



## **Volunteers and Visitors Policy**

### **Rationale**

Maple Grove Primary School has a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of its children. This includes a duty to take all reasonable steps to ensure that adults who come into the building or grounds are not a risk to the children or young people. This is a welcoming place and visitors enhance our provision of education. We are also fortunate to have many parents and other volunteers who help in the classroom and with other activities.

Some of our visitors are local authority colleagues and visit routinely for fixed appointments. Many of our parent helpers and other volunteers are well known to us. Other volunteers come to us and we do not know them at all.

It is important to have a policy that includes measures to ensure the suitability of all volunteers and visitors. This is a streamlined procedure because it is not necessary to impose onerous requirements on our staff or our volunteers and visitors. However, we do need to recognise that visitors and volunteers in particular are seen by children as safe and trustworthy adults and sensible precautions are needed.

### **Aims**

Our aim is to operate a sensible and proportionate procedure to identify people who may be a risk to our children and to have a system in place that will deter people who might abuse children or are otherwise unsuited to work with them. We aim to strike the right balance between protecting our children/young people's safety and welfare and not being unnecessarily burdensome.

### **Objectives**

The objectives of this policy are to:

- maintain a safe environment for our children/young people
- explain what volunteer checks are required and in what circumstances
- give guidance on assessing any relevant information provided by checks
- remind colleagues of the importance of existing security and safety procedures and practices.

## **Definitions**

### Responsibilities

The Head of School or proprietor has overall responsibility for the operation of this procedure.

### Procedures and practice

#### Checking volunteers

It is our responsibility to check the suitability of all volunteers who work with our children or young people. There is no one check for all because our volunteers do not all carry out the same roles for us and some who approach us are well known to staff beforehand while others are not. The following checks are required in all cases:

- an informal interview
- references
- establishing there are no concerns expressed by others in the community.

## **The vetting and barring scheme**

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) is used to vet employees and ISA for visitors and volunteers. If they are considered unsuitable they will be placed on a barred list. There are two barred lists: one for individuals barred from working with children and the other for those barred from working with vulnerable adults.

The ISA covers volunteers in 'regulated activities'. This can include work in establishment if it is 'frequent' or 'intensive'. The frequent contact test is met if the work with children takes place once a week or more and the intensive contact test is met if the work takes place on four days or more in one month or overnight. These definitions recognise that the development of a relationship of trust with a child is usually built up steadily over a period of time and is less likely as a result of one-off or spasmodic contact.

## **DBS checks**

In deciding whether to seek a DBS disclosure from a volunteer, we will take the following factors into consideration:

- the duration, frequency and nature of the volunteer's contact with children; and then

- what the school/provider knows about the volunteer, including formal or informal information offered by staff, parents and other volunteers
- whether the volunteer is well known to others in the community who are likely to be aware of behaviour that could give cause for concern
- whether the volunteer has other employment, or undertakes voluntary activities where referees would advise on suitability
- any other relevant information about the volunteer or the work they are likely to do.

So the following people do not need to apply for a DBS disclosure or register with the VBS:

- visitors who have business with the Head of School/proprietor or other staff or who only have brief contact with children with a member of staff present
- visitors or contractors who come on site only to carry out emergency repairs or service equipment and who would not be expected to be left unsupervised on establishment's premises
- volunteers or parents who only accompany staff and children on one-off outings or trips that do not involve overnight stays, or who only help at specific one-off events, for example a sports day or fete
- secondary pupils aged under 16 on Key Stage 4 work experience in other schools; secondary pupils in another school as part of voluntary service, citizenship or vocational studies; or Key

Stage 5 or sixth form pupils on a short careers or subject placement

- people who are on site before or after hours and where there is no opportunity for contact with children, for example local groups who hire premises for community or leisure activities, or cleaners who only come in after children have gone home or before they arrive.

A volunteer who has not obtained a DBS check because they only have infrequent contact with children should not be left unsupervised with children.

### **Assessing DBS disclosures**

A volunteer's criminal record does not automatically make that person unsuitable for work with children. Schools/providers must make a judgement about the volunteer's suitability, taking into account only those offences that may be relevant to the particular role or situation in question. In deciding the relevance of convictions a number of points should be considered:

- the nature of the offence: in general, convictions for sexual, violent or drug offences are particularly strong contra-indications for work with children
- the nature of the volunteer's role: serious sexual, violent, drug or drink offences would be a particular concern for a role involving close contact with children
- the age of the offence: offences from many years ago have less relevance than recent offences but convictions for offences such as serious violent or sexual offences are more concerning than, for

instance, an isolated case of dishonesty when the person was young – rehabilitation must be weighed against the need to protect children

- the frequency of the offence: a series of offences over a period of time is more likely to give cause for concern than an isolated minor conviction.

