



POLICY	Recruiting volunteers compliance code
STATUS/DATE OF THIS VERSION	Oct 2022
APPROVED BY	Board of Trustees
RATIFIED BY	Board of Trustees
REVIEW	Oct 2023

This policy is operated by all the schools in Unity Education Trust (as listed below).
There may be sections that are specific to one school and these will be added by the school either as an annex or in place of yellow highlighted sections below.

Any queries about the policy should be directed, in the first instance, to the Headteacher/Head of School:

- Beeston Primary
- Garvestone Primary
- Grove House Infant
- Kings Park Infant
- Northgate High School and Dereham Sixth Form College
- The Pinetree School
- The Short Stay School for Norfolk
- Churchill Park
- Greyfriars Primary
- Highgate Infant School
- Kings Oak Infant School
- Wimbotsham and Stow Primary
- Magdalen Primary
- St Germans Primary
- Great Dunham Primary

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1.Introduction

This document provides guidance on the health and safety considerations necessary when recruiting and managing volunteers. Please also refer to Unity Education Trust [Recruiting and Managing Volunteers Policy](#), the overarching document covering the areas needing to be considered when appointing, managing and supporting volunteers.

2.Scope

This compliance code also covers the use of external charitable organisations to deliver services on a school's behalf.

3.Responsibilities

All managers and employees should follow the procedures outlined in this Code in order to carry out their duties as outlined in your school health and safety policy.

4.Volunteers' health and safety responsibilities

Volunteers cannot be considered as employees as they are not subject to a contract of employment. You do however have a duty of care to ensure volunteers are performing their role safely. You also have legal obligations to ensure the health and safety of those affected by your undertakings are met.

5.External agencies/organisations providing volunteers

External agencies/organisations will have a duty of care to volunteers they are recruiting and nominating for service. The precise nature of this will depend on the terms/conditions agreed with the school. The expectation of who will retain what responsibilities for the volunteers needs to be clear from the outset.

Where external agencies are commissioned to deliver volunteer services, the health and safety considerations will be similar to when commissioning any other service and so the [Procurement and Commissioning Compliance Code](#) should be followed.

6.Determining the number of volunteers needed

This will require consideration of a number of practical areas including:

- Number of staff needed to perform the required function/tasks
- Ratios of paid to volunteer staff i.e. what the ratio ('mix') of employed staff to volunteers will be and how many experienced/competent employed staff will need to be available to mentor and manage volunteers
- Proximity of volunteers to management staff, e.g. will the volunteer activities be directly overseen by an employed staff member or will they work at arm's length?
- Volunteer time/hours needing to be filled
- The minimum levels of cover needed to ensure the service can continue to operate (including instigating any safety protocols such as the fire evacuation plan) needs to be established.

You may determine certain tasks should only be performed by your own staff, e.g. operation of evac chairs, and that a minimum number of your own staff need to be present on site. Similarly, there may be certain tasks you decide it would be unreasonable for volunteers to perform, e.g. attending alarm call outs.

7.Ensuring relevant training is provided

Volunteers must be provided with any necessary information, instruction and training to understand the risks associated with - and to safely perform - their role. They should also be able to access the [e-learning courses available on HR InfoSpace](#).

As a minimum, a basic induction should be carried out to include the key findings of any risk assessments relevant to their role. They will also need information on any local arrangements and emergency procedures such as for lone working, fire evacuation and reporting damage to asbestos containing materials.

8.Risk assessments of volunteer activities

Risk assessments should be in place for volunteer activities as they would be for your own staff. In most cases where the activity being performed is the same, the findings (risks and controls) will be the same. [Risk assessment Compliance Code P625](#) should be used.

9.Providing a safe environment in which to volunteer

Where volunteers are carrying out their role in or on a normal work site, their health and safety is likely to be ensured by maintaining the general premises/site management arrangements in place to protect paid staff and any visitors.

In most situations, the premises/site manager role will continue to be performed by a paid employee. However, if you expect the premises to be run at certain times or wholly by a volunteer, it is essential the premises management responsibilities are properly outlined and there are effective monitoring arrangements in place to ensure these are being properly undertaken.

10.Pre-employment and health surveillance requirements

Your risk assessment of the proposed volunteer role should consider whether pre-employment health checks or ongoing health surveillance might be needed.

10.1 Pre-employment health checks

For most roles it will be reasonable to request that the volunteer provides as part of the volunteer agreement, information on any health conditions that may affect their ability to safely perform their volunteer role.

A risk assessment should help identify particular roles where pre-employment health checks are advisable. This will be needed where the volunteer activity may potentially pose a significant risk, e.g. if it involves operating plant or machinery. Consider: Can they perform the role without risk to their health? Do they have any medical conditions that may prevent them carrying out the role safely? Do they require any modifications to the role/workplace?

Pre-employment health assessments are also an opportunity to undertake a baseline check on the health of volunteers who may be exposed to a potentially significant hazard during their volunteer work.

The manager recruiting the volunteer will need to request any assessment.

10.2 Health surveillance

Certain activities might expose individuals to physical agents (e.g. noise and vibration) or substances where health surveillance might be needed. Typically, this might involve a low level questionnaire to check for symptoms of a particular condition, e.g. when checking for symptoms of hand arm vibration in staff using vibrating tools.

11. Deciding what level of monitoring is needed

Proactive monitoring arrangements should be in place to help ensure incidents do not occur. Precisely how much and the type will depend on a number of different factors. For example; have you received any negative feedback that the volunteer is working in an unsafe manner? Are they involved in any high risk activities and/or environment?

Examples of active health and safety monitoring might include:

- Observation of the workplace
- Discussions or 1-2-1s

12. Addressing poor health and safety performance

If it becomes evident a volunteer's performance is not satisfactory, action should be taken. This should begin with discussions with the volunteer to consider how any issues could be addressed e.g. by temporarily amending their duties. Further guidance on addressing such issues is detailed in [Unity Education Trust Recruiting and managing volunteers policy.](#)