

**Volunteer
Policy**

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Approval Committee:	Directors
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ENCOUNTER ● LEARN ● GROW ● FLOURISH

Version Number	Date of Version/Review	Detail changes
V. 1	Nov 2025	n/a

1. Introduction and Aims

This policy supports the work of the St Cuthbert's Roman Catholic Academy Trust (The Trust) in promoting its vision and values. The Trust believes that volunteers provide a valuable contribution to the work of all our schools and that they enrich our trust through their breadth of knowledge and experience.

We are committed to involving volunteers in a way that supports our trust's strategic aims and vision, as well as our school's development plans.

The aim of the St Cuthbert's Roman Catholic Academy Trust volunteering policy is to:

- Encourage our wider communities to engage with The Trust, thereby enhancing the curriculum, raising achievement, supporting our children and young people and promoting community cohesion
- Ensure that volunteers support our trust's visions and values, and adhere to our policies
- Provide staff, volunteers and parents with clear expectations and guidelines
- Set a clear, fair process for recruiting and managing volunteers
- This policy has been developed in line with statutory safeguarding guidance,
- Ensure that all volunteers have a positive, meaningful and rewarding experience, during their time spent with the trust and its schools

2. How we use our volunteers

The deployment of any volunteer, whether for one day or over a longer period, must take account of the needs of the individual school, its pupils and its staff to ensure the arrangement is of benefit to the school and the person volunteering.

The deployment of any volunteer will be at the discretion of the school's Headteacher and for an agreed period, subject to review no less than annually with the Headteacher. The class teacher remains responsible at all times for the organisation of the class and methods of work. A volunteer cannot substitute for this role.

Volunteers must not be asked to carry out duties which:

- fall within the normal responsibilities of a teacher who is responsible for students' care
- fall normally within the job description of a teacher or member of support staff, i.e. they must not be asked to cover the absence of staff from any school;
- would normally be performed by a paid contractor engaged by the Trust;

Volunteers must be designated to a specific member of staff to whom they will be directly responsible. The staff member taking responsibility for the supervision of the volunteer must ensure the volunteer is adequately inducted into the tasks they are being asked to support and the specific environment they are working in.

This additional responsibility is not compulsory for staff and should only be delegated with the agreement of the employee concerned. It is essential that the volunteer is clear which member of staff has this responsibility.

At St Cuthberts RC Academy Trust, volunteers may, but this list is not exhaustive:

- Listen to children read
- Accompany school visits
- Work with individual children
- Work with small groups of children
- Support specific curriculum areas, such as ICT or art

Volunteers may come from different areas of the local community:

- Members of the local governing board
- Parents
- Former pupils
- Students on work experience
- Local residents
- Friends of the school/members of any parents/friends associations

Volunteers must not be asked to replace paid staff or be given responsibility within the school that would normally be associated with paid employees. Equally, volunteers must not carry out any activities which might cause conflict or restrict professional teaching duties.

Volunteers not undertaking regulated activity ('Ad-hoc' volunteers), for example, a parent helper on a school trip, are not covered by this policy. These volunteers must be supervised at all times by a member of staff and not have any unsupervised access to pupils.

Directors and members of the local governance board working at the school in their governance capacity (for instance, conducting school monitoring visits or attending meetings), are not covered by this policy. They are covered by our governor Code of Conduct.

3. Applying to be a volunteer

Any person interested in volunteering at the Trust should, in the first instance contact the individual school where they wish to apply, to see if any opportunities are available.

All prospective volunteers should then complete the Volunteer Application form a copy of which can be found in Appendix 1.

The Trust's equality policies applies to any person(s) volunteering within our schools or central offices and the same principles will be applied.

To view our policies, please visit the Trust website at: www.scr.cat.org/Key-Info/

4. Appointment of volunteers

Volunteers are appointed by the Headteachers in individual Trust schools or the appropriate department manager for central volunteers. Any person wishing to apply for a volunteering position must be over the age of 18.

All appointments are conditional upon the satisfactory completion of a volunteer DBS check where the activity requires and other appropriate safeguarding and recruitment checks (including two references), and relevant induction or specific training for the role to be carried out.

All volunteers will be required to attend an informal meeting with the Headteacher/Trust manager to determine that the volunteer's position is suitable for them and to ascertain if any reasonable adjustments are required.

The Headteacher/Trust manager reserves the right to withdraw or end a volunteer opportunity at any time.

DBS checks for volunteers working in the school through other organisations will be conducted by the relevant organisation. The school will ask for written confirmation that DBS checks have been carried out before a volunteer is allowed to start work at the school.

5. Safeguarding

Safeguarding our pupils is of paramount importance and our volunteers must share our commitment to child protection.

