



Volunteer Handbook

1. Who's Who
2. Safeguarding our visitors and volunteers at Educafe and boundaries
3. Training, Ethnic, Diversity and Inclusion summary & Educafe Updates
4. DBS Checks
5. Agreement – Statement of Volunteer Rights and Responsibilities
6. Educafe's Policies & Procedures
7. The library's Risk Assessment
8. Volunteer Exit Interviews





1. Who's Who

Clare Middleton

Founder and Director

Additional responsibilities: education and language Support, governance team member

clare@educafeuk.co.uk

Janine Ford

Director

Additional responsibilities: health & wellbeing, fundraising, governance team member

janine@educafeuk.co.uk

Subia Azmet

Parents' Village Manager, governance team member, marketing & social media

hello@educafeuk.co.uk

Fee Bentley-Taylor

Operations & HR Manager, governance team member

fee@educafeuk.co.uk

Ellen Hunter Smart

Volunteer Manager; Volunteer onboarding, front of house and general admin

ellen@educafeuk.co.uk

Helen McGowan

Accounts & Governance member

Natalie Broomfield of Dough & Digits

Accountant

Margaret Neville

Chatty Corner Manager, governance team member

margaret@educafeuk.co.uk





Thank you so much for volunteering with Educafe!

Educafe volunteers are at the heart of everything we do, your time and energy make all the difference. We have so much we want to accomplish and have done so much already. With your support and loyalty, we can continue to make that happen!

In this handbook you'll find useful information to help you settle in and hopefully answer any questions you might have. So please read through the entire handbook and read our Safeguarding and Ethnic, Diversity and Inclusion policies as well as the library's risk assessment.

If you haven't already then please complete our [Volunteer Registration Form](#). As part of that you'll be invited to sign up to our quarterly newsletter – it's a great way to hear about our funding situation and other updates.

By now you will have had a welcome introduction to Educafe by Fee or Ellen, they would have shown you around Educafe, introduced you to the team and answered any of your questions.

You will also be invited to join the Educafe Volunteers WhatsApp group chat. This is a quiet group chat, and you can mute chats if you don't want to be disturbed when you're not volunteering or away. It would be helpful to be part of this for quarterly meeting reminders or to access numbers for safeguarding reasons.

Please let Fee know either way.

Volunteers are encouraged to attend our 'Who's Who Meeting', every Wednesday at the Library in the Carnegie Room. You'll meet Fee, Ellen and / or the Directors along with key people attending the Educafe and find out the latest news. Please come along at 10.45am.





2. Safeguarding our Visitors and Volunteers at Educafe

Safeguarding at Educafe

Many of our visitors at Educafe are vulnerable adults who may be at risk of abuse. If you suspect, see or hear any abuse or know of any safeguarding issues with anyone who attends Educafe **you must take action immediately.**

You should take one of the following actions;

- If you consider it to be an emergency phone the police on 999.
- In first instance you must report your concerns immediately to **Clare Middleton** (Designated Safeguarding Lead & Adult Safeguarding Officer), or **Subia Azmet** (Child Safeguarding Officer) or **Fee Bentley-Taylor**, or Ellen Hunter Smart.
- Speak to them if you have any concerns and they will take the necessary action
- You can also contact West Berkshire Council Safeguarding Adults team on 01635 519056
safeguardingadults@westberks.gov.uk
www.westberks.gov.uk/safeguardingadults

We will also ask you to complete our safeguarding form to report the situation

<https://form.jotform.com/EDUCAFE/educafe-safeguarding-form->



Safeguarding our volunteers at Educafe

Please note any contact you have with visitors to Educafe should normally be in the library or other official public locations.





Please note;

Educafe has to have boundaries around the volunteer role and relationships with its visitors. If you have any concerns about a visitor's wellbeing or safety, you must always inform a member of the Educafe team. Volunteers are crucial in creating a welcoming, friendly space by offering connection, encouragement, and signposting where needed.

