Old Palace & Children's House Federation

VOLUNTEER & STUDENT POLICY

ADOPTED AUTUMN 2025

Volunteer and Student Policy

1. Introduction

The Federation actively encourage parents, carers and other volunteers to be involved in enhancing the learning opportunities of children at our school. We recognise that they have skills and attributes that are valuable for learning and can support the school in raising standards by allowing us to reflect upon and enhance our practice.

Our Volunteers include:

- Parents of pupils
- Corporate volunteers
- Students (including on work experience)
- Local residents
- Governors
- Parent Councillors

The types of activities that Volunteers may support include:

- Hearing children read
- Working with small groups of children
- Undertaking art & craft activities with children
- Supporting after-school clubs
- Accompanying school visits
- Completing a training placement, related to professional qualification

This policy explains the procedures in place to support the work of volunteers and students. Volunteers are defined as those offering regular support. Where individuals offer support only occasionally, such as at the Career Fair or Summer Fete, the federation's Visitors Policy will apply.

2. Recruitment of Volunteers

Parent Volunteers

The federation periodically seeks to recruit parent volunteers for school visits or on a more regular basis e.g. hearing children read. These opportunities are well published and include an information session led by a senior member of staff and a Parent Support Worker.

General Volunteers

Members of the public wishing to volunteer should initially make contact by emailing the relevant school, setting out their skills and the reason for their interest. If the school is able to facilitate the request, a time to visit the school will be arranged.

Student Teacher & Training Placements

The federation works with a number of partners, including LETTA, Goldsmiths University and the Institute of Education. Prospective students will be selected in collaboration with these institutions.

Work Experience Placements

The federation supports local secondary schools by offering work experience placements. Prospective work experience students will be selected in collaboration with local secondary schools.

With the exception of Parent Volunteers, in order to maintain professional boundaries, as a general rule, the federation does not offer volunteer opportunities to ex-pupils under the age of 18 or to close relatives of staff employed by the federation.

For the same reason, parent volunteers will not be deployed in the same environment as their child/ren. The only exception, is during end of year trips.

3. Clearance and Security Procedures

It is illegal for anyone who is barred from working with children to apply for, or to work in a school in any voluntary or paid capacity.

Volunteers/students who have an unsatisfactory DBS check or reference will be automatically refused the role and will be advised of the reason for the decision by the Executive Head Teacher/ Head of School. Volunteers/students who do not agree to the required checks will be refused the opportunity to work/be placed at either school in the federation.

Parent & General Volunteers

A digital information pack will be emailed to adults who express an interest in becoming a volunteer in school. This pack will consist of:

- Volunteer & Student Policy
- Volunteer Registration Form (Appendix 1)
- Volunteer Agreement (Appendix 2)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)

All volunteers who will be in contact with children will be asked to complete the registration form and the necessary checks through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) will be completed. The volunteer must provide 2 references from professionals. If that is not possible, at least 1 reference must be from a professional and the other from a non-relative.

A criminal record will not be an automatic bar to volunteering, as only relevant convictions will be taken into account. A risk assessment will be undertaken by the Executive Head Teacher in consultation with the Chair of Governors

The Head of School or a member of the Senior Leadership Team will conduct a face to face interview as part of the vetting process. The interview will help ensure the volunteer is placed in an appropriate role and will provide an opportunity to probe the candidate's skills and motivation for wishing to work with children.

Once the necessary vetting has been completed, details of the enhanced DBS check will be recorded on the relevant school's Single Central Register. When on site, the volunteer will be required to sign the visitor's book at the office and to wear the appropriate visitor's badge.

Where institutions are responsible for assigning volunteers, such as Switch or the Healthy Lives Team, they will be responsible for carrying out and sharing DBS checks (see procedure for student placements below).

