

Oyster Bay Nursery

Volunteers Policy

Date written: October 2026

Date of last update: October 2026

Date agreed and ratified by October 2026

Date of next full review: September 2027

This policy will be reviewed at least annually and/or following any lessons learnt and/or updates to national or local guidance and procedures.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Debra Hines
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s)	Grace Sidders Rachel Finch
Nominated Individual	Debra Hines
Nursery Manager	Grace Sidders

1. Policy Statement

At Oyster Bay Nursery, we welcome and encourage volunteers who can contribute their skills, knowledge, experiences and enthusiasm to enhance children's learning and development.

Volunteers can help enrich children's experiences, support nursery activities and share knowledge about different occupations, cultures, celebrations and community life.

The safety, welfare and best interests of the children are our highest priority. All volunteers must follow nursery policies, safeguarding procedures and staff instructions. Volunteering is subject to appropriate checks, risk assessment and supervision arrangements.

Volunteers support the work of the nursery but do not replace employed staff or assume responsibility for the care, supervision or safeguarding of children.

2. Activities Undertaken by Volunteers

Depending on their experience, suitability and the needs of the nursery, volunteers may assist with:

- Supporting children's learning through supervised activities.
- Sharing knowledge about occupations, hobbies, cultures, festivals and celebrations.
- Helping with nursery events, such as seasonal celebrations, stay-and-play sessions and special activities.
- Accompanying children on outings, subject to appropriate planning, risk assessment and supervision.
- Supporting creative activities, storytelling, cooking or other learning experiences under staff direction.
- Helping with suitable practical tasks that contribute to the nursery environment.

The Nursery Manager will agree each volunteer's role and responsibilities before activities begin. Volunteers must not undertake duties beyond their agreed role or experience.

3. Applying to Become a Volunteer

Anyone wishing to volunteer at Oyster Bay Nursery should contact the Nursery Manager:

oysterbaynursery@joylane.kent.sch.uk

Prospective volunteers will be asked to complete a Volunteer Information Form, providing relevant details such as:

- Full name and contact information.
- Availability and preferred volunteering activities.
- Relevant experience, skills or qualifications.
- Relationship to any child attending the nursery, where applicable.
- Any information reasonably required to assess suitability for the proposed role.

Before volunteering begins, the individual must read this policy and sign a Volunteer Agreement confirming that they understand and will follow the nursery's expectations.

The nursery will explain the role, supervision arrangements, relevant procedures and any checks required before the volunteer starts.

The Nursery Manager may decline or discontinue a volunteering arrangement where this is necessary to protect children, maintain safe practice or meet the nursery's operational needs.

4. Safer Recruitment and Suitability Checks

Oyster Bay Nursery is committed to safeguarding children and ensuring that volunteers are suitable for the activities they undertake.

Before a volunteer starts, the Nursery Manager will assess the nature of the role, the level of contact with children and whether the role requires formal suitability checks.

Depending on the role and applicable requirements, checks may include:

- Identity verification.
- References or relevant experience checks.
- An appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, including barred-list information where legally permitted and required for the role.
- Other checks or information required under current early years safeguarding requirements.

The nursery will not rely solely on the frequency of volunteering to determine whether a DBS check is required. Suitability checks will be based on the actual duties, level of supervision and applicable legal requirements.

Volunteers must not begin duties that require checks until the necessary checks have been completed and the Nursery Manager has confirmed that they may proceed.

A volunteer who is a parent or family member may be subject to different arrangements depending on the role. Being a parent or family member does not automatically remove the need for appropriate safeguarding measures.

5. One-Off Volunteers and Visitors

People assisting with a one-off event or activity may be subject to different checking arrangements depending on their duties and the level of access they have to children.

The Nursery Manager will assess the activity in advance and decide what checks, instructions and supervision are necessary.

One-off volunteers must:

- Follow the instructions of the supervising staff member.
- Remain under the required level of supervision.
- Never be left alone with children unless this has been formally authorised following the necessary checks and suitability assessment.
- Follow relevant safeguarding, confidentiality, health and safety and mobile phone procedures.
- Read and sign any activity-specific agreement required for outings or other activities.