Educafe does not expect or require volunteers to provide support with complex personal issues such as housing, finances, mental health, or legal matters. IF you choose to offer additional support, this is entirely voluntary, undertaken in your own time and in a personal capacity, not on behalf of Educafe.

If you do arrange to meet with visitors to the cafe at another time or location, maybe to assist them in some way. In this instance it is recommended that:

- You avoid being alone with anyone where possible, particularly someone of the opposite gender.
- You meet in a public area, cafe or the library and not their home.
- You complete the [Educafe chatters & volunteers meeting form](#) to advise us of your intention to meet.

We want you to feel supported and able to engage at a level that feels appropriate for you.

3. Training & Educafe updates

When you begin your volunteer role, your supervisor will make sure that you understand your role, rights and responsibilities. You will also be briefed about where the library's fire exits are and reminded to read our policies and the library's assessment.

We've also included this EDI (Ethnic, Diversity and Inclusion) summary to help support your volunteering experience with us. Thank you!

EDI Considerations for Educafe Volunteers

- **Be self-aware** – Recognise personal biases and reflect on how they may impact interactions. Approach everyone with openness and without assumptions.
- **Promote inclusivity** – Engage with all service users and volunteers in a respectful and welcoming manner, encouraging participation from diverse backgrounds.
- **Understand policies** – Familiarise yourself with Educafe's EDI guidelines and ensure your actions align with the charity's commitment to equity and diversity.





- **Support accessibility** – Help create a space where everyone feels valued by being mindful of different needs, including language, mobility, and communication styles.
- **Foster respect** – Treat all individuals with kindness, empathy, and patience, ensuring a positive and inclusive atmosphere for everyone.

If you come across anyone needing signposting to other organisations that may be able to support them, they could find relevant information through the West Berkshire Directory <https://directory.westberks.gov.uk/>. The librarians are Directory Champions so if your team or your volunteers aren't sure where they can direct residents for support, I'd encourage you to point them in the direction of our librarians, who can help with a directory search.

From time-to-time specific training may be offered to you, like safeguarding, Prevent Duty awareness (30-minute online course). Our in-house Safeguarding often takes place before the cafe opens and you will be given plenty of notice. Other training is offered by external trainers, which we encourage you to take up, if possible. It's also useful if you can feed anything back to your supervisor who can share them with the other volunteers.

In addition, we regularly host short online updates to our volunteers, with quarterly Teams meetings and news about the other Educafe projects.

If you made any good connections with people or noticed that they were being particularly helped at Educafe we'd love to hear about it. Equally if you have any feedback on what we could be doing better. After a session, please fill in this form with any reflections [Reflective Practice Form](#).

4. DBS Checks

Many of our visitors are considered vulnerable; displaced families, adults and refugees are classed as vulnerable, and they may fall into one or more of these categories. They may need community care services because of mental illness, developmental disability or delay, other disability, age, illness or emotional disturbance. They may be a person who is unable to take care of themselves or be unable to protect themselves against significant harm or serious exploitation.

Examples of vulnerable people may include those with autism, dementia, acquired brain injury, a tendency to wander, inability to communicate, aggression or other unusual social responses.





Educafe has a duty of care to our visitors and volunteers to uphold and maintain a robust safeguarding system.

In line with this, West Berkshire Council has agreed that all our staff and volunteers should hold a valid enhanced DBS Check (Disclosure and Barring Service Check). They have also agreed to pay for this on our behalf.

Why are DBS Checks important?

Some of you will already be familiar with DBS checks. DBS checks help to decide whether someone is suitable to work with children or vulnerable adults. DBS checks give employers, charities, and the volunteer sector peace of mind that they are hiring staff that don't have any convictions related to their role. This also protects employers, charities, CICs, and the volunteer sector against liability if accusations are made against an individual by clients or other organisations.

We will invite you to apply for an Educafe DBS check. You will be emailed with a link from <https://westberksdbsemploymentcheck.org.uk/> with a username and password (please keep a record of these) and asked to complete your enhanced DBS application form.

