



storyybrook

Volunteers Policy





Contents

1. Introduction and aims
2. How we use volunteers
3. How to apply to volunteer at Storyybrook
4. Appointment of volunteers
5. Volunteer placement risk assessment
6. Safeguarding
7. Volunteer reporting and escalation of safeguarding concerns
8. Volunteers working with pupils in our SEMH setting
9. Supervision of volunteers
10. Induction and training
11. Confidentiality
12. Conduct of volunteers
13. Insurance
14. Health and safety at Storyybrook
15. Data protection and record keeping
16. Monitoring and review
17. Links to other policies





1. Introduction and aims

Storybrook believes that volunteers provide a valuable contribution to the school's work, and that they enrich the school through the breadth of their knowledge and experience.

As a specialist SEMH (Social, Emotional and Mental Health) provision, we recognise that our pupils may present with additional needs relating to emotional regulation, behaviour and wellbeing. This policy reflects the importance of ensuring that all volunteers are appropriately supported, supervised and prepared to work safely within this environment.

We are committed to using volunteers in a way that supports the school's strategic aims and vision, as well as its development plan.

The aim of the Storybrook volunteer policy is to:

- encourage the wider community to engage with the school, thereby enhancing the curriculum, raising achievement and promoting community cohesion
- ensure that volunteers support the school's vision and values, and adhere to our policies
- provide staff, volunteers and parents with clear expectations and guidelines
- set a clear, fair process for recruiting and managing volunteers

This policy has been developed in line with the statutory safeguarding guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) from the Department for Education (DfE).

2. How we use volunteers

At Storybrook volunteers may:

- hear children read
- accompany school visits
- work with individual children
- work with small groups of children
- support specific curriculum areas, such as ICT or art

This isn't an exhaustive list.

Volunteers may be:

- members of the governing body
- parents
- former pupils
- students on work experience





- local residents
- members of the PTA

This is not an exhaustive list.

Members of the governing body working at the school in their capacity as governors (for instance, conducting school monitoring visits or attending meetings), are not covered by this policy. They are covered by our governor code of conduct.

3. How to apply to volunteer

You can apply to be a volunteer:

- by emailing a named member of staff, or a specific inbox
- by approaching senior leaders or a member of Storyybrook staff
- completing an application form (see appendix 1)

4. Appointment of volunteers

Volunteers are appointed by the Headteacher, Mrs Rachel Burbridge, or a member of the Leadership Team.

Appointment and induction of new volunteers can take up to 6 weeks as this is dependent on the candidate and available spaces within the school, plus a DBS application.

All appointments are conditional upon the completion of an enhanced DBS check (if appropriate) and other appropriate safeguarding and recruitment checks, and relevant training.

The Headteacher reserves the right to terminate a placement at any time.

Enhanced DBS checks for volunteers working in the school through other organisations will be conducted by the relevant organisation, if needed. The school will ask for written confirmation that enhanced DBS checks have been carried out before a volunteer is allowed to start work at the school.

5. Volunteer placement risk assessment

As a specialist SEMH (Social, Emotional and Mental Health) setting, the school recognises that volunteering within this environment requires additional consideration of suitability, resilience and boundaries.

In addition to safeguarding and recruitment checks, the school will carry out a placement risk assessment for all volunteers prior to confirming their role. This is to ensure that the placement is appropriate for both the volunteer and the pupils.





The risk assessment will consider:

- the nature of the role and level of contact with pupils
- whether the role involves exposure to potentially challenging behaviour
- the volunteer's prior experience of working with children, particularly those with additional needs
- the volunteer's understanding of professional boundaries
- the volunteer's emotional resilience and ability to respond appropriately to distressing or challenging situations
- references and any previous voluntary or employment history

Where appropriate, the school may:

- initially place volunteers in lower-risk roles or settings
- restrict volunteers from working with certain pupils or groups
- require a supported or supervised introduction period

All volunteer placements will be subject to a trial period. During this time, the suitability of the volunteer will be reviewed by the Headteacher or a designated member of staff.

