reviewed by:** November 2026

Relevant for:-

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|---------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Family Centre:</b> Yes | <b>Nursery:</b> Yes | <b>Parents:</b> Yes |
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