

Safeguarding Scenario 16 - I'm free....

🚨 "I'm free today, I'm happy to stay and help out in Reception if you need an extra pair of hands."

A parent offers to volunteer in your EYFS provision for the day. They are well known to the school, their own child attends, and they are happy to remain supervised by a member of staff throughout. Would your team know what to do?



The Scenario

As a former Headteacher and now Safeguarding Consultant, this is exactly the type of situation where a well-intentioned offer of help can create a safeguarding and compliance issue if staff are not clear about the requirements.

From 1st September 2026, there are important requirements affecting volunteers working within EYFS provision.

DON'T assume that "it's only for one day" makes it acceptable

For schools and maintained nursery schools subject to the EYFS framework, volunteers must not be permitted to begin working within the EYFS setting until the school has received the required Enhanced DBS certificate, including children's barred list information.

Simply keeping the volunteer supervised does not override this EYFS requirement.

DON'T allow familiarity to replace safer recruitment checks

"They're a parent."

"We know them really well."

"They've helped at school events before."

"They'll be with the teacher all day."

None of these statements removes the requirement.

STOP AND CHECK BEFORE THEY BEGIN

Before allowing anyone to volunteer within EYFS provision, staff should follow the school's safer recruitment and volunteering procedures and ensure that all required checks have been completed.

If there is any uncertainty, check with the Headteacher, DSL or person responsible for safer recruitment before the individual begins volunteering.

MAKE SURE STAFF UNDERSTAND THE DIFFERENCE

This is particularly important because the position for occasional volunteers elsewhere in school can be different. Under the wider regulated activity rules, an occasional parent or carer helping on a school day trip, for example, will not necessarily require an Enhanced DBS check with children's barred list information simply because they are volunteering for one day.

EYFS has additional requirements.

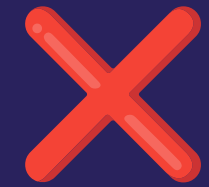
The Safeguarding Question

A parent arrives at 8.30am and offers to spend the whole day helping in Reception.

They do not currently have the required Enhanced DBS certificate including children's barred list information.

Can they volunteer in Reception that day?



 No.

Thank them for offering, but explain that the school must complete the required safeguarding checks **before they can begin volunteering within the EYFS provision.**

Safeguarding is not about questioning someone's intentions.

It is about having **consistent procedures that apply to everyone.**

Strong safeguarding cultures ensure that helpfulness, familiarity or pressure to find additional support never results in safer recruitment procedures being bypassed.

Know the checks. Follow the procedure. Never assume that supervision makes it acceptable.