The school reserves the right to:

- amend the volunteer's role at any time
- increase levels of supervision where necessary
- end the placement with immediate effect if it is deemed unsuitable or poses a risk to pupils, staff or the volunteer

This process is intended to safeguard pupils while also ensuring that volunteers are supported and placed in roles where they can be effective and feel confident.

6. Safeguarding

Safeguarding our pupils is of paramount importance, and our volunteers must share our commitment to child protection.

To ensure we're upholding our responsibility to keep our pupils safe, we will:

conduct enhanced DBS checks with a barred list check on volunteers who:

- work 1-on-1 with pupils unsupervised
- work with groups of pupils unsupervised





- supervise or accompany groups of pupils on overnight residential visits
- consider the results of any DBS checks that return with unspent and spent listed convictions, and assess these on a case-by-case basis, with regard given to the nature of the conviction and the nature of the work the volunteer will be involved in
- provide safeguarding training to all volunteers **prior** to them beginning work at the school, including ensuring that they have read and understood part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education
- require volunteers to agree and adhere to our code of conduct (see appendix 2) and to read, and adhere to, the school's policies on:
 - Safeguarding and Child Protection
 - Use of mobile phones
 - ICT and internet acceptable use
 - E-Safety
 - Behaviour and Relationships
 - Whistleblowing and Low-Level Concerns
- ensure that volunteers without an enhanced DBS check are always supervised, and are never left alone with pupils
- conduct a risk assessment to determine whether a volunteer who isn't working in regulated activity needs an enhanced DBS check. The risk assessment will consider:
 - the nature of the work they will be doing
 - what we know about them
 - references from employers or other voluntary roles
 - whether the role is eligible for an enhanced DBS check

Storybrook legally cannot carry out a DBS check on a child under the age of 16 who is volunteering at our school. We will ensure that children who are volunteering are always under an appropriate level of supervision, and conduct a risk assessment to consider any potential safeguarding issues.

7. Volunteer reporting and escalation of safeguarding concerns

Volunteers must report any safeguarding concern, disclosure, or allegation about a pupil immediately.

The first point of contact is the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). In the absence of the DSL, volunteers must report concerns to a Deputy DSL.

If neither the DSL nor a Deputy DSL is immediately available, volunteers must:





- speak to the most senior member of staff available on site without delay, and
- ensure that the concern is passed to the safeguarding team as soon as possible

Volunteers must not delay reporting concerns and should not assume that someone else will pass on the information.

In urgent situations where a pupil is at immediate risk of harm, volunteers must:

- take appropriate action to ensure the immediate safety of the pupil (for example, seeking help from staff), and
- report the concern to a member of staff straight away

The school promotes a culture where all safeguarding concerns are taken seriously. Volunteers are encouraged and expected to escalate concerns independently where necessary and will be supported in doing so.

If a volunteer feels that a concern has not been acted upon appropriately, they must escalate this in line with the school's safeguarding or whistleblowing procedures.

8. Volunteers working with pupils in our SEMH setting

As a specialist SEMH (Social, Emotional and Mental Health) provision, Storybrook recognises that many of our pupils may present with additional needs relating to trauma, attachment, and emotional regulation. Volunteers must be aware that some pupils may experience heightened anxiety, dysregulation, or behaviours that challenge.

Volunteers are not expected to manage challenging behaviour independently and must always follow the direction of school staff.

To ensure the safety and wellbeing of pupils, staff and volunteers:

- Volunteers must work under the direct supervision of a member of school staff at all times when supporting pupils.
- Volunteers must not physically intervene in any behaviour incident. Physical intervention is only to be carried out by trained school staff in line with the school's behaviour and physical intervention policies.
- Volunteers must immediately seek support from a member of staff if a pupil becomes distressed, dysregulated, or displays challenging behaviour.
- Volunteers should not attempt to de-escalate situations beyond simple supportive strategies (e.g. calm communication, giving space), and must defer to staff to lead any behaviour management or intervention.

