

HR3: VOLUNTEER SUPPORT

1. The use of volunteer helpers in Cognus is becoming increasingly important. In order to deliver an effective, high quality service, Cognus must utilise the strengths and experience of all staff and also needs to engage wider community members and stakeholders in providing excellence. Our volunteers are an essential element in our work. As such their use must be carefully considered and planned for.
2. There are some overriding considerations that staff and volunteers should be aware of:
3. Volunteers must be vetted. They must complete an application form, with two referees. The exception to this is student volunteers from Secondary Schools. These will be vetted by staff from the Secondary School.
4. Volunteers are given clear guidance on safeguarding children, child protection, and their conduct whilst in school and are asked to read section 1 of the DfE publication 'Keeping Children Safe.' This is revisited annually and a record of this is kept centrally on the SCR.
5. Volunteers must be treated with courtesy and respect. Whilst some will have the skills or expertise of an experienced classroom assistant, teacher or other professional, initially tasks may appear 'menial', but everyone should feel that their contribution is valued and appreciated.
6. Volunteers should not be asked to tackle tasks beyond their scope. If necessary, advice and support should be offered to enable the volunteer to feel comfortable with the tasks. Cognus managers and staff should always explain the task objectives and expected outcomes so that helpers feel confident about what they are doing. If possible, planning which demonstrates the activities involved should be photocopied for the helper. Don't ask helpers to do things they are not happy with. Take time to find out what they are happy doing, it makes the working relationship much more productive and means that they will keep coming back!
7. No voluntary helper should ever be left in a vulnerable position, i.e. never with a child, young person or vulnerable adult in a place/situation where they cannot be observed.
8. Volunteers are asked to treat any information, views or opinions they have received whilst working with us as confidential. However, staff should be sensitive to the need for strict confidentiality in some matters and if necessary some conversations should only take place privately.

9. All volunteers will have to agree to a check of their background to ensure there is no reason why they should not have access to children or vulnerable adults. A secure record of the DSB checks will be kept in the Single Central Record.
10. If anyone working within school has a concern about a helper, it is in the interest of everyone that the issue is resolved. In the first instance a quiet word may settle the issue. For more serious issues, staff should inform their EMT manager.
11. All volunteers working in schools or with children and vulnerable adults will leave mobile phones or any other electronic device that can be used to record images in the school office or securely locked away for the duration of visit to school in line with our safeguarding procedures.