THE FLITCH GREEN

ACADEMY

Learning for Life

Volunteer Policy

Approved by governors on 5th November 2026

Review Date: November 2027

1. Purpose principles and statutory guidance

The Flitch Green Academy welcomes volunteers who contribute to pupils' learning and to the life of our school. Volunteering can bring valuable skills, time and experience into school.

Our volunteers are expected to uphold the school's values of **Respect, Resilience, Curiosity, Collaboration and Creativity**. The safety and welfare of pupils come first. Volunteers are not substitutes for members of staff, and they do not take responsibility for teaching, safeguarding decisions or managing behaviour.

This policy explains how we recruit, check, induct, support and supervise volunteers. It applies to anyone undertaking unpaid work for the school, including parents and carers, family members, community volunteers, work-experience placements and people helping with visits, clubs or other activities. Governors and volunteers from external organisations may also be subject to separate procedures.

Volunteers must follow the school's current safeguarding and child-protection procedures, Code of Conduct and local SET procedures.

Schools and colleges need to ensure that any volunteer who is in regulated activity is not barred from working with children. Volunteers may not previously have been in regulated activity if they were supervised by a member of staff. From 1 September 2026, volunteers engaging in regulated activity will need to have an enhanced DBS check with children's barred list information.

This policy does not replace the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Safer Recruitment Policy or current statutory guidance.

This policy has been formed so that it meets the statutory requirements set out in

- *Keeping children safe in education 2026*, Department for Education.
- *Regulated activity: removal of the supervision exemption (comes into force 1 September 2026)*, Department for Education.
- *Regulated activity with children*, Disclosure and Barring Service.

2. Volunteer Roles

Volunteers may, for example:

- listen to pupils read;
- support a teacher with a small group or classroom activity;
- help with a school visit or event;
- assist with an extracurricular activity.

The school will agree each volunteer's role, location, days and times, named supervisor and expected duration before the volunteer starts. A volunteer must not take on additional duties or change their pattern of attendance without agreement from the school.

Volunteers do not:

- take sole responsibility for a class or group;
- make decisions about a pupil's progress, support or safeguarding;
- administer sanctions or use physical intervention;
- carry out intimate or personal care unless this has been specifically authorised, assessed and arranged by the school;
- access pupil records unless this is necessary and authorised for their role.

3. Application and Appointment

Anyone interested in volunteering should contact the school office, a class teacher or the Principal. The school will consider whether there is a suitable role and whether the proposed arrangement is appropriate for pupils and the volunteer.

Before a placement is agreed, the school will:

1. establish the proposed duties, frequency, duration and setting;
2. assess the checks required for that particular role;
3. decide the supervision and induction arrangements;
4. request references or other information where appropriate;
5. explain the volunteer's responsibilities and the school's expectations.

A volunteer must not start a role requiring a check until the required check has been completed and the school has confirmed that they may begin. Any exception must be handled only through the applicable statutory arrangements and the school's safer-recruitment procedures.

The school may decline or end a placement where it considers this necessary for pupil safety, operational reasons or the suitability of the arrangement. Where concerns arise, the school will follow its relevant procedures and deal with the matter fairly.

4. Safeguarding cchecks and regulated activity
4.1 Role assessment

The school will assess each volunteer's actual duties and pattern of activity against the current legal definition of regulated activity with children. It will not decide the required check solely on the basis of a volunteer's job title, whether the person is supervised, or whether they are called an "occasional" or "regular" volunteer.

From **1 September 2026**, supervision no longer exempts a volunteer from regulated activity where the legal activity and frequency conditions are met. This can affect volunteers who teach, train, instruct, care for or supervise pupils frequently, on more than three days in a 30-day period, or overnight. Activities may also qualify under other parts of the legal definition, so the school will check the current guidance when assessing a role.

4.2 Checks for volunteers

Where the role is regulated activity, the school will obtain an **enhanced DBS check with children's barred list information**, in line with current requirements.

For roles that are not regulated activity, the school will decide whether any other check is lawful and appropriate, following current guidance and its Safer Recruitment Policy. A barred-list check will not be requested unless the role is legally eligible for it.

The school will verify identity, consider the information available about the volunteer, and record the recruitment decision and required checks in accordance with its safer-recruitment and record-keeping procedures.

A volunteer who already holds a DBS certificate must show it to the school if requested. The school will decide whether it meets the requirements for the proposed role; an existing certificate does not automatically meet them. The DBS Update Service may be used where appropriate and permitted.

Where a volunteer's role or attendance pattern changes, the school will reassess the required checks. The school will also review existing volunteers affected by the change to regulated activity from 1 September 2026. The current guidance sets out limited circumstances in which an existing volunteer's barred-list status may be checked using a standalone check.

If a volunteer works across more than one setting, the school will consider the combined pattern of activity and work with the other setting or settings where needed.

4.3 Occasional helpers

A one-off role, such as helping on a day visit or at a school event, does not automatically require an enhanced DBS check with children's barred list information. The school will still assess the activity and put suitable safeguarding arrangements in place. An unchecked helper must not be left unsupervised with pupils or placed in a role for which they are not appropriately checked.

5. Induction and information for volunteers

Before starting, volunteers will receive an induction appropriate to their role. This will include:

- the name and contact route for the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and deputy DSLs;
- how to report a concern about a pupil, an adult or the volunteer's own conduct;
- the relevant safeguarding information, policies and code of conduct;
- the name of their supervisor and the tasks they are authorised to undertake;

- signing-in and signing-out arrangements, identification and areas they may use;
- emergency, fire, first-aid and health and safety procedures;
- confidentiality, data protection, photography, mobile phone and online-safety expectations;
- expectations for behaviour, professional boundaries and positive support of pupils.