Volunteers will receive guidance during induction on:





- the school's behaviour policy and expectations
- appropriate ways to communicate with and support pupils
- recognising signs of distress or dysregulation
- maintaining professional boundaries at all times

Volunteers must:

- remain calm and use appropriate, respectful language at all times
- avoid raising their voice, issuing sanctions, or making promises to pupils
- follow all instructions given by staff during incidents
- report any concerns about a pupil's wellbeing or behaviour to the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or a member of staff immediately

Failure to follow these expectations may result in the termination of the volunteer placement.

9. Supervision of volunteers

All volunteers will be assigned a named supervising member of staff at Storybrook, who will be responsible for overseeing their work and providing guidance.

Volunteers will always work under the direct supervision of a qualified member of school staff and will not be left alone with pupils unless all appropriate safeguarding checks, including an enhanced DBS check (with barred list information where applicable), have been completed and explicit permission has been given by the Headteacher.

In practice, supervision means that:

- a member of staff is present in the same room or immediate vicinity when the volunteer is working with pupils
- the supervising staff member retains overall responsibility for the pupils at all times
- volunteers follow staff direction and do not take the lead in managing pupils or activities unless instructed to do so
- volunteers know who to go to immediately if they need support

Volunteers without an enhanced DBS check must:

- remain under constant supervision at all times
- not be left alone with pupils under any circumstances





Even where a volunteer has the appropriate DBS clearance, they will not routinely be left unsupervised with pupils, particularly in an SEMH setting where pupils may present with additional needs relating to behaviour, emotional regulation, or safeguarding.

The level of supervision may be increased at any time if deemed necessary by the school.

This section should be read alongside the school's Behaviour and Relationships Policy and Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

10. Induction and training

All volunteers must complete an induction programme before beginning their placement. This is to ensure they understand their role, responsibilities, and how to work safely within an SEMH (Social, Emotional and Mental Health) environment.

The induction will be delivered by a member of the school's leadership team or an appropriate staff member and will include:

- safeguarding training, including reading and understanding Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)
- clear guidance on how to recognise and report safeguarding concerns, including disclosures
- an overview of the school's Behaviour Policy, including expectations for supporting pupils and responding to dysregulation
- guidance on professional boundaries and maintaining appropriate relationships with pupils
- expectations around confidentiality and data protection
- health and safety procedures, including emergency arrangements
- clarification of the volunteer's role, including what they can and cannot do

As part of induction, volunteers will receive guidance on:

- how to respond if a pupil makes a disclosure
- how to respond if a pupil becomes distressed or dysregulated
- when and how to seek immediate support from staff
- maintaining a calm, consistent and professional approach at all times

Volunteers will not be expected to manage behaviour independently and must follow staff direction at all times.

Additional training may be provided depending on the nature of the role.





Volunteers must confirm that they have completed the induction and understood the key policies before starting their placement, including signing the volunteer code of conduct.

11. Confidentiality

Information about pupils, parents and staff is confidential. Volunteers are not permitted to discuss issues related to pupils, parents or staff with those outside of the organisation.

If volunteers have concerns, they should raise these with the appropriate member of staff. They shouldn't discuss them with pupils or parents.

This doesn't prevent volunteers from adhering to the school's safeguarding policy (with regard to reporting safeguarding concerns or disclosures).

If concerns relate to safeguarding, volunteers must follow the guidance in our child protection and safeguarding policy, and inform the designated safeguarding lead (DSL).

If concerns are related to whistle-blowing, volunteers must follow the guidance in our whistle-blowing policy.

12. Conduct of volunteers

Volunteers must comply with the staff code of conduct/the code of conduct set out in appendix 2 of this policy.

13. Insurance

Storybrook's insurance policy does cover volunteers in the event of an accident or emergency.

If a volunteer is working at the school through another organisation, we will also check that organisation's insurance arrangements.

14. Health and safety at Storybrook

The school recognises that working in an SEMH (Social, Emotional and Mental Health) environment may present additional health and safety considerations. Volunteers must follow all school health and safety procedures and act in a way that prioritises the safety of pupils, staff and themselves.

Volunteers will receive guidance during induction on key health and safety procedures, including emergency arrangements and their role during incidents.

