



Bledlow Ridge School Child Protection Advice for Volunteers

Thank you for your interest in becoming a volunteer. This leaflet is designed to provide some useful advice. Buckinghamshire County Council is committed to safeguarding and meeting the needs of children, young people and vulnerable adults. This leaflet will provide some useful advice and information when working with children in schools.

What is Safeguarding?

Safeguarding means:

- Protecting children from harm
- Keeping them safe and healthy
- Making sure they grow up in a caring environment
- Acting quickly if you are worried about a child.

Your Role as a Volunteer

- Be a positive role model.
- Treat all children with respect and fairness.
- Never be alone with a child where you can't be seen.
- Avoid physical contact unless it is necessary for safety.

If a Child Tells You Something Worrying

- Listen carefully.
- Stay calm.
- Don't promise secrecy. Say: "I may need to share this with someone who can help."
- Report it straight away to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

What You Must Do

- Report any concern about a child immediately.
- Share only with the DSL or Deputy DSL.
- Record what was said, in the child's own words, if asked.
- Keep yourself safe by following school procedures.

DBS Checks

Part of the safeguarding policy requirement is that volunteers working in schools are checked by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). This is just to help ensure that unsuitable people are prevented from working with children. You should also inform the Headteacher immediately if you become subject to any criminal investigation, caution or conviction. This helps to protect you as well as the young people in your care.

What are my responsibilities as a Volunteer?

All those who come into contact with children through their everyday work whether paid or voluntary have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. In every school you will find a child protection policy document. Before you can volunteer in school you will need to read the safeguarding leaflet (available at the office) and have read the school's CP Policy; Child on Child abuse policy and Confidentiality Policy.

What should I do if I am worried about a child?

In every school there is a Designated Person specially trained in child protection who will know what to do. You should report your concerns to them that day. They will deal with the matter in an appropriate way.

What should I do if a child discloses that s/he is being harmed?

Listen to the child, without making judgements. Take what they tell you seriously. Explain that you can't keep the information secret and must pass it on to someone who will know what to do. Don't interrogate the child and ask leading questions, such as "What did he do next?". Try to convey to the child that they are not to blame for what has happened; though at the same time avoid criticising the abuser. Don't make promises that you can't keep but tell the child what you are going to do.

What shall I do next?

Find the Designated Person – the Headteacher – and pass the information on as soon as possible.

What should I do if the alleged abuser is a member of the school staff?

You should report such allegations to the Headteacher. If the allegation is about the Headteacher contact the Chair of Governors – Mrs Zoe Williams (zwilliams@bledlowridge.bucks.sch.uk) or can be contacted via the school office.

How do I assure that my behaviour is always appropriate?

Appropriate relationships with children should be based on mutual trust and respect. As a volunteer you may well be working closely with children. Children, especially when they are young are often spontaneously affectionate and tactile and it is important not to alienate them through lack of response or by appearing to reject this. You should, however, be careful about touching pupils. For example, as a parent, having a friend's child sit on your lap, may seem acceptable at home, but having that same child or another child, sit on your lap at school is not appropriate. Whilst warm and friendly relations are important in your role, overly familiar relationships can be misunderstood and lead to difficulties.

If you have concerns about these matters – or feel that you may find yourself in a difficult position because of the way something may appear, you need to raise them with the Class Teacher or Headteacher. If you are working with a pupil on his/her own, always ensure that the door is left open or that you can be visible to others. If, for example, a young child is in the toilet and has a problem and calls out for your help, always ask a member of staff to see what the problem is. Never go to deal with it yourself.

Confidentiality

As a volunteer, please be aware that anything you see or hear in school regarding a child, (for example if a child misbehaves) must be kept confidential. It is not appropriate to discuss things outside of school with other parents. If you have any concerns, please speak to the Class Teacher, or the Headteacher as appropriate. Refer to the school's Confidentiality Policy for more information.

No child should suffer harm, either at home or at school. Everyone who works in our school has a responsibility to make sure that all our young people are safe.

This leaflet has been given to you to make sure you understand what is expected of you. Please ask the person who gave it to you if you are not clear about anything in it, and keep the leaflet in a safe place, so that you can read it again if you need to. If you are worried about the safety of any young person in your school, you must report this to the Headteacher.

USEFUL CONTACTS

Headteacher: Mrs Natasha

Designated Person for Child Protection: Mrs Natasha Harrison

SENDCo and Deputy DSL: Miss Gemma Grimaldi

Deputy Headteacher and Deputy DSL: Mrs Rachel Stanley

Chair of Governors: Mrs Zoe Williams

Safeguarding Governor: Mrs Elaine Barry

Date agreed: September 2025