	St Thomas Primary School		
	# Volunteers in School Policy		
Date adopted	15th May 2008	Version	May 2008
Last Reviewed	10th November 2010	Review Cycle	Three Years
Revision Ref			
Author/Owner	Personnel Committee		

1. Introduction

1.1. The value of well-deployed volunteers in Schools is now widely recognised. At St Thomas Primary School volunteers are a welcome resource for helping to raise children's achievement, complementing the work of teachers and support staff. The Headteacher and Governing Body have no doubt that the School will benefit greatly from developing well-planned, active parental and community links through participation by adults in the activities of the school on a voluntary basis. It should be emphasised that the role of volunteers in schools provides for the enrichment of the pupil's learning experiences, but must not encroach on or restrict professional teaching duties.

1.2. The deployment of any volunteer, whether for one day or for a number of sessions over a longer period, must be managed with care; in particular taking account of the needs of the pupils and the staff to whom they are assigned.

1.3. Headteachers and Governors are mindful of deploying volunteers appropriately. Volunteers should not be asked to replace paid staff or be given responsibility within the School that would normally be associated with paid employees.

2. School Policy

2.1. The Governing Body intends that this policy give a clear statement on the engagement and deployment of volunteers and that this document be included in the staff handbook for the information of everyone.

2.2. This policy document has been written and agreed in consultation with school staff association representatives and all employees were given the opportunity to comment before the policy was adopted, in line with the school's *Staff Consulation Policy.*

2.3. The policy will be reviewed regularly by the Governing Body and be revised in response to changing legislation, guidance or practice as necessary.

3. Deployment

3.1. Volunteers should not be asked to carry out duties which:

a) fall normally within a teacher's responsibility under *loco parentis*;
b) fall normally within the job description of a teacher or member of support staff, ie they must not be asked to cover the absence of staff from school;
c) would normally be performed by a contractor engaged by the LA or by the school;
d) require them to have unsupervised access to children;

e) it should be noted that the ClassTeacher remains responsible for the organisation of the class and methods of work;
f) expose them to dangerous or hazardous substances or situations.

3.2. During a visit to the school each volunteer should be designated to a specific member of staff to whom he or she will be directly responsible. Whilst there should be no significant addition to the workload of the staff member taking responsibility for the volunteer, it would be expected that time is taken to ensure the volunteer is adequately inducted into the role and that there is mutual agreement and understanding. This additional responsibility is not compulsory for staff and should only be delegated with the agreement of the employee concerned. It is however essential that the volunteer is clear as to which member of staff has this responsibility.

3.3. All volunteers need to be made to feel welcome. It is important that the parameters of their role within the school are clearly defined from the outset in order to avoid the possibility of misunderstanding.

3.4. The Governing Body does not require the use of volunteer application forms. However, all successful applicants will be required to sign that they have read, understood and will observe this policy, and will complete a CRB disclosure form (see Appendix 1)

3.5. It is important to match the talents and skills of volunteers to the needs of the school. Volunteers who do not feel valued will not stay.

3.6. Where a volunteer's particular skills or knowledge do not match the current needs of the school, the offer of help should be declined.

4. School Regulations and Other Information

4.1. In fairness to all concerned, volunteers must be made aware of the rules governing behaviour at the School; the key 'dos' and 'don'ts' for children and adults. This should include procedures designed to avoid hazards or risks associated with the tasks that they are being asked to carry out and, importantly, details of first aid and emergency arrangements such as procedures to follow in case of fire.

4.2. As part of their induction to life at the school, volunteers should also be provided with basic information such as a plan or the campus and details of those facilities available to them eg staff room, toilets etc.

If the staffroom is not available to volunteers for relaxation then an alternative room needs to be made available for all the volunteers. Volunteers should not use the children's toilets.

4.3. It is important that volunteers are made aware of the following procedures:

- expectations with regard to confidentiality;
- the School's *Data Protection Policy* – especially access to information related to pupils and/or staff;
- expected level of behaviour and an awareness of Professional Codes of Practice;
- the School's *Equal Opportunities Policy* – especially focussing on issues relating to discrimination and the use of appropriate language;
- the School's Complaints procedure;
- the School's Disciplinary procedures.

5. Child Protection

5.1. The law requires check to be made on anyone with responsibility in a school which *can* give them regular unsupervised access to pupils under the age of 19. -In 2002, the Bichard Inquiry was commissioned and its recommendations led to the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, which recognised the need for a single agency to vet all individuals who want to work or volunteer with vulnerable people.

This now includes volunteers who regularly help:

- In the classroom
- In extra curricular activities
- Supervise pupils on school organised holidays or residential visits

Volunteers that also have access which is on going, substantial and unsupervised also fall under this category.

Schools planning to work with volunteers falling into any of the above groups should complete a 'Corporate Record Disclosure Form' to enable a check to be made against 'List 99' and the Devon County Council Applicant Referral List before commencing duties.

5.2. These regulations do not apply to volunteers such as those who help organise or run fetes or may assist the school activities on an irregular basis or adhoc basis but should apply to volunteers that drive children in cars or minibuses. However, if the Headteacher is unclear about the position in respect of a volunteer, further advice is available from the School's Link Personnel Officer.

