

Handbook for Volunteers working in Frieth CEC School



"Developing potential without
limitations"

Welcome to our school!

Thank you for your interest in volunteering in our school.

We appreciate the help that our volunteers give us in supporting the work of the school.

We want you to enjoy your time with us and we have produced this guide to help you feel comfortable here. Please don't hesitate to ask questions if you are unsure about anything.



When you are working in the school, your **contacts** here will be

- The class teacher you work with
- The school administrator/receptionist
- The head teacher

At the back of this booklet is a plan of the school to help you find your way around the building.

It is important for school security and fire regulations that all staff, visitors and volunteers to the school can be identified and located at all times and we ask you to follow this simple routine every time you visit the school:

- Sign in and out of the building when entering or leaving (at reception)
- Wear the name badge we have given you at all times in school
- Let your main contact (e.g. the teacher you work with) know where you are working at all times.

Where can I work?

The short answer is - almost anywhere!

Please let us know if you have a preference for the age group you work with or if there is a particular task that you would like to focus on.

If you do not enjoy the volunteering opportunity that we offer you, please let us know. We value your time and energy and want you to be happy here!

We try to match our volunteers' time and talents to the needs of the school. If it's not possible to match your skills or preferences we will let you know why.



How much time must I give?



Another short answer - it's up to you!

We appreciate all the time you choose to offer. Some volunteers prefer to have a timetable and others prefer single visits when they can spare some time.

All we ask is that you let us know if you have made an arrangement that you later find you cannot keep. Your work is valuable to the school and the teacher may have been counting on you to help with an activity. Just give us a call as soon as you know you cannot come so that we can avoid disappointing the children.

If you are not able to spend time in school but still want to help, please let us know because there may be things you can do to help us at home.

Where can I go in the school?



As a volunteer you will be expected to work with the teacher/s you are going to help. For most of the time in school you will be sharing a classroom with teachers and children. These teachers are responsible for you and if you are in any doubt about how to behave, what to do or where to go please ask the teacher.

Apart from moving about the school in the normal course of the day, we would expect you stay with the teacher who will supervise your activities.

During break times or lunch times you can:

- Wait in the classroom and the teacher will arrange for refreshments to be brought to you

You can leave your personal belongings:

- with the teacher
- with the school secretary

You can use the toilets

- that the staff use

NEVER use the children's toilets.

What should I do if I have a problem whilst working in school?



Come and talk to the teacher responsible for you, or a member of staff, failing this report directly to the headteacher.

We expect all members of the school community to be polite, courteous and self-disciplined. The same rules apply to teachers, staff, volunteers, visitors and children. If you have problems with a pupil's behaviour, please tell us. The teachers in school are responsible for children in their care not you.

Policies on behaviour, health and safety, equal opportunity, bullying and confidentiality exist within the school.

Some key things to remember when working in school:

- Never get into an argument with children or adults. Teachers are trained to deal with problem situations and they are paid to take responsibility.
- Never tell a child off. The school has a code of discipline which children are expected to follow. As a volunteer you are not expected to discipline children. If there is a problem, tell the teacher straight away.
- The only time we would expect an adult to intervene in an emergency is to prevent a child hurting themselves or others. Do this by telling them firmly and quietly to stop. Avoid physically restraining a child unless they will damage another child or themselves and do this with great care.
- Never shout at a child.
- Never hit a child.

- Never threaten to hit or manhandle a child.
- Never be left in sole charge of a child.
- Report any incident of bad behaviour immediately.

Health and safety

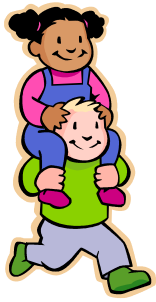


You must comply with the school's health and safety policy observing any specific requirements whilst volunteering. Do not take part in, or ask anyone else to take part in, any action that might cause you or another person to be put at risk of injury or harm. You should always advise the school's health and safety co-ordinator, headteacher or office staff of any potential hazard or situation that you feel puts people at risk.

Insurance

You will be insured for the same activities as teachers. The school's policy is available for you to see. As long as you follow the guidelines in this booklet you will be covered by the school's insurance for most ordinary occurrences.

If you use your own vehicle or the school's vehicle to transport children other than your own on school activities you need to check that your insurance policy or the school's policy protects you against claims from other people and for yourself.



