



THAMES LEARNING TRUST

Name of Policy	Volunteer Policy
Scope of Policy	This policy relates to all academies across TLT.
Approved by	CEO
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Review period	Annually
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GROWING STRONGER TOGETHER



THAMES LEARNING TRUST

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1. Introduction and aims

We believe that volunteers provide a valuable contribution to Thames Learning Trust (TLT) and our academies. Volunteers enrich pupils' educational experience through the breadth of their knowledge, skills and experience.

We are committed to using volunteers in a way that supports each academy's vision, values, strategic aims and development plan, and that maintains the highest standards of safeguarding.

This policy aims to:

- Encourage the wider community to engage with TLT academies, enhancing the curriculum, raising achievement and promoting community cohesion.
- Ensure that volunteers support the Trust's vision and values, and adhere to Trust and academy policies.
- Provide staff, volunteers and parents/carers with clear expectations and guidance.
- Set a clear, fair process for recruiting, inducting, supporting and managing volunteers across a multi-academy trust.

This policy is developed in line with statutory safeguarding guidance: Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025 (Department for Education) and related safer recruitment requirements.

2. How we use volunteers

Volunteers may support academies in a range of activities, for example:

- Working with individual pupils (where appropriate arrangements are in place).
- Working with small groups of pupils.
- Supporting specific curriculum areas (e.g., reading, computing, art, careers).
- Supporting enrichment activities, clubs, visits and events.

This is not an exhaustive list. The academy will decide what volunteer opportunities are available based on pupil needs, staffing, space and safeguarding considerations.

Volunteers may include (this list is not exhaustive):

- Parents/carers and family members
- Former pupils
- Local residents and community members
- PTA / Friends of the academy
- Strategic Ambassadors / partners
- Students on work experience (subject to age and supervision requirements)
- Members of the Trust Board

Trustees/Strategic Ambassadors visiting in their governance role (e.g., monitoring visits, attending meetings) follow the relevant governance/visitor arrangements and are not treated as 'volunteers' for the purposes of this policy.

Where a trustee/Strategic Ambassador undertakes operational activity that involves working with pupils (for example reading with pupils, mentoring, supporting trips or clubs), they are treated as a volunteer under this policy and the appropriate checks/supervision will apply.

3. How to apply to volunteer

Individuals can apply to volunteer by:

- Emailing the academy Principal (or nominated senior leader).
- Approaching a senior leader, class teacher or head of department (who will direct the applicant to the academy's volunteer process).
- Completing the volunteer application form (Appendix 1).

The academy will confirm whether there is an appropriate opportunity available and what the next steps will be.

4. Appointment of volunteers

Volunteers are appointed by the academy Principal (or delegated senior leader).

Appointment and induction can take up to 6 weeks and depends on the role, safeguarding checks, training requirements and academy capacity.

All appointments are conditional upon the completion of the appropriate safeguarding and recruitment checks, and completion of required induction and training.

The Principal reserves the right to end a volunteer placement at any time, including where safeguarding, conduct or suitability concerns arise.

Where volunteers are provided through another organisation (e.g., a partner charity or agency), the academy will obtain written confirmation of the level of DBS check completed, the date of issue, and (where applicable) confirmation of barred list information. The academy will also verify the volunteer's identity on arrival and confirm supervision arrangements and responsibilities while on site.

5. Safeguarding and safer recruitment

Safeguarding pupils is paramount. Volunteers must share our commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

5.1 Regulated activity and supervision

Whether a volunteer is in 'regulated activity' depends on the nature of the work and the level of supervision. In general, volunteers who are unsupervised and have regular contact with children may be in regulated activity.

For the purposes of this policy, 'supervised' means supervision that is:

- By a person in regulated activity (e.g., a member of staff who has undergone the appropriate checks).
- Regular and day-to-day (not ad hoc).
- Reasonable in all circumstances to ensure the protection of children.

If a volunteer is not appropriately supervised, they must not start the role until the required checks are complete.

5.2 DBS, barred list and other checks

The academy will decide, on a role-by-role basis, what checks are required, informed by KCSIE 2025 and a written risk assessment (see 5.4).

As a minimum, we will:

- Obtain an enhanced DBS check including barred list information for volunteers who will be in regulated activity (typically where they will work with children unsupervised).
- Not request barred list information for volunteers who are appropriately supervised (because barred list information can only be obtained for roles in regulated activity).
- Ensure volunteers without the required DBS check are always appropriately supervised and are never left alone with pupils.
- Consider on a case-by-case basis any information returned on a DBS certificate, with regard to the nature of the information and the nature of the role.

