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# Volunteer Policy

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**Led by:** A.Kastelanides

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# Volunteer Policy

## Introduction

This document defines the terms and sets out the principles, practices and procedures, which our Community School will follow in the appointment, management and control of volunteers.

## Definition

Volunteers may be described as individuals who put their experience, knowledge and skills at the disposal of an organisation, free of charge, with the primary aim of helping the organisation to achieve its service objectives and or with the primary aim of bringing some benefit to the local community. In this sense, volunteers are to be distinguished from students, other work placements, and secondees, where the primary aim is usually for the student or secondee to obtain certain work experience or to carry out work or research in certain areas.

In other words, the primary benefit of volunteering in our school will be for the benefit of the pupils and the school. However, volunteers will also gain valuable teaching/tutoring experience and opportunities.

## Aims and Principles

**Our school values volunteers for the diverse skills and experience they bring. Volunteers are essential to the running of the school. It recognises that volunteers should be seen as integral, complementary and additional to the staff of the school.**

**The object of this policy is to ensure that the interests of the volunteers are met, whilst bearing in mind that the children and young people's safety and wellbeing is paramount. With this in mind, the Greek Community School at St. Cyprian's undertakes that all volunteers will:**

- Work under the supervision and guidance of the Head teacher.
- Be made aware of and be expected to adhere to the GCS's policies including Equal Opportunities, Child Protection and Health & Safety.
- Have completed a Volunteer Application form.
- Have references taken up.
- Be police checked.

(See Volunteer Recruitment Procedure – Appendix A).

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## **Absence**

Please inform the Head teacher in advance of any planned absence. If you cannot attend the school please call the Head teacher immediately to inform them.

## **Dress Code**

It is essential that volunteers dress in respectful and culturally appropriate ways to work with the pupils that attend the GCS

## **Equal Opportunities**

The GCS recognises that the activity of volunteering can provide a volunteer with experiences and opportunities for self and career development. In accordance with school's Equal Opportunity Policy, volunteer placements at the GCS will be therefore be open to individuals irrespective of race, gender, disability, sexuality, age or marital status.

## **Health and Safety**

This school has a statutory responsibility under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974, not to harm or damage the health of staff or volunteers through their involvement in the activities of the organisation.

All volunteers are expected to conduct themselves in a safe manner and not to act in a way that may cause injury to others.

Further information on Health and Safety can be found in <School Name>'s Health and Safety Policy.

## **Child Protection**

All adults working with or on behalf of children have a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

All volunteers and staff will be informed of their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and the procedures for referring concerns to the Head teacher (or other Designated Person).

Further information on Child Protection can be found in the school's Child Protection Policy.

## **Confidentiality**

Volunteers should regard all information they have access to or are given as a result of their volunteering as being confidential unless advised otherwise. No information should be released to a third party without first seeking the agreement the Head teacher and/or the individual concerned, as appropriate.

The Greek Community School will fulfil its duty to safeguard the information contained within application forms etc.

Volunteers have the right to access their own records (and application forms). Should you wish to see these records this can be arranged by giving the Head teacher 24 hours notice.

## **Termination**

Where appropriate, the role and placement of the volunteer may be terminated by the Head teacher at one week's notice, or immediately, where behaviour equivalent to gross misconduct has occurred. In all cases the volunteer will be entitled to an explanation of the decision and action taken. The Head teacher will report any such terminations to the Chair of the Parents' Committee/ Governing Body.

## **Discipline and Grievance**

Volunteers will not be subject to the GCS's disciplinary procedures. Correspondingly, volunteers will not have access to the GCS's grievance procedures. However, volunteers will be entitled to use the GCS's complaints procedure. Where appropriate, the complaint will be investigated fully by the Head teacher or her/his representative.

## **Expenses**

Volunteers will be reimbursed for out of pocket expenses, but may not receive payment for any reason.

## **Insurance**

Volunteers will be covered by <School Name>'s employer's public liability, professional indemnity where appropriate, and personal accident insurance.

## **Volunteer records**

Confidential records detailing names, addresses and telephone numbers are maintained on a database. Original copies of the volunteer application form, references, interview notes, and specific checks are also held in a locked file. Volunteer records are accorded confidentiality and each volunteer will have access to their own personal record in accordance with data protection.

## **Training and involvement**

Where a volunteer is based at the GCS on a weekly basis s/he will be expected to be involved and included in general activities, such as meetings, when necessary. Volunteers will also be required to attend a Child Protection Training session every two years.

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## Monitoring and review

It will be the responsibility of the Head teacher to regularly review the operation of the GCS's Volunteer Policy to ensure that it is in accordance with its Equal Opportunity policy.

