STOUR VALE ACADEMY TRUST

VOLUNTEERS POLICY

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1. Introduction

Stour Vale Academy Trust aims to involve parents in their children's education and to develop and maintain links with the local community. In order to enrich the lives of the children in our schools, and to enable us to deliver the curriculum more effectively, we actively encourage the involvement of parents and volunteers from the community in the work of the schools.

We believe that volunteers provide a valuable contribution to the individual school's work, and that they enrich the schools 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.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that volunteers are recruited, checked, inducted, managed and supported appropriately, with the safeguarding and welfare of the children being the highest priority. The requirements of this policy apply whether volunteering is regular, occasional, short term or for a specific event.

This policy has been developed in line with:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
- The relevant Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) requirements
- The Crime and Policing Act 2026; and
- Stour Vale Academy Trust's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

This policy should be read alongside:

- The Department of Education's Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
- Stour Vale Academy Trust's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Stour Vale Academy Trust's Concerns and Allegations against Adults Policy
- Stour Vale Academy Trust's Staff Code of Conduct
- Stour Vale Academy Trust's Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Stour Vale Academy Trust's Educational Visits Policy
- Stour Vale Academy Trust's Health and Safety Policy
- Stour Vale Academy Trust's Acceptable Use Policy
- Stour Vale Academy Trust's Whistleblowing Policy
- Stour Vale Academy Trust's Data Protection Policy

3. Aim

The aim of this Volunteer Policy is to:

- Encourage the wider community to engage with the Trust/schools, thereby enhancing the curriculum, raising achievement and promoting community cohesion.
- Ensure that volunteers support the Trust's vision and values and adhere to the policies in place.
- Establish clear guidelines for both staff and volunteers.
- Provide a clear and fair process for recruiting and managing volunteers.
- Adhere to the Department of Education's safeguarding guidance.
- Ensure that all volunteers have a positive and rewarding experience during their time spent with the Trust's schools.

Volunteers could include any of the following (this list is not exhaustive):

- Members of the local governing body.
- Parents, carers, guardians, elder siblings or grandparents of pupils.
- Former pupils.
- Students on work experience or placement.
- University students.
- Ex members of staff.
- Staff family members.
- Local residents.
- Friends of the school/members of the PTA.

Activities in which volunteers may be engaged could include any of the following (this list is not exhaustive):

- Hearing children read.
- Working with small groups of children.
- Working alongside individual children.
- Supporting specific curriculum areas, such as ICT or Art.
- Accompany on school visits.
- Escorting children on local walks.
- Running or assisting with an after school club.
- Social activities such as an after school disco.
- Fundraising activities such as running a cake stall or Summer Fayre.

4. Safeguarding Principles

The welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. All volunteers are expected to:

- Safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Report any safeguarding concerns immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL).
- Follow Trust/school policies and procedures.

- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries.
- Treat all pupils with dignity and respect.

5. How we Use Volunteers

A volunteer will not be an employee of the Trust. They will not be engaged on a contract of employment nor on any type of contract for services. The engagement will be binding in honour only, there being no legal agreement between the Trust and the volunteer.

6. Define the Volunteering Role

Before accepting a volunteer, the school will establish:

- What the volunteer will be doing.
- How often they will volunteer.
- What their role will be, for example, teaching, training, caring for, supervising children.
- Whether they will volunteer overnight, for example, on an educational residential visit.

7. Determine Whether the Role is Regulated Activity

The school will determine whether the volunteer role constitutes regulated activity with children in accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.

"*Any person in a school in a role that involves teaching, training, instructing or supervising children frequently or on more than 3 days in a 30 day period or overnight is now in regulated activity.*"

From 1st September 2026, the supervision exemption no longer applies. A volunteer who meets the definition of regulated activity will be regarded as undertaking regulated activity regardless of whether they are supervised by a member of staff.

