

PARSONS GREEN PRIMARY SCHOOL



VOLUNTEER POLICY, INFORMATION & FAQ's and APPLICATION FORMS

Parsons Green Primary School Volunteer Policy

We welcome and encourage volunteers to join us in supporting and enhancing the learning opportunities, achievement and enjoyment of children at our school. We recognise that volunteers at our school can make a valuable contribution to learning and to children's experience at school.

We greatly value the time and effort our volunteers give to our school whether it is on a regular or more ad hoc basis.

Volunteering opportunities

The types of activities that volunteers support and assist with can include:

- Supporting the Reading Project
- Accompanying out of school visits
- Working with small groups of children across a range of curricular areas
- Undertaking art and craft activities with children
- Participating in Skills Groups, Leadership Groups or special projects
- Making resources for use in class
- Gardening and working on the school environment
- Assisting at before and after school clubs
- Running the school library
- Raising funds and helping to organise events through Parent Council
- Participating with/on the Parent Council

Volunteers can include

- Parents and other relatives of pupils
- Students on work experience wishing to pursue a career with children
- Graduates wishing to apply for PGDE course
- Members of the Community with a particular expertise

Types of volunteering

- a) Through Parent Council. See school website and weekly newsletters for opportunities.
- b) Occasional support in school or out of school visits. These are individual events and generally parents/volunteers are only committing themselves to helping out on that particular trip/event at that time. The class teacher will ask for volunteers. If you are required to help, the school will notify you. Class teachers also welcome parents offering help to support classroom activities such as talks about the World of Work.
- c) Regular volunteering. This is when parents or helpers offer regular weekly support to the school for a period of time. Usually the commitment will be for at least a term and will consist of one or two timetabled weekly sessions.

Important Information for Volunteers

Confidentiality

Volunteers working in school may learn a great deal about the children with whom they are working. It is important to realise that any observations a volunteer may make whilst working in school which relate to a child's behaviour or learning, are highly sensitive and totally confidential and should not be discussed out of school.

It is important that the class teacher is made aware of how well your session went and if you noticed anything about the children with whom you have been working. If necessary, any issues can be discussed with members of the Senior Leadership Team.

Security whilst on the school premises

The safety of all children and adults within the school is of paramount importance. To ensure this, the school needs to know exactly who is on the school premises and where they are. We ask every adult who comes into school to report to the office and sign in. They will then be issued a visitor's badge by the office staff, which should be worn in a visible place during their time in school. We ask that visitors then sign out when they leave and return the badge.

Health and Safety and Fire Safety

The class teacher or staff member with whom the volunteer is working will ensure that the volunteer is aware of the fire alarm arrangements and about any safety aspects associated with any given tasks. Volunteers should ask for, and be given, clarification on any issues of which they are unsure. In the event of the fire drill sounding, the volunteer must evacuate with the class and make their way outside, if safe to do so, to the front of the school to be checked off for the fire-register.

We have a number of staff who have completed first aid training. Please refer any incidences to the class teacher in the first instance and they will ensure that an appropriate member of staff is called.

Role of the volunteer

All volunteers work under the supervision of the class teacher(s). Volunteers should not hesitate to ask if they are unsure about carrying out the task(s) or to seek advice/clarity if they have any questions.

We expect our volunteers to speak to children and adults within the school in a polite and courteous manner and would expect our pupils and staff to be the same with any volunteer who works within Parsons Green.

Behaviour of pupils

Positive behaviour is part of the personal and social development of our pupils. We expect all children to be polite and courteous. Our shared values of mutual respect, honesty, kindness, fairness, responsibility, tolerance and trust between adults and pupils form the basis of our positive school ethos. We expect all our volunteers to be welcomed by our pupils and to understand that the school rules be followed whilst working together. If children are not cooperating, this should be brought to the attention of the class teacher. Like all adults in

school, we would expect our volunteers to have high expectations of children's behaviour and their efforts.



Outings

Before setting off, all volunteers should expect to receive the following information from the staff organising the excursion:

- What time the class is leaving and from where
- How the class are travelling to their destination
- What your role on the outing will be
- Any specific clothing/footwear required
- Any specific rules that apply to the excursion
- If a packed lunch is required
- What time you will be returning to school
- A copy of the Risk Assessment Form prior to leaving school premises.

Absence

Volunteers are expected to telephone and inform the school in the event of being unavailable for a pre-arranged commitment, or in the event of illness, so that appropriate alternative arrangements can be made.

Complaints procedure

Any complaints made about a volunteer will be referred to the Head Teacher. The Head Teacher reserves the right to take the following action:

- To discuss with a volunteer any breach of the volunteer agreement and seek reassurance that this will not happen again.
- To inform the volunteer that the school no longer wishes to use them.

Child Protection: Protecting Vulnerable Groups check (PVG)

Volunteers who wish to accompany a class on a school visit where they will not have unsupervised access to children, or for one off supervised support in school, may not require to be disclosed.

All other volunteers will require a PVG check and 2 written references. The school will supply the forms and guidance notes for completion of the application to join the PVG scheme.

Please see the City of Edinburgh Council website for more details.

Mrs Cochrane, HT, is the Child Protection Officer and any concerns of disclosures about pupils should be reported to her.

Parsons Green Primary School Volunteer Policy

and Guidance FAQs



Welcome to Parsons Green Primary School. We want you to feel comfortable and confident in your role and have produced this list of frequently asked questions for your support. If there is anything else you require to know that is not included within this guide or the Volunteer Policy, please ask a member of staff.

Who are my main points of contact?

- The teacher or staff member you have been allocated to
- The school office
- The Depute Head Teacher or Head Teacher

Where will I be working?

Sometimes you may not be working with your child's class. Depending on what you have volunteered to do, you will be allocated to a class teacher and will be shown how/where to carry out the tasks.

How much time should I volunteer?

This is up to individual circumstances – we are grateful for whatever time you can spare. Some volunteers come in on an ad hoc basis to help out with one-off events; others come in for a session once or twice a week of about an hour and a half.

What do I do if a child says or does something concerning to me?

The school has a Child Protection Policy in place and all staff are trained in this. Please immediately refer anything you find concerning to the class teacher or any other staff member you are working with.

Please note we have a number of children within the school who have Additional Support needs. If you are required to work with any of these children, the class teacher will give you any assistance you may require, to do so successfully.

What do I do if I am unsure of my role at any time?

If you are ever unsure what to do when volunteering, please ask the teacher. You may have to wait for a pause in the teaching to do so. Please ask the member of staff who gave you the task to clarify. The golden rule is to ask if you are not confident or comfortable with the role you have been given.

What am I expected to do when accompanying a class on an outing?

Volunteers are essential to allow us to undertake outings with the children, and staff value your support on these occasions. The teacher in charge will let you know what they expect from you and you should follow directions from them at all times.

In general terms, you will be asked to ensure the children are safe when crossing roads and while getting on and off transport. You may be asked to accompany a group while looking round a museum and help support them in engaging with the exhibits by reading labels, asking them questions to help sustain their interest, or overseeing any tasks the pupils have been given.

You may be asked to help supervise children when having a snack or lunch.

Volunteer Agreement

Thank you for offering your services as a volunteer at Parsons Green Primary School. Your help is greatly appreciated and we hope that you gain much from your experience with us.

Please read and sign this agreement and hand it into the school office. You will be invited to meet with the HT or DHT to go over your application form to ensure a good match for your skills and area of interest with our pupils.

- **I have received and read Parsons Green Primary School Volunteer Policy and Guidance paper.**
- **I agree to treat all information I learn from being in school as confidential.**
- **I will follow the guidance of school staff in carrying out any tasks allocated to me.**
- **I will apply to join the PVG Scheme if deemed necessary**

Signed_____ Date _____

Please sign and return this form to the school office along with the relevant forms below:

- **Application form**
- **References**
- **Declaration of Criminal Convictions form**
- **PVG form (available from the school office)**

School Volunteer - Application Form

Name of school:

Name	
Current Address	
	City Postcode
Telephone (Include mobile)	
E-mail Address	
Occupation	
Name of Emergency Contact	
Relationship to Volunteer	
Emergency Daytime Telephone	
Emergency Evening/Mobile Telephone	
Why do you want to volunteer with us?	
Please describe any skills, hobbies or experience that you particularly want to use or may be useful as a volunteer?	
When are you available to volunteer? (For example, during the day, at weekends or evenings)	

References

Please name two people who we can contact for a reference. One of these should, if possible be someone you know in a professional capacity, for example, a present or previous employer, a tutor, teacher or someone for whom you have previously volunteered.

Referee 1

Name		
Relationship to volunteer		
Address		
	City	Postcode
Daytime telephone		
Evening/mobile telephone		
E-mail address		

Referee 2

Name		
Relationship to volunteer		
Address		
	City	Postcode
Daytime telephone		
Evening/mobile telephone		
E-mail address		

Signature of applicant:

Date:.....

Declaration of Criminal Convictions Form

•EDINBURGH•
THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL

School Volunteers

Please confirm the name of the school/s with which you wish to volunteer:

Due to the nature of the work for which you are applying this position is exempt as per the provision of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exclusions and Exceptions) (Scotland) Order 2003 as amended. You will be required to undertake a PVG Check with Disclosure Scotland.

A criminal record does not prevent you from volunteering.

You must therefore reveal to the Council full information about all convictions which for other purposes are 'spent' under the provision of the act along with details of any criminal proceedings pending against you.

Please indicate in the box below whether or not you have any criminal convictions or proceedings pending against you.

Any failure to disclose all convictions, or failure to give details of any criminal proceedings pending against you, could invalidate your application to volunteer or prevent you continuing as a volunteer.

Any information given will be kept in strictest confidence and will be considered only in relation to your application to volunteer. Please note that any information provided about convictions which are deemed irrelevant to the volunteer work for which you are applying will be disregarded.

Have you any convictions?

Yes

☐

No

☐

Are there any criminal proceedings pending against you? Yes

☐

No

☐

If you have answered **Yes** to either question please provide details and dates in the space provided below:

Volunteer Statement

- I confirm I have not withheld any information which may affect my application
- I confirm I understand any false, misleading or omission of information may invalidate my application
- I confirm I understand the information supplied will be subject to checks

Full Name (Please print)

Previous Name(s) (where applicable)

Signature

Date

School Volunteers and PVG Scheme Membership Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why do I need to be a member of the PVG Scheme?

It is an offence for the Council to offer regulated work (paid and unpaid) to a barred person and for a barred person to do (or seek to do) regulated work. We therefore have to satisfy ourselves that we are not offering regulated work to a barred person and so not committing any offence under the PVG legislation. The only way to check if an individual is barred is to require those undertaking regulated work to join the PVG Scheme.

2. Do all volunteers require to be PVG Scheme Members?

Not all volunteers in schools are doing regulated work and each case must be assessed by the Head Teacher or representative. If a volunteer is carrying out any of the specified activities, i.e. caring for children; teaching, instructing, training or supervising children; or are in sole charge of children, they are in regulated work and must be a PVG Scheme Member. Even if you are supervised by the class teacher, if you are carrying out any of these activities you are still in regulated work.

If the volunteer is not carrying out any of the specified activities, e.g. you are updating the library database or serving refreshments, it is only regulated work if you have the opportunity to have unsupervised contact with children while doing anything permitted or requested in connection with the position. To be regulated work, it has to be part of your normal duties. This excludes one-off occurrences and unforeseeable events.

3 What about school trips?

If the trip is a one off occurrence, you are not doing regulated work and PVG membership is not required. If you volunteer for a number of school trips, it will depend on the activities as above. If you are carrying out any of these duties, you are doing regulated work even if teachers are present.

Any trip involving an overnight stay will require you to be a PVG Scheme member.

4. Do senior school pupils who want to volunteer require to be checked?

No.

5. What happens if I have not been living in the UK?

If you are going to be volunteering on a regular basis, you will have to join the PVG Scheme.

Disclosure Scotland cannot currently access overseas criminal records or other relevant information as part of their disclosure service. Therefore, if you have lived outside of the UK for more than three months in the last five years, you need to provide a translated police check from the country/countries involved. The Criminal records Bureau (CRB) website provides guidance on how you can obtain further information from a number of overseas countries. If the country required is not listed on the CRB website, you must contact the country's representative in the UK. See the Foreign and Commonwealth website.

The costs of a foreign police check must be met by the applicant.

6. Am I notified once the PVG check has been completed?

If you are joining the Scheme for the first time, or you were a Scheme member authorised to carry out regulated work with protected adults and then applied to expand your membership to work with children, you will receive a Scheme Record. This will state that you are not barred from working with children and detail any previous vetting information such as criminal convictions.

If you are already a PVG Scheme Member authorised to work with children, you will receive a Scheme Record Update. This will only state that you are not barred from working with children and if there is any new vetting information since the last Scheme Record was issued. If there is new vetting information, the school will have to ask you to apply for a Scheme Record to find out the details.

Copies of Scheme Records and Scheme Record Updates are sent by Disclosure Scotland directly to your home address and a copy is sent to the authorised person in the school who countersigned your form, e.g. a Head Teacher or Business Manager.

7. What happens if I have a conviction?

The fact that an applicant has a criminal record does not automatically make him or her unsuitable. If the conviction is minor and irrelevant, it is likely to be ignored. If the conviction is more serious, the school will contact you to discuss further. Each circumstance will be reviewed individually and factors such as nature of offence, seriousness, age of offence, pattern of offending, and relevance will be taken into consideration.

8. Is there a cost to myself?

No, as a school volunteer you will not be required to pay for PVG Scheme Membership or for a Scheme Record Update. However, if you are simply looking for work experience, the school may ask you to pay the £59 membership fee.

9. What if I refuse to be checked?

If you refuse to become a PVG Scheme Member, it will not be possible for you to work as a school volunteer carrying out regulated work.

10. Can a check be carried out without my consent?

No. The applicant must sign the PVG application form. It is therefore not possible for a check to be carried out without your consent.

12. Can I initiate my own check?

The Council requires a full PVG Scheme Record if you are going to do regulated work as a school volunteer. If you are self employed, you can apply as an individual to join the PVG Scheme, but you will only receive a Scheme Membership Statement. This is not suitable for employers since it does not contain any vetting information.

An individual can initiate a Basic level disclosure check, but this is not acceptable for regulated work with children.

13. I have been through an enhanced disclosure check/PVG check. Do I need to be checked again?

Even if you had an enhanced disclosure check, you still need to join the PVG Scheme since this has replaced enhanced disclosures for regulated work with children. Even if you had a PVG check recently with another organisation, the Council will need to request a Scheme Update so they can notify an interest in you with Disclosure Scotland.

14. Will the information be kept confidential?

All information held must meet the Council's 'Policy Statement on the Secure Processing of Disclosure Information'. All disclosure information is kept in a secure location and is destroyed after 90 days.