

PARENT COMMUNICATION · ALL GRADES

Parent Volunteer Welcome

How to onboard helpers

Why this matters

Parent volunteers can be a tremendous resource — extra adult support, real-world expertise brought into class, deeper community connection. They can also be a liability if expectations and safeguarding aren't clear from the start. This pack covers what to send to a parent volunteer before they start, what to discuss in person, and what to expect. Don't skip the safeguarding conversation — it's not paranoia, it's professional practice.

Before they start — what to organise

1. **DBS / BACKGROUND CHECK.** Most schools require this for regular volunteers. One-off classroom helpers may not need full DBS but always with another adult. School policy applies.
2. **SAFEGUARDING TRAINING.** Even a 15-minute briefing with the safeguarding lead is essential. They need to know what to do if a child discloses something or if they have a concern.
3. **CONFIDENTIALITY EXPECTATION.** Volunteers may see things — children's behavior, learning struggles, family info. Make clear that all this is confidential and not for discussion outside school.
4. **CLEAR ROLE DEFINITION.** What ARE they doing? Reading with children? Helping at a stall? Coming on a trip? Vague briefs lead to confusion.



Welcome letter to volunteers

Dear [name], Thank you SO much for offering to help at [school]. We genuinely appreciate it — parent volunteers make a real difference. ****What you'll be doing:**** [Specific role — e.g. 'Reading 1:1 with children on Tuesday afternoons' / 'Helping at the summer fair tombola'] ****When and where:**** [Day, time, location, who to find on arrival] ****Before you start:**** ■ Bring photo ID for safeguarding checks ■ Read the safeguarding briefing (attached) ■ Sign the volunteer agreement (attached) ■ DBS check completed (we'll arrange if needed) ****On the day:**** • Sign in at the office — you'll be given a visitor lanyard • [Class teacher / coordinator] will meet you and brief you • If you arrive early, you can wait in [location] ****A few things to know:**** • Anything you see or hear about specific children is confidential • Stay with the adult who's with you — never alone with a child • If a child tells you something concerning, tell [safeguarding lead] — don't promise confidentiality • Have fun and enjoy! The children love having extra adults around If you have any questions, please reach out. With huge thanks, [Name]

Safeguarding essentials for volunteers

<p>Never alone with a child</p> <p>Even briefly. Reading with a child happens in shared space, not behind a closed door. This protects volunteers as well as children.</p>	<p>Don't promise confidentiality</p> <p>If a child says 'don't tell anyone,' you cannot agree. 'I'll have to tell someone if it's important. But I'm glad you told me.'</p>
<p>Tell someone if you're worried</p> <p>Even small things. The safeguarding lead would rather hear ten things and discount nine than miss one.</p>	<p>Don't take photos</p> <p>Even with permission. Photos go through the school's official channels only. Volunteer phones stay in pockets.</p>
<p>Don't share what you see</p> <p>Not at the school gate, not on social media, not to other parents. What happens at school stays at school.</p>	



Volunteer agreement (one-page)

[School name] — Volunteer Agreement Name: _____ Role: _____

_____ I understand and agree that: ■ I will keep all information about children and families confidential. ■ I will not be alone with a child at any time. ■ I will not take photographs of children. ■ I will not share information about children on social media. ■ If a child discloses anything concerning, I will report it to [safeguarding lead] and not promise the child confidentiality. ■ I have read the safeguarding briefing. ■ I agree to follow school behavior expectations and treat all children with respect. ■ If I'm unable to attend, I'll let [coordinator] know in advance. Signed: _____ Date: _____

What good volunteer management looks like

1. CLEAR EXPECTATIONS UPFRONT. They want to be useful, but they need to know what 'useful' looks like.
2. ASSIGNED A 'BUDDY.' One regular member of staff who's their main contact. Reduces confusion.
3. SHORT TASKS, NOT VAGUE 'HELPING.' '20 minutes reading with this group' beats 'help in the classroom.'
4. THANK THEM REGULARLY. Specifically. By name. To other parents. They're giving up time.
5. END WHEN APPROPRIATE. If a volunteer arrangement isn't working — the volunteer is unreliable, or the role isn't a fit — end it kindly. Don't let situations drag.
6. CELEBRATE THEIR CONTRIBUTION. End-of-year thank-you cards, mention in newsletters (with permission), small gestures. Goes a long way.