Responding to incidents

- Volunteers must not physically intervene in behaviour incidents. Physical intervention is only carried out by trained members of staff in line with the school's policies.





- If an incident occurs, volunteers must immediately seek support from a member of staff and follow all instructions given.
- Volunteers should remove themselves and other pupils from risk where directed to do so by staff.

Personal safety

- Volunteers must be aware of their own safety and avoid placing themselves in situations where they may be at risk.
- Volunteers must follow staff guidance at all times, particularly during incidents involving distressed or dysregulated pupils.
- Any concerns about personal safety must be reported to a member of staff immediately.

Emergency procedures

- Volunteers must familiarise themselves with the school's fire safety and evacuation procedures during induction.
- In the event of an evacuation, volunteers must follow staff instructions and should not take responsibility for leading groups of pupils unless directed to do so.
- Volunteers must not deviate from agreed procedures, particularly where pupils may require additional support to evacuate safely.

First aid

- Volunteers must not administer first aid unless it is an emergency and no qualified first aider is immediately available.
- Any accidents or injuries must be reported to a member of staff without delay.

Failure to follow health and safety procedures may result in the termination of the volunteer placement.

15. Data protection and record keeping

Our privacy notice for volunteers explains what information we collect about volunteers and why we collect it.

We will:

- retain records relating to volunteers in line with our records retention schedule
- remove details of volunteers from the single central record (SCR) once they no longer work at our school





16. Monitoring and review

This policy has been approved by the governing body and will be reviewed every 2 years by the Headteacher.

17. Links to other policies

This volunteering policy is linked to our:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures
- Staff Conduct Policy





Appendix 1: volunteer application form

Complete the application form in full.

Please note that the school may not be able to accommodate all preferences.

Data protection notice	
<p>Throughout this form, we ask for some personal data about you. We'll only use this data in line with data protection legislation and process your data for 1 or more of the following reasons permitted in law:</p>	
<p>You've given us your consent</p>	
<p>We must process it to comply with our legal obligations</p>	

Personal details	
Name:	
Date of birth:	
Gender:	
Telephone number:	
Email address:	
Home address:	

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) information	
<p>Storyybrook is legally obligated to process an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check before making appointments to relevant posts.</p> <p>The enhanced DBS check will reveal both spent and unspent convictions, cautions, reprimands and final warnings, and any other information held by local police that's considered relevant to the role. Any information that is "protected" under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 will not appear on a DBS certificate.</p> <p>Volunteers working in regulated activity will also require a barred list check.</p> <p>Any data processed as part of the DBS check will be processed in accordance with data protection regulations and the school's privacy notice.</p>	
Do you have a DBS check? (please circle)	Yes/No





Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) information	
If yes, what type of check do you have? (please circle)	Basic DBS / Standard DBS / Enhanced DBS / Enhanced DBS with barred list information
Date of check:	
Certificate number:	

Availability					
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
AM					
PM					
Before school					
After school					
Lunchtimes					
How many hours per week/month can you volunteer?					
Can you commit to at least 1 term?					

Experience and qualifications
Do you have experience working as a volunteer, especially with children? If yes, please include details in the box below.
Why would you like to volunteer at Storyybrook?





Experience and qualifications

Do you have any particular skills, employment experience or hobbies you would like to share with the school? (For example, languages spoken, sports, scouting, etc.)

Do you have any relevant qualifications?

Preferences

What age groups would you prefer to work with?	
Would you prefer to work 1-on-1 or with a small group?	

References

Your placement as a volunteer may be subject to satisfactory references. Please give the details of 2 referees who can comment on your suitability (e.g. employers, colleagues, teachers, etc.).

Name:	Name:
-------	-------





References	
Relationship to you:	Relationship to you:
Address:	Address:
Telephone number:	Telephone number:
Email address:	Email address:

Disability and accessibility

Storyybrook is committed to ensuring that applicants with disabilities or impairments receive equal opportunities and treatment.

