



Handbook for Parent Helpers



St John's Cathedral Catholic
Primary School

We have produced this booklet as a guide for those parents, carers and helpers who are kind enough to volunteer to help the children in our school. The whole staff values your contribution to the children's learning and appreciates your help. We hope you find your time with us rewarding, enjoyable and informative.

Safeguarding and Child Protection

Once you have expressed an interest in volunteering at our school, we will meet with you to share our safeguarding procedures for volunteers. This will include a DBS check, references and a risk assessment.

Once working alongside our children or in the course of discussing issues that may have arisen from a story, a child may disclose information that concerns or alarms you. If this happens then please follow these steps:

- Listen to the child
- Try not to show shock or alarm
- Do not ask the child questions that will lead them or make judgements about what they have said
- At the earliest opportunity, and before you leave school, report this to the Designated Safeguarding Leads – Mrs Park or Mrs Warren - who will follow the school procedures.

Health and Safety

For a variety of Health and Safety issues, it is very important that we know exactly who is in the school premises and where they are. We therefore ask that every adult who comes into the school does so via the main reception door. Helpers must first report to the school office where they will be asked to sign in.

The fire alarm is a continuous bell. On hearing this alarm, please direct children, to walk quickly and quietly with you, out of the nearest fire exit and on to the playground where they will line up by the back fence.

Daily routine

Lesson times are as follows:

Nursery

8.40am -11.40 am

12.40pm – 3.40pm

Yr R

8.45/8.55am – 10.15am

10.30am – 12.00pm

1.00pm – 3.20pm

KS 1

8.45/8.55am – 10.15am

10.30am – 12.00pm

1.00pm – 3.20pm

KS 2

8.45/8.55am – 10.15am

10.30am – 12.00pm

1.00pm – 3.30pm

Break Times – School and parent helpers are very welcome to join us in the staff room for a cup of tea and coffee.

Confidentiality

We trust that our school helpers will support the ethos and expectations of the school. If you overhear conversations between parents, teachers and children or are given information about a child, please remember that these are confidential and should not be discussed out of school.

Children's actions, behaviour or progress at school are confidential and school helpers should never share this information with parents, families or friends – even if you think that you may be being helpful or have been asked by parents for information. It may require a great deal of tact on your part but it is essential that if anyone seeks information on a child that you firmly suggest they see the child's teacher for an update.

If you have any concerns that you may have seen or heard anything that concerns you, please do not hesitate to speak to the class teacher, Mrs Park or Mrs Warren.

Mobile phones

Personal mobile phones should be switched to silent and kept in a safe place, out of sight and out of use whilst you are on the school premises. If you need to be contacted while you are helping at school, please leave your phone with the office staff who will contact you if it rings. Photos, even of your own child, must not be taken on your mobile phone whilst volunteering at school.

Hearing Readers

One of the tasks that you will probably be involved in is reading with the children. This is an important but time consuming task. The exact approach will depend on the reading level of the child

Beginning readers

1. Children should be aware that you read from left to right, turning the pages that way and reading the lines left to right and top to bottom
2. Read the book together to start with
3. Discuss the pictures and story
4. Read the book again pointing to each word as you read

Early readers

1. Ask the child to point to each word as they read it
2. Discuss the pictures and story together
3. Read the story together
4. Ask the child to find key words, which are repeated several times in the book i.e 'the' 'up' 'in' etc
5. The children should be aware of full stops and that you need to pause at a full stop and not to run sentences together

As the children can read more words try to get them to work out new words by making a good logical guess. Maybe the picture will help. If the child has a good knowledge of initial sounds, looking at the first letter strings or small words within words, sound out the whole word

Try to get the child to read to the end of the sentence and then go back to work out an unknown word

Extending reading

Even with competent readers you should discuss the stories and pictures. Also you can try to encourage the children to use expression or put on suitable voices

Discussion questions

The following are examples of the types of questions to use when discussing a story

What was the story about?

Who was the main character?

What sort of person was he?

Was that a sensible thing to do?

What should he have done?

Which part did you like best?

What would have happened if?

Try to relate some ideas to the children's own experiences i.e.

Can you....?

Have you ever.....?

Using the Reading Record Books/ Reading Diaries

When you have heard a child read please enter the page number that they have read up to. You may put a short positive comment e.g. good, well done, etc but we do ask that parents and helpers do not put any negative comments in the books or suggestions of what the child needs to do.

If the child has changed their book, please write the title of the new book in the appropriate place.

Top tips when helping in the classroom

1. Always encourage the children to treat you and others with respect
2. Don't be afraid to quietly and calmly correct a child that is misbehaving but NEVER manhandle a child at any time. If in doubt, speak to the nearest member of staff.
3. Praise the children wherever possible
4. Do not let children become silly or over friendly with you. They must learn how to behave socially towards adults who are not close friends.
5. Encourage them to be polite to one another.

In case we forget teachers to say so, please be assured we really do appreciate your help!

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

