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Policy title	Volunteer policy
Policy owner (including job title)	Head of Operations
Red Balloon approving body	Worthing Governing body
Date when version was approved	September 2026
Date of next review	September 2027

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Purpose

The purpose of Red Balloon's volunteer policy is to:

Encourage the wider community to engage with the charity, thereby enhancing the provision, raising achievement and promoting community cohesion.

Ensure that volunteers support the charity's vision and values, and adhere to our policies.
Provide staff, volunteers and parents with clear expectations and guidelines.

Set a clear, fair process for recruiting and managing volunteers.

Scope

Volunteers support Red Balloon Learner Centres by giving their time to carry out roles which have been initiated by, or agreed with, the charity. The volunteering relationship is based on trust and does not involve the obligations associated with employment. No payment, other than the reimbursement of agreed expenses, is made by Red Balloon to people who give their time as volunteers. This policy is intended for Red Balloon volunteers who have accepted an agreed role with the charity. It outlines the principles on which the relationship between volunteers and the charity is based and provides basic information about volunteering with us.

Policy statement

Red Balloon believes that volunteers provide a valuable contribution to the charity's work, and that they enrich the charity through the breadth of their knowledge and experience.

Red Balloon is committed to using volunteers in a way that supports the charity's strategic aims and vision, as well as its development plan.

This policy has been developed in line with the Department for Education's statutory safeguarding guidance, [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#).

This policy must be read alongside the latest Keeping Children Safe in Education, the Red Balloon Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, the staff/volunteer Code of Conduct, the Low-Level Concerns Policy and the Whistleblowing Policy.

How we use volunteers

At Red Balloon, volunteers may:

Hear children read.

Accompany school visits.

Work with individual learners.

Work with small groups of learners.

Support specific curriculum areas such as IT, music or languages.

Provide bespoke video lessons such as music, language etc.

This is not an exhaustive list. Volunteers may be:

Members of the board of trustees.

Parents.

Former pupils.

Learners on work experience.

Local residents.

Friends of the charity.

This is not an exhaustive list.

Members of the board of trustees working at the charity in their capacity are not covered by this policy. They are covered by our trustee code of conduct.

How to apply to volunteer

Anyone wanting to volunteer should Red Balloon Worthing by email at: worthing-admin@rbet.ac

If applicable, Lucy Jackson will send the applicant a volunteer application using Sam Recruit.

Appointment of volunteers

Volunteers for Red Balloon Worthing are appointed by the Head of Centre and Head of Operations.

Informal interviews are carried out to ensure that applicants are suitable for the role in question. We will base our selection on the ability of each applicant to fulfil the role concerned, taking into account any effect volunteers may have on the safety of all parties, our brand and reputation.

Intake of new volunteers can often take up to 6 weeks, and is dependent on the candidate and available space within Red Balloon.

All appointments are conditional upon the completion of an enhanced DBS check and other appropriate safeguarding and recruitment checks, and relevant training.

Before a volunteer begins, Red Balloon will define the role, frequency, level of contact with children and whether the activity is regulated activity. Required checks must be completed and recorded before the volunteer undertakes the relevant duties.

From 1 September 2026, the previous supervision exemption no longer applies. A volunteer who teaches, trains, instructs, cares for or supervises children frequently, on more than 3 days in any 30-day period, or overnight, is undertaking regulated activity even when supervised. Red Balloon will obtain an enhanced DBS check with children's barred list information for such volunteers.

Where an existing volunteer became engaged in regulated activity because of the change on 1 September 2026, Red Balloon must check the volunteer's children's barred list status, normally through an enhanced DBS check with children's barred list information. A standalone barred list check may be used only in the circumstances permitted by current statutory guidance.

If a volunteer meets the frequency threshold through volunteering across more than one setting, Red Balloon will liaise with the other setting(s) to agree which organisation will apply for the enhanced DBS check with barred list information and will verify the information supplied for this setting. Volunteers may join the DBS Update Service, which is free for volunteers.

All volunteers accompanying an overnight trip are treated as engaging in regulated activity and require an enhanced DBS check with children's barred list information.

In most cases you will need to be over 16 years of age to volunteer independently and under 18s will be asked for parental consent. Younger people may get involved in some aspects of volunteering with us if they are accompanied by a responsible adult. We do not have an upper age limit for volunteers but there may be situations that require us to ask someone to stop volunteering – for example when health issues are considered a risk to the person concerned or others around them

Red Balloon reserves the right to terminate a placement at any time.

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Safeguarding our learners is of paramount importance, and our volunteers must share our commitment to child protection.

Safeguarding concerns or allegations about volunteers, including low-level concerns, will be reported, recorded and managed under Red Balloon's safeguarding procedures and Part four of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026. Concerns that may meet the harm threshold must be referred immediately to the Head of Centre or, where appropriate, the Chair of the governing body/proprietor, so that advice can be sought from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

Volunteers must report any concern about an adult's conduct, however small it may appear. Concerns that do not meet the harm threshold must be shared in accordance with the Low-Level Concerns Policy.

Volunteers must feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe safeguarding practice. Red Balloon will take such concerns seriously and volunteers may use the Trust's whistleblowing arrangements if they believe a concern has not been addressed appropriately.

To ensure we're upholding our responsibility to keep our learners safe, we will:

Conduct the appropriate DBS and safeguarding checks based on the volunteer role, eligibility and whether the role constitutes regulated activity.

Volunteers undertaking regulated activity will require an enhanced DBS check with children's barred list information.

Volunteers not undertaking regulated activity may be subject to other checks, including an enhanced DBS check without barred list information or a basic DBS check, where legally eligible and appropriate following risk assessment.

Consider the results of any DBS checks that return with unspent and spent listed convictions, and assess these on a case-by-case basis, with regard given to the nature of the conviction and the nature of the work the volunteer will be involved in.

Provide safeguarding training to all volunteers prior to them beginning work at Red Balloon, ensuring that they have read the safeguarding information determined by Red Balloon as appropriate to their role, including Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education where required.

Require volunteers to agree and adhere to our code of conduct and to read, and adhere to, Red Balloon's policies on:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Low-Level Concerns Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (current edition)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- Safer Working Practice Guidance

Ensure that volunteers without an enhanced DBS check are always supervised, and are never left alone with pupils

Supervision does not remove the requirement for barred list information where the volunteer's activity meets the regulated activity threshold. Under no circumstances may a volunteer for whom no checks have been obtained be left unsupervised or permitted to undertake regulated activity.

Conduct a risk assessment to determine whether a volunteer who isn't working in regulated activity needs an enhanced DBS check. The risk assessment will consider:

The nature of the work they will be doing

What we know about them

References from employers or other voluntary roles

Whether the role is eligible for an enhanced DBS check

The written risk assessment must also record the frequency and duration of the activity, whether the role is regulated activity, whether the volunteer works across multiple settings, the level of supervision, and the level of DBS check considered appropriate. For a role outside regulated activity, Red Balloon may consider an enhanced DBS check without barred list information, or a basic DBS check, where legally eligible and proportionate.

Where someone volunteers on a one-off basis and will not be working unsupervised, they will be considered a visitor and processed in this way. Visitors must always be supervised when working with learners.

Details of volunteers will be added to Red Balloon's Single Central Record.

Induction and training

Red Balloon wants to make sure volunteers have everything they need to get started so we'll provide volunteers with an induction and access to useful materials and information.

The volunteer's staff contact will usually be the Red Balloon staff member who manages the area of work the volunteer is working in.

Volunteers must complete appropriate training prior to beginning work at Red Balloon.

Training requirements will be determined by the Head of Operations, or the appropriate member of staff.

All volunteers must have safeguarding training. Other training requirements will be based on the nature of the work the volunteer will be doing.

Volunteer induction will be proportionate to the role and risk, and will include: the identity and role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and deputies; how to report a concern about a child; how to report an allegation or low-level concern about an adult; professional boundaries; confidentiality and information sharing; online safety and acceptable use of technology; and whistleblowing arrangements.

Volunteers will receive safeguarding and child protection updates as required and at least annually where they continue in role. Red Balloon will keep a record that the volunteer has received, read and understood the safeguarding information provided to them.

Health and safety

Red Balloon is committed to ensuring the well-being and safety of our volunteers and, in turn, Red Balloon expects our volunteers to contribute to maintaining a safe working environment. All volunteers at Red Balloon must:

Take reasonable care for the health and safety of yourself and other persons who may be affected by your actions or omissions

Cooperate with staff by assisting them to fulfil their statutory duties

Follow our health and safety policy and measures put in place.

Report accidents/incidents or dangerous circumstances to a paid member of staff, whether or not any person has been injured

Be aware of actions to take when an emergency situation arises and who, from Red Balloon, to contact for support

Confidentiality

Information about learners, parents and staff is confidential. Volunteers are not permitted to discuss issues related to learners, parents or staff with those outside of the organisation.

If volunteers have concerns, they should raise these with the appropriate member of staff. They shouldn't discuss them with learners or parents.

This doesn't prevent volunteers from adhering to Red Balloon's safeguarding policy (with regard to reporting safeguarding concerns or disclosures).

If concerns relate to safeguarding, volunteers must follow the guidance in our child protection and safeguarding policy, and inform the designated safeguarding lead.

If concerns are related to whistle-blowing, volunteers must follow the guidance in our whistle-blowing policy.

Conduct of volunteers

Volunteers must comply with the Red Balloon code of conduct.

The Code of Conduct and associated safeguarding procedures apply to volunteers' conduct both on-site and, where relevant to safeguarding, outside the setting and online. Any behaviour that may indicate that a volunteer is unsuitable to work with children must be reported immediately.

Expenses

Volunteers may request reimbursement of reasonable out of-pocket expenses, such as travel costs and, if devoting a full day to the charity, a sandwich lunch or equivalent. Payment of reasonable expenses must be authorised by your staff contact in advance and receipts or tickets will be required.

When claiming expenses, volunteers must speak to the Head of Operations.

Insurance

Red Balloon's insurance policy does cover volunteers in the event of an accident or emergency.

If a volunteer is working at Red Balloon through another organisation, we will also check that organisation's insurance arrangements.

Data protection and record keeping

Our privacy notice for volunteers explains what information we collect about volunteers and why we collect it.

Volunteers must only access, use, retain and share personal information where authorised to do so and in accordance with Red Balloon's Data Protection Policy and privacy notices.

We will retain records for as long as necessary to fulfil the purposes for which Red Balloon collected it, including for the purposes of satisfying any legal, accounting, or reporting requirements. To determine the appropriate retention period for personal data, we consider the amount, nature, and sensitivity of the personal data, the potential risk of harm from unauthorised use or disclosure of the personal data, the purposes for which we process the personal data and whether we can achieve those purposes through other means, and the applicable legal requirements.

Responsibilities (compliance, monitoring and review)

The Head of Operations is responsible for ensuring that each volunteer role is assessed before appointment, required checks and training are completed, supervision arrangements are clear, and relevant information is recorded on the Single Central Record or other approved safeguarding record.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will advise on safeguarding risk, induction content, allegations and low-level concerns. The policy owner will review volunteer arrangements following changes to legislation or statutory guidance and at least annually.

Communication

The Head of Centre is responsible for ensuring that this policy is communicated to volunteers, staff and other relevant stakeholders.

Monitoring

The Head of Centre and Designated Safeguarding Lead are responsible for monitoring compliance with this policy and ensuring volunteer arrangements remain consistent with safeguarding legislation and statutory guidance.

Review

The Head of Centre is responsible for ensuring the policy is reviewed annually, or sooner where changes in legislation, guidance or operational practice require amendment.

Monitoring and review

This policy has been approved by the Governing body and will be reviewed annually.

Related legislation and documents

External Documents

Keeping Children Safe in Education – the latest version

Crime and Policing Act 2026

Department for Education guidance: Regulated activity - removal of the supervision exemption (from 1 September 2026)

Disclosure and Barring Service guidance and DBS Update Service guidance

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR May 2018)

Freedom of Information Act (2000)

Internal Documents

Code of Conduct for all staff

Safeguarding

Online Safety Policy

Code of Conduct

Low-Level Concerns Policy

Whistleblowing Policy

Keeping Children Safe in Education (current edition)

Working Together to Safeguard Children

Safer Working Practice Guidance

Volunteer expense form