Willow School Policy

Volunteer Policy

Date: November 2026

Review Date: November 2027

Introduction and aims

At Willow School, we believe that volunteers provide a valuable contribution to the school's work, and that they enrich the school through the breadth of their knowledge and experience.

We are committed to using volunteers in a way that supports the school's strategic aims and vision, as well as its development plan.

The aim of Willow School's volunteer policy is to:

- Encourage the wider community to engage with the school, thereby enhancing the curriculum, raising achievement and promoting community cohesion
- Ensure that volunteers support the school's vision and values, and adhere to our policies
- Provide staff, volunteers and parents with clear expectations and guidelines
- Set a clear, fair process for recruiting and managing volunteers

This policy has been developed in line with the statutory safeguarding guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026 from the Department for Education (DfE), the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (as amended by the Crime and Policing Act 2026) and the Independent School Standards.

How we use volunteers

At Willow School, volunteers may:

- Hear children read
- Accompany school visits
- Work with individual children
- Work with small groups of children
- Support specific curriculum areas, such as computing or art

This isn't an exhaustive list.

Volunteers may be:

- Parents
- Former pupils
- Students on work experience
- Local residents

This is not an exhaustive list.

How to apply to volunteer

If you are interested in volunteering at Willow School:

- Initial contact should be made via the school office at enquiries@willow-school.co.uk
- In your email, please include a brief overview of what you would like to offer the school
- You may then be signposted to complete an application form (see appendix 1)

- Please do not arrange volunteering directly with individual members of staff – all requests are co-ordinated through the school office so that the correct checks can be completed before you start

Appointment of volunteers

Volunteers are appointed by the headteacher.

Appointment and induction of new volunteers can take up to six weeks and is dependent on the candidate and available spaces within the school.

All appointments are conditional upon satisfactory completion of the safeguarding and recruitment checks required for the role (see the Safeguarding section), including an enhanced DBS check where required, and relevant training. No volunteer will begin until these checks and their induction have been completed.

The headteacher reserves the right to terminate a placement at any time.

Enhanced DBS checks for volunteers working in the school through other organisations (for example, college or university placements) may be carried out by the relevant organisation. The school will ask for written confirmation that the appropriate level of check has been carried out, including a children's barred list check where the volunteer will be in regulated activity, before a volunteer is allowed to start work at the school. Where a volunteer also helps in other schools or settings, the days are counted together for the frequency test, and the school will agree with the other setting(s) who will apply for the check.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding our pupils is of paramount importance, and our volunteers must share our commitment to child protection.

To ensure we're upholding our responsibility to keep our pupils safe, we will:

- Conduct an enhanced DBS check with a children's barred list check on every volunteer in regulated activity. From 1 September 2026, the Crime and Policing Act 2026 removed the "supervision exemption", so a volunteer is in regulated activity whether or not they are supervised by staff if they:
    - Teach, train, instruct, care for or supervise pupils on more than three days in any 30-day period (days volunteered in other schools or settings count towards this total)
    - Teach, train, instruct, care for or supervise pupils overnight between 2am and 6am, including on any overnight residential visit
    - Provide personal care to a pupil (for example, help with eating, drinking, toileting or washing) on any occasion – volunteers at Willow School will not normally be asked to do this
- Apply this as our default for any volunteer who will attend weekly or more often, as this meets the frequency test. Given the needs of our pupils and the amount of 1:1 and small-group work at Willow School, this is the expected position for regular volunteers
- Only allow a volunteer in regulated activity to start before their enhanced DBS certificate is received once a separate children's barred list check has been obtained, and ensure they are supervised by a member of staff at all times until the certificate has been received and reviewed
- Encourage volunteers to join the DBS Update Service (free for volunteers) and, with their consent, complete an online status check where they already hold an enhanced certificate with children's barred list information for the children's workforce. DBS checks for volunteers are free of charge
- Record volunteers in regulated activity on the single central record (SCR), including the dates of their DBS and barred list checks

