



HOMEBROOK WOODS

Independent Special School

Ages 5–11 | Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC), Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) and Associated SEND

USE OF VOLUNTEERS POLICY

Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026

Document Control

Policy Title	Use of Volunteers Policy
School	Homebrook Woods
Policy Owner	Proprietor / Headteacher
Approved by	Proprietor
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Next Review	July 2027

Related Policies

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Behaviour Regulation and Positive Support Policy
- Physical Intervention and Positive Handling Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Educational Visits Policy
- Privacy Notice

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- encourage members of the wider community to contribute positively to the life of Homebrook Woods, enriching pupils' educational experiences and supporting the school's ethos;
 - ensure that all volunteers understand and uphold the values, policies and procedures of Homebrook Woods;
 - provide clear expectations, guidance and support for volunteers and staff;
 - establish fair, safe and consistent arrangements for the recruitment, induction, supervision and management of volunteers;
 - ensure that safeguarding and the welfare of children remain paramount in all volunteer activities.
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2. Scope

This policy applies to all volunteers working at or on behalf of Homebrook Woods, including:

- parents and carers;
- former pupils;
- students on work experience or placement;
- members of the local community;
- professionals volunteering their expertise;
- contractors undertaking voluntary activities where applicable.

It also applies to all employees responsible for recruiting, supervising or working alongside volunteers.

3. Safeguarding Commitment

The welfare of children is paramount.

Homebrook Woods is committed to maintaining a strong safeguarding culture in which every adult understands their responsibility to protect children from harm.

All volunteers are expected to share this commitment and must act in accordance with the Homebrook Woods Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026**, and all other safeguarding procedures.

Any safeguarding concern, allegation or disclosure involving a child must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), or in their absence the Deputy DSL or Headteacher, in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures.

4. Responsibilities

Proprietor

The Proprietor has overall responsibility for ensuring that appropriate arrangements are in place for the safe recruitment, induction and oversight of volunteers, in accordance with statutory safeguarding requirements.

Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- approving the appointment of volunteers;
- ensuring appropriate safeguarding and recruitment checks are completed before volunteers begin their role;
- ensuring volunteers receive appropriate induction, training and supervision;
- determining the suitability of volunteer placements;
- ensuring volunteers understand and comply with school policies and procedures.

Staff

Staff responsible for supervising volunteers will:

- provide appropriate guidance and support;
- ensure volunteers understand their role and responsibilities;
- supervise volunteers appropriately;
- report any concerns regarding volunteer conduct or safeguarding immediately.

Volunteers

All volunteers are expected to:

- act in accordance with the values and ethos of Homebrook Woods;
- safeguard the welfare of all pupils;
- follow all relevant school policies and procedures;
- maintain confidentiality;
- work under the direction of school staff;
- report safeguarding concerns immediately;
- behave professionally at all times.

5. Definition of a Volunteer

For the purposes of this policy, a volunteer is any individual who freely offers their time, skills or experience to support Homebrook Woods without receiving financial payment or entering into a contract of employment.

Volunteers may include, but are not limited to:

- parents and carers;
- former pupils;
- students on work experience or placement;
- members of the local community;
- professionals sharing specialist skills;
- university students;
- retired professionals.

Volunteers work under the supervision and direction of an appropriately appointed member of staff and contribute to enriching pupils' learning experiences and wellbeing.

6. How Volunteers May Support Homebrook Woods

Volunteers may, subject to appropriate supervision and safeguarding arrangements:

- support individual pupils under staff direction;
- assist small group learning activities;

- support curriculum enrichment activities;
- accompany educational visits where appropriate;
- support outdoor learning;
- contribute specialist skills or knowledge;
- assist with reading, creative arts or practical activities;
- support community events and celebrations.

This list is not exhaustive.

7. Recruitment of Volunteers

Anyone wishing to volunteer at Homebrook Woods should contact the Headteacher.

Prospective volunteers may be asked to:

- complete an application form;
- attend an informal meeting or interview;
- provide references where appropriate;
- undertake safeguarding and recruitment checks;
- complete an induction programme before commencing their role.

Homebrook Woods reserves the right not to accept a volunteer application where it is not considered appropriate or in the best interests of pupils.

8. Appointment of Volunteers

The appointment of volunteers is at the discretion of the Headteacher.

Appointments are subject to:

- satisfactory safeguarding checks;
- satisfactory references where appropriate;
- completion of any required DBS checks;
- successful completion of induction;
- agreement to comply with Homebrook Woods policies.

