



Happiness Outdoors Project

Volunteer Policy

Aims and Principles

HOP aspires to enhance children's well-being through developing strong and positive connections with nature through regular provision of practical, outdoor enrichment activities and learning opportunities which focus on developing connections through key areas such as growing, wildlife, natural craft and free play. Using different areas within the school grounds as invaluable resources, HOP aims to boost children's resilience, perseverance, emotional regulation, confidence, self-esteem and adaptability through a range of problem-solving, risk-taking and creative activities.

The HOP Approach

HOP activities are carefully planned to help children learn about their environment and develop essential life skills. The Outdoor Learning Facilitators provide opportunities for children to build a sense of self-efficacy which in turn increases confidence, perseverance and resilience. Through actions and words, they intentionally provide the children with space and opportunities to build positive emotions and optimism to become more able to cope with change, adversity, uncertainty and uncomfortable feelings.

The Outdoor Learning Facilitators are supportive of emotional openness and offer the opportunity to be heard and understood. Non-judgementally accepting shared feelings creates a feeling of being valued which increases self-respect, self-worth and self-acceptance, all cornerstones of emotional well-being.

HOP does not attempt to fulfil any part of the school's statutory obligations within the national curriculum.

Statement of Intent

HOP has a clear and structured approach to all activities that take place. HOP has an active and participatory approach to work where the Outdoor Learning Facilitators are fully approachable regarding volunteers' ideas and questions regarding the work they are being asked to do. HOP is also fully in favour of continued improvement of schemes of work or activities and will listen carefully to proposals for improvement from any volunteer.

Recruitment and Selection

HOP's recruitment process may require a submission of a CV and an explanation of why you want to volunteer. There may be an informal discussion with HOP and if possible, an invitation to HOP's workplace to experience activities. Following safer recruitment procedures, HOP will require two references and an enhanced DBS check from every volunteer.

Health and Safety

The health and safety of volunteers is a priority. HOP will provide all necessary health and safety information to volunteers on induction and will provide electronic access to all activity plans and associated activity risk assessments relating to each session. HOP will happily supply any other information on request.

All site risk assessments are kept in the HOP folder on-site and are freely available to all volunteers who wish to review the information. Volunteers will be included in dynamic risk assessments made on-site before and during activities.

Insurance

All activities on site will be covered by public liability insurance. No work will be expected of volunteers that requires specialist training or handling of potentially dangerous machinery or processes. Volunteers are welcome to assist a trained member of staff in these activities; if this is requested by the volunteer then the staff member will fully brief them on the job and make sure they are safe at all times.

Volunteers are free to decline any job offered them by HOP staff members on the grounds of preserving personal safety. This decision will be respected by and a task suitable to the volunteers' skill and confidence levels will be found.

Confidentiality and data protection

Due to the nature of HOP's business, there will be a substantial interaction between volunteers and children. Therefore, all volunteers are subject to the full confidentiality of HOP's and the school's safeguarding policies and procedures. Copies of HOP's and the school's policies are available for any staff or volunteer to view at any point.

Regarding volunteers' access to their own personal records, HOP will comply fully with the UK Data Protection Act.

Equal Opportunities

As detailed separately in HOP's Equality, Diversity & Inclusion policy, all HOP staff and volunteers agree to work together in a manner which provides equality, fairness and respect to each other and to all those participating in HOP.

Support and supervision

Volunteers will be supported in their role by a named HOP Director and volunteers are encouraged to provide feedback and request information or support on an on-going basis as needed. Volunteers' role and agreements will be reviewed on a regular basis to provide opportunities for reflection and any necessary changes.

Organisational policies

HOP and partner school policies will be made available to volunteers.

Approval and Review

This policy will be reviewed by the Directors annually, as part of the financial planning cycle.

Version No	Approved By	Approval Date	Main Changes	Review Period
1.0	Directors	April 2025	Initial draft approved	Annually

1.0	Directors	September 2025	General updates in line with good practice	Annually