All visitors and volunteers must follow the nursery's signing-in and visitor identification procedures and wear a visitor badge where required.

6. Supervision and Responsibilities

All volunteers will work under the direction and supervision of a designated member of staff, such as the Nursery Manager or another appropriately appointed staff member.

The supervising staff member will explain:

- The volunteer's agreed role and duties.
- Room routines and expectations.
- Appropriate ways to interact with children.
- Relevant safeguarding and behaviour procedures.
- Health and safety requirements.
- Emergency procedures, including evacuation and lockdown arrangements.
- Who to contact if a concern or difficulty arises.

Staff retain responsibility for children's care, behaviour, supervision and safety at all times.

Volunteers must not:

- Take sole responsibility for a child or group of children.
- Be left alone with children unless the nursery has formally authorised this and all necessary safeguarding requirements have been met.
- Take children to another room or area without the supervising staff member's agreement.
- Take children off site independently.
- Administer medication or provide intimate care unless this is expressly authorised, appropriate training and safeguarding arrangements are in place, and nursery procedures permit it.
- Use physical punishment, humiliating language or inappropriate disciplinary methods.
- Make decisions outside their agreed responsibilities.

Volunteers should ask the supervising staff member for advice whenever they are uncertain about a child's needs, behaviour or an appropriate response.

Where practicable, volunteers who are related to a child attending the nursery will not be allocated responsibility for supervising that child or making decisions about their care.

7. Confidentiality

Volunteers may become aware of confidential information about children, parents, carers, staff or nursery operations. This information must not be discussed outside the nursery or shared with unauthorised people.

Volunteers must:

- Respect the privacy of children and families.
- Avoid discussing a child's development, behaviour, family circumstances or personal information with parents or other individuals unless specifically authorised.
- Not share photographs, videos, records or information about children on social media or through personal messaging.
- Keep information secure and follow the nursery's Data Protection and Privacy Policy.

- Raise concerns directly with the Nursery Manager or Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), rather than investigating the matter or discussing it with other families.

Confidentiality does not prevent a volunteer from reporting a safeguarding concern or information about a child who may be at risk. Such concerns must be passed on promptly through the nursery's safeguarding procedures.

The duty to protect confidential information continues after the volunteering arrangement has ended.

8. Safeguarding and Child Protection

The welfare of children is paramount. Volunteers must follow Oyster Bay Nursery's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and any instructions provided during their induction.

Volunteers must:

- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries with children.
- Treat every child with dignity, respect and fairness.
- Never use physical punishment, threatening behaviour or inappropriate language.
- Avoid being alone with a child and follow the agreed supervision arrangements.
- Never exchange personal contact details or communicate privately with children outside authorised nursery arrangements.
- Never take photographs or recordings of children using personal devices.
- Report any concern about a child's safety or welfare immediately to the DSL or Nursery Manager.
- Report any concern about the conduct of a member of staff or another volunteer through the nursery's safeguarding or whistleblowing procedures.

If a child makes a disclosure that causes concern, the volunteer must listen calmly, avoid leading questions or promising secrecy, and report the information promptly to the DSL. The volunteer must not investigate the concern independently.

If a child appears to be in immediate danger, the volunteer must alert staff straight away. Emergency services should be contacted where necessary.

The nursery will follow applicable safeguarding and referral procedures, including making referrals to the relevant agencies where required.

9. Health, Safety and Emergency Procedures

All volunteers must follow the nursery's Health and Safety Policy, risk assessments and any task-specific instructions.

The supervising staff member will explain relevant safety arrangements before the activity begins.

Volunteers must:

- Take reasonable care to protect their own safety and the safety of others.
- Follow staff instructions and risk assessments.
- Report hazards, accidents, injuries or near misses promptly.
- Follow fire evacuation, lockdown and other emergency procedures.
- Not use equipment or undertake tasks for which they have not received appropriate instruction.
- Follow the nursery's hygiene and infection-prevention requirements.

For outings, volunteers must receive a clear briefing about their role, the activity's risk assessment, emergency arrangements and supervision expectations. They must follow the nursery's Outings and Off-Site Visits Policy.

Volunteers must not be counted towards required staff-to-child ratios unless this is expressly permitted under the applicable requirements and the individual meets the relevant conditions.

10. Mobile Phones, Cameras and Personal Devices

Volunteers must follow the nursery's Mobile Phone and Camera Policy.

Personal mobile phones, cameras and recording devices must not be used to photograph, film or record children. Volunteers must not post information about nursery activities or children on personal social media accounts.

Any authorised photography or recording must follow nursery procedures, including applicable parental permissions and data protection requirements.

11. Equality, Inclusion and Professional Conduct

Oyster Bay Nursery expects volunteers to treat children, families, staff and other volunteers respectfully and fairly.

Volunteers must:

- Respect children's individual needs, identities, backgrounds and abilities.
- Support an inclusive environment.

- Avoid discriminatory, offensive or inappropriate language or behaviour.
- Respect cultural, religious and family differences.
- Follow staff guidance when supporting children with additional needs.
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries.

The nursery will take concerns about inappropriate conduct seriously and may suspend or end a volunteering arrangement where necessary.

12. Complaints and Concerns About Volunteers

Any complaint made by or about a volunteer will be referred to the Nursery Manager or Nominated Individual for appropriate consideration.

Depending on the nature of the concern, the nursery may:

- Discuss the matter with the volunteer and clarify expectations.
- Provide additional guidance or training.
- Agree an improvement plan.
- Change the volunteer's duties or placement.
- Suspend the volunteering arrangement while a concern is investigated.
- End the volunteering arrangement.

Where a concern relates to a child's safety, alleged abuse, inappropriate conduct or a potential criminal offence, the nursery will follow the relevant safeguarding and reporting procedures. It will not rely solely on an informal discussion to resolve a safeguarding concern.

Volunteers may raise concerns about their treatment or the conduct of others through the nursery's Complaints Policy or Whistleblowing Policy, as appropriate.

13. Ending a Volunteering Arrangement

A volunteering arrangement may end at the volunteer's request or at the nursery's decision.

The nursery may end an arrangement where:

- The agreed role is no longer needed.
- The volunteer does not follow nursery policies or instructions.
- There are concerns about suitability, conduct or safeguarding.
- Required checks or information are not provided.

- The arrangement is no longer appropriate for the needs of the nursery or children.

Any decision will be proportionate to the circumstances, with safeguarding concerns addressed through the appropriate procedures.

On leaving, volunteers must return any nursery property, identification badges, keys or documents and must continue to respect confidentiality.

14. Responsibilities

The Nursery Manager will:

- Assess the suitability of proposed volunteering activities.
- Ensure appropriate checks and induction arrangements are completed.
- Allocate a designated supervisor.
- Ensure volunteers understand relevant policies and procedures.
- Monitor volunteering arrangements and address concerns.
- Keep appropriate records securely.

The supervising staff member will:

- Explain the volunteer's duties and limits.
- Provide appropriate supervision and guidance.
- Retain responsibility for children's care and safety.
- Report concerns to the Nursery Manager or DSL.

Volunteers will:

- Follow nursery policies, procedures and staff instructions.
- Maintain confidentiality and professional boundaries.
- Act responsibly and respectfully.
- Report hazards, incidents and safeguarding concerns promptly.
- Undertake only activities for which they have been authorised and appropriately prepared.

15. Records and Data Protection

The nursery will keep appropriate records relating to volunteers, including application details, agreements, relevant suitability checks, induction, supervision and any concerns or complaints.

Records will be stored securely, accessed only by authorised individuals and retained in accordance with the nursery's Data Protection and Privacy Policy and applicable requirements.

16. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed regularly and whenever changes to legislation, statutory guidance or nursery practice make a review necessary. The Nursery Manager will ensure that volunteers and relevant staff are informed of any updates.