Please refer to the following sections for further guidance on certain visitors and volunteers.

### **Supply staff**

The same range of checks required for permanent employees are also required for supply staff, including those employed via employment agencies. Before taking on a supply teacher provided by an employment agency, the school requires written confirmation from the agency that the supply staff has the qualifications required for the post.

The school also requires agencies to provide confirmation that all the checks required have been satisfactorily completed. If a DBS disclosure is pending, this must be notified to the school/provider, together with the date the disclosure was sought and subsequent confirmation of clearance. If the disclosure raises concerns the individual will be withdrawn pending further inquiries.

In any case, where the school engages supply staff directly, it is the school's responsibility to complete all relevant checks, including confirmation of ISA registration, as for other employed staff.

### **Student teachers**

When a student on initial teacher training comes into school, the training provider should provide details of the enhanced DBS disclosure and ISA registration. These checks should ideally be completed before the trainee starts. If this is not possible, the school can allow the trainee to begin if it has carried out an ISA check and made sure that the trainee is appropriately supervised.

### **Professional staff**

Psychologists, nurses, dentists, centrally employed teachers and other local authority staff will have been checked by their employing organisation. The school just needs confirmation that checks have been carried out. If these visitors come on the premises on a regular basis, an ISA registration check will be needed.

### **Visiting speakers**

The school does not require a visitor to obtain a DBS if they will only have contact with children on an ad hoc or irregular basis for short periods of time whilst supervised. Visitors such as police officers, sporting or other celebrities, authors and musicians who go into different schools/providers to work with different children or young people are not required to be checked unless their contact with the same children is frequent or intensive as defined earlier in this policy. It is likely that these visitors see any child/young person only once or very occasionally and will be with children in groups rather than alone. They are unlikely to have any opportunities to build up a relationship of trust that could be abused.

### **Exam invigilators**

Exam invigilators are required to have an enhanced DBS disclosure. This is because an invigilator could be away from the school/provider for an extended period and a DBS enhanced disclosure is required to ensure that their criminal record and suitability to work with children have not altered in the time that they have been away from the school.

### **Governors and the clerk to the governing body**

We require our school governors and the clerk to the governing body to obtain a DBS check. All clerks must be registered before July 2015.

### **Contractors**

Workers who come on to the premises to carry out emergency repairs do not require DBS or equivalent checking. But if the school/provider engages contracted building work it is very important to ensure in the contractual arrangements that the contractor confirms their staff are appropriately checked. The contractor should also ensure that the same procedures are followed by any subcontractors

and provide a list of its direct employees and those of any sub-contractors before they start work on site.

The school must have a sensible but secure system in place for identity checks to confirm that the individual arriving is the individual confirmed by the contractor. This should be in line with the visitor control systems (see below).

### **Educational trips**

In addition to checking adult volunteers in line with this policy it is important that they are properly briefed beforehand and clearly directed during the visit.

Adult volunteers should be given clear information by the group leader about their role and responsibilities on an educational visit. We expect them to do their best to ensure the health and safety of everyone in the group. They follow the instructions of the group leader and help with discipline and control. Adult volunteers should not be in sole charge of pupils unless this has been previously agreed and for the protection of both adults and children all adult supervisors should ensure that they are not alone with a child/young person unless it is unavoidable. All adult volunteers should be list 99 checked in line with the educational visits policy.

### **Visitor controls**

Notwithstanding the volunteer and visitor checks the school should operate a visitor control system. This is a simple procedure which incorporates knowing who is on the school grounds or within the school and having some control over them. The underlying operational principles are to:

- provide a waiting area for visitors until they can be attended to
- identify legitimate visitors, monitor their arrival, movement around the school and departure time

- make all visitors sign in and give the reason for their visit
- give all visitors a name badge or name tag to wear on school premises. These should be used only once and are not transferable. We tell our children that they should not approach any stranger not wearing a badge. They are told to report all strangers or intruders to a member of staff immediately
- ensure that no visitor is given unrestricted access to the school.