The Headteacher may end a volunteer placement at any time where this is considered necessary for safeguarding, operational or other legitimate reasons.

9. Safer Recruitment and Safeguarding Checks

Homebrook Woods is committed to safer recruitment and safeguarding in accordance with **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026**.

Before commencing voluntary work, the school will determine what safeguarding checks are required based upon:

- the nature of the volunteer role;
- the level of supervision;
- whether regulated activity will take place;
- the frequency of volunteering;
- the level of contact with pupils.

Where required, volunteers will undergo:

- Enhanced DBS checks;
- Children's Barred List checks (where legally permitted);
- identity verification;
- reference checks;
- risk assessments where appropriate.

Volunteers working through another organisation must provide written confirmation that appropriate safeguarding checks have been completed.

10. Induction

Before beginning their placement, volunteers will receive an appropriate induction.

This will normally include:

- safeguarding arrangements;
- child protection procedures;
- health and safety;
- fire procedures;
- confidentiality;
- professional boundaries;
- behaviour expectations;
- online safety;
- reporting concerns;

- emergency procedures.

Volunteers will be expected to read and understand:

- Part One (or Annex A where appropriate) of **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026**;
 - the Homebrook Woods Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy;
 - the Staff Code of Conduct;
 - any other policies relevant to their role.
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11. Supervision of Volunteers

All volunteers will work under the direction and supervision of an appropriately appointed member of staff.

Volunteers do not replace employed staff and are not responsible for the teaching, behaviour management or supervision of pupils.

Unless specifically authorised, appropriately trained and supervised, volunteers must not:

- administer medication;
- undertake intimate care;
- transport pupils;
- use physical intervention or restrictive practices;
- be left alone with pupils where this would constitute regulated activity without the appropriate safeguarding checks;
- make safeguarding decisions independently.

Any concerns regarding a pupil's safety or welfare must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

12. Confidentiality

Volunteers may have access to confidential information regarding pupils, families or staff.

All such information must remain confidential and must not be shared outside Homebrook Woods unless required by safeguarding procedures or permitted by law.

Questions or concerns should always be discussed with the supervising member of staff rather than with pupils, parents or other volunteers.

13. Conduct and Professional Expectations

Volunteers are expected to:

- act professionally at all times;
- maintain appropriate professional boundaries;
- treat everyone with dignity and respect;
- follow staff instructions;
- use appropriate language;
- dress appropriately for their role;
- respect confidentiality;
- follow all Homebrook Woods policies and procedures.

Volunteers must not:

- use personal mobile phones with pupils except where authorised;
 - photograph pupils using personal devices;
 - communicate with pupils via personal social media or messaging services;
 - accept gifts or engage in inappropriate relationships with pupils.
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14. Health and Safety

Homebrook Woods is committed to providing a safe working environment for volunteers.

Volunteers are expected to:

- follow health and safety procedures;
- report accidents and hazards immediately;
- follow fire evacuation procedures;
- use equipment safely;
- comply with risk assessments.

Accidents involving volunteers should be reported immediately and recorded in accordance with the school's Health and Safety Policy.

15. Insurance

Homebrook Woods maintains appropriate insurance arrangements covering authorised volunteers while undertaking approved activities on behalf of the school.

Where volunteers are provided through another organisation, the school will seek confirmation that suitable insurance arrangements are also in place.

16. Data Protection

Personal information relating to volunteers will be processed in accordance with:

- UK GDPR;
- Data Protection Act 2018;
- Homebrook Woods Privacy Notice;
- Homebrook Woods Data Protection Policy.

Volunteer records will be retained and securely disposed of in accordance with the school's Data Retention Schedule.

17. Concerns About Volunteers

Where concerns arise regarding the conduct or suitability of a volunteer, Homebrook Woods will take appropriate action.

This may include:

- increased supervision;
- additional training;
- suspension of volunteering activities;
- referral to safeguarding agencies;
- termination of the volunteer placement.

Where concerns relate to safeguarding, procedures set out in the Homebrook Woods Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Managing Allegations Against Staff Policy will be followed.

18. Monitoring and Review

The Headteacher will monitor the effectiveness of volunteer arrangements to ensure they continue to support pupils safely and effectively.

This policy will be reviewed:

- annually;
- following changes to legislation or statutory guidance;
- following safeguarding reviews;
- where operational improvements are identified.