**[FAITH INSTITUTION]**

**Volunteer Policy**

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| **Version** |  | **Approved by** |  |
| **Dated** |  | **Next review due on** |  |

**Introduction**

Safeguarding children is everybody’s responsibility; good practice has to be built into routine practice and procedures. Nowhere is this more important that in the recruitment and vetting of people who have contact with children. Volunteers are seen by children as safe and trustworthy adults and therefore it is vital that [Faith Institutions] adopt robust recruitment and vetting procedures for volunteers that minimise the risk of using a volunteer who might abuse children or is otherwise unsuited to work with them.

**Recruiting Volunteers**

Volunteers fall into four categories and this document provides guidance on the process which should be followed:

1. Individuals not known to the [Faith Institution]
	1. If a [Faith Institution] is actively seeking volunteers, and is considering candidates about whom it has little or no recent knowledge, it should adopt the same recruitment measures as it would for paid staff.
2. Individuals known to the [Faith Institution]
	1. If for example a school approaches a parent who is well known to the [Faith Institution] to take on a particular role, a streamlined procedure can be adopted:
		1. seeking references;
		2. checking to ensure others in the school community know of no concerns and can make a positive recommendation;
		3. conducting an informal interview to gauge the persons aptitude and suitability;
		4. undertaking a Disclosure & Barring Check (where applicable).
		5. ensuring that the individual has a legal right to live and work in the UK (Asylum & Immigration check)
3. One off volunteers
	1. In circumstances where a volunteer’s role will be ‘one off’ – e.g. helping at an event, the measures shown above will not be necessary provided that the person is not to be left alone/unsupervised in charge of children.
4. Volunteers recruited by other organisations
	1. Where volunteers recruited by another organisation work in schools, eg sports coaches from a local club, the school should obtain assurances, in for form of written confirmation from that organisation that the volunteer has undergone the appropriate clearance checks.

**Vetting**

Application Form - All volunteers should be required to fill in an application form in order to obtain basic information about the individual.

Verification of Identity - It is important to be sure that the person is who they claim to be, [Faith Institution] must see proof of identity, which should include photographic proof and proof of address.

**DBS Check**

All unsupervised volunteers in school, other than where specified must undergo a DBS check prior to commencement. There is no charge to the school for checks for volunteers, as long as the criteria laid down by the DBS is met.

It is important not to rely solely on a DBS check to screen out unsuitable volunteers. This is an essential safeguard, but will only pick out those abusers who have been convicted or come to the attention of the Police.

**References**

Two specific references should be sought for a volunteer, by [Faith Institution]. Reference enquiries should include a request for a specific statement about whether the referee knows of any reason why the person might be unsuitable for work relating to children, and if so details of those concerns. The school must not accept a testimonial for example, a to whom it may concern letter. Under no circumstances should a reference from a relative be accepted.

**Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974**

All volunteers requiring a DBS Check will be informed that the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 is not applicable to them and will be asked to detail any convictions or cautions on their application form, even if these would in other circumstances be considered spent.

**Record Keeping**

[Faith Institution] must include details of checks made on volunteers in their single central record.

**POST APPOINTMENT**

**Induction**

There should be an induction programme for all volunteers; the purpose of induction is to:

1. provide training and information about [Faith Institutions] policies and procedures;
2. support individuals in a way that is appropriate for their role in the [Faith Institutions]
3. confirm the conduct expected within the organisation;
4. provide opportunities for the volunteer to discuss any issues or concerns about their role;
5. enable the institution to recognise any concerns or issues about the person’s ability or suitability at the outset and address them immediately.

**Health and Safety**

[Faith Institution] have a duty of care to avoid exposing volunteers to risks to their health and safety. Senior staff should ensure that volunteers are made aware of the institutions health and safety policy and practical safety issues as part of their induction.

**Grievance and Disciplinary**

There should be a clear procedure in place to deal with complaints by or about volunteers. These procedures should be separate to the procedures for paid staff to maintain a distinctiveness between staff and volunteers.

**Confidentiality**

Volunteers should be bound by the same requirements for confidentiality as paid staff and the institution must ensure that this is explicit when using volunteers.

**Expenses**

[Faith Organisation] can choose to pay reasonable expenses to volunteers; these must only be out of pocket expenses e.g. travel for which receipts must be provided.