

Volunteer Handbook



Academic Year: 2016-2017

"Inspiring the Learner"

Dear Volunteer,

First of all I want to say a thank you for volunteering your services at Highfields Primary School. We work very hard to ensure that we provide the very best we can for the young people that we serve. For this reason we have developed a policy and structure that we believe, with your help, can make a difference to the lives of our pupils.

Believe it or not we get inundated with offers of support and we believe it is important to have the “right people for the right job” and so often find ourselves turning people away when we are either oversubscribed or if we believe someone is unsuitable. To ensure that we make best use of the wide range of skills on offer I have asked Mrs Portlock to co-ordinate and match up the needs of the pupils and staff (as put forward by staff) and the skills and availability of you the volunteer. This way I hope to ensure best value and impact for our pupils.

I very much appreciate your time and feel it is important to value the work of volunteers. This pack will hopefully demonstrate our commitment to developing the role of our volunteers and will set out guidelines to ensure a high level of professionalism amongst all adults in school.

Please read through the pack carefully and complete the relevant forms before starting your placement in school.

If you have any questions or queries whilst volunteering with us please feel free to speak to either Mrs. Portlock or to myself.

Yours sincerely,

Mark Wilkes
Headteacher

Policy on Adult Volunteer Helpers

1 Introduction

- 1.1 We want our school to be open and welcoming to all who would like to support the children. We also want to encourage parents and other adults to help teachers in a variety of ways. However, our overriding concern is for the safety of the children in our care. This document sets out our school's policy, which is to ensure that the children benefit from as much help and support as possible, and are provided at the same time with the best possible security.
- 1.2 The school has a variety of adults working on the premises at any one time. They can be categorised as follows:
- 1.2.1 Paid full- or part-time staff employed by the school:
- teachers;
 - teaching assistants;
 - SEN assistants;
 - nursery nurse;
 - caretaker;
 - cleaners;
 - dinner supervisors;
 - school secretaries;
 - librarian;
 - instructors.
- 1.2.2 Adult workers employed by another organisation:
- peripatetic music teachers;
 - trainee teachers;
 - LA advisers and inspectors;
 - health visitors;
 - grounds maintenance staff;
 - contract workers (e.g. an electrician or heating engineer);
 - School Improvement Partner [SIP].
- 1.2.3 Volunteer helpers:
- parents or other adult helpers working alongside teachers;
 - students on work experience.

This policy sets out the arrangements for volunteer helpers only.

2 Volunteer helpers

- 2.1 Volunteer helpers support the school in a number of ways, including:
- supporting individual pupils;
 - hearing pupils read;
 - helping with classroom organisation;
 - helping with the supervision of children on school trips;
 - helping with group work;
 - helping with art or subjects involving other practical activities.
- 2.2 Volunteer helpers are not allowed to do the following activities:

take responsibility for all or some of the whole class;
change very young children, or supervise them changing;
supervise children engaged in PE or other specialist activities;
take children off the school site without a teacher in charge.

The responsibility for the health and welfare of the child remains with the class teacher at all times.

3 Signing in

- 3.1 When helpers arrive in the school, they must sign in at the reception desk. They will be given a visitor's badge, which they should wear at all times. The signing-in sheet will give the date and time of arrival. They must also sign out, stating the time they are leaving, and return their badge before they leave.

4 Police checks

- 4.1 For the children's safety, all volunteer helpers **may be** required to have police clearance before they work in the school.
- 4.2 The headteacher has the authority not to accept the help of volunteers if he or she believes it will not be in the best interests of the children.

5 Deployment of classroom helpers

- 5.1 It is the policy of this school that parent helpers do not support in their own child's classroom, as this can be distracting for the child, and perhaps place the class teacher in an uncomfortable situation. Helpers will be asked to support in classes in which there is the most need for individual support.

6 Monitoring and review

- 6.1 The day-to-day monitoring of this policy is the responsibility of the Headteacher.
- 6.2 This policy will be reviewed every two years, or earlier if considered necessary.

Mission Statement and Aims

Mission Statement

“Inspiring the Learner.”

At Highfields we believe everyone is a learner and has the chance to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding. Everything we do is about enabling the individual to maximise their potential in all they do.