Scenario	Before September 2026	From September 2026
Parent hears readers every Monday under teacher supervision	May not have been regulated activity due to being supervised	Regulated activity
Volunteer coach assists after school every week with a PE teacher	May not have been regulated activity due to being supervised	Regulated activity
Volunteer on an overnight residential trip	Regulated activity	Regulated activity

8. If the Role is Regulated Activity

The school must obtain an Enhanced DBS certificate with Children's Barred List information before the volunteer begins their role. Any additional checks required by statutory guidance will also be completed. The volunteer must not undertake regulated activity until all required checks have been completed and deemed satisfactory by the school.

Where schools are subject to the EYFS framework, volunteers must not be permitted to begin working within the schools/settings covered by the EYFS framework until the school/setting has received the volunteer's Enhanced DBS certificate including Children's Barred List information.

9. If the Role is Not Regulated Activity

The school will:

- Complete a written risk assessment (Appendix A).
- Determine whether an Enhanced DBS check (without Children's Barred List information), a Basic DBS check or no DBS check is appropriate.
- Record the outcome of the risk assessment, including the rationale for any decisions made regarding safeguarding checks.

Where a volunteer is not undertaking regulated activity, the school will complete a written risk assessment to determine the safeguarding measures required. This may include the need for supervision or the requirement for a DBS check. Any measures identified will be proportionate to the nature of the role and recorded by the school.

Where a volunteer is not undertaking regulated activity but will have regular contact with children, the school will consider whether an Enhanced DBS check (without Children's Barred List information) is appropriate as part of its risk assessment. Children's Barred List information cannot be obtained for volunteers who are not undertaking regulated activity.

For one-off, occasional or low-risk volunteering activities, a Basic DBS check or no DBS check may be appropriate following completion of the risk assessment.

10. Volunteer Recruitment Process

The following recruitment and checking process must be followed before any volunteer is permitted to commence their role within the school.

- Volunteer application form received and reviewed (Appendix B).
- Assessment completed to determine whether the role constitutes regulated activity (Appendix C).
- Written risk assessment completed for volunteers who are not undertaking regulated activity.
- Appropriate DBS check determined and obtained.

- Children's Barred List information obtained, where the role constitutes regulated activity.
- Overseas criminal record check considered and completed, where applicable.
- A Right to Work Check in line with the Home Office Guidance
- Two references. (Appendix D).
- Photo ID check.
- Signed Self Declaration Form.
- Childcare disqualification (if applicable)
- Informal meeting/interview

Details of volunteers will be added to the Single Central Record (SCR).

A Volunteer recruitment checklist can be found at Appendix E.

11. Existing volunteers

The school will review existing volunteer arrangements in light of the changes taking effect from 1 September 2026, brought in by the Crime and Policing Act 2026.

Where an existing volunteer is now undertaking regulated activity and does not hold the required level of DBS check, the school will take appropriate action to obtain an Enhanced DBS check with Children's Barred list information and ensure that the volunteer does not undertake regulated activity until the appropriate safeguarding requirements have been met.

12. Induction and Training

Stour Vale Academy Trust is committed to ensuring that all volunteers understand their safeguarding responsibilities and are equipped to carry out their role safely and effectively. Therefore, each school will ensure that volunteers receive an induction appropriate to the nature of their role and level of contact with children before commencing their duties.

The induction process will include:

- Information about the Trust's/school's safeguarding and child protection arrangements. Including ensuring that they have read and understood Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.
- Guidance on recognising and reporting safeguarding concerns.
- Details of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL).
- The Trusts'/school's expectations regarding professional conduct and boundaries. Including reading, agreeing and adhering to Stour Vale Academy Trust's Staff Code of Conduct.
- Health and safety procedures, including emergency and evacuation arrangements.
- Confidentiality and data protection requirements.
- Information relevant to the volunteer's specific role and responsibilities.

Volunteers will be provided with, or directed to, relevant Trust/school policies and procedures and will be expected to read and comply with them.

Volunteers are expected to participate in any safeguarding or other training identified as appropriate by the Trust/school.

Volunteers will be given a named contact person who will review the work undertaken by the volunteer and will assist the volunteer generally and particularly in the event of any problems occurring. Regular supervision of the volunteer will be provided as appropriate to the task undertaken and the needs of the volunteer.