Student Placements

Where students are completing a recognized training course, the training institution will complete the necessary safeguarding checks (DBS enhanced clearance with a barred list check) and share this with the relevant school. They will also verifying in writing the student's enrollment on the course and purpose for the placement. On their first day, the student will be required to provide photo ID and a copy of their enhanced DBs check. These details will be recorded on the relevant school's Single Central Record, after which the student may be provided with a school entry fob.

Work Experience

The secondary school will provide a letter verifying the child's enrollment at the school and the purpose for the placement. Work Experience students will be required to sign the visitor's book at the office and to wear the appropriate visitor's badge. Work Experience students will not be left unsupervised with pupils.

4. Induction

Parent and General Volunteers
Before taking up their volunteering roles, the volunteers will be asked to attend an induction meeting led by a senior member of staff. The meeting will provide information about the school and key staff, linked to safeguarding and health and safety. This meeting will also give an opportunity for the volunteer to ask questions and for the school to familiarise the volunteer with the key policies relating to their role such as:

- Code of Conduct.
- Safeguarding and Child Protection.
- Behaviour Policy.
- Online Safety.
- Health and Safety.
- Whistle Blowing.

Student Placements
The student's mentor will ensure that a thorough induction is completed, as set out in the school's Induction Policy.

Work Experience
The Class Teacher will provide the student will essential Health & Safety information.

5. Conduct

All volunteers and students will be required to adhere with the expectations set out in the federation's Code of Conduct and Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
Failure to do so may result in the placement being terminated

The welfare of our children is paramount. Should any volunteer receive a disclosure from a child or have a concern they must report it immediately to the member of staff that they are working with, who will then follow school procedures. They must not engage in any further discussions about the disclosure with the child.

All placements are considered with the children's best interests at heart.
The federation reserves the right to end any placement if it is deemed that the needs of the children are being compromised.

6. Supervision

Volunteers and work placement students work under the supervision of the Class Teacher of the class to which they are assigned. In some cases, volunteers work under the supervision of a senior member of staff. Teachers retain responsibility for children at all times, including the children's behaviour and the activity they are undertaking. Volunteers should have clear guidance from the Teacher as to how an activity is to be carried out, what the expected outcome of an activity is and be briefed on any specific health and safety requirements (for example when using tools). Volunteers are encouraged to seek further advice / guidance from the Teacher in the event of any query / problem regarding the children's understanding of a task or their behaviour.

Volunteers undertaking a student placement on a recognized training course will be assigned a mentor. The support and time provided by the mentor will be such that it does not impede on their role within the federation. The student should initially see their mentor as the first point of contact for any questions/queries.

7. Confidentiality

Volunteers in school should regard any information that they acquire in working with children to be confidential and not to be discussed with anyone except the class teacher. Volunteers must not pass on information about progress, attainment or behaviour to a child's parents; if they have concerns or relevant information this should only be passed on to the Class Teacher or a member of the Senior

Leadership Team. It is not appropriate for volunteers to provide written records for the child's parent/carer

Other confidential information includes records of the children's medical needs, family contact details and any other sensitive information relating to a child's family circumstances. Should you see or hear information pertaining to the children this should be kept in the strictest confidence.

If volunteers are concerned about anything another adult in school says or does they should raise the matter immediately with a senior member of staff.

8. Complaints Procedure

Any complaints made about a Volunteer will initially be referred to the year group leader for investigation. They will also receive any complaints made by a Volunteer regarding staff or children in the year group which they lead.

The Head Teacher/ Head of School reserves the right to take the following action:

- To speak with a Volunteer about a breach of the Code of Conduct or Volunteer Agreement and seek reassurance that this will not happen again.
- Inform the Volunteer that the school no longer wishes to use their voluntary services.

9. Additional Guidance

The Role and Responsibilities of Volunteer Helpers on Visits and Journeys
The school greatly values the support of parents in helping to supervise trips, however should a parent fail to follow the guidance below, we retain the right not to invite them to attend subsequent trips.