5.3 Checks decision guide (summary)

The table below summarises how checks are typically determined. The academy must complete and record a written risk assessment for each volunteer role.

Typical volunteer activity	Supervision	Likely regulated activity?	Typical DBS requirement	Notes / additional controls
Reading/mentoring 1:1 (potential to be alone with a pupil)	Unsupervised	Yes	Enhanced DBS + barred list	Do not start until check complete.
Supporting groups without staff present (including some clubs)	Unsupervised	Yes	Enhanced DBS + barred list	Do not start until check complete.
Classroom helper with teacher present and oversight	Supervised	No	Risk-assessed: Enhanced DBS may be required	No barred list request. Maintain supervision.
One-off speaker/visitor in professional capacity	Supervised/controlled	No	Usually not; risk-assess	Follow visitor procedures; staff remain responsible.
Overnight residential visit (responsibility for pupils)	May include unsupervised periods	Often	Enhanced DBS + barred list	Assess supervision arrangements carefully.

5.4 Written risk assessment

Where a volunteer is not in regulated activity, the academy will complete a written risk assessment to determine whether an enhanced DBS check is required. The risk assessment will consider:

- The nature, frequency and duration of the activity and level of contact with children.
- The supervision arrangements and physical environment (e.g., whether doors are open, visibility).
- What we know about the volunteer, including application information and identity verification.
- References (where required) and any previous volunteering or employment history.
- Whether the role is eligible for an enhanced DBS check and whether the volunteer is in regulated activity.

Risk assessments must be recorded and retained in line with Trust record keeping requirements.

5.5 Volunteers aged under 16

We cannot carry out a DBS check on a child under 16 who is volunteering at an academy. Children volunteering must always be appropriately supervised and a risk assessment must be completed to consider safeguarding arrangements.

5.6 Safeguarding training and expectations

Before starting, volunteers will receive safeguarding induction and training appropriate to their role. This will include:

- How to recognise and report safeguarding concerns, including who the DSL and deputy DSLs are.
- Reading and understanding Part 1 (or the role-appropriate annex) of KCSIE 2025.

- Understanding professional boundaries, online safety expectations and acceptable use of technology.
- Signing and adhering to the volunteer code of conduct (Appendix 2).

5.7 Reporting concerns, low-level concerns and allegations

Volunteers must report any safeguarding concerns about a pupil immediately in accordance with the academy's child protection and safeguarding policy.

Concerns about the behaviour or conduct of an adult (including a volunteer) must be reported promptly to the Principal (or nominated senior leader) and/or the Trust/academy designated safeguarding lead, as appropriate.

Low-level concerns (conduct that does not meet the threshold for an allegation but is inconsistent with the code of conduct or professional expectations) will be recorded and reviewed in line with KCSIE 2025. The academy will look for patterns and take action where needed.

Where an allegation may meet the threshold for managing allegations against adults who work with children, the Principal will follow the academy's managing allegations procedure, including liaison with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) where required. Where appropriate, referrals to the DBS and/or relevant professional bodies will be considered.

5.8 Online/remote volunteering

Where volunteers support learning remotely (e.g., via video call), this must be pre-approved by the academy and conducted using Trust-approved platforms.

Volunteers must not:

- Use personal social media accounts or personal contact details to communicate with pupils.
- Record sessions or take screenshots unless explicitly authorised by the academy and in line with policy.
- Work remotely with a pupil in a way that is not appropriately supervised or that creates one-to-one contact risks.

The academy will document supervision and safeguarding arrangements for any remote volunteering activity.

6. Induction and training

Volunteers must complete induction before beginning their placement. Induction will be proportionate to the role and may include:

- Safeguarding induction and reading the relevant parts of KCSIE 2025.
- Code of conduct and professional boundaries.
- Health and safety, fire procedures and first aid arrangements (including what to do in an emergency).
- Academy routines, signing in/out, visitor badge requirements and confidentiality expectations.

- Online safety, ICT acceptable use and mobile phone expectations.

Training completion will be recorded by the academy and retained in line with Trust record keeping requirements.

7. Confidentiality

Information about pupils, parents/carers and staff is confidential. Volunteers must not discuss any matters relating to pupils, parents/carers or staff with anyone outside the academy.

If volunteers have concerns about practice or welfare, they should raise these with their supervisor or the appropriate member of staff and follow the relevant policy (including safeguarding and whistleblowing). Volunteers should not discuss concerns with pupils or parents/carers.