Aims of the School

- ❖ To inspire and motivate everyone to become enthusiastic life long learners.
- ❖ To provide a happy, safe caring ethos and stimulating environment in which pupils will have a desire to succeed.
- ❖ To promote high standards in behaviour and conduct.
- ❖ To promote high standards through providing highly qualified, skilled, dedicated and motivated staff who strive for excellence.
- ❖ To foster parental involvement in the education of their child, and to develop the partnership between the home, the school and the community.
- ❖ To nurture the pupil’s spiritual, moral and cultural awareness.
- ❖ To provide a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum in order to develop a range of skills, knowledge and understanding for the 21st century.
- ❖ To encourage each child to become an active member of the school community with a valued voice.
- ❖ To encourage and support each child in their own personal goals of achievement and independence both within and out of school hours.
- ❖ To raise aspiration and promote a positive ‘can do attitude’ and willingness to take risks.
- ❖ To provide a firm foundation in the basic skills of Literacy and Numeracy, from which each child can develop.
- ❖ To support the development of each child’s self esteem and self belief.
- ❖ To provide a culture of mutual respect for individuals and property.

Becoming a Volunteer

Anyone wishing to work as a volunteer who will be in school on a regular basis should request a Volunteer Pack from the School Office. Volunteers should complete the *Volunteer Information Sheet* (Appendix 1) with their contact details, type of activities they would like to help with, and the times they are available to help.

If a DBS check is required the office staff will inform you and ask you to bring in the appropriate i.d.

Where the volunteering is a placement linked to a course of study the cost of the DBS check will be met by the volunteer (or his/her college).

When a clear DBS check has been received by the school, the Headteacher may interview the potential volunteer and an appropriate placement will be agreed. This will be in a class which has no family connection to the applicant. A regular day and time will be agreed and the applicant will be expected to sign a volunteer agreement (appendix 2). An entry will be made on the school's Safeguarding Central Record and a file maintained with the confidential details of the volunteer which will be retained by school for 7 years after the volunteer resigns from their volunteering responsibilities.

The exceptions to this are:

- Work Experience Students or University Placements who apply via their educational establishment as it is expected that all necessary safeguarding checks have been carried out by the educational establishment before arriving at Highfields. The student will be expected to sign a confidentiality agreement and will not be placed in a class with any family connection.
- One-off volunteers i.e. assisting with a school walk, a fund raising event or a school visit where volunteers do not have sole responsibility for a group of children or provide any form of intimate care.

In exceptional circumstances the Headteacher can agree a placement without a reference or full DBS check but a risk assessment must be undertaken.

All adults who work in our school, whether a paid member of staff or a volunteer are expected to work and behave in such a way as to actively promote our school vision.

Confidentiality

Volunteers in school are bound by a code of confidentiality. Any concerns that Volunteers have about the children they work with / come into contact with should be voiced with the Class Teacher and NOT with the parents of the child / persons outside school. Comments regarding children's behaviour or learning can be highly sensitive, and if taken out of context, can cause distress to the parents of a child if they hear about such issues through a third party rather than directly from the school. Volunteers who are concerned about anything another adult in the school does or says should raise the matter with the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher.

Supervision

All volunteers work under the supervision of the Class Teacher of the class to which they are assigned. Teachers retain responsibility for children at all times, including the children's behaviour and the activity they are undertaking.

Volunteers should have clear guidance from the Teacher as to how an activity is carried out / what the expected outcome of an activity is. Volunteers are encouraged to seek further advice / guidance from the Teacher in the event of any query / problem regarding children's understanding of a task or behaviour.

Health & Safety

The school has a Health & Safety Policy and this is made available on request to Volunteers working in the school. Class Teachers ensure that Volunteers are clear about emergency procedures (e.g. fire alarm evacuation) and about any safety aspects associated with a particular task (e.g. using DT equipment / accompanying children on visits). Volunteers need to exercise due care and attention and report any obvious hazards or concerns to the Class Teacher / Headteacher.

Child Protection

The welfare of our children is paramount. To ensure the safety of our children, we adopt the following procedures:

- All Volunteers are given a copy of the Volunteer Policy and asked to sign a *Volunteer Agreement* (Appendix 2)
- Where a Volunteer is engaged in a 'one-off' activity e.g. helping supervise a group of children as part of a class visit, a DBS check will not be required. These volunteers, who are under constant supervision of school staff and must read and sign our *Off-site visit agreement* (Appendix 3).

Complaints Procedure

Any complaints made about a Volunteer will be referred to the Headteacher / Deputy Headteacher for investigation. Any complaints made by a Volunteer will be referred to the Headteacher / Deputy Headteacher.

The Headteacher reserves the right to take the following action:

- To speak with a Volunteer about a breach of the Volunteer Agreement and seek reassurance that this will not happen again;
- Offer an alternative placement for a Volunteer, e.g. helping with another activity or in another Class;
- Inform the Volunteer that the school no longer wishes to use them.

Volunteers' Expectations from School

Volunteers in school should expect to:

- be recognised for their valuable contribution to the learning experience for the children they support
- be assigned worthwhile tasks
- access to any school policies or procedures that are relevant to their role
- access any training that is necessary for the success of their activities
- claim any expenses incurred such as purchases made on behalf of the school and on the instruction of the class teacher.

