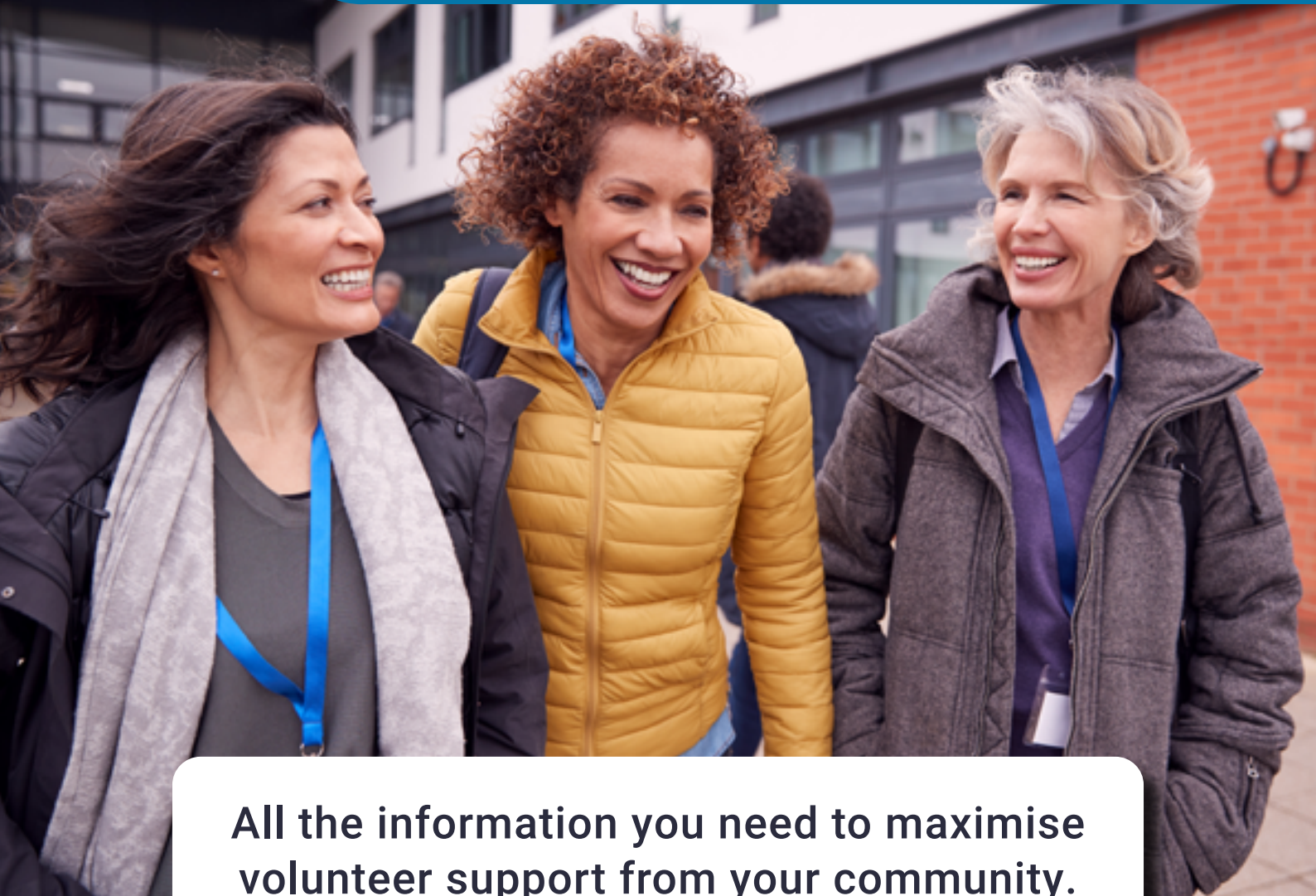




## GUIDE TO SCHOOL VOLUNTEERING



**All the information you need to maximise  
volunteer support from your community.**

SIMPLIFYING SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

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*I'm really pleased with the software, it has already helped me with all sorts of jobs and cut my workload hugely.*

This document is created for schools looking to start offering volunteering opportunities to their local community, to support the school's work without increasing staffing costs.

This comprehensive guide provides key information on volunteering in education settings, to give school business managers and leaders a solid footing from which to launch a new volunteer programme.



# 75%

of maintained schools' budgets  
are spent on staffing costs\*

## Introduction to school volunteering

**With the bill for staffing at an all-time high, it's sadly not surprising that school personnel costs are coming under the microscope.**

In fact, 74% of primary schools had to reduce their teaching assistant numbers in 2023-24, according to the [Sutton Trust](#).

With so many demands on staff time and limited budgets, resourceful educators are looking to bridge the gap by increasing volunteer activity around their schools.

When properly deployed, community involvement can help to free up the time of teachers, classroom assistants and administration staff, so they can focus on educating pupils and creating enriching experiences both inside and outside of the classroom.

Plus, volunteers can contribute to enhancing students' school lives; all without incurring extra expense for the school.

\* Data from the Department for Education's LA and school expenditure statistics for financial year 2022-23.



