

Staffordshire County Council HR Policy		Owned and approved by: Strategic HR (Approved by JCC – June 2011 (Approved by GBCF – June 2011	
Policy Ref Number		Version 01	June 2011
Policy Title	Volunteer Policy for Staff in Schools		

Policy Adoption and Revision Details			
LA Review:	06/2013	Governors Review	06/2013
Adopted by school on:	07/03/2012	Effective date:	08/03/2012

1. Policy Statement

1.1 The policy supports the Schools commitment to volunteering by providing an opportunity for employees to become employee volunteers to deliver benefits to communities and to support their personal development.

1.2 The employees working at the School are highly skilled and motivated. They have a great deal to offer outside of their day to day roles and many of them welcome the opportunity to use their knowledge and expertise to benefit communities. The school recognises the value of employee volunteering and the difference our employees can make. As such the school is committed to supporting employees in their volunteering activities and helping them to achieve their personal aims, whilst making a positive impact on society.

1.3 Where it is not detrimental to the effective provision of education, all staff within the school will be supported in their volunteering activity.

1.4 The school enables employees to get involved by creating the opportunity for them to request authorised (paid or unpaid) leave within an academic year to take part in an appropriate volunteering activity of their choice. This is known as volunteer leave.

2. Scope of the policy

2.1 The policy covers all school based staff regardless of length of service, so teaching and support staff as well as the senior leadership team.

2.2 The policy does not relate to other activities which are covered by separate arrangements such as school governor responsibilities, magistrate responsibilities, time off for Trade Union duties. These are detailed in the Time off for Public Duties Policy which can be accessed here: [Time off for Public Duties Policy](#)

3. Purpose of the Policy

3.1 This policy and associated guidance sets out the framework for all employees to make a request for volunteer leave. This can include:

- Paid or unpaid leave
- A determined number days or hours over the academic year
- When the leave can be taken within the academic year

3.2 Employees who wish to submit a request for volunteer leave should do complete Form A and submit it to their manager.

3.3 To ensure schools have a consistent approach to the consideration of volunteer leave.

4. Accountabilities

4.1 Headteacher accountabilities:

- to ensure that school leaders, including Governors, and staff discuss volunteering arrangements as part of the schools approach to work life balance
- to ensure that staff are made aware of the opportunity to apply for volunteer leave
- to consider if volunteer leave will be paid or unpaid on a whole school or individual basis
- to assess the impact of volunteer activities on the performance of the school

- to consider how the skills gained through volunteering may develop skills within school
- to ensure all requests are treated fairly and consistently and
- if a request is turned down, ensure an explanation is given in writing, giving clear business reasons using Form B.

4.2 Manager accountabilities:

- to respond to a request in accordance with the policy and guidance
- to assess the impact of a request on the performance of the school or department
- if a request is turned down, explain in writing why, giving clear business reasons.

4.3 Employee's accountabilities:

- identifying the volunteering opportunities
- to make a fully completed application for volunteer leave
- seeking agreement from their Headteacher for taking time off
- balancing the needs and demands of their work activities alongside any volunteering role and
- ensuring the time taken from work to participate as an employee volunteer is within the agreed amounts.

4.4 Governor's responsibilities:

- to consider how using volunteering arrangements can contribute to school performance and
- to consider carefully any appeals made in relation to a request to time off to volunteer.

4.5 HR can assist with the interpretation and application of this policy.

5. Types of Volunteering

5.1 Volunteering activities can provide a great opportunity to build skills in specific areas or to get experience and develop skills in an area an employee would not normally come into contact with.

5.2 Support and advice on finding volunteer opportunities can be found on the [Volunteer Staffordshire - Homepage](#)

6. Existing Volunteers

6.1 Employees may already be committed to a volunteering activity and as long as the activity meets the requirements of this policy, the volunteer leave can be accessed to support this activity.

7. Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) Disclosure

7.1 The volunteer activity may require a CRB disclosure. However any CRB disclosure that is required as part of the activity is not the responsibility of the School. Employees are likely to already have a CRB check for their employment at school but employees should be aware that CRB checks undertaken by the volunteering organisation are not portable to the school.

Similarly the schools CRB check is unlikely to be portable to the volunteering organisation and they may require the employee to apply for another disclosure.

8. General Principles – Applying to be an Employee Volunteer

8.1 An individual should apply to their manager, using Form A for an agreed number of days or hours leave in an academic year.

8.2 The employee must specify when they expect to start their volunteering activity and also provide the school with a minimum of one term's notice of this date.

8.3 Within 28 calendar days of receiving the form requesting volunteer leave, the manager will meet with the employee to discuss it. The employee has the right to be accompanied by a companion who may be a fellow worker, a trade union representative or an official employed by the trade union.

8.4 The employee together with their manager should consider the amount of time required to undertake the activity, in relation to the needs of the school and of the individual and how this time should be taken, in hours or days.

8.5 Within 14 calendar days of the meeting to discuss the request the manager will write to the employee to either approve or refuse the request for volunteer leave and complete Form C to consent to the volunteer leave.

8.6 Where the request is refused, written, valid reasons detailed in Form B will be provided to the employee who will also be informed of the right of appeal.

8.7 Only one application for volunteer leave can be made in an academic year.

9. The Appeal

9.1 Employees have 14 calendar days of being informed of the outcome of their request to appeal against the decision.

9.2 The appeal meeting will be arranged, normally, within 14 calendar days of receiving an appeal. The appeal will be to an appeal panel of governors where the headteacher has made the decision to refuse the request, or to a more senior manager (this may be the headteacher) where a line manager has made the decision.

9.3 The Chair of the appeals committee or senior manager will communicate the outcome of this appeal meeting to the employee within 14 calendar days of the meeting. Their decision will be final.

N.B. references to calendar days exclude school closure periods

10. General Principles – Accessing the authorised leave

10.1 Once the employee has become an employee volunteer they can volunteer during work time up to the agreed days in an academic year.

10.2 Employees must provide appropriate notice of when they need to participate in their volunteering activity and how much of the agreed leave they need at that time. Normally this should be at the start of each term for the following term and longer wherever possible.

10.3 Where an employee volunteer gives notice that they wish to use some of the agreed volunteer leave the manager will authorise this as authorised leave and process it in SAP or through the Shared Services Centre.

11. Equality Impact Assessment

11.1 Staffordshire County Council policies are intended to promote equality, eliminate unlawful legislation and actively promote good relationships regardless of age, disability, race or ethnicity, religion and belief and sexual orientation. This policy has been subject to an equality impact assessment (EIA).

12. Further Advice and Information

12.1 If you need any further advice on how to apply this policy please contact Human Resources. Employees are expected to engage appropriately with this policy insofar as they are affected by it.

12.2 Further background information on this topic is available on the following Websites: <http://www.volunteerstaffordshire.org.uk/Voluntee.aspx>
www.bis.gov.uk
www.acas.org.uk

See also national conditions of service and local agreements before determining or issuing advice:

NJC for Local Government Services (Green Book)

School Teachers Pay and Conditions Document

Conditions of service for school teachers in England and Wales (Burgundy Book)

13. Standard Documents

Form A - Volunteer leave form

Form B- Volunteer leave refusal form

Form C - Volunteer leave consent form

[Schools Guidance Notes](#)

This information can be made available in a range of formats and languages, including Braille and large print. If this would be useful to you or someone you know, please contact the HR Unit.