School's Expectations from Volunteers

School expects all volunteers to:

- Adhere to the name protocol for staff i.e. Miss Smith , Mr Brown
- Adhere to the school's Health and Safety Policy, Safeguarding Policy, Data Protection Policy, Confidentiality Policy and ICT Acceptable Use (where appropriate).
- Be role models for the children they work with i.e. consider the language they use, only walk in school, no smoking or swearing and dress appropriately (smart casual with no jeans).
- Refer any behavioural or safeguarding concerns to the class teacher.
- Commit to a regular window of time to allow teachers to plan activities to include the volunteer
- Advise school as soon as possible when it is not possible to attend

PLEASE NOTE MOBILE PHONES MUST NOT BE BROUGHT INTO THE MAIN SCHOOL AREA. THEY CAN BE LEFT SECURELY IN THE SCHOOL OFFICE ON ARRIVAL AND COLLECTED WHEN YOU LEAVE.

APPENDIX 1

VOLUNTEER INFORMATION SHEET – FOR NEW VOLUNTEERS

Name of Volunteer:

Date of Birth:

Other names known by (including maiden names):

Address:

Phone:

What skills / areas would you like to help with in school?

Are there any particular age groups / classes you would like to work with?

Do you have any disabilities / other needs we need to take into account when working as a Volunteer in school? *(please give details)*

Thank you for taking time to complete this Volunteer Information Sheet.

Please hand it to the office

Your offer of help is appreciated and we will be in touch shortly.

APPENDIX 2

VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT

Thank you for offering your services as a Volunteer at Highfields Primary School. Your offer of help is greatly appreciated and we hope that you will gain much from your experience here.

Please read and sign this Volunteer Agreement Sheet and hand it in at school. You will receive a copy of it for your records.

- I have received a copy of the School's Volunteer Policy
- I agree to support the School's Aims and Core Values
- I agree to treat information I learn from being a Volunteer in School as confidential
- I understand that I may be required to undergo a DBS check to advise the school of my suitability as a volunteer.

If you already have a DBS Certificate, please hand it to the school and a copy will be made for the school records.

Signed: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX 3

OFF-SITE VISITS VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT

School trips are an integral part of learning at our school and afford many children opportunities which are outside their usual experiences. We are pleased that you have come forward as a volunteer helper: You will have an important role to play in the success and safety of this school trip.

Please read and return this appendix, and sign and return the helper's slip.

This is part of our school's risk assessment planning.

Role of the Volunteer Helper

- to be responsible and look after, in equal measure, all of the children in your group
- to stay with your allocated group of children, ensuring that their well being and safety is maintained for the total duration of the school trip
- to promote polite, respectful and courteous behaviour towards each other and members of the general public. We all go as ambassadors of our school!
- to ensure that your group keep up with the body of the school visit party, be it walking, entering or exiting from transportation or following speakers for the trip
- to contact your child's class teacher/member of staff if there are issues with first aid, safety and/or behaviour

Working alongside school staff

School staff expect volunteer helpers to:

- comply with all of the above whilst being under the direct line management of school staff
- show a commitment to their group, an interest in the focus of the visit and assist children in their learning by helping them to read signs/labels/information, asking questions that encourage children to think about the task and help to explain areas of interest
- follow guidance from the school staff

What is not permitted

- Volunteer helpers are not allowed to bring additional siblings on the school trip.
- Volunteer helpers are not allowed to re-organise school visit groups.
- Volunteer helpers are not allowed to smoke, drink alcohol or engage in any illegal practices.
- Volunteer helpers are not permitted to take photographs of children.
- Volunteer helpers are not allowed to give/buy their group treats e.g., ice-creams, biscuits, sweets – before, during or after the school trip.
- Volunteers are not allowed to touch or reprimand children but should speak to a school staff member if there is any difficulties. If you need to move a child or gain a child's attention we always use their name and under no circumstances are we to come into physical contact with a child.

First Aid

For each class on the school visit, there will be at least one qualified first aider. You will be informed if any child in your group has medication/needs. If medicine needs to be administered, this will be done by a member of staff. Under no circumstances will a volunteer be asked to administer medication of any kind. All other medicines and first aid box(es) will be carried by staff.

Emergencies

You are expected to inform a member of staff as soon as possible.

If you have become separated from the rest of the school party, please telephone one of the members of staff on your contact list or telephone the school.

I have read the Volunteer Policy

I agree to the terms and conditions as stated in the policy

I will support the young people in enjoying the trip and actively contribute to the smooth running of the occasion.

Signed : _____ Date : _____