Educafe will be notified once you have applied. We will then contact you to arrange to see proof of your ID. A minimum of 3 documents must be presented;

- At least one document must be from Group 1, a 'Primary Trusted Document' (Driving Licence or Passport taking priority)
- At least one document must show your current address, a council tax or household bill from the last 3 months.
- At least one document must show your date of birth.

Ellen will carry out the document checks on Wednesdays during Educafe time and will contact you to advise a date. Decisions from the DBS are usually made within 2-3 weeks.

We really appreciate your support with this and hope that you will agree to holding a DBS Check with us. Please let Ellen know if you have any questions on ellen@educafeuk.co.uk.

5. Agreement – Statement of Volunteer Rights and Responsibilities





Volunteers have the right to;

- An adequate orientation to the organisation.
 - A clearly written job description.
 - Be assigned to a job that suits their personal preferences, motivation, skills, experience, and qualifications.
 - Be trained to do their job.
 - A suitable place to work.
 - A satisfying job.
 - Know their supervisors and how to contact them.
 - Be provided with adequate guidance and supervision, protection, safety, and insurance when carrying out their assigned tasks.
 - Have their personal information held confidentially.
 - Be involved in decisions that affect their areas of responsibility.
 - Have their concerns and complaints heard.
 - Be respected by co-workers, clients or members, and staff.
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- Feedback about their performance.
 - Be recognised for contributing their time, experience, ideas, and skills.
 - Say “no”; volunteers should not be coerced into doing tasks against their wishes or that they don’t feel qualified to do.
 - Take time off for a holiday or for personal reasons.
 - Resign from their position.

Volunteers have the responsibility to;

- Ensure they have the time necessary to take on a volunteer position.
- Work within the policies and rules of the organisation.
- Respect the privacy of staff, clients or members, and other volunteers.
- Be reliable and dependable.
- Complete agreed hours and tasks.
- Inform the organisation when they will not be available to volunteer.
- Be loyal to the organisation.
- Speak up about important issues or concerns.
- Attend orientation and training sessions.
- Follow directions given by supervisors.
- Be team players and support staff and other volunteers.
- Be considerate about the views of staff, clients or members, and other volunteers.
- Identify their limitations and expectations.
- Be accountable and accept constructive criticism.





Tips on parking: free parking for our volunteers is unfortunately not an option at the library car park. The carpark in Faraday Road is only £1 for four hours and is a very short walk along the canal. Or you can park at Northcroft Leisure Centre free for 3 hours. (NB you need a ticket). However, it's a bit further to walk. Sainsbury's have free car parking for **two** hours but that's quite tight for anyone doing an hour and a half slot. There are few residential roads fairly close where you can park for free; please speak to other volunteers for any tips.

6. Educafe's Policies and Procedures;

To keep good governance, all CICs and charities must have relevant and up to date policies. We urge all volunteers to read the Educafe policies which can be found on our website or do ask Fee or Ellen for any copies to be emailed to you directly ie Code of Conduct, Safeguarding and Privacy Policy

7. Library's Risk Assessment

Please read the risk assessment here: [Newbury Library Risk Assessment 2024.doc](#)

8. Volunteer Exit Interviews

Finally, we ask volunteers to provide at least one month's notice of their decision to terminate their involvement with Educafe or any projects they are involved with.

We invite leaving volunteers to attend an exit interview.

The purpose of this interview is to accomplish the following:

1. Bring closure to the volunteer/Educafe relationship.
2. Obtain feedback about the overall volunteer experience for the purpose of ongoing volunteer programme development.





3. Obtain feedback about the specific programme in which the person has been volunteering for the purpose of ongoing development of that programme.

This form will help support the exit interview, if you could spend a minute completing our feedback form, we will then remove you from our database.

The Educafe team would like to ***thank you*** for your support and precious time spent volunteering with us!

[EXIT INTERVIEW FORM](#)



We really hope you have benefitted from the experience and wish you all the best with future endeavours!

The secret of happiness is something to do.