To ensure we are upholding our responsibility to keep our pupils safe, we will:

- Conduct volunteer DBS checks
- Obtain satisfactory references
- Conduct risk assessments where necessary

We will also consider the results of any DBS checks that return with unspent and spent listed convictions, and assess these on a case-by-case basis, with regard given to the nature of the conviction and the nature of the work the volunteer will be involved in.

We will provide safeguarding training/induction to all volunteers **prior** to them beginning work at the school, including ensuring that they have read and understood part 1 of the DfE's *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (KCSIE).

In accordance with KSCIE, should a low-level concern be raised against a volunteer, the Trust's Low Level Concern procedures will be followed.

Similarly, should a safeguarding allegation be raised against a volunteer, the Trust policy on allegations against staff & volunteers will be followed.

We require volunteers to read, agree and adhere to the expectations outlined in our Staff Code of Conduct and to read, and adhere to, the school's policies on:

- Safeguarding
- Health & Safety
- Social Media Policy
- Use of mobile phones
- ICT and internet acceptable use
- Online safety
- Behaviour
- Any other appropriate policies deemed necessary to the role undertaken

6. Induction, training and support

Specific training requirements will be determined by the Headteacher, or the appropriate member of staff.

Volunteers must complete appropriate induction training prior to beginning work at the school. Volunteers may be required to undertake other additional training, provided by the school or a third party, to support the activity they undertake where relevant. This may include online training.

All volunteers must have safeguarding training. Other training requirements will be based on the nature of the work the volunteer will be doing.

Volunteers will be made aware of the following procedures in addition to those referenced in the safeguarding section:

- expectations with regard to confidentiality;
- access to information related to pupils and/or staff;
- expected level of pupil/student behaviour;
- the Trust statement on Equalities, especially focusing on issues relating to discrimination and the use of appropriate language;
- the Trust Complaints policy and procedure;

All volunteers will receive support and guidance from a named line manager or the department they are volunteering within. This will be in the form of regular feedback and meetings if necessary. If anyone volunteering requires any additional support or guidance they should arrange to meet with their named line manager to discuss this.

7. Confidentiality

Information about pupils, parents and staff is confidential. Volunteers are not permitted to discuss issues related to pupils, parents or staff with persons outside of the Trust.

If volunteers have concerns, they should raise these with the appropriate member of staff. They must never directly discuss them with pupils or parents.

This doesn't prevent volunteers from adhering to the Trust's Safeguarding & Child Protection policy (with regard to reporting safeguarding concerns or disclosures).

If concerns relate to safeguarding, volunteers must follow the guidance in the appropriate safeguarding policy and inform the named designated safeguarding lead (DSL).

If concerns are related to whistleblowing, volunteers must follow the guidance in our Whistleblowing Policy which can be found on the website at www.scr.cat.org/Key-Info/

Any materials or resources used by a volunteer are the property of the trust and consent should be sought before using any items outside.

8. Volunteer Conduct

As a volunteer of the St Cuthbert's RC Academy Trust, you are expected to conduct yourself in a manner both inside and outside work, which upholds the reputation of our schools and Trust.

The following points should always be adhered to and if you are unsure what is expected of you then you should raise this with the named line manager.

- The Trust expects all volunteers to deal with one another, the public, pupils and parents in a courteous and civil manner. Relationships between colleagues should be supportive, cooperative and respectful. Volunteers should behave in a way that enhances the performance and wellbeing of others and the effectiveness of the individual school and the Trust.
- You should notify the Headteacher if you are in any doubt about the effect of your conduct outside work.
- If you are subject to criminal proceedings, you are obliged to disclose this to the Headteacher. If any aspect of the information that forms your DBS check changes whilst you are volunteering with the Trust you are obligated to inform the Headteacher immediately
- A person's dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self-expression. However, volunteers must ensure they are dressed decently, safely and appropriately, for the tasks they undertake and which are outlined for all in the Staff Code of Conduct document.
- Personal property of a sexually explicit nature such as books, magazines, DVDs or such material on any electronic media must not be brought onto school premises or stored on Trust equipment.
- Social networking sites and blogging are extremely popular. Volunteers must not post material which damages the reputation of the Trust or which causes concern about their own suitability to work with children and young people. Those who post material, which could be considered as inappropriate, could render themselves vulnerable to criticism or allegations of misconduct and have their volunteering agreement ended.

- The St Cuthbert's RC Academy Trust prohibits the involvement of volunteers from engaging in any form of social networking with students. If there is, any doubt about whether communication with students is appropriate, advice should be sought from a member of a senior management team. Volunteers must adhere to the Trust's Social Media Policy.

9. Expenses

If within your role as a volunteer for The Trust you incur any additional expenses, this should be discussed with the Headteacher or relevant line manager.

If it is deemed that they are *reasonable* expenses that have occurred through your role and by **prior agreement** then The Trust will reimburse additional costs.

The Trust will only reimburse expenses that have been agreed by your line manager and are claimed through an authorised expenses form.

All expenses must be supported by evidence/receipts.