Equal Opportunities

At our school we do not tolerate discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, race, ethnic background, colour, religion, gender, sexual orientation, history of illness, non-relevant criminal records or your marital, employment, financial or social status. As a volunteer you must treat people with respect at all times and ensure that there is no unlawful discrimination, abuse, harassment or bullying in your dealing with children, colleagues or others at the school.

The school has a legal responsibility to ask all volunteers and staff to be checked against certain lists and to have a criminal records bureau check. You will be asked to agree to this and fill out some forms before you begin volunteering. We will help you with these forms if necessary.

Furthermore, the school has a duty of care to pupils and all people working in the school to make sure that your volunteering does not put anyone at risk. This may mean that the type of volunteering you will be allowed to undertake is restricted in some circumstances but if this is the case we shall explain why.

Obviously everybody is not suited to all activities but the school will only take into account relevant criteria when deciding whether you are suited to a particular role. For example, a criminal conviction for fraud may mean that it is inappropriate for you to volunteer to deal with finances and a history of back pain or disability allowance will mean that you cannot undertake physical tasks likely to conflict with your own health and safety.

If you feel that you have been unfairly discriminated against please discuss this with the head teacher. You can also contact your local volunteer centre or Volunteer Bureau listed in the local telephone directory.

Will I be able to volunteer if I am claiming benefits

such as Job Seekers Allowance?



Guidance from the Employment Service states that benefits such as JSA, Income Support, Incapacity Benefit and Severe Disablement Allowance will not usually be affected as long as you do not receive any payment other than your out-of-pocket expenses (such as travel expenses, child care or special clothing for the job). The rules and the names of benefits sometimes change so if you are in any doubt, contact your local Volunteer Bureau (in the telephone directory) who will advise you. Your Volunteer Bureau is not a government agency and will give you free and independent advice.

Out-of-pocket expenses



As part of the equal opportunities policy of the school, we ask that all volunteers claim agreed expenses that are incurred *solely as a result of their volunteering*. You will not be able to claim for anything that has not been agreed in advance or for things that have been donated to raise money, such as cakes or other goods for PTA events.

Induction and training

Whatever tasks you volunteer to do, we will offer you a simple induction session.

Our school values the work of volunteers and recognises that training can sometimes be helpful. Not only does training help you to help us, it can also mean that you learn useful new skills. We want to offer all our volunteers training if they think it would be helpful for them to carry out their duties in the school.

From time to time your teacher or person responsible for you in school will discuss your work with you. They will want to know if you have any queries or concerns, whether you are satisfied with your role or if you would like more training for the tasks that you do.

The volunteering experience at our school

Volunteers at our school can expect to be treated respectfully and fairly.

We also expect a high standard of commitment from our volunteers who will have to abide by, and be subject to, the school's agreements, codes of conduct, policies and procedures.

You can normally expect to get a reference from us in the future, as a result of your voluntary work at the school.

Volunteers have a right to join a relevant trade union.



What work should I not undertake?

You should not be asked to do anything that you do not feel comfortable with or be put under any moral pressure.

Do I need to fill in any forms?

For legal reasons, all adults working in schools with children must



undergo certain checks. This is for the safety of the children which you will agree is of prime importance. We will help you fill out the forms if you wish.

We shall only ask for relevant information from you. We will tell you why we need the information and all written information will be kept confidential.

What about confidentiality?

We expect our volunteers to abide by the same rules of confidentiality as the teachers and other staff at the school.

It is essential that any information you learn about individuals must not be disclosed to anyone outside the school, without the permission of the person concerned. We have a confidentiality policy for you to read.

And finally.....

We would like to thank you for volunteering at our school. We regard you as a friend and member of our team. We have a professional duty to you - just as we have to all members of staff - to make your time with us happy and fulfilling.

Please use this form to make your first contact after you have read this volunteers' handbook.

Give it to any teacher or hand it into the office. If you would like to know more before making a commitment please talk to:

- The head teacher
- The volunteer coordinator
- The receptionist
- Other person

Thank you!

Now that I have read the volunteers' handbook I would like to try volunteering.

My name: _____

Address: _____

_____ **Post code:** _____

Telephone number: _____

Email address: _____

I would prefer to try: _____

I would like to commit to _____ hours on _____ days

Signature: _____

Any other comments: _____

No information will be passed to any other agency or person without your permission.

