



Thorpe Church of England Primary School

Faith, Love and Excellence

Volunteer Booklet



Guidelines

Firstly, a huge thanks for volunteering to help our children in school. Your support is vital and as we know, the involvement of parents in children's education improves children's chances in later life.

We encourage volunteers to come and help in school in a variety of ways such as ICT, cooking, and especially reading, and usually work with small groups in specific classes. Other volunteers help when the children are taken on visits outside school.

The aim of this booklet is to give you all the information you need to make your time both worthwhile and enjoyable. Thank you for your support.

At Thorpe Church of England Primary School we want children to be happy and confident and to develop an enduring love of learning.

We aim to be a place where:

- Children are happy and safe.
- Children develop an understanding of their faith and a respect and tolerance for that of others in a Christian environment.
- Children develop true self esteem.
- Children are aware of how their actions may affect others.
- Children can learn to appreciate quality and beauty.
- We build upon children's desire to learn and give them the life skills to achieve this.

Volunteers have a valuable role in helping us to fulfil these aims and values.

Safeguarding

All schools must carry out a check on all staff and volunteers who have regular contact with children. This is done through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). All schools need to hold a register of the checks undertaken.

In order for you to work in school as a volunteer, you will need to undergo a DBS check (advice available from the school office). Please be assured that all information will be treated in the strictest confidence and that these checks are done only in the best interests and safety of the children.

When you are working with our children they may say something to you that makes you worried or you are not sure about, please speak with the Designated Safeguarding Leader. It is really important that you follow the 'Do's and 'Don'ts' below:

Volunteer Guidelines

- Before you undertake any volunteer work the DSL (Designated Safeguarding Leader – formerly DCPO Designation Child Protection Officer) will talk with you regarding working in school and what to do if a child makes a disclosure to you. If you see something in school that you are not comfortable with and feel you need to talk with someone about it, please ensure you do so only to the DSL (Mrs Helen Southgate) or Deputy DSL (Miss Laura White) discretely or if it is about the DSL to the Chair of Governors (Mr Eric Peacock) in person and not via a third party.
- **Confidential Information** - 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 Headteacher. But any conversation with parents outside of school 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 head or the class teacher.

- Please do not worry about your child's behaviour while you are helping as often they may behave quite differently if a parent or carer is in school. Most children soon get used to their parent or carer helping in class and settle down after a few weeks.
- Please don't have favourites - as humans we are drawn to certain individuals but it is important that all children in school are given equal time and attention.
- Please encourage the children to be independent - we expect children to try everything themselves before we help them.
- Please do not lift, carry or move a child in any way ie by holding their arm or guiding them in the small of their back.
 - Never be on your own with a child.
 - Never go into the toilet with a child or group of children unless a member of staff is with you.

Housekeeping

There are tea and coffee making facilities in the staff room – please help yourself. Please do not take hot drinks out of the staff room unless they are in a cup with a secure lid – thank you.

Health and Safety

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. There is a bell to press in order to gain entry. Helpers must first report to the school office to sign in and receive a badge - the Headteacher should be informed when possible.

For your own protection/safety we ask that parents do not enter the classroom unless the class teacher is present.

Supervising Children

All Staff employed in schools are required to follow strict supervision guidelines which aim to protect both the child and the adult. The following points are included to ensure the same protection is available for any volunteers too.

Whenever you are supervising children, the following points will be of help:

1. Always treat children with respect and in the same sort of way that you would expect them to treat you. Always speak to a child as you would if their parent was there.
2. Be friendly towards them. However, do not let the children become 'silly' or over-friendly with you. They must learn to behave socially towards adults who are not close friends. Encourage them to be polite to one another.
3. Do not shout or raise your voice to any child.
4. Tell them exactly what to do in as much detail as possible.
5. If a child is misbehaving please speak to the nearest member of staff do not attempt to discipline them yourself.
6. Do not allow a child to sit on your knee and make sure that you are not left alone with one child. Always sit where you are in sight of other people for your own protection.
7. Praise the children wherever possible. You may award team points or stickers to children for good effort.
8. 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 (see section on confidentiality)
9. Please respect the decisions the class teacher makes. You may not agree with the way a teacher is approaching a task but it is important that you carry out their wishes or withdraw yourself to seek out a senior member of staff to discuss a matter with. The Class teacher will have made their choice based on their prior knowledge of the children. If this happens, please speak with the Helen Southgate, Headteacher or Laura White, Assistant Head. Please do not challenge the teacher's authority in front of the children.
10. If you are working in your own child's class, please remember that you are there to support the whole class and that these rules apply to all members of the group, including your child!

Guidance for volunteers on school trips

These guidance notes have been written in conjunction with the school's policy on off-site visits. If you have any questions about a school trip, please see the class teacher. We do appreciate your help on school trips – it would be difficult to organise visits outside school without volunteers.

1. Volunteers may not always have their own child in their group.
2. The teacher will give volunteers a list of children for whom they are responsible.
3. All children are told that they must stay with their group and the group adult at all times.
4. If the trip involves a coach journey, please help the children in your group put and fit their seatbelts. Children are not allowed to eat or drink on the coaches. The class teacher has sick bucket/bags, if needed.
5. The class teacher is responsible for ALL first aid and medication.
6. The class teacher leads the rules, routines and expectations for the day. Please help the teacher by ensuring your group follows all instructions eg when to eat and drink.
7. If there is a medical or other emergency, let the class teacher know immediately. The class teacher is responsible for contacting the school and associated parents in emergency situations.
8. If you need to leave your group for any reason, please ensure you are with another adult and take advice from the class teacher if you want to take a child to the toilet.
9. Volunteers are asked to keep the same degree of confidentiality as in school. If you have any queries or problems concerning the trip, please direct these in the first instance to the class teacher, or if you would rather, the Headteacher on return from the trip.

Hearing Readers

One of the tasks that you may 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 the 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 the story.
3. Read the story together.

4. Ask the child to find key words which are repeated several times in the book ie '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.

Extending reading

1. 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 good knowledge of initial sounds, looking at the first letter strings or small words within words, sound out the whole word eg ing in king
2. Try to get the child to read to the end of the sentence and then go back to work out an unknown word.
3. 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 a 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. ie

- Can you...?
- Have you ever?

Using the Home School Link Book

When you have heard a child read please enter the page number that they have read up to and use the stamp 'I have read today' please do not write in the child's book. The class teacher may give you a separate whole class list to write comments on.

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

Changing Reading Books

It is quite usual for a child to have finished a book at home and therefore they will need to change it. Thorpe's policy on the organisation of reading material is that every book is colour coded according to its content. The children are free to choose any book within their level. Please do not move a child onto a new level even if they have read every book in that level (this happens very rarely). Some children may need help to select a book and possibly having a quick flick through some of the books may help them to choose.

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

Swimming

Please see our separate letter regarding procedure for helping with swimming.

Lunchtime Helpers

1. Create as much independence as possible with children cutting up their own food and opening packed lunch products.
2. Listen to and talk with the children.
3. Be aware of all the children – try not to get caught by just one child.
4. Be proactive around the hall – see what needs doing and help out.
5. Safeguarding: **Use kind words and soft voices** to encourage children to do what you want them to. **Do not handle children or use harsh words or voices.** Note any issues that need to be shared with the team regarding certain children.
6. Please check with the Teaching Assistants in the hall before you ask a child to eat up their meal – it is important for children to feel calm when they are eating.
7. Be consistent about boundaries and ensure no one oversteps them.

Other activities in school you may wish to consider...

- Handwriting practice
- Changing maths packs
- Helping with Festivals
- Delivering class talks

*In case we 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!)
A huge thank from us all!*