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Community Hubs Volunteer Policy

Introduction

Paulsgrove Community Hub believes that everyone has something valuable to contribute and we invite and celebrate the unique knowledge, skills, and experiences people bring – across all ages, backgrounds and life stages. Whether studying, working, or retired, volunteers play an important role by offering their time and energy to support specific activities and shared goals free of charge. Volunteering is a vital part of community building and complements the contributions of community hub staff, partners and residents, who together, help create the conditions for a strong, connected community. Volunteering is also a meaningful opportunity for personal growth, connection, and contribution.

Paulsgrove Cluster community hub welcomes anyone who would like to contribute their skills, time and talents. We are committed to creating a safe, inclusive, and rewarding experience.

Paulsgrove Community Hub

Paulsgrove Community Hub is based in Portsmouth - a vibrant and diverse community with a rich mix of strengths, cultures, and experiences. The hub is shaped by local residents, currently offering activities such as food sharing, cooking, stay and play sessions, SEND sessions, creative workshops, youth programmes, wellbeing sessions and working in partnership with Collaboration for Kids, Special Kinship PCC, NHS and the NHS. We advocate an asset-based approach to community development – focusing on what’s strong in our community, not what’s wrong – and aim to contribute our assets to local community building efforts.

Paulsgrove Community Hub is run collaboratively by Beacon View Primary Academy, Castle View Academy and The Victory Primary School and part of the United Communities network, a national group of local school-linked community hubs.



This policy aligns with statutory guidance including Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) and reflects our commitment to safeguarding and inclusive practice. This policy should be read in conjunction with the other relevant policies outlined at the end of this policy.

Scope

This volunteer policy sets out the principles and practices that underpin our approach to involving volunteers and is relevant to school and community hub staff, and community hub volunteers. It sets out roles and responsibilities in relation to the recruitment and management of volunteers and details the expectations we have of our volunteers, and the expectations volunteers should have of community hub and school staff.

Our Approach

At the Paulsgrove Community Hub, we see volunteers as valued partners who bring unique strengths, experiences, and relationships that enrich our shared work. We are committed to creating volunteering experiences that are flexible, respectful, and mutually beneficial. Volunteers are supported to grow in confidence, build skills and relationships, and contribute in ways that reflect their strengths and aspirations. Volunteering is not just about giving – it's about belonging, building relationships, and creating change together.

Volunteers often work alongside paid staff. We will always make sure that both paid staff and volunteers understand their respective roles and how they can best support each other. Volunteers are not paid for their time and don't receive any payments beyond agreed expenses; however, they are also not required to commit to specific hours and can choose to stop volunteering at any time.

We are committed to encouraging people from diverse backgrounds to volunteer with us, including those from under-represented groups such as youth, people with a disability, older people and people from black and minority ethnic communities. We will listen to residents regarding any barriers to volunteering with us and are committed to working together to overcome these where possible.

We recognise that there are costs associated with volunteer involvement. We're committed to supporting our volunteers to enable them to contribute, including through essential safeguarding training and induction.

We recognise our responsibility to organise volunteering efficiently and sensitively so that the valuable gift of the volunteer's time is best used to the benefit of the community and the volunteer themselves.

Who is a volunteer?

We define volunteering as activity that:

- Is undertaken freely and by choice.



- Is carried out with the intention of benefiting the wider community.
- Is offered without expectation of financial reward.

Volunteers may be involved on a short-term or on a longer-term, regular basis.

In asset-based community development practice, the line between volunteers and residents actively engaged in community building can blur – the key difference is that volunteers have formal roles and responsibilities, while residents engaged in community building efforts may influence or support the community hub in informal ways.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Paulsgrove Community Hub Lead has responsibility for the development and co-ordination of voluntary activity within the Community Hub, including volunteering policies and procedures and the welfare of volunteers.

All volunteers will have a designated staff member/volunteer for guidance, support and supervision.

The volunteer role is based on trust and mutual understanding. There is no enforceable obligation, contractual or otherwise, for the volunteer to attend or to undertake particular tasks or for the organisation to provide continuing opportunities for voluntary involvement, provision of training or benefits. However, there is a presumption of mutual support and reliability.

