Volunteers in School Policy

Policy Creation & Review	
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1. Policy information

1.1 Policy statement

Volunteers bring a valuable range of skills and experience that significantly enhance the learning opportunities available to the children at Ellen Wilkinson Primary school. Our vision is to provide a welcoming, happy, secure, and disciplined learning environment where every child is stimulated and challenged. We value each child as an individual and champion a culture of achievement, self-confidence, and lifelong learning. All adults working in our school, including volunteers, are expected to behave in a manner that actively promotes this vision and models respect and tolerance for others.

1.2 Aims

The aims of Ellen Wilkinson Primary school are to:

- Provide clear operational guidelines and statutory expectations for staff, volunteers, and governors.
- Ensure robust, safer recruitment procedures that protect children in accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026.
- Establish clear roles, responsibilities, and boundary expectations for volunteers in school.
- Maintain a safe and secure environment for pupils, staff, and visitors.

1.3 Legislation, guidance and relevant policies

This policy is drafted in accordance with statutory responsibilities and national guidance governing child protection, education, and employment. Principal statutory references include Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023, the School Staffing (England) Regulations 2009 (as amended), the Childcare Act 2006, and the Childcare Disqualification Regulations 2018.

It should be noted that while the types of hazards faced during lone working may not differ significantly from those encountered during normal work, the associated risks are often greater due to the absence of direct supervision or immediate assistance.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following Ellen Wilkinson policies:

- Safeguarding and child protection policy
- Low level concerns policy
- Whistleblowing policy
- Behaviour policy
- Health and safety policy
- Educational visits policy
- Data Protection policy

1.4 Key definitions

Volunteer: Any individual who gives freely of their time, skills, and effort without financial reward (except approved out-of-pocket expenses) to assist the school in fulfilling its educational and community goals.

Regulated Activity (relating to children): Refers to specific work involving teaching, training, instructing, caring for, or supervising children if carried out frequently (frequently means on four or more days in any 30-day period) or overnight. Under the statutory mandates of KCSIE 2026 and the Crime and Policing Act 2026, the historical 'supervision exemption' has been removed; consequently, any volunteer performing these core duties at the statutory frequency is engaged in regulated activity regardless of whether a qualified staff member is present.

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1 The local authority and governing board

The Governing Body holds overall statutory accountability for ensuring that effective safeguarding policies and safer recruitment practices are implemented throughout the school. Governors review this policy annually, monitor compliance with KCSIE 2026, and maintain oversight of the Single Central Record to ensure that all statutory vetting procedures are rigorously executed. The governing board delegates operational matters and day-to-day tasks to the headteacher and staff members.

2.2 The headteacher

The headteacher, supported by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), maintains strategic responsibility for the operational management of volunteers. This includes the deployment of volunteers, approving placements, overseeing statutory risk assessments, and ensuring that all volunteers undergo mandatory safeguarding induction prior to commencing duties. The Headteacher also manages any allegations or low-level concerns raised regarding volunteer conduct.

2.3 Class teachers

Class Teachers hold immediate operational responsibility for directing, supporting, and supervising volunteers within the learning environment. Teachers ensure that volunteers understand their daily tasks, operate within established professional boundaries, and are never left unsupervised with pupils. Teachers retain sole responsibility for classroom management, pupil learning, and discipline.

2.4 Volunteers

Volunteers are responsible for fulfilling their agreed roles in accordance with school policies and the Volunteer Code of Conduct. They must model high standards of behaviour, sign in and out at reception, wear issued identification at all times, respect pupil confidentiality, and immediately report any safeguarding, welfare, or safety concerns to the DSL.

3. Becoming a volunteer and safer recruitment

Anyone wishing to become a volunteer must begin by completing a volunteer application form and providing the details of two referees. Prospective volunteers will then be invited to attend an informal interview with school staff to discuss their suitability and interests. It's important to note that volunteers are not employees of the school and are not engaged on a contract of employment. The volunteering arrangement is entirely voluntary and can cease at any time at the discretion of either the school or the volunteer.

Because the welfare of our pupils is our primary concern, all volunteer placements are subject to our safer recruitment procedures. This means that as part of the application process, volunteers must declare any criminal convictions or cautions (including those considered "spent" unless they are legally protected).

Following the September 2026 updates to Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026, the "supervision exemption" has been removed. This means any volunteer who teaches, trains, instructs, cares for, or supervises children on more than 3 days in a rolling 30-day period (or overnight) is considered to be in regulated activity. These volunteers must undergo an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check that includes a children's barred list check, even when a teacher is present. For volunteers engaging in non-regulated or one-off activities, the school will conduct a risk assessment to determine the appropriate level of background checking and supervision required.

Volunteers also have an ongoing duty of self-disclosure throughout their time at the school. They must promptly tell the school if there are any changes to their personal circumstances, their availability, or their work at other settings that might affect their suitability to volunteer. Furthermore, any police investigation a volunteer becomes involved in must be immediately declared to the Headteacher.

Prior to starting their placement, all volunteers must complete mandatory induction training provided by the school.

4. Attendance and health and safety

We ask that volunteers commit to being reliable and punctual, arriving on time for their agreed sessions. If a volunteer is unable to attend, they should contact the school office to give as much notice as possible so alternative arrangements can be made.

Safety is at the heart of our care, meaning the school must always know exactly who is on the premises. Volunteers must report to the school office upon arrival to sign in and collect a visitor badge, which must be worn visibly at all times, and sign out when leaving. Volunteers are also expected to familiarise themselves with the school's emergency evacuation and fire safety procedures, reporting any obvious hazards or health and safety concerns directly to their supervising teacher.

5. Safeguarding and child protection

Safeguarding children is paramount, and all volunteers must share our commitment to child protection. As part of their induction, volunteers will receive safeguarding training and must read and understand Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026. If a volunteer has any concerns regarding the welfare of a child, or if a child makes a disclosure to them, they must report this immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a deputy DSL. **Volunteers must never attempt to investigate safeguarding concerns themselves, nor should they ever promise a child that they will keep a secret.**

6. Code of conduct, confidentiality and GDPR

Volunteers are expected to conduct themselves professionally at all times, serving as positive role models who reflect the school's ethos. This includes dressing sensibly, safely, and appropriately, avoiding clothing that is revealing, offensive, or otherwise unsuitable for a school setting. While volunteering, individuals must not smoke, consume alcohol, or engage in any illegal practices. Volunteers must avoid using inappropriate language and must not act in a way (either in person or online) that undermines fundamental British values or brings the school into disrepute.

Information regarding pupils, parents, or staff is strictly confidential and must never be shared or discussed with parents or members of the general public. Sharing identifiable pupil information, school records, or images outside of the authorised school context is strictly prohibited. If a parent approaches a volunteer for information about a child, the volunteer must direct them to speak to the class teacher.

Just as we protect our pupils' data, the school also processes our volunteers' personal data securely and in line with data protection legislation. Relevant volunteer details and check dates will be recorded on the school's Single Central Record (SCR), and all records will be securely retained and removed in accordance with our data retention schedule.

7. Working with pupils

Volunteers will always work under the direct supervision of the class teacher or another designated member of staff. Volunteers must never be left alone with an individual child or an unsupervised group of children. The classroom teacher retains full responsibility for the children at all times, including overseeing the activities being undertaken and managing the classroom environment.

- Professional Boundaries and Devices: Volunteers must observe professional boundaries with pupils and must not form personal relationships with them. Exchanging personal contact details, communicating with pupils on social media, or arranging to meet children outside of school hours is prohibited. Personal mobile phones must be switched off while in the classroom and should only be during designated breaks away from pupil facing areas. Volunteers must never use personal devices, including phones or cameras, to take photographs or videos of pupils.

- Behaviour Management: Managing pupil behaviour is the responsibility of employed school staff. If a volunteer witnesses a pupil behaving inappropriately, they must alert the class teacher immediately. Volunteers should not attempt to issue reprimands or sanctions to pupils. Volunteers must also refrain from engaging in positive handling, as it can be hazardous to both the pupil and volunteer.

- Personal Care: Volunteers are not permitted to assist a child with changing their clothes; and they must never accompany children to the toilet or take individual children out of the room alone. Any required personal care routines will always be carried out by appropriately trained school staff.

- Educational Visits: When accompanying pupils on educational visits, volunteers are expected to stay with their allocated group of children for the duration of the visit and follow all instructions provided by the lead teacher. Volunteers must not bring additional siblings on the trip, and they are not permitted to purchase treats, such as sweets or ice cream, for the children in their group.

8. Low level concern, allegations, complaints and whistleblowing

Any concerns regarding the behaviour of another adult in the school, including low-level concerns or allegations against staff, must be reported directly to the Headteacher immediately. If a volunteer observes unethical, illegal, or unsafe practices within the school that are not addressed through standard channels, they should refer to and follow the school's whistle-blowing policy. If a volunteer has a complaint, they should follow the procedure outlined in Ellen Wilkinson Primary school complaints policy.

In the event that a volunteer becomes the subject of a low-level concern or allegation, the school will manage the situation according to its established safeguarding procedures. This involves formally investigating the matter, withdrawing the volunteer's placement if necessary, and liaising with external professional bodies, such as the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or the Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) where appropriate.

9. End of placement and references

When a volunteer's placement with Ellen Wilkinson Primary school concludes, they must return their visitor badge and any school information or property they were issued. Following the end of the placement, any reference requests must be directed to the School Business Manager. References are provided at the discretion of the headteacher and to be eligible for a reference, the individual must have completed a minimum volunteering period of six weeks.

10. Policy review

This policy will be reviewed by the **Job title** every **number of 3 years**. At each review, the policy will be approved by the **governing body.**

Version information as follows;

Version number	Date of implementation
1	November 2026


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