

BELLAGHY PRIMARY SCHOOL

VOLUNTEER POLICY

RATIONALE

When children are enrolled in Bellaghy Primary School, teachers and parents become partners in their care and education. Through complimentary roles, mutual support and open communication the bond between home, community and school can greatly enrich a child's general progress and experience of the school.

In addition to providing on-going assistance with homework, uniform etc, parents and friends are encouraged to become actively involved in the life of the school in many ways such as helpers on educational visits.

Without wishing to dissuade or offend those who are enthusiastic and generous with their commitment to school, it is important that we follow procedures that will give confidence to children, parents and staff and to the volunteers themselves.

This policy has been written to comply with Department of Education (DENI) Circular 2017/04. DENI Circular 2008/03 "The unsupervised and unmanaged individual who, subject to the satisfactory completion of the procedures set out below either

- Assumes unpaid duties in a school on a regular basis on more than two occasions or is
- Engaged by the school to accompany or assist the school visits or trips: summer activity schemes or residential activities: or to undertake coaching in sports activities"

RECRUITMENT OF VOLUNTEERS

There are many opportunities for people to become involved with the school and individuals may wish to be generally available, or to offer their assistance with a particular age group or task.

Some children are not ready to have their parents assisting the teacher in their own classroom as it may be difficult to adjust to a different relationship. In these cases, it is better for the parent to volunteer to work in another area of the school.

All volunteers follow the same procedures and a list is held in school of those people who:

- Have applied to be a volunteer
- Have completed the necessary paperwork
- Have been vetted in accordance with Education Authority guidelines

People are encouraged to volunteer at any time and application forms are readily available in the school office through contacting any member of staff. Parents or friends of the school may be asked to help when a particular need arises but an appeal for volunteers is made annually to allow time for clearance from the Education Authority.

INDUCTION

Following clearance, the volunteer will be asked to come to school for an Induction meeting with the Principal. This meeting will also provide an opportunity for both the volunteer to ask questions and for the school to familiarise the volunteer with key school policies relating to their role such as:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Confidentiality
- Health and Safety
- Behaviour Management
- Code of Conduct

The meeting will also provide an opportunity for both the volunteer and the school to agree the start date and frequency of the support being offered.

As part of the schools' safeguarding procedures, all volunteers are requested to sign the Visitors' Book at the main entrance and wear a visitors' lanyard.

Parents volunteering to accompany on school visits may do so without a disclosure and will be reminded not to put themselves in any compromising situation and will not work on a one to one basis, ie the volunteer will always be supervised by a member of staff.

CODE OF CONDUCT

While helping in school, volunteers are entitled to be treated with the respect and in a manner appropriate to a member of staff. If other parents have concerns, they should approach the principal.

A volunteer at Bellaghy Primary School is expected to:

- Demonstrate his/her support for education and give his/her full attention to the task in hand.
- Treat what he/she sees and hears in school as confidential. Working with other people's children is a privilege with responsibilities. Children observed in the classroom or the school should not be discussed outside, even with that child's parent. Questions relating to individual children should be addressed to the child's teacher or principal.
- Arrive on time and be ready to start the agreed task. If he/she must cancel, the volunteer is asked to call the office as soon as possible to allow time for a replacement to be found.
- Leave all matters of discipline to the teacher with responsibility. A volunteer may address behaviour or safety issues if the teacher is temporarily unavailable. The volunteer should inform the teacher as soon as possible
- Accept direction and supervision. A volunteer is not intended to take the place of staff but to provide assistance and enrichment. He/she should be consistent with the teacher in supporting the school's ethos and behaviour. A volunteer should therefore agree to operate under the direction of the Bellaghy Primary School staff.

- Clearly communicate interests and expectations.
- Present a positive role model. A volunteer should be patient, flexible, appreciative, respectful and considerate particularly in dealings with children.
- Adhere to the school's Health and Safety Policy.
- Adhere to the school's Pastoral Care and Child Protection Policies and know who the Designated and Deputy Designated Teachers are.
- Adhere to the school's Safe Handling and Reasonable Force Policy.
- Adhere to the school's Visitors' Code of Conduct.
- Dress in a manner that is appropriate for professional working in a primary school.
- Refrain from inappropriate language or topics of conversation.
- Switch off mobile phones inside the school building or any venue for an educational visit (arrangements can be made to deal with any essential call/s).

VOLUNTEER'S RIGHTS

A school volunteers has the right to:

- Be recognised for his/her invaluable contributions to the educational experience of our children.
- Be assigned worthwhile tasks.
- Access any school policies and procedures that are relevant to his/her role.
- Any training or supervision that is necessary for the success of his/her role.
- Deal with any complaint through the school's formal complaints procedure.

Consent will be sought from parents if the volunteer is working with a particular group of children or an individual child on a regular basis e.g. Reading Partnership Programme

REVIEW OF POLICY

This policy will be reviewed by the Board of Governors annually.

March 2020

BELLAGHY PRIMARY SCHOOL

VOLUNTEER APPLICATION FORM

Name: _____ D.O.B _____

Home Telephone number: _____ Mobile: _____

Email address: _____

Relevant skills, training qualifications or job history if applicable:

Medical History Disclosure: e.g. back complaint? Epilepsy etc.

Please indicate what type of work you are volunteering for?

Please give the name and contact details of a referee who has known you for at least 2 years. This should be someone who knows you in a Professional capacity, not a friend or a relative.

Referee's name: _____

Referee's Address: _____

Position: _____

Telephone no: _____ Email address: _____

The Board of Governors is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. The school requires all volunteers working on a regular basis to complete an application form for an Enhanced Disclosure.

Signature: _____

Date : _____