

Volunteers Policy

1. Policy Statement

Oaklands College recognises the immense benefits that volunteers bring to the organisation, and the bridges that they build between the organisation and the local community. In return, the college recognises that gaining work experience through volunteering enhances individual skills and provides new experiences. The College receives a number of requests from volunteers who wish to help in the college or to gain more experience in an area, particularly teaching experience and supporting learners.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all volunteers and the employees that would be responsible for supervising volunteers on site.

Volunteer helpers are not employees of the College and do not receive any form of payment for the services they provide. Volunteer helpers must not be used as substitute staff and should not have sole responsibility for a student or group of students at any time. Volunteer helpers must be registered with HR prior to undertaking any work.

Where possible and in agreement with the relevant manager the College may support requests from schools, staff members or external agencies in offering a work placement to a young person.

Oaklands College reserves the right to stop any voluntary period at any time for any reason.

3. Purpose

This policy will ensure that all volunteers and the employees responsible for supervising volunteers are clear about their responsibilities to safeguard learners and ensure that the College facilities are only used for the purpose they are intended. It also provides guidance to managers for offering work placements to young people.

4. Procedure

When a manager receives a request for volunteer work, the request must be completed on [the Request an Associate/Volunteers Account form](#) and authorised by the Head of Department. The form should be sent to the HR office even if the period of volunteer is only for a few hours. The form will be processed within 5 working days subject to the HR department's receipt of all the required documentation specified in the "Volunteer" section of the [Associate Checklist](#).

The volunteer in conjunction with the requesting manager must provide all the documentation specified within the volunteer section of the [Associate Checklist](#). A new enhanced DBS certificate will always be requested for volunteers unless they have the correct enhanced DBS clearance registered to the update service. The update service will be checked by HR upon confirming a start date.

The relevant HR Officer will email the volunteer a link to complete a new Enhanced level DBS check. Once this has been completed by the volunteer, they will be required to come in with their Identity documents in person and the HR Officer will complete the application management process and submit the ID for the DBS application. When the volunteer has received the hard copy of their DBS certificate through the post, they must bring this to the HR office so that a copy can be taken. Once this has been done, the volunteer will be notified that they can begin volunteering at the College subject to all safeguarding checks being completed and all documentation received as listed in the Associate checklist.

For "one off" volunteering events, where the volunteer is directly supervised by another member of College Staff, right to work and a barred check will be completed prior to the volunteer starting.

HR must ensure the following checks are completed prior to confirming a start date for the volunteer;

- Verify the person's right to work in the UK and the candidate's identity
- Obtain an enhanced DBS certificate (including barred list information with the required workforce, for those who will be engaging in regulated activity). If the individual has lived or worked outside the UK in the last five years, we will make any further checks considered appropriate from the country of residence.
- Obtain a separate barred list check (list 99 check)
- Obtain two recent references from two recent employers / previous volunteering roles (If a recent reference covers a substantive period of employment an additional reference could be obtained, this could be a character reference).

Although there is no legal requirement to regularly recheck employees, all existing staff/ volunteers will be asked annually to update their DBS details via a self-declaration process.

In the event that a volunteer is convicted of a criminal conviction during the volunteer period they must inform the HR department immediately and their volunteer period may be terminated.

Wherever possible HR will agree to requests, however if this is not possible HR will provide a reason for refusal.

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5. Responsibilities

Before any work is to be undertaken it is the responsibility of the requesting manager to ensure that all fields are completed on the "Request an Associate/Volunteers Account" form and this must be brought together with all the supporting documentation specified in the [Associate Checklist](#). The HR department will only process received applications once all the relevant documentation has been supplied.

Once the online Enhanced level DBS check has been completed, it is the responsibility of both the volunteer and the requesting manager to ensure that the DBS certificate is brought into HR so that a copy can be taken.

The Volunteer's line manager is responsible for ensuring that the volunteer is given specific instructions as to the activities with which he/she may help and the limits of his /her responsibility and give clear instructions regarding safe practice when using any equipment.

It is further required that all volunteers must undertake a departmental induction session which must include any safety requirements and emergency procedures. It is the responsibility of the line manager to also ensure that the volunteer is provided with a College ID card and any appropriate safety equipment. The HR department must be informed if a volunteer ceases to undertake work by the line manager as soon as possible.

It is the responsibility of the volunteer to follow [all College Policies](#) (found on the intranet) and to incorporate the College Values when undertaking their work.

6. Work Experience

DBS clearance is not required for work experience school children, as no student is to be left on their own or unsupervised at any time whilst on placement, including lunch times unless agreed in writing with the school. This is the responsibility of the department manager to ensure trained, responsible members of staff are providing mentoring and supervision at all times for the period of the placement.