Regular volunteers will be asked to read the relevant parts of the school's safeguarding information and policies for their role. The school will tell volunteers what they need to read and record that the induction has taken place.

6. Supervision and day-to-day arrangements

Every volunteer will have a named member of staff responsible for their day-to-day guidance. Staff retain responsibility for pupils, the activity and decisions about teaching, behaviour, welfare and safeguarding.

The supervisor will explain the task, the expected outcome, the pupils or group involved and what to do if a pupil does not understand, becomes distressed or behaves in a way that causes concern. The school will set supervision arrangements appropriate to the activity and the needs of the pupils.

Volunteers must:

- follow their supervisor's instructions and ask if unsure;
- remain in the agreed area and not take pupils elsewhere without permission;
- not be alone with a pupil unless this has been specifically authorised and the role and checks permit it;
- report any concern, incident, injury or near miss promptly;
- sign in and out at the school office and wear the identification provided;
- tell the school if they cannot attend, or if their availability or role changes.
- Follow the use of mobile phones and similar devices in our school as set out in the Academy's Mobile Phone Policy.

For school visits, trips and events, the visit leader will give volunteers clear instructions about their group, boundaries, emergency arrangements and reporting concerns. Volunteers must not make separate arrangements with pupils or leave their allocated group without the visit leader's agreement.

7. Safeguarding concerns and disclosures

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. A volunteer who has a concern about a pupil's safety or welfare must report it **immediately** to the DSL or a deputy DSL, following the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

If a pupil speaks to a volunteer about something worrying:

- listen calmly and allow the pupil to speak;
- do not promise to keep it secret;
- do not investigate, ask leading questions or confront anyone;
- explain that you need to pass the concern to the DSL;
- report it promptly and make a factual record in line with the school's procedures.

Volunteers must not contact a pupil's parent or carer about a safeguarding concern, or discuss the concern with other families or volunteers. If the DSL and deputies are unavailable, volunteers should report the matter to the principal or another senior member of staff without delay and follow the school's safeguarding procedures.

If a volunteer is concerned about the conduct of a member of staff or another adult, they must use the school's procedures for reporting concerns or allegations. Concerns about the principal must be raised through the route set out in the school's safeguarding and allegations procedures. Volunteers may also use the school's Whistleblowing Policy.

8. Professional conduct and boundaries

Volunteers are expected to be positive, respectful role models and to maintain professional boundaries. They must:

- treat pupils fairly and respectfully;
- use appropriate language and behave in a way that supports the school's values;
- follow staff directions and the school's policies;
- avoid favouritism and avoid making promises to pupils;
- not discuss a pupil's ability, behaviour, family circumstances or progress with others;
- not exchange personal contact details with pupils, contact them through personal accounts, or arrange to meet them outside school;
- avoid unnecessary physical contact and seek guidance if unsure how to respond to a pupil who needs comfort or help;
- not take photographs, video or audio recordings of pupils on a personal device or share pupil images or information;
- keep personal mobile phones and other devices away during activities with pupils, except where the school has authorised their use for a specific purpose;
- raise questions or concerns with their supervisor rather than trying to resolve sensitive matters themselves.

Volunteers must not use physical punishment, shout at, threaten, humiliate or handle a pupil inappropriately. They must not administer medication or provide personal care unless specifically authorised and trained under the school's arrangements.

A breach of these expectations may result in the volunteer being asked to stop the activity while the school considers what action is appropriate.

9. Equality, inclusion and respect

Volunteers must treat pupils, families and staff with dignity and respect. Discrimination, harassment, bullying or derogatory language are not acceptable.

Pupils at Flitch Green have a range of strengths and needs. Volunteers should follow the teacher's guidance on how to support pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and disabilities. They should not make assumptions about a pupil's needs or discuss a pupil's individual circumstances with others. Any concern about a pupil's access, participation or wellbeing should be shared with the teacher or DSL as appropriate.

10. Confidentiality and information handling

Information about pupils, families and staff is confidential. Volunteers must not discuss or share information they learn through their role, including outside school or on social media.

Information may be shared with the DSL or another appropriate member of staff where necessary to protect a pupil or support the volunteer's role. Volunteers must follow the school's data protection instructions and must not access, copy, photograph or retain school records unless specifically authorised.

The school will handle volunteer information in line with its data protection and retention arrangements.

11. Health, safety and insurance

Volunteers must follow the school's Health and Safety Policy and any instructions for the activity they are undertaking. They must familiarise themselves with emergency arrangements and report hazards, accidents, injuries and near misses promptly to their supervisor or another member of staff.

The school will explain the limits of its insurance arrangements relevant to the volunteer's agreed role. A volunteer must not transport pupils in a private vehicle or undertake an activity requiring specific authorisation unless the school has approved it in advance and all required arrangements are in place.

12. Concerns, complaints and ending a placement

A volunteer who has a concern or complaint should raise it with their supervisor or the principal. Complaints about a volunteer will be considered by the principal or a delegated senior leader in line with the relevant school procedure. Safeguarding concerns and allegations must be handled through the safeguarding and allegations procedures, not treated only as a routine complaint.

The school may:

- discuss a concern with the volunteer and clarify expectations;
- provide further guidance or supervision;
- adjust the placement or duties;
- pause or end the placement where appropriate.

A volunteer who wishes to stop should notify their supervisor or the school office. The volunteer must return any school property, identification or documents issued to them.

13. Review and monitoring

The principal and DSL will ensure that volunteer arrangements are reviewed when roles or patterns of attendance change, and that recruitment and induction records are maintained under the school's procedures. The appropriate governance body will review this policy in line with the school's policy cycle and after relevant changes to statutory guidance or law.