



BEACONSFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL

VOLUNTEER HELPERS IN SCHOOL

What we believe

At Beaconsfield Primary School we believe that our school should 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.

Our Aims

- ◆ To support pupils in their learning.
- ◆ To ensure that volunteer helpers/parents are welcomed and valued as members of the school community

What you need to know

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

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

- ◆ All volunteers will meet with a member of the school's senior management team, who will explain relevant Health and Safety policies, including what to do in the case of a fire.
- ◆ When volunteer helpers arrive in the school they must sign in at the school office. 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.
- ◆ 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 Criminal Records Disclosure which is then sent to the Local Authority for clearance. We also ensure that volunteers are known to the school or come through a reputable institution e.g. the local High School or University.
- ◆ Sadly there will be occasions when the head teacher declines to accept the help of a parent/volunteer if he believes it will not be in the best interests of the



school community and a teacher must always have the last word on what happens in a classroom.

- ◆ We also know that for staff and parents of other children to be confident about the role of the parent/volunteer helper you need to agree to a protocol about confidentiality and conduct, as do all staff who work in schools. We will ask you to sign this to indicate your agreement and a copy will be kept in school.
- ◆ There are lots of things we need help with in school. Some activities are in class with the children and some are out of class. Some are outdoors activities and some are making resources.
- ◆ You **MUST** let the teaching staff know of any inappropriate behaviour. If you let it go the children will learn that it is ok to behave less well for some people than others and that will make everyone's job harder and the child less likely to develop a sound moral code and sense of respect!
- ◆ The teaching staff will also talk with you about the standard of learning they expect from the children so you can expect the same.
- ◆ At Beaconsfield Primary School we aim to make learning as exciting as we can, so often lessons will be practical and that is when we need most help. There may not be a lot of writing down or recording because that is not where the learning is. It is 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, questions like: "I wonder what would happen if we put it the other way up?", "Why do you think it does that?", "Where has that answer come from?" and "How did you find that out?"
- ◆ 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 would give very negative messages to the children about your role and about their responsibilities.
- ◆ 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 have heard some of the teachers' favourite phrases; we hear yours! Therefore it is important that all our own behaviours in school are always those we want the children to copy.

Confidentiality

- ◆ 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 weekday 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 and follows the protocols in the later document. This school is a very trusting school and so 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.
- ◆ 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 must not join in some activities. Some children may be experiencing a traumatic time at home and their behaviour in school may be affected.

- ◆ You may find that a friend's child is in trouble one day for something, or you might see a friend's child being upset by another child. You may not be sure about what to do. You may be asked by a parent: "What is my child like in school?" Or even: "What is so and so like in school?" You may be asked by a parent to find out about such and such or see what this or that is like. You may even be asked what the staff are really like.
- ◆ Parents/volunteer helpers are welcome in our staffroom (during morning and afternoon break times). Should you hear any information pertaining to the children, this should be kept in strictest confidence.
- ◆ It is also possible that a child will tell you something which is very worrying. Please always refer any concern immediately to the class teacher or Head Teacher.

The role of parent/volunteer helper in school

There are so many things that we need you to help with. Some of these are listed below:

- ◆ We need assistance with craft work. Things like cutting, sticking, sewing, folding, sawing, nailing and 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 there is adult support and challenge, the more the children will learn. They need help with colour mixing, layering materials, practising techniques with paint or clay, constructing sculptures, learning batik skills, textile work etc.
- ◆ Practical maths and science lessons benefit 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 support.
- ◆ 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 parents input can make a big difference to children's progress.
- ◆ Accompanying the children on educational visits enables the school to meet its legal requirements in terms of adult/pupil ratios.



Beaconsfield Primary School Parent/Volunteer Helper Protocol

THE SCHOOL

We promise to:

- ◆ Train you 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:..... Date:

Name: Position:

THE PARENT/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. This may affect the teacher's planning.
- ◆ Respect the guidance of the teacher at all times
- ◆ Understand the need for CRB and other checks prior to working with children

I promise never to:

- ◆ Look at or compare any child's work books or 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

Signed: Date: