

## Visitor and volunteer policy and good practice guide

**Date:** Spring 2025

### Introduction

In addition to adults employed by Sphere Federation, there are often adults and young people who spend some time at our schools. Visitors and volunteers have an important role to play in bringing a range of skills and experience that enhance and promote learning opportunities.

### Safeguarding

Sphere Federation is committed to the safeguarding of pupils and everyone who works here. We expect visitors and volunteers to share this commitment and follow policies and procedures in relation to this. The Safeguarding checklist (Appendix 1) and Visitors to School Flowchart (Appendix 2) gives further guidance on DBS checks for visitors and volunteers in school. This policy should be read in conjunction with other related federation policies: including Safeguarding and Child Protection; Positive Relationships, Guidance for Safer Working Practice, and various Health and Safety policies.

For safeguarding reasons, volunteers and visitors (including parents/carers and regardless of the nature of activity) must have prior agreement before entering school.

### Volunteers and visitors

Visitors include:

- supply teachers
- NHS staff
- agencies running specific events
- local authority representatives
- catering staff
- building and maintenance companies

The types of activities that visitors engage in include working with whole classes, small groups or with individual pupils (eg supply teacher, school nurse, speech and language therapists, theatre companies, music teachers, sports coaches), and leading after-school clubs.

Volunteers include:

- members of the Governing Board
- parents of pupils
- students on work experience
- university students
- local residents
- friends and supporters of the school

The types of activities that volunteers engage in include listening to pupils read, working with small groups of pupils to assist them in their learning, working alongside individual pupils as an additional tutor, and assisting with extra-curricular activities

### Volunteers

Anyone wishing to become a volunteer at one of our schools should complete a Volunteer Application Form (Appendix 3) and the Volunteer Agreement (Appendix 4) which sets out our expectations of volunteers and confirms that they have received a copy of this Visitor and Volunteer policy and good practice guide.

If the volunteer will be in school on a frequent or regular basis, a DBS Enhanced Disclosure is undertaken and references are checked before the volunteer starts working. Volunteer records are kept centrally within the school.

If successful, a short induction takes place (not required where a volunteer participates in a one-off activity):

- the volunteer is made aware of their role and responsibilities
- relevant school policies and documentation are explained and issued; these include those relating to safeguarding
- an appropriate member of staff ensures that volunteers are clear about emergency procedure (eg fire alarm evacuation) and about any safety aspects associated with particular tasks (eg using equipment or accompanying pupils on visits)

### Visitors

Before a visitor is invited to the school, there must be a discussion with the Head of School to make sure that any safeguarding issues can be addressed and to make sure the content of the visit is appropriate and fit for purpose. The following guidance is in place to support arrangements:

- the year group(s) involved

- date and time
- name of visitor and company
- reason for visit
- what is the purpose and proposed activity
- whether parents need to be consulted
- informing the visitor of restricted parking
- whether any equipment is needed
- clarification on whether DBS or risk assessment is needed
- whether there are any costs involved

Permission must be granted by the Head of School before a visitor is arranged. The following must be adhered to:

- formal visitors representing the LA, businesses, contractors, outside agencies etc are required to present formal photographic identification
- all visitors must enter the school building through the main gate and report to the office to sign in
- all visitors must state the purpose of their visit and who has invited them or who they wish to see
- all visitors must wear a visitor lanyard
- all visitors are directed to the information on their visitor badge

On departing, visitors leave via the office, recording their departure time and returning the visitor lanyard.

## Upholding the school ethos

We want Sphere Federation schools to be happy and healthy places to learn (St James' CE Primary: ...to achieve and believe). All adults and young people in Sphere Federation, including visitors or volunteers, are expected to behave in such a way as to promote our aims and educational purpose. The following points should be adhered to:

- your help will bring you into close contact with staff and pupils; much of what you see in school is confidential and should remain so
- all adults in school should behave as role models for our pupils
- you are not expected to make judgments about pupils' abilities or behaviour; any personal views you may have about a pupil's ability should not be disclosed to anybody except a member of the school's teaching staff
- do everything possible to avoid any physical contact with pupils
- you should not get drawn into inappropriate topics of conversations with pupils; if a pupil begins to talk to you about matters which concern or disturb you, please talk to a member of staff, or the Head of School
- all personal belongings (bags, valuables and medications) must be kept with you at all times or locked away securely (a member of staff will help you with this)
- mobile phones, personal cameras and recording devices must be locked away, out of the reach of children during school hours, and must never be used to take photographs of pupils, whether in school or out on a school trip or other event
- if you are in doubt about anything, always ask the advice of a member of staff or the Head of School

Many of the above standards are there not only for the protection of our children, but also for your own; a breach of any of the standards set out above might lead to a visitor or volunteer being removed and considered an unsuitable candidate for further involvement.

