

# Dunbar Primary School

## A Guide

### for

# Volunteers





Thank you for volunteering to help in Dunbar Primary School.

We really appreciate the help that all our volunteers give us to support the work of our school. We value all your help and we hope that you will enjoy working with us and our pupils.

We have produced this guide to help you feel comfortable working in school.

It sets out the expectations that we have and will hopefully answer some questions you may have.

We hope that you will also feel able to ask any questions as they arise.

The points of contact for volunteers in school are as follows:

- the class teacher you work with
- the depute head / head teacher

It is important for school security and fire regulations that all staff, visitors and volunteers to the school can be identified and located at all times and so we ask you to follow the simple routine of:

- Signing in and out when coming into and leaving the premises
- Wearing the Visitor badge we give you at all times whilst in school

### **How might I help?**

We need volunteers to help with all sorts of tasks. You may have the skills or experience that would enable you to help with gardening, making costumes/props for shows, helping catalogue books in the library, helping prepare and serve healthy snack or helping with the school fair. We are always making games and resources for classes to use. Maybe you would be happy to come to school and share information with a group or class. This could be a hobby you have, a career or job you do or have done in the past. Maybe you know about a country you have visited or lived in. Could you share a skill you have such as knitting, woodworking, cooking, dancing or speaking a foreign language?



We always need lots of volunteers to help with reading. This may involve working with a group who can read to you and then work on activities together or it could be you reading and sharing a story with the children. We need volunteers to teach pupils how to play games that will help them learn.

We need helpers to support with outdoor learning or helping on educational visits. We are often looking for volunteers to help accompany groups or classes to walk to local places such as the swimming pool or even just walking across to the other campus. Please let us know if you have a strong preference about the age group with which you would like to work or if there is a particular task on which you would like to focus.

### **What is expected of a volunteer?**

We appreciate all the time you are able to offer. Some volunteers are able to come to help weekly or more often. Some helpers prefer to arrange single visits when they can spare some time. Our school is a work place and you will be supporting children's learning and joining a committed team of staff and volunteers. All we ask is that you let us know if you have made an arrangement with the school but find that you can't come. Your work in school is valuable and we will have been counting on your support. Teachers will have planned activities believing you will be there to help and these may have to be re-arranged or even postponed. Just give us a call or send a message with your child as soon as you know so that we can re-organise.

As a volunteer you may be asked to work with any teacher/s who have requested your help. This will not always be your child's class. Most of the time you will be sharing the classroom with the teacher concerned. The class teacher will be responsible for you and if you are in any doubt about your role, where you should be working or questions about the school please just ask the teacher you are working with. Apart from moving about the school in the normal course of the day, we would expect you to stay with the teacher who will supervise your activities.

If you are with us during break times, you can join your teacher in the staff room. You can use the toilets that the staff use. Please do not use the children's toilets.

We expect all members of our school community to be polite and courteous. Pupils watch us all and follow our example. The same rules apply to all staff, pupils and volunteers working in school.

- Try to stay calm with the children and model good behaviour and manners such as saying please and thank you.
- Praise pupils who show good behaviour and recognise when they try hard.
- Give clear instructions to pupils so they know what you expect. Children may not see it the way you do and it can help if you listen to their point of view.

The teachers in school are expected to act "in loco parentis" — this means in place of the parents. They are responsible for the children whilst they are at school.

It may seem obvious but ...

- If there is a problem — tell the teacher straight away who will be able to help. The teacher will be able to offer suggestions on how to work with different groups.
- Try telling pupils quietly and firmly to stop and then get help from the teacher. The only time we would expect any adult to intervene is to prevent a child hurting themselves or another child but please don't ever lift, carry or move a child in any way.
- Never get into an argument. Teachers are trained to deal with difficult situations and taking responsibility is part of their role.
- Don't shout at a child (or a member of staff!)

- If the fire alarm rings then go out the nearest marked exit and meet on the playground area at back of the school
- Class teachers hold a basic first aid kit in the classroom but children who are ill should be sent either to the class teacher or to the office.
- Never hit a child.
- If a child asks to go to the toilet then there will be a class system to follow.

**What about discipline?** The school has a code of discipline which children are expected to follow. As a volunteer you are not expected to discipline children.

We expect all our volunteers to abide by the same code of confidentiality as teachers and other staff.

When you are in the school you will be able to see how pupils work and how different pupils behave in school. You will notice that teachers may use different approaches or strategies with different ages or individual pupils. Remember that as trained professionals there will be a good reason for what goes on. You will at some point see children being disciplined. However sorry you feel for them do not give them any comfort or support. You may not be fully aware of situation or any background events that may have led to this. You may not be aware of warnings that have already been given.



**Some rules about confidentiality.** All volunteers working on a regular basis with children require to be disclosure checked. As a volunteer you are being asked to support us and not to pass on your opinions about things outside school. It is not appropriate to pass on information about anything you have seen or heard in a classroom to other parents. We need to be assured that you will respect the privacy of others when you are working in school. It is vital that you are completely discreet and do not share any information about specific pupils with your family, friends or even the child's parent/carer if you know them.

If you are working in your own child's class then it is not really appropriate to hug or comfort your child. Sometimes pupils behave differently when a parent or carer is working in the classroom. Pupils often 'push the boundaries' when working with parents they know. The class teacher will notice this. If a little reminder of what is expected in school doesn't work then just speak to the teacher. At Dunbar Primary we aim to develop confident, independent pupils. We usually expect pupils to try everything themselves before we step into help. This covers every aspect of school life whether it's getting changed for PE or attempting work independently. We want every pupil to do as much as they can for themselves.

We would like to thank you for offering to volunteer to help at our school. We regard you as a member of our team. We have a professional duty to you - just as we have to all members of staff and aim to make your time with us happy and fulfilling.

Together we will make a great team.