Further information on expenses can be found within our finance policies.

Insurance

The Trust and its schools hold Risk Protection Arrangements with third party liability. Any person volunteering within a Trust school would be covered under this arrangement.

10. Data protection and record keeping

Everyone has rights regarding how their personal information about them is handled.

During the course of our activities we will collect, store and otherwise process personal information about our pupils, pupils' families, staff, volunteers, contractors, suppliers, and other third parties. St Cuthbert's RC Academy Trust is committed to meeting their legal obligations concerning data protection and confidentiality and to seeking to achieve best practice in relation to information governance.

Any breach of this or any other information governance policy will be taken seriously and may result in legal action being taken against the Academy, the Trust and/or the individual responsible for the breach.

Full further information our full Data Protection Policy can be viewed on our Trust website.

11. Complaints or Concerns

The St Cuthbert's RC Academy Trust commits to promote positive working relationships and is committed to providing a working environment where employees and volunteers are treated with dignity, fairness and respect.

The Trust recognises that occasionally an individual may have a problem, concern or complaint regarding their working environment or another volunteer or employee.

Where a complaint or concern is raised, it is preferable for this to be resolved informally between the individual and the line manager or the person who the complaint is made against, as close to the point of origin, wherever possible.

In the event that a complaint or concern cannot be resolved informally, the volunteer should raise the issue formally with the appropriate Headteacher and HR department. All complaints and concerns will be handled fairly, and level of due diligence will be undertaken before coming to a decision regarding how the complaint or concern may be dealt with.

Responsibilities of the Academy Trust

- To ensure volunteers are given the opportunity to explain their concern and the outcome sought.
- To seek a means to resolve the complaint/concern wherever possible whilst taking into account Trust policies, procedures and rules.
- Achieve an early resolution of complaints where possible and allow volunteers to take their concerns to a further level of management where appropriate.
- To ensure consistency and fairness of treatment

Responsibilities of the Volunteer

- To raise complaints only in relation to legitimate concerns and not of a malicious/vexatious nature
- To engage with managers in seeking to resolve any complaint that has been raised – by attending meetings and /or participating in any investigation and providing evidence to support the complaint
- To make every effort to raise and resolve matters informally at an early stage and to consider mediation as a means of resolving concerns.
- To act in a respectful and professional manner towards all parties
- To maintain confidentiality.

12. Moving on

In the event that a volunteer wishes to end their volunteering agreement with The Trust, they should confirm this in writing to their line manager/ Headteacher.

Whilst there is no set notice period for anyone volunteering, the Trust would appreciate as much notice as possible so that alternative arrangements can be made to cover the tasks being undertaken by the volunteer.

Any personal information relating to volunteers will be stored in accordance with GDPR regulations and further guidance on this can be found within the Trust's Data Protection Policy.

13. Monitoring and review

This policy has been approved by Directors and will be reviewed on a 3 year basis or sooner if required.

The St Cuthbert's RC Academy Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all employees and volunteers to share this commitment.

Personal Details

Title.....

First Name..... Last Name.....

Known as (abbreviated/alternative forename)

Address.....

.....

Postcode.....

Mobile No..... Home No.....

Email Address.....

Which school are you applying to volunteer at:

Please say why you are applying for voluntary work at The Trust. Include any skills or experience that you can bring to the role along with what you would like to achieve from the volunteering. Continue on a separate sheet if necessary.

Have you Volunteered before?
If yes, please provide details:

YES/NO

Please provide details of employment and/or work experience and other volunteering roles that you have undertaken

Do you have any particular needs that we should be aware of so as to best support your volunteering with us?

References

Please provide two referees, one from your current or most recent employer and one character reference. Please let your referees know that we may contact them.

Referee one	
Name	
Address	
Telephone Number	
Occupation	
Email Address	
In what capacity do they know you?	

Referee two	
Name	
Address	
Telephone Number	
Occupation	
E-Mail Address	
In what capacity do they know you?	

We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. This post is subject to an enhanced DBS check.

Please note that it is a criminal offence for a person that has been barred from working with children and young people to work or volunteer in a school.

Declaration

I confirm that I have read and agree to the St Cuthbert's RC Academy Volunteering Policy **YES/ NO**

I declare that the information given on this application form is true and correct

Name.....

Signature.....

Date.....

Appendix 2: Volunteer Agreement

Thank you for offering your services as a volunteer at. Your offer of help is greatly appreciated and we hope that you will gain much from your experience.

Please read and sign this Volunteer Agreement statement and return it to the school.

You may request a copy of it for your records if required.

- I have read a copy of the Volunteer Policy
- I agree to support the Trust's vision and values
- I agree to treat information obtained from being a volunteer in school as strictly confidential
- I understand that an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check will be undertaken
- I have been made aware of who is my designated supervisor e.g. Class Teacher, Headteacher.

Name: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____