

# Volunteers in Caherline School Policy

## 1. Introduction

- (a) At Caherline National School, volunteers are a welcome resource for helping to raise children's achievements and complementing the work of Teachers. We feel that our school will benefit greatly from developing well-planned, active parental and community links through participation by adults in the activities of the school on a voluntary basis. We also feel that the role of volunteers in our school provides for the enrichment of the pupil's learning experiences, but should not encroach on or restrict professional teaching duties. The deployment of any volunteer, whether for one day or for a number of sessions over a longer period, is managed with care; in particular taking account of the needs of the pupils and the staff to whom they are assigned.
- (b) At our school the principal and the Board of Management are mindful of deploying volunteers appropriately. Volunteers are not asked to replace paid staff or given responsibility within the School that would normally be associated with paid employees.

## 2. Deployment

- (a) Volunteers are not asked to carry out duties which:-
  - (i) Fall normally within a Teacher's responsibility under *loco parentis*;
  - (ii) Fall normally within the job description of a Teacher or member of support staff, i.e. they are not asked to cover the absence of staff from School;
  - (iii) Would normally be performed by a contractor engaged by the Department of Education or Science or by the School;
  - (iv) Require them to have unsupervised access to children on a 1:1 basis;
- (b) The Class teacher remains responsible for the organisation of the class and methods of work.

## 3. Organisation

- (a) During a visit to the school each volunteer is linked with a specific member of staff to whom he or she will be directly responsible. Whilst there should be no significant addition to the workload of the staff member taking responsibility for the volunteer, it is expected that time is taken to ensure the volunteer is adequately inducted into the role and that there is mutual agreement and understanding.
- (b) All volunteers are made to feel welcome. The parameters of their role within the school are clearly defined from the outset in order to avoid the possibility of misunderstanding.

## 4. School Regulations and Other Information

- (a) In fairness to all concerned, volunteers are made aware of the rules governing behaviour at the School; the key 'dos' and 'don'ts' for children and adults. This includes procedures designed to avoid hazards or risks associated with the tasks that they are being asked to carry out and, importantly, details of first aid and emergency arrangements such as procedures to follow in case of fire.

- (b) As part of their induction to life at the school, volunteers are also provided with basic information such as details of those facilities available to them eg staff room, toilets etc.
- (c) We feel that it is vital that volunteers are made aware of the following procedures:-
  - expectations with regard to confidentiality;
  - access to information related to pupils and/or staff;
  - expected level of behaviour and an awareness of Professional Codes of Conduct;
  - School's Equal Opportunities policy –especially focusing on issues relating to discrimination and the use of appropriate language;
    - the School's Complaints procedure;
    - the School's Disciplinary procedure.

## **5. Child Protection**

- (a) The school requires a copy of Garda clearance for all volunteers with responsibilities which can give them regular unsupervised access to pupils.
- (b) Where the individual volunteer is unable to provide a copy of the Garda clearance they will be required to complete the necessary application which will be processed by the school.
- (c) The Principal will take all reasonable steps to confirm the identity of the person volunteering.

## **6. Insurance**

- (a) Volunteers are informed about the extent of the insurance cover available. The school insurance policy does not cover parents driving children to events. They do so at their own risk and under own motor insurance policy. However children, if injured etc., would be covered under school policy.

Also, teachers taking children to events in their own car use own motor insurance. However if their personal premium is increased as a result of an accident then school policy would cover payment of increase up to €3500.

- (b) Volunteers using their own car to transport children other than their own children to school events, (sport, music etc) are made aware of the school policy and advised to check with their car insurance company to ensure that they do not contravene their insurance policy conditions.

## **7. Allowances**

- (a) Although there is no obligation to make financial reimbursement to volunteers, out-of-pocket expenses may be available, connected with the tasks they undertake for the school, reimbursed through the school fund, if requested.