8. Conduct of volunteers

Volunteers must comply with the volunteer code of conduct set out in Appendix 2 and any relevant academy procedures. Failure to do so may result in the termination of the placement and, where necessary, further action in line with Trust procedures.

9. Expenses

TLT recognises that volunteers may incur reasonable out-of-pocket expenses when supporting academy activities (for example, travel costs for an agreed activity or pre-approved materials).

Expenses will only be reimbursed where they are:

- Agreed in advance by the academy Principal (or delegated budget holder).
- Reasonable and wholly, exclusively and necessarily incurred for the volunteering activity.
- Supported by receipts or appropriate evidence, where applicable.

Volunteers should submit claims using Appendix 4. The academy will confirm what can be claimed and the payment method/timescales.

10. Insurance

The Trust's insurance arrangements cover volunteers while they are volunteering for an academy, subject to the terms and conditions of the policy. If a volunteer is working through another organisation, the academy will also confirm that organisation's insurance arrangements are appropriate.

11. Data protection and record keeping

The Trust's privacy notice for volunteers explains what information we collect about volunteers and why we collect it.

We will:

- Process personal data in accordance with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.
- Use appropriate lawful bases for processing, typically legal obligation and/or public task for safeguarding and safer recruitment purposes (and where relevant, legitimate interests).
- Keep volunteer records and risk assessments in line with the Trust's records retention schedule.
- Record relevant checks and decisions on the single central record (SCR) in line with KCSIE 2025 requirements.
- Not routinely retain copies of DBS certificates. If a copy is taken in exceptional circumstances, it will be stored securely and retained for no longer than 6 months, in line with DBS guidance.

Academies will remove details of volunteers from the SCR once they no longer work in the academy, in line with Trust record keeping requirements.

12. Trust-wide single central record (SCR) and assurance

As a multi-academy trust, TLT requires each academy to maintain an accurate SCR that records the required checks for staff and relevant volunteers, and to be able to produce each academy's SCR details separately and without delay when required (e.g., for internal audit or inspection).

Minimum SCR and assurance expectations for volunteers include:

- Recording whether the volunteer is in regulated activity and whether supervision is in place.
- Recording DBS level (where applicable), date of check and who verified it.
- Recording the written risk assessment decision (where used) and where it is stored.
- Maintaining a trust assurance process (e.g., termly sampling and annual SCR verification) coordinated by the Trust Safeguarding Lead/central team.

13. Monitoring and review

This policy is approved by the CEO (or delegated authority) and will be reviewed annually, or sooner where statutory guidance changes or where review is required following learning from safeguarding incidents or audits.

14. Links to other policies

This volunteer policy should be read alongside the Trust/academy:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures
- Managing allegations against adults who work with children procedure
- Staff/Trustee code of conduct (as applicable)
- Whistleblowing policy
- Online safety and acceptable use policies (ICT and mobile phones)
- Health and safety and first aid policies
- Gifts and hospitality policy
- Data protection policies and privacy notices

Appendix 1: Volunteer application form

Complete the application form in full. Please note that the academy may not be able to accommodate all preferences.

Data protection notice

We ask for personal data about you in this form. We will use your information in accordance with UK data protection legislation. We process your data for 1 or more lawful bases, including legal obligation and/or public task for safeguarding and safer recruitment, and where relevant legitimate interests. Further information is available in the Trust privacy notice for volunteers (available via the Trust/academy website).

Personal details

Name	
Date of birth	
Telephone number	
Email address	
Home address	
Emergency contact (name/number)	

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) information

The Trust may need to obtain an enhanced DBS check for volunteer roles. Volunteers in regulated activity will require barred list information. The level of check required will depend on the role and supervision arrangements and will be decided by the academy.

Do you already have a DBS check? (circle): Yes / No

If yes, what type of check do you have? (circle): Basic / Standard / Enhanced / Enhanced with barred list information

Date of check: _____ Certificate number: _____

If you are a member of the DBS Update Service, please provide your Update Service ID number:

Availability

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
AM					
PM					
Before school					
After school					
Lunchtime					

How many hours per week/month can you volunteer? _____

Can you commit to at least 1 term? Yes / No

Experience and qualifications

Please describe any experience working as a volunteer, particularly with children (include dates and organisations where possible):

Why would you like to volunteer at this academy?