- Monitor each volunteer's pattern of attendance. If a volunteer's days increase so that they meet the frequency test, the checks above will be completed before they continue
- Refer a volunteer to the DBS where they have been removed from their role (or would have been, had they not left) because they harmed, or posed a risk of harm to, a child – as we would for a member of staff
- Consider the results of any DBS checks that return with unspent and spent listed convictions, and assess these on a case-by-case basis, with regard given to the nature of the conviction and the nature of the work the volunteer will be involved in
- Provide safeguarding training to all volunteers prior to them beginning work at the school, including ensuring that they have read and understood part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.
- Require volunteers to agree and adhere to our code of conduct and to read, and adhere to, the school's policies on:
    - Safeguarding
    - Use of mobile phones
    - ICT and internet acceptable use
    - Online safety
    - Behaviour
- Ensure that volunteers who are not in regulated activity and do not have an enhanced DBS check are always supervised by a member of staff, and are never left alone with pupils
- Carry out and record a written risk assessment for every volunteer who is not in regulated activity (for example, an occasional volunteer helping at a one-off event or on a non-overnight day trip) to decide whether an enhanced DBS check without barred list information, a basic DBS check, or no DBS check is appropriate. The risk assessment will consider:
    - The nature of the work they will be doing
    - What we know about them
    - References from employers or other voluntary roles
    - Whether the role is eligible for an enhanced DBS check

We legally cannot carry out a DBS check on a child under the age of 16 who is volunteering at our school. We will ensure that children who are volunteering are always under an appropriate level of supervision, and conduct a risk assessment to consider any potential safeguarding issues.

Induction and Training

All volunteers will complete an induction before beginning in school which will include: safeguarding, staff code of conduct, sharing of policies and risk assessments and appropriate induction training. Volunteers must complete appropriate training prior to beginning work at the school.

Each induction will be recorded using the Volunteer Induction Chart (Appendix 3), which is signed by the volunteer and their supervising member of staff and kept on the volunteer's file.

Training requirements will be determined by the headteacher, or the appropriate member of staff.

All volunteers must have safeguarding training. Other training requirements will be based on the nature of the work the volunteer will be doing.

Confidentiality

Information about pupils, parents and staff is confidential. Volunteers are not permitted to discuss issues related to pupils, parents or staff with those outside of the organisation.

If volunteers have concerns, they should raise these with the appropriate member of staff. They shouldn't discuss them with pupils or parents.

This doesn't prevent volunteers from adhering to the school's safeguarding policy (with regard to reporting safeguarding concerns or disclosures).

If concerns relate to safeguarding, volunteers must follow the guidance in our Safeguarding Policy and inform the designated safeguarding lead (DSL).

If concerns are related to whistle-blowing, volunteers must follow the guidance in our Whistle-blowing Policy.

Conduct of Volunteers

Volunteers must comply with the Staff Code of Conduct.

Insurance

The school's insurance policy does cover volunteers in the event of an accident or emergency.

If a volunteer is working at the school through another organisation, we will also check that organisation's insurance arrangements.

Data Protection and Record Keeping

Our privacy notice for volunteers explains what information we collect about volunteers and why we collect it.

We will:

- Keep a written record of the regulated activity decision, and any risk assessment, for each volunteer
- Retain records relating to volunteers in line with our records retention schedule
- Remove details of volunteers from the single central record (SCR) once they no longer work at our school

Monitoring and Review

This policy has been approved by the proprietors and will be reviewed annually by the headteacher, or sooner if statutory guidance changes.

Links to Other Policies

This volunteering policy is linked to our:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Recruitment Policy
- Visitor Policy
- Local Area Visits Policy

Appendix 1: Volunteer Application Form

Complete the application form in full.

Please note that the school may not be able to accommodate all preferences.

Data Protection Notice
Throughout this form, we ask for some personal data about you. We'll only use this data in line with data protection legislation and process your data for 1 or more of the following reasons permitted in law: • You've given us your consent • We must process it to comply with our legal obligations

Personal Details	
Name:	
Date of birth:	
Gender:	
Telephone number:	
Email address:	
Home address:	

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Information	
Willow School is legally obligated to process an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check before making appointments to relevant posts. The enhanced DBS check will reveal both spent and unspent convictions, cautions, reprimands and final warnings, and any other information held by local police that's considered relevant to the role. Any information that is "protected" under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 will not appear on a DBS certificate. Volunteers in regulated activity will also require a children's barred list check. From 1 September 2026, this includes volunteers who help on more than three days in any 30-day period, or overnight, even when they are supervised by staff. DBS checks for volunteers are free of charge. Any data processed as part of the DBS check will be processed in accordance with data protection regulations and Willow School's privacy notice.	
Do you have a DBS check? (please circle)	Yes/No

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Information	
If yes, what type of check do you have? (please circle)	Basic DBS / Standard DBS / Enhanced DBS / Enhanced DBS with barred list information
Date of check:	
Certificate number:	
Are you registered with the DBS Update Service? (please circle)	Yes/No
Do you volunteer or work with children anywhere else? If yes, where and how many days per month?	