13. Signing and Site Procedures

All volunteers must:

- Sign in at the school office on arrival.
- Sign out when leaving the school site.
- Wear and display any visitor or volunteer identification provided by the school.
- Follow all school security procedures and instructions from staff.
- Report any concerns relating to site security or pupil safety immediately.

14. Safeguarding Concerns and Allegations

All volunteers have a responsibility to help safeguard and promote the welfare of children. If a volunteer has any concern about a pupil's welfare, safety or wellbeing, they must follow the guidance in the Stour Vale Academy Trust's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and no concern should be considered too minor to report.

If a volunteer is concerned that a safeguarding issue is not being dealt with appropriately, or the concern relates to a member of staff, they should follow the Stour Vale Academy Trust's Whistleblowing Policy

15. Concerns/Allegations About a Volunteer

Any concern or allegation about a volunteer's conduct towards a child must be taken seriously and reported immediately to the Headteacher.

This includes concerns that a volunteer has behaved in a way that may have:

- harmed a child,
- may pose a risk of harm to children, or
- may indicate they are unsuitable to work with children

All concerns will be dealt with promptly, fairly, confidentially and in accordance

will be managed in accordance with Stour Vale Academy Trust's Concerns and Allegations against Adults Policy. Advice will be sought from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) where appropriate.

16. Low Level Concerns

Any low-level concern about a volunteer's conduct towards a child or breach of the staff code of conduct should be reported to the Headteacher and managed in line with low level concerns procedures within Stour Vale Academy Trust's Concerns and Allegations against Adults Policy.

17. Duty to Refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service

Where concerns are raised about a volunteer and an investigation finds evidence that they may have harmed a child, posed a risk of harm or engaged in conduct that makes them unsuitable to work with children, the Trust/school has a legal duty to refer the individual to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) if they are removed from regulated activity or would have been removed had they not ceased volunteering. Referrals will be made as soon as possible and will include all relevant information to help the DBS determine whether the individual should be barred from working with children.

18. Confidentiality

Volunteers may have access to confidential information about pupils, families and staff. All information obtained during volunteering activities must be treated as confidential and must not be discussed outside the school, expect where there is a safeguarding concern that must be reported in accordance with the Trust's/school's procedures.

19. Conduct of Volunteers

Volunteers are expected to act in a professional manner, follow staff instructions, uphold Stour Vale Academy Trust's values and comply with Stour Vale Academy Trust's Staff Code of Conduct.

20. Use of Mobile Phones and Photography

Volunteers must not use personal mobile phones, cameras or recording devices to photograph or record pupils unless specifically authorised to do so by the Trust/school.

21. Health and safety

All volunteers must comply with Stour Vale Academy Trust's Health and Safety Policy and the school's health and safety procedures.

The school will ensure that volunteers are provided with information appropriate

to their role, including emergency procedures and relevant risk assessments.

Volunteers must immediately report accidents, hazards or other health and safety concerns to an appropriate member of staff.

22. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Stour Vale Academy Trust are committed to treating all volunteers with fairness, dignity, and respect. We value the diverse backgrounds, experiences and perspectives that individuals bring and aim to create an inclusive environment where everyone feels welcome, supported and able to contribute. We do not tolerate discrimination, harassment or bullying and are committed to providing equal opportunities for all volunteers.

23. Insurance

All volunteers should be made aware of the cover provided by the individual school.

24. Data Protection and Record Keeping

Data will be processed to be in line with the requirements and protections set out in the UK General Data Protection Regulation. Stour Vale Academy Trust's Data Protection Policy explains what information we collect and why we collect it.

25. Withdrawal of a Volunteer

The school may withdraw or suspend a volunteer from their duties where:

- safeguarding concerns arise;
- required checks have not been completed;
- information arises that affects the volunteer's suitability;
- the volunteer breaches school policies or procedures;
- the volunteer fails to maintain appropriate professional boundaries;
- the volunteer's conduct presents a risk to pupils or staff; or
- the school otherwise considers that withdrawal is necessary

The Trust/school reserves the right to terminate a volunteer placement with immediate effect at any time.