Please list any particular skills, employment experience or hobbies you would like to share with the academy (e.g., languages, sports, scouting):

Please list any relevant qualifications:

Preferences

What area of the academy would you prefer to work with?	
Would you prefer to work 1-on-1 or with a small group?	
Any other preferences or notes?	

References

Your placement may be subject to satisfactory references. Please provide details of 2 referees who can comment on your suitability (e.g., employers, colleagues, teachers).

	Referee 1	Referee 2
Name		
Relationship		
Address		
Telephone		
Email		
How do they know you / for how long?		

Disability and accessibility

TLT is committed to ensuring that applicants with disabilities or impairments receive equal opportunities. If you would like us to make adjustments to assist you, please state the arrangements you require:

Appendix 2: Code of conduct for volunteers

By signing this form, volunteers agree to the following:

1. Academy rules and policies

Volunteers will follow all Trust and academy rules and policies, including those on:

- Child protection and safeguarding
- ICT and internet acceptable use
- Online safety
- Mobile phones
- Data protection
- Health and safety
- Equality and inclusion
- Whistleblowing
- Behaviour

Copies of relevant policies are available via the Trust/academy website or from the academy office.

2. Professional conduct

- Volunteers will follow instructions provided by supervisors and ask for guidance where needed.
- Behaviour management is the responsibility of academy staff. Volunteers should not issue sanctions; they should alert a member of staff if help is needed.
- Volunteers will act professionally at all times, including appropriate dress and language, and will not post content online that could bring the Trust or academy into disrepute.
- Volunteers must not accept gifts from, or give gifts to, pupils (except small tokens in line with Trust gifts and hospitality rules).
- Volunteers must not transport pupils in their own vehicles unless specifically authorised by the academy and with parent/carer consent.
- Parent volunteers must not use their role to favour their own child or to discuss their child's education with staff during volunteering time.
- If a volunteer is unable to attend as scheduled, they must inform the supervisor or academy office as soon as possible.

3. Safeguarding and professional boundaries

- Volunteers must be familiar with, and adhere to, the academy's safeguarding policy and procedures.
- Any concern about a child's welfare, or any disclosure, must be reported immediately to the DSL or deputy DSL.
- Volunteers should avoid physical contact with pupils unless it is appropriate and necessary; if contact is required, seek the pupil's consent where practicable and inform staff as appropriate.
- Volunteers must not form personal relationships with pupils (including exchanging contact details, meeting outside of academy, or communicating via personal social media).

- Volunteers must not take or share photos of pupils unless instructed and authorised by the academy.
- Volunteers must report any concern about the behaviour or conduct of an adult (including low-level concerns) in line with academy procedures.

4. Health and safety

- Volunteers must follow health and safety and first aid arrangements. Volunteers are not expected to administer first aid except in an emergency where no trained first aider is immediately available.
- Volunteers must be familiar with fire safety and emergency evacuation procedures.
- Volunteers must sign in and out for every visit and wear a visitor badge at all times.

5. Confidentiality

Information about pupils, parents/carers and staff is confidential and must not be shared. If parents/carers ask volunteers for information, volunteers should direct them to a member of staff.

Failure to adhere to this code of conduct may result in the termination of the placement and, in serious cases, further action in line with Trust procedures.

Volunteer name (print)	
Signature	
Date	

Appendix 3: Requesting a volunteer (information for staff)

If you would like assistance from a volunteer in your classroom, or for a specific activity or trip, complete the form below and submit it to the academy Principal (or delegated approver).

Volunteer request form

Year group / class	
Activity details	
Date(s) and time(s)	
Frequency (one-off / daily / weekly / other)	
Location (on site / off site / remote)	
Will the volunteer ever be 1:1 or unsupervised with pupils? (Yes/No)	
Supervision arrangements (who, where, when)	
Any costs for the volunteer (e.g., travel, entry fees, materials)?	
Any specific skills/experience needed?	
How many volunteers are needed?	
Submitted by (name and role)	

Note: The Principal (or delegated leader) must confirm the safeguarding checks, risk assessment and training requirements before the volunteer starts.

Appendix 4: Volunteer expenses request form

Expenses must be agreed in advance and supported by receipts/evidence where applicable.

Volunteer name	
Academy	
Activity / reason for claim	
Date(s) of expense	
Type of expense (e.g., travel, parking, materials)	
Amount claimed (GBP)	
Receipts attached (Yes/No)	
Approved by (Principal / budget holder)	
Payment details / notes	

Volunteer declaration: I confirm these expenses were incurred wholly, exclusively and necessarily for the agreed volunteering activity.

Volunteer signature	
Date	