For visitors and volunteers whose children are pupils at the school, it is important to behave impartially when working with children. Although it may be tempting, please do not seek to use your time in school as an opportunity to discuss personal issues such as your child's educational progress (this can be distracting for teachers during school time).

## Supervision

Visitors and volunteers work under the supervision of a teacher or other member of staff. Staff retain ultimate responsibility for pupils at all times, including pupils' behaviour and the activity that they are undertaking. Visitors and volunteers should have clear guidance from the designated supervisor as to how an activity is carried out and the expected outcome of the activity. In the event of any query or problem regarding the pupil's understanding of the task, their behaviour or welfare, visitors and volunteers must seek guidance from their designated supervisor.

## Health and safety

Visitors and volunteers need to exercise due care and attention and communicate any obvious hazards or concerns to their designated supervisor or other senior member of staff. Visitors and volunteers are covered by the school's Indemnity and Public Liability Insurance.

## Concerns and complaints

Any complaints made about a visitor or volunteer will be referred to the Head of School or delegated to a senior member of staff for investigation. Any complaints made by a visitor or volunteer will be dealt with in the same way. The Head of School or designated member of staff reserves the right to take the following action:

- speak with the visitor or volunteer about the incident, and in the case of volunteers the breach of the Volunteer Agreement, and seek reassurance that this will not happen again
- offer an alternative placement for the visitor or volunteer (eg helping with a different activity or in another class)
- end the relationship and therefore no longer agree for the individual to be in school

At Sphere Federation, we value the diversity of individuals within our school and do not discriminate: no member of the school community should experience harassment, less favourable treatment or discrimination. We respect protected characteristics. Any concerns should be reported to the Head of School or Head of Federation.

Visitors and volunteers are provided with Sphere Federation's Complaints Policy and Procedures if requested.

### Finally...

We hope that you find this guidance helpful and that you will keep it in mind throughout your time in school. We are confident that you will enjoy the experience of working as a volunteer, satisfied in the knowledge that you are making a positive contribution.

## Appendix: Safeguarding checklist

The following are extracts from Keeping Safe in Education (DfE, 2024):

### Visitors

305. Schools and colleges have different types of visitors, those with a professional role i.e. educational psychologists, social workers etc. those connected with the building, grounds maintenance, children's relatives or other visitors attending an activity in school such as a sports day. For visitors provided via a third party see paragraphs 292-295.
306. Schools and colleges should not request DBS checks or barred list checks, or ask to see existing DBS certificates, for visitors such as children's relatives or other visitors attending a sports day.
307. Headteachers and principals should use their professional judgement about the need to escort or supervise such visitors.
308. For visitors who are there in a professional capacity schools and colleges should check ID and be assured that the visitor has had the appropriate DBS check (or the visitor's employers have confirmed that their staff have appropriate checks. Schools and colleges should not ask to see the certificate in these circumstances).
309. Whilst external organisations can provide a varied and useful range of information, resources and speakers that can help schools and colleges enrich children's education, careful consideration should be given to the suitability of any external organisations.
310. School and college safeguarding policies should set out the arrangements for individuals coming onto their premises, which may include an assessment of the education value, the age appropriateness of what is going to be delivered and whether relevant checks will be required.