# Benefits to teachers and pupils

Since the pandemic, concerns have been mounting about pupils' attendance, behaviour, and attainment, and also teachers' workloads and mental wellbeing.

With education budgets being continually squeezed, any additional resources to alleviate the pressure on school staff, and improve pupils' experiences, are very welcome.



## Here are the key ways in which volunteering benefits schools, staff and pupils:

- **Teachers' overwhelming workloads can be reduced** with the extra help provided by volunteers. The same goes for teaching assistants and school administrators. This improves mental health and wellbeing throughout the team, in turn improving morale.
- **Teachers have more time to focus on educating pupils**, planning and delivering lessons, interacting with students and providing more in-depth feedback. As a result, the standard of education children receive is bound to rise.
- **Pupils' outcomes can be improved** through volunteers' work on enriching their learning environments, both within the classroom and outdoors.
- **Children can build confidence** by being introduced to different people in a safe, familiar school setting. By interacting with more people of varied ages and walks of life, children can build confidence, improve their communication skills, and broaden their understanding of the world.
- **School volunteers set a great example**. Children who regularly see people contributing to their school community, and feel the benefit of their work, are more likely to get involved in volunteering opportunities themselves.

# Why do people volunteer?

Volunteering is a fundamentally generous act. People give up their time and share their skills and expertise without a financial reward, primarily from an altruistic motivation. However, that's not to say that volunteers don't benefit from their work – in fact, quite the opposite is true.

## So, why would people want to volunteer at your school?

- **To support their child's or grandchild's school.** Many school volunteers are a pupil's parent or grandparent, who want to be more involved in their education. Knowing their own family members will directly benefit from their work is a great motivation for volunteers.
- **To gain work experience** in a school environment. This can help with career development, learning general skills to become ready for work, enable professional networking, and improve an individual's employability, especially for roles within the education sector.
- **To get a taste of life in education** and decide whether to pursue it as a career or which kind of education setting suits them best, before beginning a new qualification or undertaking a career change.
- **To share their skills and learn new skills** by undertaking new, exciting challenges in a different working environment.
- **For the self-fulfilling reward** of working with children, helping them to learn, grow and achieve their full potential.
- **To become a valued member of a school team** and have a positive impact on the lives of staff, pupils and their families.
- **To socialise with others** and build new friendships through the school community.
- **To build a supportive, two-way relationship**, especially where volunteers are pupils' parents or guardians. For example, [ASSET Education multi-academy trust employs a Partnership and Engagement Manager](#) to develop volunteering and partnership opportunities for the local community within the trust's schools. Meanwhile, the schools also provide support and signposting for the challenges facing parents and carers.
- **To keep active in retirement.** Those who have retired may want to stay active and work towards a goal, without the pressures and responsibilities of formal employment.





# School volunteering opportunities

When you hear the words “school volunteering”, it likely calls to mind reading programmes and helping out at school fetes. Of course, these examples can be great contributions to school life, but opportunities for volunteering in schools can go much further.

Here are some tasks volunteers could help with at your school:

## Classroom support

Volunteers can help children settle into their classes; assist teachers with lesson preparation; help individual pupils or small groups to complete tasks; provide extra support for SEN students, answer questions for pupils; and complete classroom administration tasks, like recording school dinner choices through SCO's Classroom Edition. Volunteers can also help to organise teaching materials, photocopy worksheets and keep classrooms tidy.

## Mentoring or coaching pupils

Helping pupils work on their personal or social skills, improve their resilience and wellbeing, turn around negative behaviour to avoid exclusion or other disciplinary measures, or learn career skills to become ready for work.

## Reading

Depending on the pupils' age and reading levels, volunteers can either read to children or listen to them read, one-to-one.



“ *We live such busy lives that children don't always get the opportunity to practice their reading at home.*

*As a reader, I love being able to help children with their reading journey.*

*It's a great way to give back to my local community in a way that is important to me.* ”



## Delivering guest talks on specific topics

Visitors can share their specialist knowledge in assemblies or interactive classes, e.g. relating to their career, life experience or special interests.

## Supporting extracurricular activities

Volunteers can share their skills or hobbies by helping to deliver enrichment clubs such as sports, art, music, cookery, science, photography, etc.

Volunteers can also help with tasks like monitoring income and attendance at clubs or wraparound care sessions, using SCO's Trips and Events or Extended Day modules.



### Catering support

Helping the school catering team to prepare nutritious meals for school lunches, and potentially breakfasts and after-school snacks. Volunteers may also help maintain hygiene standards, or supervise the dining room. In a school with SCO's Classroom Edition, they could even confirm the meals pupils receive against pre-ordered choices.

### Helping during recreation times

Volunteers can support school employees by playing games with pupils and helping duty staff to supervise the playground at lunch or breaktime.

### Assisting on trips

Helping staff to supervise pupils, making up the required ratio of adults to children, and ensuring the safety of pupils when away from the school site are all helpful roles.

Volunteers could also help with planning and tracking finances or sending reminder messages, using the SCO system's integrated reporting options and Communications module.

### Helping with events

This can include preparations, such as making costumes for a play or decorations for a party, assisting during rehearsals, and providing on-the-day support.

