



## **Stowford School Volunteer Best Practice Guidelines and Volunteer Application Form**

### **1. Introduction**

Thank you for volunteering your time and enthusiasm to Stowford School and its children and staff. Volunteers have a very important role to play in bringing a range of skills and experience that can enhance and promote the learning opportunities that we offer to our pupils.

Our volunteers include:

- Members of the Governing Body
- Parents of pupils
- Ex-pupils
- Ex-members of staff
- Students on work experience
- University students
- Local residents
- Friends and supporters of the school.

The types of activities that volunteers engage in, include:

- Listening to pupils read
- Working with small groups of pupils to assist them in their learning
- Working alongside individual pupils, as an additional tutor
- Accompanying school visits
- Assisting with extracurricular activities.

### **2. Safeguarding**

Devon County Council, WeST and Stowford School are committed to the safeguarding of pupils, young people and everyone who works here. We expect volunteers to share this commitment and follow policies and procedures in relation to this.

### **3. Becoming a Volunteer**

Anyone wishing to become a volunteer, either for a one off event such as a school visit or on a more regular basis (e.g. to listen to children read), should approach the Class Teacher, the Headteacher or a senior member of staff.

Volunteers should complete a Volunteer Application Form (Appendix 1) and the Volunteer Agreement (Appendix 2) which sets out the schools expectations of its volunteers and confirms that they have received a copy of this Agreement.

### **4. Process for Recruiting Frequent Volunteers**

- a) Identify the need and role
- b) Attract candidates by means of a local advert / other methods of communication used by the school
- c) The candidate(s) attend a meeting at school for an informal discussion to ensure that they are suitable for the role
- d) An Enhanced DBS Disclosure is undertaken before the volunteer starts working
- e) The volunteer will be made aware of their role and responsibilities within the school (this is not required where a volunteer is participating in a one-off activity)
- f) If appropriate, two references should be sought

- g) Induction - relevant school policies and documentation should be explained and issued
- h) Volunteer records should be kept centrally within the school.

## 5. Upholding the School Ethos

All adults and young people who work within our school, whether as a paid member of staff or as a volunteer, are expected to work and behave in such a way as to promote Stowford School's aims and educational purpose.

- It is critically important for pupils to see all adults in school as role models.
- You are not expected to make judgments about pupils' abilities or behaviour. Any personal views you may have about a pupil's ability should not be disclosed to anybody except a member of the school's teaching staff.
- Your help will bring you into close contact with staff and pupils. Much of what you see in school is confidential, so please do not talk about things outside of school.
- Please do everything possible to avoid any physical contact with pupils, even touching.
- You should not get drawn into inappropriate topics of conversations with pupils. If a pupil begins to talk to you about matters which disturb you, please talk to Mrs Williams, the Headteacher or Mrs Fitzpatrick the Deputy Safeguarding Officer.
- Although it can be tempting, please do not seek to use your time in school as an opportunity to discuss personal issues such as your child's educational progress (this can be distracting for teachers during school time).
- All personal belongings (bags, valuables and medications) **must** be kept with you at all times.
- Mobile phones, personal cameras and recording devices **must** be handed in at the school office and **must never** be used to take photographs of pupils, whether in school or out on a school trip or other event.
- If you are in doubt about anything, always ask the advice of a member of staff or the Headteacher / Deputy Headteacher.
- Many of the above standards are there not only for the protection of our children, but also for your own. A serious breach of any of the standards set out above might lead to a volunteer being removed and considered an unsuitable candidate for further voluntary / student placement involvement. Obviously, we hope and expect that such a situation remains extremely rare.

## 6. Supervision

All volunteers work under the supervision of a teacher or full-time member of staff. Teachers retain ultimate responsibility for pupils at all times, including pupils' behaviour and the activity that they are undertaking.

Volunteers should have clear guidance from the designated supervisor as to how an activity is carried out and the expected outcome of the activity. In the event of any query or problem regarding the pupil's understanding of the task, their behaviour or welfare, volunteers must seek advice / guidance from their designated supervisor.

## 7. Health and Safety

The school has a Health and Safety Policy which volunteers will work within, under supervision of the teacher. An appropriate member of staff will ensure that volunteers are clear about emergency procedure (e.g. fire alarm evacuation) and about any safety aspects associated with particular tasks (e.g. using equipment or accompanying pupils on visits). Volunteers need to exercise due care and attention and report any obvious hazards or concerns to their designated supervisor or other senior member of staff. Volunteers are covered by the school's Indemnity and Public Liability Insurance.

## **8. Complaints**

Any complaints made about a volunteer will be referred to the Headteacher or delegated to a senior member of staff for investigation. Any complaints made by a volunteer will be dealt with in the same way.

The Headteacher or designated member of staff reserves the right to take the following action:

- To speak with the volunteer about a breach of the Volunteer Agreement and seek reassurance that this will not happen again
- Offer an alternative placement for the volunteer (e.g. helping with a different activity or in another class)
- Based upon the facts identified in the investigation, it may be necessary for the school to inform the volunteer that they are unable to continue using them
- The volunteer will be provided with a copy of the school Complaints Policy and Procedures.

## **9. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

At Stowford School we aim to ensure that no member of the school community experiences harassment, less favourable treatment or discrimination within the learning environment because of their age; any disability they may have; their ethnicity, colour or national origin; their gender; their religion or beliefs.

We value the diversity of individuals within our school and do not discriminate against anyone because of 'differences'. We believe that all our children matter and we value their families too. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when devising and implementing school policies and procedures.

## **10 Finally...**

We hope that you will find this guidance helpful and that you will keep it in mind throughout your time in school. We are confident that you will enjoy the experience of working as a volunteer at Stowford School, satisfied in the knowledge that you are making a positive contribution.



**Volunteer Application Form**

Full Name of Volunteer: .....

Date of Birth: .....

Address: .....

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Home Telephone: ..... Mobile Telephone: .....

What activities / areas of the school's work would you like to help with?

Are there any particular age groups / classes you would like to work with?

Do you have any disabilities or other needs we need to take into account, or adjustments we need to make, to enable you to work as a volunteer in school?  
(Please give details)

Do you have children at Stowford School? If so what are their names and classes?

**References:**

Please give the names and contact details for two people who can provide a reference for you.

1. Name:

Contact details:

(Including Email Address)

Relationship to you:

2. Name:

Contact details:

(Including Email Address)

Relationship to you:

**Thank you for taking the time to complete this Volunteer Application Form. Please hand it to the School Office, marked for the attention of the Headteacher.**

**Your offer of help is greatly appreciated and we will be in touch as soon as possible.**



**Volunteer Agreement**

Thank you for offering your services as a volunteer at Stowford School. Your offer of help is greatly appreciated and we hope that you will gain much from your experience.

Please sign this Volunteer Agreement and hand it in to the School Office.

I have been accepted as a volunteer at Stowford School and I can confirm the following:

- I understand and accept Stowford School's Volunteer guidelines and Good Practice Guide, which applies to my involvement as a volunteer
- I agree to support Stowford School's aims and educational purpose
- I agree to adhere to Stowford School's policies and procedures at all times
- I agree to work within the boundaries of Stowford School's Safeguarding procedures at all times
- I agree to treat any information obtained from within school with the strictest of confidence
- I agree to undertaking an enhanced DBS check
- I have been informed of who will be my designated supervisor

Signed: .....

Full Name.....

Date: .....