### Volunteers

311. Under no circumstances should a volunteer on whom no checks have been obtained be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.
312. Whilst volunteers play an important role and are often seen by children as being safe and trustworthy adults, the nature of voluntary roles varies, so schools and colleges should undertake a written risk assessment and use their professional judgement and experience when deciding what checks, if any, are required.
313. The risk assessment should consider:
- the nature of the work with children, especially if it will constitute regulated activity, including the level of supervision
  - what the establishment knows about the volunteer, including formal or informal information offered by staff, parents and other volunteers
- 82
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- whether the volunteer has other employment or undertakes voluntary activities where referees can advise on their suitability, and
  - whether the role is eligible for a DBS check, and if it is, the level of the check, for volunteer roles that are not in regulated activity.
314. Details of the risk assessment should be recorded.<sup>104</sup>

Below is some guidance about DBS checks and other safeguarding measures. This is only guidance: it is important to consider the duration, frequency and nature of a visitor's time in school. To ensure safeguarding is robust, all regular adults in school have had a DBS Enhanced Disclosure. Details of DBS checks of frequent visitors to school are included on the Single Central Register. This is updated by the Sphere Federation Resources Manager.

### Volunteers and visitors

If they are unaccompanied with children (eg hearing children read), come in at least once a month, or for more than three days in one month, these adults are DBS-checked. Details included on Single Central Register. Even when DBS-checked, volunteers should not be left alone for sustained periods. This applies even in areas where there are no children, such as the staffroom. DBS-checked visitors must not be responsible for accompanying / supervising any non-DBS checked visitors.

### Specific people who visit school

#### PTA

Appropriate risk assessments are undertaken. The professional judgement of school leaders is used, and sometimes this will be moderated with the Head of Federation or another Head of School.

#### Governors

All governors should be DBS-checked because we encourage governor input and participation in school activities and this therefore means their visits to school should be of a regular nature. Details included on Single Central Register.

#### Work experience students

Work experience students do not need to be DBS-checked if they are part of high school work experience or for half a day per week for no more than a term. High schools are required to assess the suitability of the student for the placement. However, students undertaking other types of placement (eg sports leaders) should be DBS-checked by the organising body and details included on the Single Central Register.

#### People considering a teacher training course, but not yet applied

These people are DBS-checked if they spend a period of longer than three days in school. They are supervised at all times. Details included on Single Central Register.

#### Trainee teachers

We ensure that the relevant educational institution confirms that the trainee has been checked and is suitable for the placement. They are included on the Single Central Register with the university's DBS disclosure number.

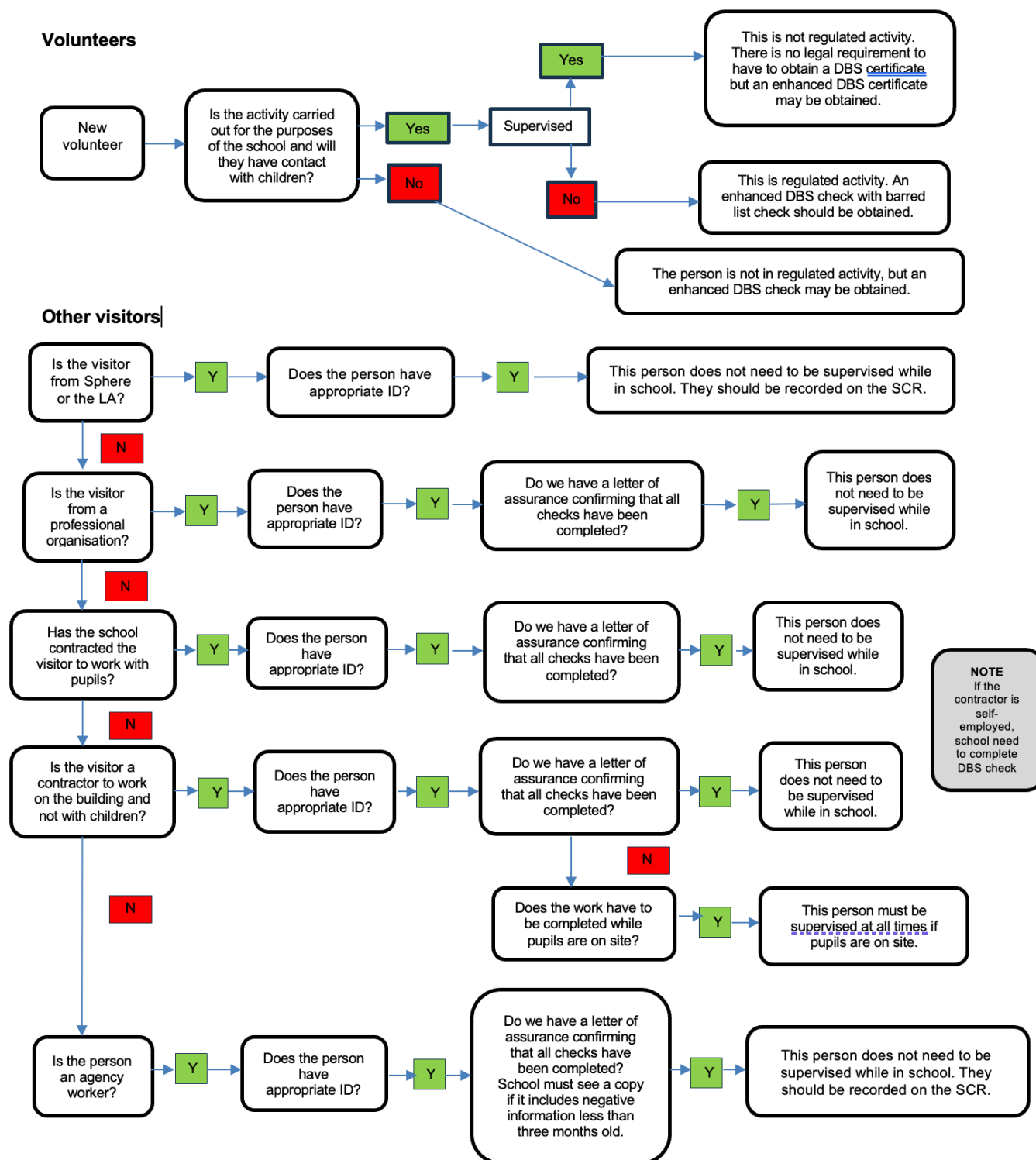
## Adults doing work attached to some sort of training body