## Code of Behaviour for Volunteers

### What a Volunteer Can Expect

- to be valued as an individual
- to have clear guidelines within which to carry out duties
- to be respected for their individual knowledge and skills
- to have support, feedback, appreciation, and encouragement
- to have opportunities to contribute to <School Name>'s developments
- to have opportunities to discuss concerns or problems relating to their duties
- not to have their duties changed without prior discussion
- to be reimbursed for out of pocket expenses
- to be insured while at Community School at St. Cyprian's
- up to date information about the school and its development
- a safe working environment
- to be given an induction as a volunteer of the school – outlining the policies and procedures that they need to adhere to

### What the School can Expect of its Volunteers

- a completed volunteer application form, positive reference and approved CRB disclosure
- show commitment to the school
- treat pupils, staff and volunteer colleagues with respect
- have a flexible approach to their duties
- be sensitive and tactful in their dealings with pupils
- follow policies, procedures and instructions
- be punctual
- be reliable and regular in their attendance
- inform the school in all cases of absence (in advance where possible)
- report any accidents promptly to staff
- respect confidentiality
- be prepared to undertake appropriate training
- carry out their tasks to the best of their ability
- discuss concerns with the appropriate person
- consult the appropriate person, if in need of help and guidance

### Some Do's and Don'ts for Volunteers

**Do** help to provide a safe, stimulating environment for children and young people.

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Reason **you are essential to the success of the school. Your role in ensuring that the pupils are in an environment where they are able to learn is paramount.**

**Do** ask questions if you are not clear about what your role is or what is expected of you.

**Reason** there can be last minute changes. Always make sure you are confident you know what you are doing. This also will be reassuring for the pupils you are working with.

**Do** help to ensure that equipment is maintained and that anything damaged or dangerous is removed.

Reason **accidents do occur and materials do get broken. Volunteers play a key role in ensuring that safety is maintained at all times.**

**Don't** develop a physical relationship with pupils. Clear boundaries are essential.

**Reason** you are in a more powerful position than the pupils and such a relationship would be exploitative. This is for your and the pupil's protection.

**Don't** accept/put up with any form of harassment from pupils, staff or other volunteers. If such incidents occur, or you feel they are likely to occur, please contact the head teacher, who will support you in dealing with this.

**Reason:** any form of harassment, intimidation or abuse is not to be tolerated and you have the right to conduct your voluntary work without fear of it.

**Don't** give your home address to pupils and never invite pupils into your home.

**Reason:** your time away from volunteering is exactly that – time away. You need space and privacy. During your agreed time with pupils you are protected by policies and guidelines and in your time you are not.

## **Appendix A – Volunteer Recruitment**

To ensure that volunteers are recruited in a manner that ensures the safety of the children and young people of the school, the following must be followed:

- Any volunteer adverts or requests for assistance must clearly state that "The Greek Community School (GCS) is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment".
- All job descriptions for staff and volunteers will state the main duties of the post and will include the statement that 'all adults employed by/volunteering with the GCS are responsible for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children s/he is responsible for, or comes into contact with'.

- All volunteers will need to have completed a Volunteer Application form.
- When appointing volunteers, the GCS will pay particular attention to:
  - unexplained gaps in employment
  - discrepancies
  - repeated changes of employment
  - explanations as to why the person would like to volunteer with children.

Incomplete application forms will not be accepted.

- References will be sought before interviews take place. Open references and testimonials provided by applicants will not be accepted. No volunteer will be appointed until a verified reference is received and scrutinised. For successful candidates, written references will be verbally verified.
- It might be necessary to request the contact details of another reference if there is any uncertainty of the appropriateness of the applicant to work with children and young people.
- All volunteers will be asked to bring identity proof with them e.g. a current driving licence or passport, a full birth certificate, plus a document such as a utility bill showing the candidate's current name and address.
- All volunteers will be asked to bring documents confirming any educational and professional qualifications relevant to the post.
- All interviews will be conducted by a minimum of two (usually three) people. At least one member of the Parents' Committee will always be present.
- As well as the above checks (qualifications, references), all candidates will undergo a CRB check and check of DfES List 99. All volunteer appointments are subject to these checks being satisfactory.
- Where there are serious concerns about an applicant's suitability to work with children, the facts will be reported to the police and the DfES Children's Safeguarding Operations Unit (formerly the Teachers Misconduct Team).
- All appointed volunteers will undergo an induction process which includes information and written statements of; policies and procedures in relation to safeguarding and promoting welfare e.g. child protection, anti-bullying, anti-racism, physical intervention/restraint, internet safety and professional conduct.