### Maintenance or decorating tasks

For example, small repairs, painting and creating displays for classrooms, corridors, dining halls, etc.

Gardening or groundskeeping jobs - to maintain outdoor areas and offer enrichment for pupils, for example, planting trees or a veg patch, and installing bird feeders and bug hotels.

### Supporting special projects

For example, the new [kitchen garden](#) at Carr Junior School, set up by School Kitchen's commis chef and a professional landscape gardener. Produce grown in the garden will be shared between the delivery service's restaurants, the school's cookery classes, and parents in need.

### Joining the PTA

PTA's bring parents, teachers and pupils together to raise funds for enriching activities, projects or equipment outside the normal school budget.

### Becoming a school governor or Trustee

Supporting the strategic leadership of the school, monitoring the school's progress, and overseeing its finances and resources.

# Things to consider

Schools must check volunteers' suitability to work with children, their ability to carry out necessary tasks, and ensure all non-staff members working in the school are appropriately supervised.

Just like your staff, safety checks and training must be carried out for all volunteers.

We have listed some of these considerations below.



## DBS checks

All school volunteers must have a DBS check. Generally, schools will pay any costs for this, so it is important to ensure you prospective volunteers are happy to undertake the tasks required and can commit their time as needed. You can find guidance [here](#).

## References

It is good practice to request references. Schools will normally obtain two references, to help assess the applicant's character, suitability, and relevant skills or experience.

## Safeguarding

Volunteers working with children should undergo basic safeguarding training. As a minimum, school volunteers should understand the role they play in keeping children safe. They should be able to recognise the signs of abuse and know how to follow the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures. Volunteers should also be supervised by school staff members when working directly with children.



## Additional training

Consider whether other specialist training is needed. For example, anyone working with food should complete food safety training, while volunteers helping with classroom activities, clubs or trips would benefit from being first aid trained.

## Data security

How will you maintain data security? If volunteers are assisting with administration tasks within school computer systems, measures must be taken to ensure only the necessary information is accessible or editable. For example, Tucasi's SCO system enables schools to lock down access for different users. This means a user can be limited to read-only access, for example, to run reports, but not amend any data. Access to entire modules can also be withheld, so that a user can only see the module(s) required for their role.



# Starting your volunteering programme

With so many benefits to everyone involved, there has never been a better time to open volunteering opportunities to your local community.

So, where do you start?

## Consider who your opportunities are for

Volunteering can be attractive to parents or other family members, professionals looking to share their specialist skills, other community members and university students. Consider what tasks you have and which skills you are looking for – this may help you to target potential volunteers.

## Establish when you need support

You need volunteers to be available at the right times. Identify which days and times you will need support, and whether it will be on a regular basis, for a time-limited project, or just a one-off, e.g. for a trip or event.

## Decide who will organise your volunteers

It's a good idea to appoint a staff member to lead your volunteer programme. This helps with smoother communications, scheduling, and ensuring all checks and training are completed properly. MATs may be able to recruit a dedicated staff member to manage such activities.

## Publicise your volunteering opportunities

Now you're all ready to get started, you'll need to advertise the roles available and let people know how to apply. Share the news in emails or letters to parents; the school newsletter, website or social media accounts; through the local newspaper or radio station; with your Local Authority network, and via volunteer organisations, such as these:

- [School Readers](#)
- [Volunteering Matters](#)
- [CharityJob](#)
- [Reach Volunteering](#)
- [Vinspired](#)



## Help with school administration tasks

Introducing volunteering opportunities around your school can help you to deliver more with a limited budget. To further capitalise on the school's resources, it's also important to maximise efficiency in your administration processes. To speak to our product experts about how Tucasi could help you achieve this, [book a free, no-obligation demonstration](#), or call **02380 016 563**.

# About Tucasi

At Tucasi, we work closely with schools, academies, multi academy trusts, local authorities and caterers to provide software to support seamless administration.

Our modular software is tailored to meet your specific needs. It helps to reduce time spent on administration tasks and provides an easy way to receive bookings and payments, either online or via our free SCOPAY app.

Tucasi was formed in 2004 to address the issues relating to the income collection process in schools. We provide exceptional software, used by schools across the country.

Tucasi is one of a constantly growing number of companies run within the Vesta Software Group, which in turn, is one of many operating groups of Constellation Software Inc.

## Get in touch

To find out more about the SCO system and its functionality, you can book a free demonstration, and our product experts will show you the software in action and answer any questions you may have.

To book a free demonstration, call **02380 016 563** or email [sales@tucasi.com](mailto:sales@tucasi.com)

“

*SCOPAY is a very user friendly system. It is logical and easy to use, with good reports functionality and being able to download data into excel is a real bonus. It makes the management of the school finances very easy and saves the team a lot of work. It has made us far more efficient and there is an audit trail for everything so it is easy to track back if there are any issues.*

”

© This impartial guide was created by Tucasi to inform school leaders about opportunities and processes to introduce volunteering roles in their schools.

All information has been gathered as a result of our extensive experience providing software to schools across the UK.

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