



# PORTFIELDS PRIMARY SCHOOL

## PARENT AND VOLUNTEER HELPER GUIDELINES

Thank you for volunteering to help in our school.

We believe that the involvement of parents and carers in children's education is vital and we encourage active participation in many ways. Some parents come to school to help with a variety of tasks in the classroom setting. Other parents help when the children are taken on educational visits outside school or are involved with the work of Friends of Portfields School (FOPS).

The aim of this document is to give you all the information you need to make your time with us both worthwhile and enjoyable.

### Security

When you are helping in school please make sure that you sign the visitors' book when you arrive and leave. This is important in case the fire alarm rings. Visitors' lanyards are available from reception staff and should be worn at all times in school. Please familiarise yourself with the instructions regarding Fire, Emergency and Safety procedures contained in the pocket of the visitors' lanyard. You will also be asked to read our Safeguarding Statement prior to starting as a Parent Helper. Please report to the Head of Year for the year group you will be working with.

### Confidentiality

It is very important that all staff, parent volunteers and other adults working in the school adhere to our policy of confidentiality. You may see children struggling with work, be upset or misbehaving or hear/see other information concerning a child while you are with us in school. It is vital that you do not share anything about specific children with friends or family or a child's parent if you know them. The teachers here have the responsibility of informing parents of any concerns about a child.

Volunteers working in classrooms should do so on the understanding that they support the teaching staff and will not pass opinion on such matters as discipline or teaching styles either inside or outside the school.

### Parent Helper Guidelines

It is important that all children in school are given equal time and attention.

It is vital to encourage the children to talk about what they are doing in order to support them in using the correct vocabulary.

Always encourage the children to do things for themselves. It is important that they are independent and although they need help and supervision, the end result should always be their own work. Please don't be tempted to do the work for them. The learning that goes on while the children are doing an activity is often much more important than the end product.

Please do not become over-familiar with the children as they must learn to behave in a socially acceptable way towards adults who are not close friends. All children are expected to use your correct title e.g. Mr Jones or Mrs Smith. Please do not lift, carry or move a child in any way.

If you find that you are not going to be able to come into school on a particular day, it is really helpful to know in advance, even if that is only by means of a phone message on the morning in question.

## Disclosure and Barring Service checks

Initially, you will not be asked to work alone with children in isolated areas but will be in the main classroom area or in a shared area in the line of vision of the class teacher. This is for your own protection as much as for the children.

If, after a trial period of approximately 6 weeks, you decide to continue volunteering on a regular basis as a Parent Helper, there is a requirement for the school to carry out a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. The school is not informed about any information on these checks but does hold a record of the checks undertaken. We will let you know when this needs to be done.

## What kind of activities might you be engaged in?

We might ask you to become involved in a variety of classroom-based activities such as:

sharing books, hearing children read, playing games, making things, sewing, topic related studies and supporting children with written tasks.

Sometimes just being there is what is needed.

The teacher will give you clear guidelines about the activity you are supporting and will provide all the materials you need. Please ask if there is anything that you are not sure about or if you need further clarification. At the end of a session or lesson, it is helpful if you can talk to the teacher briefly about how the activity went.

## Sharing books or hearing children read

The teacher will indicate whether you should read to the child or the child should read to you. If this is not clear, ask.

If the child appears 'stuck', remind them gently to use their phonics and 'sound it out', encourage a sensible guess based on what has already been read or look at the illustrations for clues. If all else fails, tell them the word. Quite often a lack of confidence will inhibit them from making an attempt and their fear of 'getting it wrong' may result in silence.

The following are examples of questions that you might use when discussing a story:

- What was the story about?
- Who was the main character in the story?
- What sort of person is the main character? What makes you think that?
- What do you think might happen next?
- Which part of the story did you like best? Why?
- What would have happened if....?

You can also try to relate some of the story elements to the children's own experiences:

- Has this ever happened to you?
- Have you ever visited a place like the one in the story?
- How do you think you would feel if this happened to you?

## Dress Code

As a school, we have a dress code. We would ask you to remember that you are a role model for the children and dress appropriately.

## Housekeeping

You are welcome to use the tea and coffee making facilities and water cooler in the staffroom. There is no charge for visitors' tea and coffee and you may use any mug you like!

Toilets are located in the reception/office area and outside the Lagonda Hall.

Please ask the teacher you are working with where you may store your personal possessions. As a general rule, mobile phones are not to be used in school and must be switched off or put on silent so they do not disturb lessons. In the case of an absolute emergency where you need to have your phone on, please ensure that it is on silent and inform the class teacher you are working with for the session.

## Safeguarding

We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children in this school, which is best defined as:

'protecting children from maltreatment; preventing impairment of children's health or development; ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes'. (*Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges (DfE 2016)*).

We want all our children to achieve their full potential by:

- being as physically and mentally healthy as possible;
- experiencing good quality education opportunities;
- living in a safe environment;
- learning and working in a safe environment;
- experiencing emotional well-being;
- feeling loved and valued;
- receiving support from a network of reliable and affectionate relationships;
- learning to look after themselves;
- coping with everyday living;
- having a sense of identity and a positive image of themselves;
- developing their confidence and their interpersonal skills

If a child does or tells you something which gives you cause for concern about their safety or well-being, please tell the class teacher as soon as possible after the disclosure in an appropriate setting so that others cannot overhear. The class teacher will then inform the school's Designated Lead for Safeguarding (Vikki Pegg) or Deputy Leads for Safeguarding (Liz Dines, Mandy Elston or Lorna Varley).

In the unlikely event that you witness an adult doing something that gives you cause for concern, please inform the school's Designated Lead for Safeguarding immediately.

## Thank you

In case we forget to say so please be assured that we really do appreciate your help. We may sometimes forget to say this because we are busy but we do!

If you have any worries, queries or ideas on how we can improve something, please let us know. We are always willing to listen.

Thank you once again for your support.



## PORTFIELDS PRIMARY SCHOOL PARENT AND VOLUNTEER HELPER AGREEMENT

Please read and sign the document below to confirm your agreement with the following school expectations as a volunteer helper:

### As a school we agree to:

- explain your tasks/jobs carefully so that you are clear about what we would like you to do with the children
- help you understand how we manage behaviour
- ensure that the children you work with behave and work well
- treat you with the highest respect and care
- share relevant information about the children you are working with
- let you know in advance the overall plan for the day and let you know if this changes
- treat anything you tell us with confidentiality
- we agree not to ask you to:
  - deal with difficult or challenging behaviour
  - carry out a task that you feel unprepared to complete

### As a volunteer helper I agree to:

- read Part 1 of the Keeping Children Safe in Education document
- inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Vikki Pegg) if I have any concerns about the welfare of a child
- inform the teacher if I observe anything that worries me in school or if a child discloses something of a concern to me
- inform the teacher if I see any inappropriate behaviour
- treat any information I am party to with total confidentiality
- be discreet and refrain from discussing any issues I may observe or become aware of outside of school
- inform the school if I am unable to come in for any reason
- respect and listen to the guidance of the teacher at all times
- complete appropriate DBS/safeguarding checks as required by the school

Volunteer name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

(Vikki Pegg, Deputy Headteacher, on behalf of the school)