The main duties of parent volunteers on school trips and visits are to:

- ensure the safety and security of the children
- engage with the children in order to enhance their learning experience
- help ensure that all children, including their own, participate fully and independently in all activities

When supporting trips, parents volunteers:

- are asked to read any briefing information which relates to the trip.
- should not leave their group/class at any time without notifying the teacher.
- when walking in public places, should encourage children to walk in twos rather than a group.
- should raise any concerns with the teacher leading the trip and not to discuss these with other parents/carers.
- should refrain from purchasing items, or food and drink, for their own child/group.
- should not interfere with their own child's social interaction with their groups and friends or their child's independence.
- inform the class teacher if they experience any difficulties with a child/children in their group

APPENDIX 1

Registration Form for Volunteers

You will appreciate that the School must be particularly careful to enquire into the background of individuals who have access to pupils at the School. The School keeps a record of all persons who carry out voluntary work at the School. You are asked, therefore, to complete the details below and return it to the School. In accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education, we ask volunteers to give names and addresses of two 'professional' referees. Please provide these below.
It will be necessary for a Disclosure and Barring Check, including a Barred List Check, to be made on you unless you already have provided one.

Title (Mrs/Miss/Ms/Mr):	
Surname:	
Previous name(s):	
Forename(s):	
Address:	
Date of birth:	
Telephone no:	
Have you ever lived overseas?	Yes: ☐ (Please give details separately) N ☐

Relevant experience (e.g. education, training, employment or voluntary work):

Referees:

Please give names and addresses of two professional referees who can comment on your suitability to work with children.

First Referee

Full name:	
Job title:	
Telephone no:	
Full address:	
Relationship to applicant:	

Second Referee	

Full name:	
Job title:	
Telephone no:	
Full address:	
Relationship to applicant:	

DBS Check

I consent to a Disclosure and Barring and Barred List Check being made on me if I will have regular unsupervised contact with pupils and this form being held by the School as a record that appropriate checks have been carried out.

Signed:	
Print name:	
Date:	

For School Use	
DBS application made:	Yes: ☐
Date:	
Signed:	
DBS clearance received:	Yes: ☐
Reference number:	
Date:	
Signed:	

APPENDIX 2

VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT

Thank you for supporting the school. Your time, energy and skills are important to us and we would like to make sure you get the most out of your volunteering role. We hope that you enjoy volunteering with us and feel a full part of our team. This agreement tells you what to expect from us, and what we hope for from you.

We aim to:

- provide a clear induction, appropriate training where needed, and any other information to enable you to fulfil your role
- explain the tasks carefully
- share the relevant school policies with you
- ensure the behaviour policy is being applied
- treat you with respect and care and expect the children to do so as well
- share relevant information about children with you as necessary
- let you know in advance if we have changed the plan for the day and don't need you
- provide a reference after 2 consecutive terms of volunteering for the federation.

The parent/volunteer (name) ……
agrees to:

- read the policies and documents provided during induction and to raise any related questions
- be reliable and punctual
- respect the guidance of the teacher at all times.
- follow the federation's Code of Conduct and the school's Behaviour Policy, informing the teacher of any inappropriate behaviour
- treat any information with total confidentiality
- agree to follow the safeguarding and emergency procedures at all times.
- let the school know at least 24 hours in advance if unable to attend. This may affect the teachers' planning for the day or prevent a trip from proceeding.

agrees not to:

- look at or compare any child's work, records or teacher's notes
- share any information about a child or member of staff with anyone outside the school staff or governors including via social media or messaging.
- speak ill of any child as a result of things you may have seen them do or say in school
- discuss information with other parents which you may have access to as a result of your position in school
- take photographs without permission or to use a mobile phone in the presence of the children.

The process of arranging a DBS and induction process for volunteers takes time, therefore we request that your commitment to the school is for a minimum of 12 sessions in any one academic year.

By signing I agreed to this policy and confirm I have read all the other policies which have been provided.

Signed by volunteer: _____ **Date:** _____

Print Name: _____