The training institution must confirm that they employ safer recruitment techniques including ID checks, interview, DBS and that they have risk-assessed any disclosed information. The organising institution undertakes the DBS check. Details included on Single Central Register.

## Agency staff and peripatetic teachers

DBS checks are undertaken by the organising body and included on the Single Central Register.

Below is a guide, but Heads of School use their professional judgement.



## Appendix: Volunteer application form

| Personal details       |                              |
|------------------------|------------------------------|
| Title:                 | Home address (inc postcode): |
| First name(s):         |                              |
| Surname:               |                              |
| Home telephone number: |                              |
| Mobile number:         | Email address:               |

| Basic details   |                         |                      |
|---|-------------------------|----------------------|
| Which school are you interested in volunteering for?  |                         |                      |
| Moortown Primary  | Scholes (Elmet) Primary | St James' CE Primary |
| What activities / areas of the school's work would you like to help with?   |                         |                      |
|   |                         |                      |
| Are there any particular age groups / classes you would like to work with?  |                         |                      |
|   |                         |                      |
| Do you have any disabilities or other needs we need to take into account, or adjustments we need to make, to enable you to work as a volunteer in school? (Please give details) |                         |                      |
|   |                         |                      |

| References  |                          |
|---|--------------------------|
| It is expected that applicants will name their most recent employer as their first referee. |                          |
| Title:  | Title:                   |
| Name:   | Name:                    |
| Position:   | Position:                |
| Address:  | Address:                 |
| Postcode:   | Postcode:                |
| Telephone:  | Telephone:               |
| Email:  | Email:                   |
| Capacity in which known:  | Capacity in which known: |

| Secondary, further and higher education           |   |  |                   |                                     |
|---|---|--|-------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Dates<br>(month and year)<br>(start and end date) | School, college,<br>university or<br>educational<br>establishment | Exams taken or<br>being taken or any<br>other qualifications<br>obtained | Full or part time | Exam result / grade<br>(with dates) |
|   |   |  |                   |                                     |

| Work experience (please start with most recent)   |                  |   |                       |
|---|------------------|---|-----------------------|
| Please give details in chronological order or any experience / activities which you consider relevant e.g. commercial experience, raising a family, youth work, voluntary work. |                  |   |                       |
| Details and nature of<br>work / activity  | Name of employer | Period of service<br>(start and end date) | Full time / part time |
|   |                  |   |                       |

**Information in support of this application**

You may use this space to provide any information you wish, including any interest or unpaid activity. Ensure that you provide a full description of all skills, knowledge and experience that you feel are relevant.

**Criminal offences**

This post is exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975. Applicants are therefore not entitled to withhold information about convictions or binding overs which for other purposes are 'spent' under the provisions of the Act.

You are asked to disclose any previous convictions. Any failure to disclose convictions could result in dismissal from the voluntary position.

Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence, received bindovers or police cautions? **Yes / No**

If **Yes**, please give details:

**Data Protection Act 1998**

The information you submit will be processed by Sphere Federation who act as a data processor for Leeds City Council. By signing below, you consent to Sphere Federation recording and processing the information detailed in this application form. I understand that this information may be used by the company in pursuance of its business purposes and my consent is conditional upon Sphere Federation complying with their obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998.

**Signature and agreement**

I confirm that all information given in this application is accurate and I agree that if my application is successful my appointment will be subject to satisfactory criminal vetting under the legislation for the protection of children.

**Signed:**

**Date:**

Thank you for taking the time to complete this Volunteer Application Form. Please hand it to the School Office, marked for the attention of the Head of School.  
Your offer of help is greatly appreciated, but we can't guarantee we will be able to accommodate every volunteer in our schools. We'll be in touch soon.

| Equal opportunities  |                 |
|--|-----------------|
| <p>Volunteers will not be unfairly discriminated against on the grounds of any protected characteristic. To ensure the effectiveness of the policy, and to assist in its development, all applications are monitored. You do not need to respond to some or all if you'd rather not.</p> |                 |
| Age  |                 |
| Date of birth:   |                 |
| Sex  |                 |
| Male   |                 |
| Female   |                 |
| Other / prefer not to say  |                 |
| Disability   |                 |
| Are you disabled?  |                 |
| Yes  |                 |
| No   |                 |
| Do you consider yourself to meet the Disability Discrimination Act definition of a disabled person?  |                 |
| Yes  |                 |
| No   |                 |
| <b>For disabled candidates only</b>  | <b>Yes / No</b> |
| If called for an interview, does your impairment require us to make any particular arrangements?   |                 |
| <p>If yes, please describe.</p> <p>It would be useful if you could give us any information you have about how these might be overcome. If you do not let us know at this stage what your needs are, there is no guarantee that we can meet them if you let us know at a later date.</p>  |                 |
|  |                 |
| Ethnic background  |                 |
| White  |                 |
| English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British  |                 |
| Irish  |                 |
| Gypsy or Irish Traveller   |                 |
| Any Other White background   |                 |
| Mixed / Multiple ethnic group  |                 |
| White and Black Caribbean  |                 |
| White and Black African  |                 |
| White and Asian  |                 |
| Any Other Mixed / multiple ethnic background   |                 |
| Asian / Asian British  |                 |
| Indian   |                 |
| Pakistani  |                 |
| Bangladeshi  |                 |
| Chinese  |                 |
| Any other Asian background   |                 |
| Black / African / Caribbean / Black British  |                 |
| African  |                 |
| Caribbean  |                 |
| Any other Black / African / Caribbean background   |                 |
| Other  |                 |
| Arab   |                 |
| Any other ethnic group   |                 |
| Prefer not to say  |                 |

## Appendix: Volunteer agreement

Thank you for offering your services as a volunteer at Sphere Federation.

Your offer of help is greatly appreciated and we hope that you will gain much from your experience.

Please sign this Volunteer Agreement and hand it in to the School Office.

**I have been accepted as a volunteer at Sphere Federation and I can confirm the following:**

- I understand and accept the Sphere Federation Volunteer Policy and Good Practice Guide, which applies to my involvement as a volunteer.
- I agree to support Sphere Federation school aims and educational purpose.
- I agree to adhere to Sphere Federation policies and procedures at all time.
- I agree to work within the boundaries of Sphere Federation safeguarding procedures at all times.
- I agree to treat any information obtained from within school with the strictest of confidence.
- I agree to undertaking an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check.
- I have been informed of who will be my designated supervisor.

Signed:

Full name:

Date: