



Volunteer helpers in school. M19(ii)

We would like to extend our thanks to all our parent/volunteer helpers. At Milton Abbot School we value the help we receive from parents/volunteers enormously and realise that we would be unable to provide such quality experiences for the children without your time and expertise.

We have produced this booklet as a basic guide for those who are kind enough to volunteer to help the children. 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.

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.

We know that for parents/volunteers to be happy and comfortable helping in school we need to share some important skills and information with you.

Health and Safety

1. For a variety of Health and Safety issues, it is very important that we know exactly who is on 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, signs in and buzzes through to the office to report to Mrs Jones. In the absence of the office staff, helpers must report to the Head, Jo Nutbeam after signing in.
2. For the children's safety, all volunteer helpers are required to have police clearance before they work in the school. They are asked to complete a Disclosure and Barring document (DBS) which is then sent to the Local Authority for clearance. Please see Mrs Jones and she will provide the relevant forms.
3. To ensure staff and parents of other children are confident about the role of the parent/volunteer helpers in our school please read the guidance about confidentiality and conduct, sign the attached slip and return to school to show you have read it.

The Roles of Volunteer Helpers in School

There are lots of things we would like help with in school. Some activities are in class with the children, some are outdoor activities and some are making resources. There are so many things that we need you to help with but some of them are listed here:

- Assisting with craft work - cutting, sticking, sewing, folding, sawing, nailing, constructing. There are lots of skills which children need one to one teaching with and guidance as they practise them.
- Art work in class is very exciting and the more adult support and challenge, the more the children learn. They need help with colour mixing, layering materials, practising techniques with paint or clay, constructing sculptures, learning batik skills, textile work etc. We need a team of arty parents!
- Practical maths and science lessons benefit greatly from parent helper support. Children need reminding of the task, guiding with the next steps, questioning in the right way to make them think. They also need to be regularly "brought back" to the learning objective. For the class teacher to be with every group is not possible so another adult in class improves the quality of learning for all the children.
- Literacy support during language lessons enables some children to be more successful than they might be without adult intervention. Children often need to hear the instructions over a few times, or to have a task broken down into smaller steps for them, or to have someone close by to encourage them to stay on task or to reassure them that they are doing the right thing. Small groups or individuals benefit greatly from one to one handwriting support and spelling activities
- Learning games - some of the best learning for children happens when they are playing a game and so we use lots of games in maths and literacy. An adult supporting the game is wonderfully helpful for the children and the teacher.
- Listening to children reading - this is a skill which has many levels and parental input can make a big difference to children's progress. Skilled adult intervention is very helpful with all play activities, practical learning, games and exploring materials.

General information

1. To help parents/volunteers in school we will share with you our Behaviour Policy so you have a good understanding of our rewards and sanctions.

2. At Milton Abbot School we aim to make learning as exciting as we can so often lessons will be practical, which is when we need most help. There may not be a lot of writing down or recording because that's not where the learning is - it's in the doing. Having an adult to challenge the learning is very helpful. Being able to ask the children open questions is a great skill and brings out the thinking in children e.g. I wonder what would happen if? Why do you think it does that? Where has that answer come from? How did you find that out?

3. Helping to clear up is an essential part of learning too! We want all children to see clearing up as a natural part of the activity and you as a helper should never be the one who clears everything away - that could give a negative message to the children about your role and about their own responsibilities.

4. Children learn some things very quickly from the actions, words and attitude of the people around them - their role models. They are not always the things we plan for them to learn in the classroom e.g. they pick up good manners from the adults at home and from the adults in school, they copy phrases from their adults - we are sure you've heard some of the teachers' favourite phrases; we hear yours! Therefore it's important that our own behaviour in school is always what we want the children to copy.

5. For your information, the times of lessons are as follows:

9:00 - 9:30 - reading circles (Green, Blue & Yellow classes)

9:30 - 10:30- session 1

11:00 - 12:00 - session 2

1.00 - 3:30pm - afternoon session (a break will be taken at the teacher's discretion)

Confidential Information

The most sensitive issue around parent helpers in school is confidentiality. Parents hand their children over to the school for the best part of every week day trusting that they are safe and that their progress and welfare will be treated with complete confidentiality. It is therefore essential that anyone helping in school respects that confidentiality.

Occasionally in school you will become aware of information about children which is confidential or private to the child or their family. This is a delicate matter that requires a great deal of tact on your part. Any information that leads you to believe a child is at risk should be mentioned to the head teacher. But any conversation with parents outside is a breach of the school's confidence. Even a comment such as, 'your Jimmy reads well,' is not acceptable as others will wonder why you have not said that to them. It is very important to treat anything you hear or see in school with regard to particular children as being in absolute confidence and entirely a matter within the school.

Similarly you may find that parents who are friends will ask about the progression or behaviour of their children in school. Again, this is a matter requiring a great deal of tact on your part and it is very important that you firmly suggest that if they are worried in any way about their child then they must discuss the matter themselves with the class teacher in the first instance.

This school is a very trusting school and we welcome you all in your offers of help. Please do not be offended by the protocol but think of it from the other side of the fence. You all need to be able to trust the school and when you are helping in school you are part of the school community. There are other things as well as children's progress that need to be kept confidential. Some children have medical needs to which we have to attend - perhaps an allergy or a condition that affects their daily learning. Some families have complex circumstances which mean that a child may not join in some activities. Some children may be experiencing a traumatic time at home and their behaviour in school may be affected.

Parents/Volunteers are welcome in our staffroom. Should you hear any information pertaining to the children this should be kept in strictest confidence, although pupil issues are not usually discussed in the staffroom.

Child Protection Information for Visitors and Volunteers

The school's first priority is the welfare of our pupils. We are committed to the highest standards in protecting and safeguarding the children entrusted to our care at all times. We recognise that some children may be the victims of neglect, physical, sexual or emotional abuse and that all staff are well placed to identify such abuse and offer support to children in need. At Milton Abbot School, in order to protect our children, we aim to:

- Create an atmosphere where all our children can feel secure, valued and listened to,
- Recognise signs and symptoms of abuse,
- Respond quickly and effectively to cases of suspected abuse.

If you are concerned about a child for any reason, have a word with the class teacher or the head teacher - do not speak directly to the parents of the child. This is the teacher's job.

Lastly...

In case we teachers forget to say so please be assured that we really do appreciate your help (we may be too busy to say so but we do!!)

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.

Once again.....

Thank You!

(This was recommended to the Governing body for adoption in September 2013.)

Volunteer helper protocol and agreement

THE SCHOOL

We promise to:

- Train parents in any skill needed to carry out the task;
- Explain the tasks carefully;
- Share the school behaviour policy with you;
- Ensure that children learning with you behave well;
- Treat you with respect and care and expect the children to do the same;
- Share relevant information about children with you as necessary;
- Let you know in advance if we have changed the plan for the day and don't need you;
- Treat anything you tell us with complete confidentiality.

We promise never to:

- Expect you to deal with difficult or challenging behaviour;
- Ask you to carry out a task without explaining it first.

Signed.....

THE VOLUNTEER

Name.....

I promise to:

- Use the school's behaviour guidelines and inform the teacher of any inappropriate behaviour;
- Treat any information with total confidentiality;
- Let staff know if I can't come in (as they will have planned the lesson to include me);
- Respect the guidance of the teacher at all times;
- Understand the need for DBS and other checks prior to working with children.

I promise never to:

- Look at or compare any child's work books, records or staff notes;
- Share any information about a child or member of staff with anyone outside the school staff or governors;
- Speak ill of any child as a result of things I may have seen them do in school;
- Discuss things with parents which I may have access to as a result of my position in school - I will advise them to come into school and discuss them with the teacher or headteacher.

Signed.....

Date