

Volunteers Policy

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Introduction

This policy sets out the broad principles for voluntary involvement in the Inclusive Multi Academy Trust. Appointed/elected officials such as Members/Governors/Trustees have their own code of conduct as well as specific responsibilities under a variety of other policies. They are not included in this policy.

Commitment

The Inclusive Multi Academy Trust recognises the right that people have to participate in the life of their communities through volunteering. It also acknowledges that volunteers contribute in many ways, that their contribution is unique, and that volunteering can benefit our pupils, staff, local communities and the volunteers themselves. We value the contribution made by volunteers and are committed to involving volunteers in appropriate positions and in ways which are encouraging, supportive and which develop volunteering.

We recognise our responsibility to arrange volunteering efficiently and sensitively so that the valuable gift of the volunteer's time is best used to the mutual advantage of all concerned.

Definition

Volunteering is an important expression of citizenship as well as an important component of democracy. Volunteers are people who, unpaid and of their own free will, contribute their time, energy and skills to benefit the community.

Statement of values and principles

Volunteering is a legitimate and crucial activity that is supported and encouraged by the Inclusive Multi Academy Trust and is not intended to be a substitute for paid employment. The role of volunteers complements but does not replace the role of paid staff. Appropriate steps will be taken to ensure that paid staff are clear about the role of volunteers, and to foster good working relationships between paid staff and volunteers.

Volunteers will not be used during times of industrial action to do the work of paid staff. The volunteer role is a gift relationship, binding only in honour, trust and mutual understanding. No enforceable obligation, contractual or otherwise, can be imposed on volunteers to attend, give or be set a minimum amount of time to carry out the tasks involved in their voluntary activity. Likewise, the Trust cannot be compelled to provide either regular work or payment or other benefit for any activity undertaken by the volunteer. Although volunteers offer time freely and willingly without binding obligation, there is a presumption of mutual support and reliability. Reciprocal expectations are acknowledged – both of what the Trust expects of volunteers and what volunteers expect of the Trust.

Volunteer Co-ordination

All volunteers will have a nominated member of staff, appointed by the Headteacher, to offer guidance and advice to help the volunteer carry out tasks effectively. Volunteers will be informed of who to contact to receive support and supervision. This person is responsible for the management and welfare of the Trust's volunteers. Any staff having concerns about a volunteer should bring them to the attention of the nominated staff member.

Recruitment & Selection

To meet safeguarding regulations all volunteers will be required to undertake a DBS check where appropriate. References will also be sought to check suitability of working with children.

The Inclusive Multi Academy Trust is committed to equal opportunities and believes that volunteering should be open to all regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, ability, religion and political beliefs. The acceptance of volunteer assistance for a particular role is made on merit, the sole selection criterion being the individual's suitability to carry out agreed tasks. Information about the volunteer not relevant to the performance of the volunteering tasks concerned will be disregarded by the Trust in terms of recruitment and selection.

Volunteering opportunities will be widely promoted in ways that makes them accessible to all members of the community. Volunteers will be invited to attend an informal interview.

Volunteers who are considered unsuitable for a particular task will either be offered alternative voluntary involvement with the Trust or referred to the nearest Volunteer Centre.

Volunteers will have a clear and concise task description, which will be subsequently reviewed every **term**. The task description will be prepared in conjunction with the volunteer and the designated person referred to above.

New volunteers will be properly inducted into the Trust. Volunteers will be properly briefed about the activities to be undertaken and given all the necessary information to enable them to perform with confidence.

Training & Development

All volunteers will be made aware of and have access to all the Trust's relevant policies, including those relating to volunteering, health & safety, child protection and equal opportunities.

The development of training and support for volunteers is a high priority for the Trust to equip them with the necessary information and skills to carry out their tasks. It will be the responsibility of the designated person referred to above to see that this training is provided. It is the responsibility of the volunteer to attend relevant training.

Training in the management of volunteers will be provided for those staff with direct responsibility for same.

Support, Supervision and Recognition

Volunteers will have access to regular support and supervision. This will enable both the volunteer and the supervisor to identify, monitor and evaluate the volunteer's involvement, recognise achievements and identify individual training needs, including that relevant to their particular volunteering role and to their wider personal development. The frequency, duration and format of these sessions will be negotiated between the volunteer and the designated officer referred to above.

Volunteers will be given the opportunity, where relevant, to share their views and opinions with the Trust's wider staff, at staff meetings etc.

Insurance

The Trust is a member of the Department for Education's Risk Protection Arrangement.

Confidentiality

The Trust will advise the volunteer on its confidentiality policy and procedures, where relevant. This would include those relating to personal information held by the Trust relating to the volunteer.

Settling Differences

The Trust aims to treat all volunteers fairly, objectively and consistently. The Trust seeks to ensure that volunteers' views are heard, noted and acted upon promptly and aim for a positive and amicable solution based on the Trust's guidelines for settling differences.

The designated officer referred to above is responsible for handling problems regarding volunteer complaints or conduct and these should be referred to him/her. In the event of a problem, all relevant facts should be obtained as quickly as possible. Support will be provided by the Trust to the volunteer while it endeavours to resolve the problem in an informal manner. If an informal resolution proves impossible, the Trust's wider disciplinary, grievance or complaints policies and procedures (which include volunteers) will be referred to.

Rights and Responsibilities

The Trust recognises the rights of volunteers to:

- know what is (and what is not) expected of them
- have adequate support in their volunteering
- receive appreciation
- have safe working conditions
- be insured
- know their rights and responsibilities if something goes wrong
- receive appropriate training
- be free from discrimination
- be offered the opportunity for personal development

The Trust expects volunteers to:

- be reliable
- be honest
- respect confidentiality
- make the most of training and support opportunities
- carry out tasks in a way that reflects the aims and values of the Trust
- work within agreed guidelines
- respect the work of the Trust and not bring it into disrepute
- comply with the Trust's policies