5.3. Volunteers are also seen by children as safe and trustworthy adults, and if a school is actively seeking volunteers and is considering candidates about whom it has little or no recent knowledge, it should adopt the same recruitment measures as it would for paid staff. In other circumstances, for example where a school approaches a parent who is well known to the school to take a particular role, a steamlined procedure can be adopted; seeking references, checking to ensure others in the school community know of no concerns and can make a positive recommendation, conducting an informal interview to gauge the person's aptitude and suitability, and undertaking a List 99 and a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) disclosure. In other circumstances, eg where a volunteer's roles will be one off, such as accompanying teachers and pupils on a day outing or helping at a concert or school fete, those kind of measures would be unnecessary provided that the person is not to be left alone and unsupervised in charge of children. Where volunteers recruited by another organisation work in a school, eg sports coaches from a local club, the school should obtain assurance from that organisation that the person has be properly vetted.

5.4. Whilst having no direct contact with children in their role, the Governors Body have directed that all governors should be CRB checked.
(Agreed 29th March 2007).

5.5. IMPORTANT: It is the Headteacher's responsibility to ensure that volunteers do not have unsupervised access to children.

5.6. Headteachers should take all reasonable steps to confirm the identity of the person volunteering. It is recommended that the Headteacher view, and take a copy of, at least two original documents. At least one document must show a

current address and at lease one document must show the volunteers date of birth.

- Birth Certificate – plus Marriage Certificate or Copy of Deed Poll or License if their name as changed;
- Passport;
- Driver's License (A photo card is only valid if the individual presents it with the counterpart license)

A full list of acceptable Valid Identity Documents can be found on the leaflet, '*An Applicants Guide to Completing the CRB Application Form*' or alternatively visit the website, www.crb.gov.uk.

5.7. A new vetting service will being to operate in Autumn 2008. This means that employers, statutory bodies and voluntary organisations will need to change recruitment procedures, and those who want to work with vulnerable groups will need to register with the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA).

5.8. Safer Recruitment training provides valuable information on a safer school culture and advice and guidance to strengthen safeguards against employing unsuitable people in schools. The training will help schools demonstrate that they have effective recruitment and selection processes in place that ensure learners are both well taught and protected. Further information on this can be found at:

http://www.ncsl.org.uk/managing_your_school/safer-recruitment/index.cfm

5.9. The Independent Safeguarding Authority vetting service is a tool to help recruitment take place safely but it does not replace correct recruitment processes.

5.10. If training has not be completed by relevant personnel it is strongly urged that this is carried out.

6. Insurance

6.1. Volunteers should be informed about the extent of the insurance cover available. Whilst volunteering for the school they are covered by the LA for third party liability only and the limitations of this insurance should be explained carefully to volunteers. They may wish to make their own arrangements for insuring against theft, personal injury or damage to their own property.

6.2. Volunteers using their own car to transport children other than their own children to school events, (sport, music etc) should be made aware of the school policy and advised to check with their car insurance company to ensure that they do not contravene their insurance policy conditions.

6.3. The school should carefully consider all aspects of insurance and safety before deploying volunteers to drive a minibus. All parties should be made fully aware of the regulations and drivers should be offered appropriate training and instruction before taking children on journeys in such vehicles.

7. Allowances

7.1. Although there is no obligation to make financial reimbursement to volunteers, it would be appropriate to consider paying out-of-pocket expenses connected with the tasks they undertake for the school. If school funds will not allow a

policy of general reimbursement, consideration could be given to such payments in exceptional circumstances.

7.2. State benefits claimed by volunteers can be affected by voluntary work. Schools are strongly advised to refer volunteers to the leaflet from DWP "*A guide to volunteering while on benefits"* (http://www.volunteering.org.uk/NR/rdonlyres/D1C7064B-561C-4057-84ED-77AF8CEEDA93/VG12006.pdf) and discuss any voluntary work with their Personnel Advisor to see how this may affect any possible benefits if they are in any doubt about work they may undertake voluntarily.

The main points for consideration are that volunteers should remain available for work if claiming unemployment benefits and that disabled volunteers should not undertake voluntary work of a nature similar to that for which they are receiving disability benefit.

8. Document History

3	Revised and approved by Personnel Committee, 15th May 2008
2.1	Updated against DCC Guidance, March 2008, reflecting changes in Child Protection procedure and Safer Recruitment (May 2008)
2	Approved without amendment at Personnel Committee, 11th February 2008
1.2	Reviewed by Personnel Committee (18th Oct 2007) – CRB Issue to Full Govs
1.1	Reformatted and updated by Clerk (October 2007)
1	Legacy policy last reviewed / approved 7th July 2005

APPENDIX 1

Volunteer Declaration

I have received, read, and will observe the requirements of this policy.

I agree to complete a CRB disclosure form and understand that my role as a school volunteer is conditional upon background-checks being successful.

Signed .....

Name (in capitals) .....

Date .....