Availability					
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
AM					
PM					
Before school					
After school					
Lunchtimes					
How many hours per week/month can you volunteer?					
Can you commit to at least 1 term?					

Experience and Qualifications
Do you have experience working as a volunteer, especially with children? If yes, please include details in the box below.
Why would you like to volunteer at Willow School?
Do you have any particular skills, employment experience or hobbies you would like to share with the school? (For example, languages spoken, sports, scouting, etc.)

Experience and Qualifications
Do you have any relevant qualifications?

References	
Your placement as a volunteer may be subject to satisfactory references. Please give the details of 2 referees who can comment on your suitability (e.g. employers, colleagues, teachers, etc.).	
Name:	Name:
Relationship to you:	Relationship to you:
Address:	Address:
Telephone number:	Telephone number:
Email address:	Email address:

Disability and Accessibility
Willow School is committed to ensuring that applicants with disabilities or impairments receive equal opportunities and treatment. If you have a disability or impairment, and would like us to make adjustments or arrangements to assist you, please state the arrangements you require:

Appendix 2: Code of Conduct for Volunteers

By signing this form, volunteers agree to the following:

1. School rules and policies

1.1. Volunteers will follow all school rules and policies, including those on:

- Child protection
- ICT and internet acceptable use
- Online safety
- Mobile phones
- Data protection
- Health and safety
- Equality
- Whistle-blowing
- Behaviour

1.2. Copies of the school policies are available online or from the school office

2. Professional Conduct

2.1. Volunteers must accept and follow instructions provided by supervisors, and ask for guidance or clarification if required. Questions can be directed to the supervising member of staff, or to the school's volunteer co-ordinator, Mrs Miller (Headteacher)

2.2. Behaviour management is the responsibility of school staff. If volunteers witness behaviour that is in breach of the school's behaviour policy, or are struggling to manage the behaviour of pupils with whom they're working, they should alert the class teacher immediately. Volunteers should not attempt to reprimand pupils or issue sanctions.

2.3. Volunteers must conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times. This includes:

- Dressing in a way that is professional and appropriate to the work they are doing
- Refraining from using inappropriate language
- Setting an example for pupils by acting in a way that reflects the school's ethos and values
- Behaving in a way that is appropriate for the role they are undertaking
- Ensuring that comments, including those made on social media, do not bring the school into disrepute

2.4. Volunteers must not accept gifts from, or give gifts to, pupils. The exception is small tokens, such as those exchanged at the end of term or as a way of saying "thank you". Volunteers must not transport pupils in their own cars unless specific arrangements have been made with the school, and the pupil's parents have consented.

2.5. Parent volunteers with children at the school must not act in a way that favours their own child and should not approach their child unnecessarily during the school day (for instance, during break times). They may not use their time as a volunteer to discuss their child's education with school staff.

2.6. If a volunteer is unable to come to school when they are expected/scheduled to be in, they must contact their supervisor or the school office as soon as possible. Inconsistent attendance may result in the placement being reviewed or terminated.

3. Safeguarding

3.1. Volunteers must be familiar with, and adhere to, the school's safeguarding and child protection policy. Safeguarding training will be provided to all volunteers before they begin their placement.

3.2. If volunteers have concerns about the welfare of a child, or if a child makes a disclosure, they should speak directly to the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or a deputy DSL. The DSL is Miss Hemming (Assistant Headteacher) and the deputy DSLs are Mrs Miller (Headteacher) and Miss McNeil (Assistant Headteacher and SENCo).

3.3. Volunteers should refrain from physical contact with pupils, and should use their judgement to determine when physical contact is appropriate. If physical contact with pupils is required, volunteers should ask for a pupil's consent before touching them.

3.4. Volunteers must not use physical intervention and must not provide intimate care. If a pupil becomes dysregulated, volunteers should step back, keep themselves and others safe, and alert a member of staff immediately.

3.5. Volunteers must alert the DSL if a pupil develops an infatuation with them, and must not form personal relationships with pupils, either inside or outside of school, with whom they do not already have a personal relationship. This includes:

- Exchanging contact information
- Making contact with pupils outside of school, including on social media
- Arranging to meet pupils outside of school

3.6. Volunteers should not take or share photos of pupils unless instructed to do so by their supervisor.

4. Health and Safety

4.1. Volunteers must abide by the school's health and safety and first aid policies. Volunteers are not to administer first aid or medication, except in an emergency where none of the designated first aiders are available.

4.2. Volunteers must be familiar with the school's fire safety and emergency evacuation procedures.

4.3. Volunteers must sign in and sign out at the beginning and end of every visit, and must wear a visitor badge at all times.

