

VOLUNTEERS POLICY

This policy describes that regular volunteers, who may be taken into account in staffing ratios, are people who you expect to attend on a planned and regular basis. Volunteers must be over eighteen years of age (except in the case of young people on work experience from local high schools).

Volunteer students under the age of 17 will be supervised at all times and not included in our ratio. Students or volunteers over the age of 17 can be included in the ratio at the manager's discretion. All adults over the age of 16 will require a DBS check.

Volunteers can enhance the work of the staff team to the benefit of the group and themselves. Volunteers are suitable individuals to be working with children, selected through a manner, within an equal opportunities framework. Volunteers are well supervised and supported and are seen as valued members of the group.

Times and days of working will be mutually agreed between the group leader and volunteer. The needs of the children will be paramount when making such arrangements, however the personal situation will also be considered. A written agreement will be set out between the group leader and volunteer and signed by both parties.

Volunteers will be kept informed of any significant management decisions both verbally and in writing if necessary. Daily opportunities will be available to communicate with staff and management, if required.

Volunteers may bring:

- * Specialist arts and craft skills
- * Sports skills
- * Business skills
- * Experience and awareness of cultures and traditions
- * Energy and imagination
- * Learning skills
- * Experience and knowledge of working with children and people with individual needs

Volunteers may gain:

- * Friendship and social contact
- * Involvement in their community
- * Involvement in their child's activities
- * Closer relationships with staff
- * Play and childcare experience
- * Skills that complement life-long learning

Volunteers have an important role to play in the group:

- * They must not be used instead of qualified staff
- * They must not be left in sole care of the children
- * They must have DRB checks
- * They will be responsible to the qualified member of staff on duty
- * They will be offered the opportunity to participate in staff training
- * They will be Issued with a policy document
- * Regular assessment will be held with the volunteer
- * They will be given the same access to the grievance procedures as the other staff

This group makes the following commitments to volunteers within our setting. We will:

- * Respect individual's wishes and principles
- * Respect confidentiality
- * Provide an induction (lead by the leader) with clear definition of the work involved
- * Provide appropriate support and supervision
- * Provide equal opportunities
- * Never use volunteers in place of paid staff
- * Involve volunteers in a wide range of activities
- * Never leave volunteers in sole charge of children
- * Give volunteers an opportunity to participate in staff training
- * Allow volunteers access to the same grievance procedures as staff
- * Provide written job descriptions and contracts as appropriate
- * Where possible volunteers will be additional to good staffing ratios

In view of these principles, volunteers should:

- * Respect confidentiality at all times
- * Familiarise themselves and always act within the policies of the group
- * Let the group know as soon as possible if they are unable to keep a commitment
- * Never act other than as authorised by a member of staff
- * Observe health and safety procedures at all times
- * Take any concerns to the leader on duty or committee chair
- * Be prepared to undergo a police check
- * Provide two references.