

Bray School Project Volunteer Policy

Bray School Project has consistently welcomed and benefited from volunteers in many areas of school life. Parental involvement is an essential and much valued aspect of our school community. It is hoped that we can build on the many years of volunteering that have taken place at all levels in the school. With this in mind, our volunteer policy aims to further support, encourage and promote volunteering while simultaneously meeting our responsibilities in the areas of health and safety and child protection.

This policy aims to provide a framework in which to best harness the broad range of skills and resources that are evident in the school community. The policy will provide clear guidelines on recruitment, information management, training, supervision, support and communication with regard to volunteers. The policy relates to those involved in all aspects of volunteering – from committee work, supporting activities and education in the classroom, fund-raising and other areas that are supported by volunteers.

This policy is intended to increase and support the level of volunteering in BSP. It is designed to promote a consistent approach to volunteering with all those who play such a valuable role, working closely with school staff to ensure best practice.

Definitions

Volunteers engage in a wide variety of activities in our school – ranging from small group support to accompanying children on school trips and including playing an active role on various committees. Volunteers may provide regular support in the classroom or occasional support at various school events. Regardless of the role, volunteers will be required to adhere to all BSP policies and procedures and to ensure that all information regarding staff, children and parents is managed in such a way as to guarantee confidentiality for all involved.

Recruitment

In line with current national guidelines and best practice, all BSP volunteers will be required to undergo Garda vetting. Applications for Garda clearance will be processed through Educate Together. Clearance will be required for those who volunteer at every level.

Where an applicant does not receive clearance, it will be a decision of the Board of Management as to whether that person can proceed in a volunteering capacity.

Access to and storage of personal information

Applications for clearance will be submitted to the school Principal on appropriate forms. The Principal will in turn process these through Educate Together. On receipt of cleared forms, information will be stored securely on school premises and will only be accessed with the consent of the Principal and the Chairperson of the Board of Management. A list of approved/unapproved names will also be stored securely on the school premises and will only be accessed with the consent of the Principal and the Chairperson of the Board of Management. This list may be made available to a Volunteer coordinator to be appointed by the Board of Management.

Volunteer coordinator

The coordinator will be appointed by the Board of Management with a view to linking volunteers to school activities and managing the requirements of staff for assistance and support. The coordinator will agree with the Principal to ensure that information is accessed only when needed, is stored securely and is not shared with others. The coordinator will provide all volunteers with a copy of relevant policies and will be available for questions or support as required.

Induction, training and supervision

While volunteers bring many skills and much valued experience to their role, it may be the case that further training would be valuable in areas such as first aid, health and safety or child protection. BSP will endeavour to provide training to volunteers as required. As part of their induction, volunteers will receive a suite of policies and will be asked to sign to confirm that they have read and understood those policies. These will include the following:

- Child Protection policy
- Code of behaviour
- Anti-bullying policy

-Health and Safety policy

Volunteers may discuss any concerns arising from their work with the relevant teacher, the school Principal or the Chairperson of the Board of Management.

Role of volunteers

Volunteers will play a role in the various activities of the school. Some of these are listed below:

- Classroom support
- Accompanying teachers and pupils on school trips
- Providing additional activities during school hours (e.g. gardening, art, sport)
- Taking part in various committees (Board of Management, PTA, Executive, Class Reps.)
- Assisting in occasional activities (discos, art day, parties etc.)

The volunteer will be advised that discipline, administering medication or addressing allegations of bullying, will be the responsibility of the class teacher or Principal. Incidents of misbehaviour will be brought to the attention of the teacher and not discussed with parents.

Confidentiality

In the case of volunteers providing direct support to children in the classroom, the volunteer will agree not to share information regarding children or discuss matters relating to them with anyone other than the class teacher or Principal. Similarly, it will be a requirement for those who play a role on the various committees which may provide them with access to personal information regarding staff and children to ensure confidentiality is maintained at all times.

This policy has been formulated by the Board of Management. It will be reviewed annually, alongside the Child Protection Policy.