5. Confidentiality

5.1. Information about pupils, parents and staff at the school is confidential, and should not be shared with anyone else. Volunteers shouldn't discuss pupils with parents or other children. If parents approach volunteers for information, they should be directed to speak to a class teacher or the headteacher.

Failure to adhere to this code of conduct may result in the termination of the placement. In more serious cases, misconduct will be treated in line with the school's staff disciplinary procedures.

Please sign and date below:

Signature	
Name	
Date	

Appendix 3: Volunteer Induction Chart

This chart must be completed for every volunteer. Items in "Before the First Day" must be completed before the volunteer begins. The completed chart is kept on the volunteer's file.

Volunteer Details	
Volunteer Name	
Role / Activity	
Site(s)	Jermyn Street / White Hart Mews / West Banks
Days and Times	
Supervising Member of Staff	
Start Date	
Placed Through Another Organisation?	Yes / No – if yes, name of organisation:
In Regulated Activity?	Yes / No – reason:

Stage	Task / Document	Date Completed	Signature
Before the First Day	Initial contact received via the school office (enquiries@willow-school.co.uk) and volunteer application form (Appendix 1) completed		
	References received and approved (two references), with any concerns followed up		
	Identity verified using original documents		
	Regulated activity decision made and recorded: more than three days in any 30-day period (including days volunteered elsewhere), overnight between 2am and 6am, or personal care		
	Safeguarding checks – in regulated activity: enhanced DBS check with children's barred list check received and reviewed, or separate barred list check received and full-time staff supervision in place while the certificate is awaited		
	DBS Update Service status check completed (where the volunteer is registered and gives consent)		
	Safeguarding checks – not in regulated activity: written risk assessment completed and level of check agreed (enhanced without barred list, basic, or none with constant supervision)		
	Placed through another organisation: placement contact details received, and written confirmation of checks (including barred list check where required) and insurance arrangements received		
	Under 16 / work experience: risk assessment and supervision arrangements in place		

Stage	Task / Document	Date Completed	Signature
	Single central record updated (volunteers in regulated activity)		
	Emergency contact details received		
	Role description shared with the volunteer and role responsibilities outlined clearly		
	Supervising member of staff named, and schedule/timetable (days, times and activities) agreed		
First Day Induction	Welcome tour of the school site(s) where the volunteer will work, including areas that are out of bounds		
	Introduced to supervising member of staff and key staff, including the DSL (Miss Hemming) and deputy DSLs (Mrs Miller and Miss McNeil)		
	Sign-in/sign-out procedure explained and volunteer badge issued		
	School values, ethos and policies explained		
	Health and safety briefing: fire drill procedures and assembly point, accident reporting, first aiders, and location of emergency medication (e.g. spare adrenaline auto-injectors)		
	Safeguarding and child protection briefing: safeguarding training completed, and Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education read and signed for		
	How to report a safeguarding concern or disclosure, and how to raise a low-level concern about an adult		
	Code of Conduct for Volunteers (Appendix 2) signed, and Staff Code of Conduct shared		
	Behaviour Policy shared and explained, including that behaviour management is the responsibility of staff		
	Other policies shared and read: Child Protection and Safeguarding, Physical Intervention, Intimate Care, Online Safety, ICT Acceptable Use, Mobile Phones, Photograph and Video, Data Protection, Whistle-Blowing, and Health and Safety		
	Confidentiality and data protection expectations explained		
	Absence procedure explained: contact the supervising member of staff or the school office as soon as possible if unable to attend		

Stage	Task / Document	Date Completed	Signature
	Shadow session with supervising member of staff completed		
Pupil Needs (SEN)	Overview of the needs of the pupils the volunteer will work with, shared on a need-to-know basis (e.g. one-page profiles, communication approaches, sensory needs)		
	Pupil risk assessments shared, along with relevant class, activity and visit risk assessments		
	Pupils' medical needs and allergies relevant to the role explained		
	What to do if a pupil becomes dysregulated: step back, keep safe and alert staff – volunteers do not use physical intervention		
	Confirmed that volunteers do not provide intimate care, administer medication, or give first aid except in an emergency		
Review	End of first week check-in with supervising member of staff		
	Termly review of the placement, including any change in days that affects the regulated activity decision		
	On leaving: badge returned, single central record updated and records retained in line with the retention schedule		

Sign-Off			
Volunteer Signature		Date	
Supervising Member of Staff Signature		Date	
Headteacher Signature		Date	