



Volunteer/Work Experience & Student Placement Handbook

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1. Welcome

Thank you for your interest in volunteering at our school. We appreciate the help that all our volunteers give in supporting the work of the school. **Please note: volunteers in this handbook includes those on work experience and student placements.**

We want you to enjoy your time with us, and we have produced this guide to make sure you feel comfortable, supported and appreciated. There is a lot of information here, but please don't hesitate to ask questions if you are unsure about anything!

2. Our commitment to you

As one of our valued volunteers, we are committed to giving you the following:

- A friendly and supportive working environment
- Enthusiastic and cooperative children
- A link staff member to support you in your volunteering
- Recognition for the work that you do and its impact on learning
- A reference if you apply for paid work here or elsewhere

3. Signing in and out

It is important for security and fire regulations that all volunteers working in the school can be identified and located at all times. We ask you to follow this simple routine every time you visit the school:

- Only enter the school via the front entrance.
- Sign in via the visitors management system (located at reception) and make sure you are wearing your ID badge and appropriate colour lanyard at all times.
- Find your link staff member or the Office Manager to let them know you have arrived, and to tell them where you will be working.
- When you have finished, please return your badge and lanyard to the office and sign out.

4. Where can I leave my belongings?

It's not a good idea to bring too many personal belongings and valuables to school with you; however, your link staff member will let you know where you can leave your coat and bag, etc.

5. Where can I go?

Most of the time, you will be working in your link staff member's classroom or shared spaces. If you need to visit other classrooms (for example, to collect children for reading), please be as discreet as possible while lessons are taking place.

At break times, we want you to feel relaxed and comfortable and, therefore, you are welcome to use the staff room for somewhere to sit. There are tea and coffee making facilities in there, so make yourself a drink. You may prefer use the playground to get a breath of fresh air, or alternatively, you could sit quietly in the classroom where you have been based.

6. Where can I go to the toilet?

There are toilets which you are welcome to use, but please do not use the pupils toilets.

7. Working with children

Whether you have previous experience of working with children or not, here are some guidelines to help you be successful in your voluntary work:

- Be friendly and encouraging with the pupils, especially when working with them for the first time. Expect them to be a little nervous – introduce yourself and explain that you will be helping them with their reading/spelling, etc.
- Remember that although we need to be friendly, we are not making friendships, and it is important that the pupils give you the same amount of respect as other adults in the school. Expect children to use your 'grown up' name, e.g. Mrs Smith.
- Our pupils are usually enthusiastic and cooperative. You are not responsible for managing their behaviour beyond making a reasonable attempt to help the pupil focus on their task. Be positive and clear in your explanations, and remember you are not there to negotiate about what the pupils have to do.
- If a pupil is overenthusiastic and silly, ask them politely to settle down to help them and others concentrate. If a pupil is not engaging at all with their work, remind them of the purpose of the activity and that you are there to help them.
- If your reasonable attempts to help a pupil engage with their task are not working, use a final reminder, e.g. 'If you can't settle down you will have to go back to see your teacher.'
- If you have any concerns at all, go and get help from a member of staff immediately.
- When you have finished working with a pupil, it is good to reflect on how the activity has gone. Praise the pupils when they have done well with their learning and attitude; when they have not, use phrases like 'Next week you should think about...' and 'I think it would help your learning if...' rather than telling the pupil off.
- Remember that the pupils are always watching – it's good to let them see you interacting respectfully and cooperatively with other adults in the school.

For more information, you can read the school's Behaviour Policy. If you are apprehensive about this area, the best advice is to watch members of staff or other adults working with children, even for the first few weeks. If it just is not working with a particular pupil or group, please let someone know.

8. Health and safety

You must comply with the school's Health and Safety Policy (available on the school's website), observing any specific requirements whilst volunteering.

Do not take part in, or ask anyone else to take part in, any action that might cause you or another person to be put at risk of injury or harm. You should always advise your link staff member or the school business manager of any potential hazard or situation that you feel puts people at risk.

If you are involved in an accident whilst volunteering at the school, please seek first aid if required (a list of qualified first aiders is available in all classrooms), and ensure you report the incident to your link staff member or the school office.

9. Equal opportunities

At our school, we do not tolerate discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, race, ethnic background, skin colour, religion, gender, sexual orientation, history of illness, non-relevant criminal records or marital, employment, financial or social status.

As a volunteer, you must treat people with respect at all times and ensure that there is no unlawful discrimination, abuse, harassment or bullying in your dealing with pupils, colleagues or others at the school.

If you feel that you have been unfairly discriminated against please discuss this with the headteacher. Our Equal Opportunities Policy is available from the office.

10. Child protection

Because of the school's duty of care to all pupils and adults in the school, we must ensure that your volunteering does not put anyone at risk.

The school's designated safeguarding lead (DSL) are as follows;

Centre	Name of DSL (Head of Centre)
Ashbourne	Josh Beckreck,
Marywood	Nia Brennan
Minerva	Caroline Willis
Kings	Sue Butcher
Link	Judith Traill
Millpool	Gary Christie
Firbrook	Steve Wilkes
Grove	Amy Hutchinson

The Lead DSL for the school is Mr Sunil Vyakaranam – sunilvyakaranam@cobschool.com

It is possible that pupils may tell you (or try to tell you) things relating to some form of child protection. If this happens, do not question the pupil; let your link staff member know immediately, and allow them to deal with it.

While you cannot promise confidentiality within school (i.e. you must make it clear to the child that you'll have to tell someone), you must ensure that once you have passed the matter on you do not discuss it with anyone else.

If you are in any doubt about the safety of a child, immediately tell your link staff member or the DSL.

11. Safe practice

To protect the pupils you are working with, and yourself, from any false accusation, follow these simple steps:

- Only work in public areas such as classrooms and corridors.

- Try to work close to where other volunteers or staff members are working.
- Avoid any physical contact with the pupils.
- Try to ensure that your conversation with pupils is friendly but not over-familiar.
- Never accompany pupils into the toilets.

12. Confidentiality

The information we hold about you and your volunteering is confidential, and as such, will not be shared with any third parties without your express consent, unless legally required.

We ask that you respect the confidentiality of staff and pupils at our school by not discussing things you have seen and heard whilst volunteering, especially when sensitive information about pupils is involved. We have a Confidentiality Policy located on the school website which you can read if you require more information.

13. Insurance

You will be insured for the same activities as teachers. As long as you follow the guidelines in this booklet and in the relevant policies you will be covered by the school's insurance for most occurrences.

14. Key contacts

Head of Teacher	Mr Steve Howel
Data Protection Officer	Shirley Chisholm – shirleychisholm@cobschool.com / 0121 303 0274
Lead DSL	Sunil Vyakaranam - sunilvyakaranam@cobschool.com / 0121 303 0272