

Policy and Guidelines for Volunteers and Students at Sandbrook Nursery School



Volunteers and students have an important and beneficial role in supporting the work of teachers and other support staff in Sandbrook Nursery school and in contributing, by their efforts and initiative, to the life of the school.

It is essential however, that appropriate steps are taken, through screening and selection arrangements, to ensure that children are not placed at risk through allowing the unsupervised and unmanaged access of unsuitable adults to the school. The Department of Education has produced guidance ([DE Circular 2012/19 English Version PDF 87 KB](#) and [DE Circular 2012/19 Irish Version PDF 93 KB](#)), which Sandbrook Nursery school complies with in order to help decide whether the supervision they plan to provide will take any supervised activity out of Regulated Activity. This policy also includes advice from Section 4.5 of the Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools Guide.

Sandbrook Nursery School can obtain an Enhanced Disclosure Certificate from AccessNI, but not check barred list status, for supervised work that is no longer Regulated Activity.

Students will be accepted in the following order of priority :-

- Students from Teacher Training Colleges
- NNEB/NVQIII/BTEC students
- NVQII students
- Students on work experience courses from statutory and non-statutory agencies.
- Pupils from secondary schools involved with child care related courses.

The number of students or volunteers will be limited so that the staff may meet the students' needs satisfactorily without over-stretching the school's resources. All students will complete basic induction training and will receive a copy of the school's Student Handbook. Whilst on placement at Sandbrook Nursery School, students will meet regularly with the Student Liaison Mentor

to review and evaluate performance. Interaction between tutors/teachers and Sandbrook Nursery School staff will be established prior to and during the student's placement, to the mutual benefit of both the student and the staff.

This will be done in the following ways:-

- Tutors/teachers will be invited to visit the school prior to and during placements to discuss placement arrangements with the Student Liaison Teacher.
- The Student Liaison Teacher/or the tutor informs the student of the principles of Nursery education.
- The Student Liaison Teacher and/or the tutor explains good nursery practices.
- The tutor meets with the Student Liaison Teacher and together they prepare a report on the progress of the students.
- The tutor gives clear instructions to the students and sets relevant assignments as previously agreed.
- There will be a 8 week trial period for all students and volunteers in the school- at all times issues will be discussed with tutor/college

If appropriate, students and volunteers will be offered a placement for the duration of the full academic year (ie. until 30 June). All students and volunteers are expected to attend for placement punctually, dress professionally, use time efficiently, behave courteously and act as a role-model for the children at all times. Students on childcare placements will be mentored by the associated Nursery Assistant for the class in which they are placed and students on teaching placement will be mentored by the Student Liaison Mentor. The appropriate mentor should be the first source of support and guidance throughout the placement. An 8 week trial period will be in place for all students and volunteers.

Who is a Volunteer?

A volunteer is an individual who, subject to the satisfactory procedures below, assumes unpaid duties in a school on a regular basis

Formal arrangements as to selection and vetting should not be required for volunteers who are involved outside school hours and who do not have unsupervised contact with pupils. These would include fund raisers, people using school premises for meetings etc.

Use of Volunteers

September 2020

Recruiting and Selecting Volunteers

The school may canvass for volunteers or people may come forward to offer assistance at their own initiative. In many cases potential volunteers may already be known to the school. Others may come forward from the local community. Engagement of volunteers is only undertaken with agreement of the Board of Governors.

Initial Appraisal

As a minimum requirement all potential volunteers are asked to provide the following information to the Principal:

- personal details
- qualifications and previous work with children
- a declaration that they have never been convicted of a criminal offence or been the subject of a Caution or of a Bound-over Order
- a declaration as to whether they have been investigated by Social Services for safeguarding
- agree to an enhanced disclosure check being carried out if engaging in regulated activity
- provide the name of two referees who are not family members or members of staff in the school
- attend an interview with the school Principal with proof of identity
- Undergo an annual enhanced disclosure check through Access NI (via EANI), if appropriate.

No individual will be admitted to the school as a volunteer until these basic steps have been completed and the results assessed.

Accepting Volunteers

Where the previous procedures have been followed as appropriate and the school is satisfied that:

- the volunteer is a suitable person to have contact with the children and has the character, skills and experience to support the work of the school in a voluntary capacity;
- well defined and worthwhile activities have been identified for the volunteer to undertake and he/she is competent to undertake them;

the school will notify the individual that he/she has been accepted for voluntary duties in the school

The use of Volunteers

September 2020

These are the fundamental principles observed when using volunteers:

- The purpose of the volunteer is to assist staff, whether teaching or non-teaching. They are not used as substitutes either to cover activities normally undertaken by paid staff who are absent, or to release such staff to undertake other duties.
- Parent volunteers who provide occasional voluntary work in Sandbrook Nursery School will always be supervised by a permanent staff member and will not require vetting procedures to be carried out.
- Parent volunteers providing more than occasional voluntary work and any other volunteer to Sandbrook Nursery School will be required to undergo an enhanced disclosure check before commencing any volunteer work.
- The Principal will conduct an interview process with prospective volunteers in order to determine the extent of their time commitment to the school and hence the need for an EDC to be sought.
- **NO volunteer, in any capacity, will have access to the children or work unsupervised at any time in Sandbrook Nursery School.**
- Volunteers should understand the tasks they are to undertake and receive appropriate training to enable them to perform these;
- Volunteers are only allocated duties after consultation and agreement with the teacher or other member of staff with whom the volunteer will be closely involved. Teachers are not to be placed under any pressure to accept a volunteer in their classroom;
- Volunteers are not afforded access to records or other information relating to staff or pupils. An exception might be made where a child has a medical or other condition of which all those working with the pupil should be made aware, and where agreement of the parent has been sought.
- At all times Sandbrook Nursery School shall comply with the guidance contained in DENI circular no 2012/19, DISCLOSURE AND BARRING ARRANGEMENTS: CHANGES TO PRE-EMPLOYMENT VETTING CHECKS FOR VOLUNTEERS

Health and Safety Insurance

Volunteers are owed a duty of care under the requirements of Health and Safety Legislation. Sandbrook Nursery School therefore ensures that volunteers are treated no less favourably than paid employees in terms of Sandbrook Nursery Schools' obligations under the legislation.

Duration

Sandbrook Nursery school places a time limit on the period of the volunteer's service. This is done where the work earmarked for the volunteer is likely to be completed within a specific period. Where a volunteer's involvement is likely to be long term, the school advises the volunteer that he/she will be subject to a trial period, during which the Principal monitors the volunteer's effectiveness in contributing to the life and work of the school.

Information and Training

The school ensures that the volunteer receives such information, guidance, preparation and where necessary, training to enable him/her to perform tasks effectively. As a minimum, volunteers are briefed on:

- the policy of the school and the management authority in relation to pastoral care and safeguarding, including its behaviour/discipline policy, including rewards and sanctions, and the extent of the volunteer's authority within it; its safeguarding procedures
- Sandbrook Nursery School's Health and Safety Policy, Fire and Evacuation Procedures and the Code of Conduct.

Arrangements are made for the volunteer to have a formal line of communication to the Principal for reporting issues of concern or the welfare of the children in the school.

School Security

Sandbrook Nursery School has drawn on the advice from the guidance Document "Security and Personal Safety in Schools" 1997 to establish

arrangements for the admission and supervision of volunteers on school premises. Particular attention is drawn to:

- The volunteer reporting to the Principal at the beginning of each visit.