




Supervision of Volunteers Practice

November 2023

Signed (Chair of Trustees):	
Date:	November 2023
Date of Review:	November 2024

The Arbor Academy Trust reviews this policy annually. The Trustees may, however, review the policy earlier than this, if the Government introduces new regulations, or if the Trust receives recommendations on how the policy might be improved. This document is also available in other formats e.g. e-mail and enlarged print version, on request to the School Offices and is displayed on the schools' websites.

Introduction

This volunteer policy sets out the principles and practice by which we involve volunteers and is relevant to staff, volunteers and trustees within the organisation. It aims to create a common understanding and to clarify roles and responsibilities to ensure the highest standards are maintained in relation to the management of volunteers.

The volunteer guidance provided to all volunteers in our setting gives further details about the support and procedures in place for volunteers.

Our commitments

We recognise volunteers as an integral part of the organisation. Their contribution supports our mission and strategic aims, and complements the role of paid staff. We aim to encourage and support volunteer involvement to ensure that volunteering benefits the organisation, its clients and the volunteers themselves.

Appropriate steps will be taken to ensure that paid staff are clear about the role of volunteers, and to foster good working relationships between paid staff and volunteers. Volunteers will not be used to replace staff.

We are committed to offering a flexible range of opportunities and to encouraging a diversity of people to volunteer with us, including those from under - represented groups such as youth, people with a disability, older people and people from black and minority ethnic communities.

We recognise that people have a right to participate in the life of their communities through volunteering and can contribute in many ways. We recognise our responsibility to organise volunteering efficiently and sensitively so that the valuable gift of the volunteer's time is best used to the mutual advantage of all concerned.

Who are our volunteers?

Volunteers are individuals who undertake activity on behalf of our organisation, unpaid and of their own free choice.

We define volunteering within our setting in the following way:

- is undertaken freely, by choice
- is undertaken to be of public/ community benefit
- is not undertaken for financial gain

Work experience placements and internships are not the same as volunteering. Please refer to HR for further information about these. Trustees are volunteers with responsibility for governance of the organisation. Volunteers may be involved on a one – off, short term or on a longer term, regular basis.

They may be involved:

- in the direct delivery of our services including reading and working with individuals or groups of children
- on our board of management as trustees
- in community engagement to raise awareness of our work
- in one off events and promotional activities

- in our offices or in community venues

Volunteers are valued for:

- bringing additional skills and new perspectives to the organisations
- enabling us to be more responsive and flexible in our approach
- championing our cause within the wider community
- enhancing the quality of our work and of pupil experience
- promoting the wellbeing of users of services, staff, local communities and themselves.

Standards of good practice

Our management practice is informed by the Code of Practice for organisations involving volunteers and the Investing in Volunteers Quality Standard for volunteer management.

Roles and responsibilities

A designated staff member at each school (The Volunteer Co-ordinator) has responsibility for the development and co-ordination of voluntary activity within the organisation, including volunteering policies and procedures and the welfare of pupils, staff and volunteers.

All volunteers will have a designated staff member /volunteer for guidance, support and supervision. No volunteer will be left alone with children in our setting and Staff responsibilities for volunteers will be explicitly referred to in their job /role description.

The volunteer role is based on trust and mutual understanding. There is no enforceable obligation, contractual or otherwise, for the volunteer to attend or to undertake particular tasks or for the organisation to provide continuing opportunities for voluntary involvement, provision of training or benefits .

However, there is a presumption of mutual support and reliability. Reciprocal expectations are acknowledged – both of what the organisation expects of volunteers and what volunteers expect of the organisation.

The organisation expects volunteers:

- to maintain confidentiality
- to ensure the safeguarding and welfare of all children throughout the voluntary period
- to adhere to safeguarding and welfare policy and procedures in place within our setting
- to report to the designated staff member
- to be reliable and honest
- to uphold the organisation 's values and comply with organisational policies
- to make the most of opportunities given, e.g. for training
- to contribute positively to the aims of the organisation and avoid bringing the organisation into disrepute
- to carry out tasks within agreed guidelines

Volunteers can expect:

- to have clear information about what is and is not expected of them
- to receive adequate support and training
- to volunteer in a safe environment
- to be treated with respect and in a non - discriminatory manner
- to receive out of pocket expenses
- to have opportunities for personal development
- to be recognised and appreciated

- to be able to say 'no' to anything which they consider to be unrealistic or unreasonable
- to know what to do if something goes wrong or they have a safeguarding concern

Recruitment and selection

Equal opportunities principles will be adhered to in recruiting volunteers. Opportunities will be widely promoted, so as to attract interest from different sectors of the community. Positive action to target recruitment may be used where appropriate.

Information will be made available to those enquiring about volunteering, including written role descriptions, which set out the nature and purpose of the volunteering role, key tasks, skills required and benefits. A risk assessment will be undertaken on all volunteer roles.

Recruitment will usually involve an informal interview, volunteer pack/ forms that outlines key contacts in an emergency; the process will be defined and consistent for any given role - for example the recruitment process for regular volunteers and for volunteers for one off events will be tailored in each case and may differ from one another.

Where applicants are not able to be placed in their preferred role, they will be provided with feedback and given the opportunity to discuss alternative volunteering roles.

For roles which involve care giving and/or sustained and direct contact with children in our setting, volunteers will be required to have a full DBS disclosure check which will be arranged by the organisation. DBS disclosures are dealt with in the strictest confidence. A criminal record is not necessarily a bar to volunteering.

Induction and training

Regular Volunteers will be given induction and training appropriate to the specific tasks to be undertaken. The Volunteer induction documentation includes detailed, useful information for volunteers including template forms for safeguarding and whistleblowing. Organisational policies relevant to volunteers include Health and Safety, Safeguarding, Child Protection, Equal Opportunities, Confidentiality, Social media, and Complaints. All further policies are available on the school website or within the school office.

Support and supervision

Volunteers will be offered support and supervision as appropriate and this is discussed during induction. Arrangements vary according to the volunteer and the role undertaken, and may include telephone support, group meetings or one to one reviews.

Recognition

Volunteers will be given the opportunity, where relevant, to share their views and opinions with the organisation's wider staff.

Dealing with issues that may arise from Volunteers working in our setting.

The organisation aims to treat all volunteers fairly, objectively and consistently. It seeks to ensure that volunteers' views are heard, noted and acted upon promptly.

We will attempt to deal with any problems informally and at the earliest opportunity. All volunteers will have a named person to whom they can confide in, in the case of any difficulty, safeguarding or welfare concerns. They will also be made aware on induction of the settings policy and procedures for whistleblowing and reporting safeguarding concerns.

Volunteers will be made aware of the organisation's complaints policy and how to use it. They will also be made aware of how inappropriate behaviour by volunteers will be addressed by the organisation.

Ending voluntary work

When volunteers move on from volunteering with us they will be asked to provide feedback on the volunteering experience by way of an exit questionnaire. They will also be given the opportunity to discuss their responses to the questionnaire more fully.

Volunteers who have remained with the organisation for at least 3 months will have the right to request a reference. Volunteers will be supported to move on to other options.