What we expect from volunteers

Volunteers are expected to:

- Bring their knowledge, skills, and passions to support the hub's activities
- Act with reliability, honesty, and integrity
- Embody the values of the Community Hub, contributing positively to its welcoming and inclusive culture
- Work within agreed guidelines and collaborate respectfully with others
- Treat all individuals—staff, fellow volunteers, school partners, and community members—with courtesy, dignity, and respect
- Help create a space where everyone feels safe, valued, and free from discrimination
- Report any concerns to a named member of staff, whilst maintaining confidentiality

What volunteers can expect from us

We are committed to ensuring that volunteers:

- Receive clear information about their role and expectations
- Have essential safeguarding training, and induction
- Are welcomed into a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment
- Are supported by a named member of staff
- Can claim reasonable, agreed out-of-pocket expenses
- Are recognised and appreciated for their contributions



- Know how to raise concerns or seek support if something isn't right

Recruitment of Volunteers

Due to the nature of the hub's work, it is expected that where volunteer roles emerge organically, there will be no formal recruitment. Where this is not the case, equal opportunities principles will be adhered to in recruiting volunteers. Opportunities will be widely promoted to attract interest from different sectors of the community. We encourage online applications, but non-digital methods of application are also available.

Information will be made available to those enquiring about volunteering, including the nature and purpose of the volunteering role, key tasks and skills required.

Depending on the nature of the volunteer role, recruitment may involve an informal interview, application form and the taking of references; the process will be defined and consistent for any given role. (For example, the recruitment process for regular volunteers and for volunteers for one-off events may differ.) However, in all cases the community hub lead at Paulsgrove Cluster Community Hub will ensure that all appropriate checks have been undertaken.

Where volunteers cannot be placed in their preferred volunteering role, the Paulsgrove Cluster Community Hub lead will invite the applicant to have a conversation exploring other ways to contribute their skills and gifts, whether formally or informally.

Safer Recruitment

All volunteers will be subject to appropriate vetting checks in accordance with the community hub safeguarding policy. It is the responsibility of the Community Hub Lead at Paulsgrove Cluster Community Hub to ensure that appropriate checks are conducted. The nature and level of supervision may vary dependent on the individual scenario; however, this must be clearly recorded in the community hub risk assessment.

For volunteer roles which involve the potential for sustained, unsupervised and/or direct contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults, volunteers will be required to have a full enhanced DBS check which will be arranged by the Community Hub Lead with the School Manager. DBS disclosures are dealt with in the strictest confidence. A criminal record is not necessarily a bar to volunteering and each case will be considered individually.

Induction and training

Volunteers will receive induction materials including safeguarding policies and training, health and safety guidance, and any other relevant training to support their role.

Safeguarding training actions must be completed within the first two weeks of taking up a volunteering role and community hub leads will support to ensure this happens.



Support and supervision

Volunteers will be assigned a named contact (usually the community hub lead) for support and will be encouraged to raise any concerns or questions during their involvement.

Recognition

Volunteers are recognised as key contributors to our asset-based community development approach and their contributions are celebrated through various channels which may include annual reports, website articles, award nominations and social media. Consent will be sought prior to sharing any personal details.

Dealing with problems

Paulsgrove Community Hub aims to treat all volunteers fairly, objectively and consistently. The hub seeks to ensure that volunteers' views are heard, noted and acted upon promptly.

If a complaint is made, United Communities' complaints policy will be followed. This includes an informal resolution as stage 1. Volunteers will be made aware of United Communities' complaints policy and how to use it. They will also be made aware of how inappropriate behaviour by volunteers will be addressed by the community hub.

Expenses

Volunteers will be informed of eligible expenses and how to claim them in line with United Learning's expenses policy. Volunteers will be given clear information about what expenses can be claimed and how to make a claim.

Insurance

Volunteering is covered by the United Learning's/United Communities insurance policy which can be found on the hub. The insurance will not cover unauthorised actions or actions outside of this and related policies.

Moving on

When volunteers move on from volunteering with us, they will be invited to share their feedback on the volunteering experience, and where a volunteer has served longer than 3 months, will have the right to request a reference.

Additional policies and guidance relevant to volunteers include:

- Health and Safety Policy
- Expenses policy
- Community Hubs Social Media Policy
- Community Hubs Safeguarding Policy