If you have a disability or impairment, and would like us to make adjustments or arrangements to assist you, please state the arrangements you require:





Appendix 2: code of conduct for volunteers

Code of conduct for volunteers

By signing this form, volunteers agree to the following:

1. School rules and policies

Volunteers will follow all school rules and policies, including those on:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- ICT and internet acceptable use
- E-Safety
- Mobile phones
- Data protection
- Health and safety
- Equality and Accessibility
- Whistle-blowing
- Behaviour and relationships

Copies of the school policies are available online or from the school office

2. Professional conduct

Volunteers must accept and follow instructions provided by supervisors, and ask for guidance or clarification if required. Questions can be directed to the supervising member of staff; usually, this is the Headteacher

Behaviour management is the responsibility of school staff. If volunteers witness behaviour that is in breach of the school's behaviour policy, or are struggling to manage the behaviour of pupils with whom they're working, they should alert the class teacher immediately. Volunteers should not attempt to reprimand pupils or issue sanctions.

Volunteers must conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times. This includes:

- dressing in a way that is professional and appropriate to the work they are doing
- refraining from using inappropriate language
- setting an example for pupils by acting in a way that reflects the school's ethos and values
- behaving in a way that is appropriate for the role they are undertaking
- ensuring that comments, including those made on social media, do not bring the school into disrepute





Volunteers must not accept gifts from, or give gifts to, pupils. The exception is small tokens, such as those exchanged at the end of term or as a way of saying “thank you”.

Volunteers must not transport pupils in their own cars unless specific arrangements have been made with the school, and the pupil’s parents have consented.

Parent volunteers with children at the school must not act in a way that favours their own child, and should not approach their child unnecessarily during the school day (for instance, during break times). They may not use their time as a volunteer to discuss their child’s education with school staff.

If a volunteer is unable to come to school when they are expected/scheduled to be in, they must contact their supervisor or the school office as soon as possible. Inconsistent attendance may result in the placement being reviewed or terminated.

3. Safeguarding

Volunteers must be familiar with, and adhere to, the school’s safeguarding and child protection policy. Safeguarding training will be provided to all volunteers before they begin their placement.

If volunteers have concerns about the welfare of a child, or if a child makes a disclosure, they should speak directly to the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or deputy DSL. The DSL is the Headteacher and the Deputy DSL is the Deputy Head.

Volunteers should refrain from physical contact with pupils, and should use their judgement to determine when physical contact is appropriate. If physical contact with pupils is required, volunteers should ask for a pupil’s consent before touching them.

Volunteers must alert the DSL if a pupil develops an infatuation with them, and must not form personal relationships with pupils, either inside or outside of school, with whom they do not already have a personal relationship. This includes:

- exchanging contact information
- making contact with pupils outside of school, including on social media
- arranging to meet pupils outside of school

Volunteers should not take or share photos of pupils unless instructed to do so by their supervisor.

4. Health and safety

Volunteers must abide by the school’s health and safety and first aid policies. Volunteers are not to administer first aid, except in an emergency where none of the designated first aiders are available.





Volunteers must be familiar with the school's fire safety and emergency evacuation procedures.

Volunteers must sign in and sign out at the beginning and end of every visit, and must wear a visitor badge at all times.

5. Confidentiality

Information about pupils, parents and staff at the school is confidential, and should not be shared with anyone else. Volunteers shouldn't discuss pupils with parents or other children. If parents approach volunteers for information, they should be directed to speak to a class teacher or the Headteacher.

Failure to adhere to this code of conduct may result in the termination of the placement. In more serious cases, misconduct will be treated in line with the school's staff disciplinary procedures.

Please sign and date below:

X

Volunteer name (please print)

X

Volunteer signature

X

Date





Appendix 3: requesting a volunteer (information for staff)

If you'd like assistance from a volunteer in your classroom, or for a specific activity or trip, fill out the form below and submit to the secretary.

Volunteer request form

Activity details	
Year group/class	
Activity details	
Date(s) and time(s)	
Is this activity ... (circle one)	One-off? Daily? Weekly? Other? If other, please explain:
Will there be any costs for the volunteer (such as entry fees to museums, materials, or travel)?	
Volunteer details	
How many volunteers do you need?	
Do you need your volunteers to have any specific skills or experience?	

Submitted by:

