



Hillcross Primary School

# School Volunteer Policy

The aim of this policy is to:

- To provide parents, staff and volunteers with clear expectations, induction and guidelines for working in school.
- To encourage the wider community to engage with children's learning to raise standards of achievement and promote community cohesion.

Thank you for volunteering to help our support our school community.

## **Introduction**

Volunteers are parents or other adults working alongside the school staff to support children with their learning and development. This includes students on work experience.

At Hillcross Primary School we welcome those wishing to help in the school and value the contribution they make to school life. We believe that the involvement of parents, carers and volunteers in children's education is vital and we encourage active participation in many ways. Some volunteers come to school to help with a variety of tasks such as ICT, art, cooking, and especially reading, and usually work with individuals or small groups in specific classes. In addition volunteers often help when the children are taken on educational visits outside school or get involved with the work of the Friends of Hillcross (Parent Teacher Association).

These guidelines have been written to ensure that for all concerned – volunteers, teachers and children - the experience is positive and rewarding.

## **Vision and Values**

Our children are supported and challenged to become a caring, collaborative, critical and creative learners who can adapt to meet their future life goals with confidence and success. We have a clear focus on ensuring all children experience success in all aspects of the curriculum by inspiring them in their learning and ensuring they develop the personal and social skills they need to be successful in life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

We know that pupils learn more effectively if they feel valued, happy and secure. We aim to ensure that our children are respected as individuals and feel good about themselves so that they can achieve their very best within a safe, caring and supportive environment.

In line with our mission statement, 'Educating Our Children Together', we have an excellent team of outstanding, experienced staff who are fully committed to working in partnership with families and the local community to ensure that every child in the school benefits from a school environment where all children achieve success in both their learning and personal achievements.

As a nationally recognised Thinking School we help children to develop a range of thinking processes that they can use to support their independent learning and problem solving. Children are given opportunities to reflect and



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develop knowledge about themselves and others both in school and in the wider community. As part of your induction we will provide you with further information on how you can support this too.

As an inclusive school we celebrate diversity and value the achievements of all children. We are committed to providing the greatest possible access for all children by providing a broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum which is appropriate for meeting their needs. We particularly want to ensure that parents and pupils are fully participative in the process.

The vision and values promoted by the school are key to the way we work and we expect all staff, governors and volunteers to be committed to it. Parents, carers and volunteers have a valuable role in helping us to fulfil our aims and values.

### **Safeguarding**

As part of our commitment to safeguarding volunteers who are not already known to the school will be asked to attend an informal interview to ensure that the aims and intentions of the school and the volunteer are compatible. The Headteacher has the authority not to accept the help of volunteers if he or she believes that it is not in the best interest of the children. As part of your induction you will be asked to read Keeping Children Safe in Education and sign to say that you have understood this document, the document can be read or downloaded from our website.

We carry out a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check for all volunteers who have regular contact with children. 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 complete a DBS online check. We will help you get the process started. 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.

In special circumstances such as if a parent steps in to support a trip at short notice, volunteers or parents without a DBS enhanced check may help out if they have had a clear list 99 check. One of the admin team will carry this out for you.

Those who help out at specific events e.g. the school fair or walking with us to the Carol Service do not need a DBS or List 99 check but must not have unsupervised access to children.

### **Becoming a Volunteer in School**

All volunteers will be asked to attend an induction meeting which will cover the following topics:

- Confidentiality
- Safeguarding
- Child Protection
- Health & Safety
- Fire and Evacuation Procedures

### **Deployment of Volunteers**

Volunteers will be asked to support in classes/areas of the school where there is the most need for support. Parent volunteers should be aware that they will not always be able to work in their child's class as for some children this can be distracting for the child and perhaps can place the class teacher in a difficult situation. If this is the case, we may ask you to help in a different class or area of the school. This is entirely at the Headteacher's discretion. It is helpful if you can explain to your child that you will be coming into school to help all of the children and that he/she will not always be able to work with you.



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We may from time to time ask you to support another class during a visit if extra adults are required for a specific activity (e.g. supporting practical learning).

Volunteers do not have to stay for a full morning or afternoon session, even an hour would be appreciated but we do prefer for volunteers to attend on a regular basis to ensure continuity and aid planning. However, volunteers with a 'special skill' which they could share with the children on a less frequent basis are also welcome!

Vicki Lowe will co-ordinate the support of volunteers across the school. All placements will be authorised by the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher.

### **Volunteer Roles in School**

Many of the activities that we ask you to help with are the sorts of things that parents do with their own children at home. We might ask you to become involved in a variety of activities such as:

- Sharing books (see appendix 2);
- Working on the computer;
- Playing games;
- Making things;
- Cooking;
- Gardening;
- Sewing;
- Topic related studies;
- Coming with us on visits (see appendix 3);
- Supporting individual children;
- Supporting group work;
- Help with the walk to and from Swimming or other sporting activities.
- Helping with classroom organisation or the preparation of resources;
- Sometimes just being there is what is needed!

The teacher will give you:

- Clear guidelines about the activity;
- All the materials you need.

The class teacher may ask you to help with classroom organisation and/or the preparation of resources when they are teaching the whole class.

Afterwards it is very helpful if you can feedback to the teacher about how the activity went and how you got on. Please agree with the class teacher how and when this should take place. Please ask if there is anything that you are not sure about or if you need help.

### **Procedures and Protocols**

#### **Health and Safety/Safeguarding**

When a volunteer arrives in the school they must sign in the visitors book which is located at the front office. Please indicate your arrival time and which class/person you will be supporting. Volunteers must also sign out and state the time when they are leaving the school premises. Signing in and out is important in the event of an emergency so that staff and emergency services know who needs to be accounted for.



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A visitor badge must be worn at all times in school. Volunteers with a DBS or List 99 clearance will wear a badge with a blue lanyard. Other volunteers will wear a red lanyard to indicate that they must not be left to supervise children on their own.

The Headteacher has the authority to withdraw the help of volunteers if he or she believes that it is not in the best interest of the children.

Safeguarding concerns about a child must be shared immediately with the class teacher and one of the designated teachers for child protection as soon as possible after the disclosure in an appropriate setting so that others cannot overhear. They are Mrs Lisa Francis, Headteacher, Mr Graeme Page, Deputy Headteacher, Mrs Tanja Doig, Assistant Headteacher or Ms Helen Beckett, Assistant Headteacher.

### Our Designated Safeguarding Leads



Lisa Francis  
Headteacher



Graeme Page  
Deputy Headteacher



Helen Beckett  
Assistant Head



Tanja Doig  
Assistant Head/Y3 Class  
Teacher

### Confidentiality

It is very important that all staff, parent volunteers and other adults working in the school work to a policy of confidentiality. While in school you are likely to become aware of issues relating to individual children. You may see children struggling with work, be upset or misbehaving or hear/see other information concerning a child while you are with us in school.

It is vital that you do not share anything about specific children with friends or family or a child's parent if you know them. The teachers here have the responsibility of informing parents of any concerns about a child. Volunteers working in classrooms do so on the understanding that they support the teaching staff and will not pass opinion on such matters as discipline or teaching styles outside the school. If you ever have any concerns about a child, please speak to the class teacher as soon as possible after the disclosure in an appropriate setting so that others cannot overhear.

When volunteering for a full day, you will be provided with a location in which to have a break or lunch. This will usually be the staff room; if this is not available another suitable space will be made available to you.

Volunteers are asked to sign a 'Volunteer in School Protocol' (see appendix 4) a copy of which will be kept in school.

### Guidelines for Supporting Children in School

- ✓ It is vital to encourage the children to talk about what they are doing in order to support them in using the correct vocabulary.
- ✓ There is no rush. We give the children plenty of time to complete a task and they will often need to return to it over several occasions.
- ✓ Always encourage the children to do things for themselves. It is important that they are independent and although some children may need help and supervision, the end result should always be their own work.



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Please don't be tempted to do the work for them! The learning that goes on while the children are doing an activity is often much more important than the end product!

- ✓ When playing games with the children, try and encourage the idea of taking turns, sharing and being a good loser. The real joy of a game is the taking part!
- ✓ Please don't have favourites - it is important that all children in school are given equal time and attention.
- ✓ Please do not lift, carry or move a child in any way.

### Housekeeping

- **Mobile Phones** - We would be most grateful if you could keep your mobile phone on silent whilst helping in school, and avoid taking calls/texting whilst supporting the children.
- **Tea / Coffee arrangements** - If you are in school over the break period, there are tea and coffee making facilities for visitors in the staff room which you are welcome to use. There is no charge for visitors' tea and coffee.
- **Photocopier / Laminator** - The photocopier and laminator are located throughout the school. You may be asked to use these machines to support the class teacher in preparing resources. Please ask in the school office if you are unsure of how to use them!
- **First Aid** - Please do not administer First Aid to children whilst you are volunteering in school. A number of staff hold certificates for paediatric first aid and first aid at work. Please talk to the class teacher in the first instance if a child has a bump etc.
- **Fire alarm** - If the fire alarm sounds, please make your way safely to the nearest exit, guiding the child you are working with if away from the main class area (e.g. hearing readers in the library). We will provide you with information regarding our evacuation/invacuation as part of your induction.
- **Attendance** - If you find that you are not going to be able to come into school on a particular day, it is really helpful to know in advance, even if that's only a phone message on the morning in question.

### References

Occasionally, volunteers ask the school to provide a written reference when they are seeking employment. We stipulate a minimum qualifying period of three months attendance of regular volunteering (e.g. once a week) before we feel able to provide a work-based reference. We believe that this is fair to both prospective employers and candidates.

### Thank you!

In case we forget to say so please be assured that we really do appreciate your help (we may sometimes forget to say so because we are busy, 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.

### Equality Impact Assessment

Under the Equality Act 2010 we have a duty not to discriminate against people on the basis of their age, disability, gender, gender identity, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation. We are committed to treating all pupils fairly and challenging negative attitudes about disability and accessibility and to developing a culture of awareness, tolerance and inclusion. This policy has been equality impact assessed and we believe that it is in line with the Equality Act 2010 as it is fair, it does not prioritise or disadvantage any member of the school community and it helps to promote equality and accessibility at our school. The curriculum is planned to be inclusive and meet the needs and interests of a full range of learners. Activities and resources will be



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differentiated and adult support used to ensure that children assess the curriculum and make the best possible progress.

### **Safeguarding Commitment**

The school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2016, and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. We take seriously our duty of care to our pupils and staff which includes safeguarding them from the risk of being drawn into terrorism - this includes not just violent extremism but also non-violent extremism, which can create an atmosphere conducive to terrorism and can popularise views which terrorists exploit. We work closely with social care, the police, health services and other services to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. Radicalisation is recognised as a specific safeguarding issue and is addressed in line with the Government Prevent Strategy and The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Written and Reviewed: June 2016/January 2017

Approved by Staff/Parents/Pupils/Governors:

Date of next review: Feb 2018

Appendix 1

School Volunteer Request Form

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Volunteer Name:  |  |
| Address:   |  |
| Telephone Number:  |  |
| Email Address:   |  |
| If a parent of a child/ren in the school please give names and classes:  |  |
| Have you read the School Volunteer Policy?   |  |
| Do you have a current Merton DBS Clearance?<br><br>An original copy will need to be shown to the Front Office.<br>OR<br>Are you willing to complete an online DBS check? |  |
| Which area/s of the school would you prefer to support?  |  |



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|  |
|--|
| Do you have any specific skills/strength that could be utilised?         |
| Are there any activities that you cannot support? Please give details.   |
| When are you available to support in school? Please give days and times. |

For office use only. Authorised by ..... Date.....

### **Appendix 2**

#### **What does 'sharing books with children' mean?**

A few quick pointers to help you when you are asked to read or share a book with a child:

- The teacher will indicate whether you should read to the child or the child should read to you. If this is not clear, ask.
- If the child appears 'stuck', tell them gently to use their phonics and 'sound it out' or encourage a sensible guess based on what has already been read or look at the illustrations for clues, and if all else fails, tell them the word. Quite often a lack of confidence will inhibit them from making an attempt and their fear of 'getting it wrong' may result in silence.
- Encourage the child to predict what might happen next and discuss how they feel about the story and characters.
- Make the experience an enjoyable one, sharing your love of books with the child. This is a moment of quality time for you both.
- Please do not move the child onto another box from the reading scheme. If a child has done particularly well in their reading, please be sure to share this with the class teacher. Equally, please let the teacher know if any problems.



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## **Appendix 3** **Guidance for Volunteers for 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 parent volunteers.

- Parents may not always have their own child in their group.
- The teacher will give parent helpers a list of children for whom they are responsible.
- All children are told that they must stay with their group and the group adult at all times.
- If the trip involves a coach journey, please help the children in your group put on their seatbelts. Children are not allowed to eat or drink on the coaches. The class teacher has sick bucket/bags, if needed.
- The class teacher is responsible for ALL first aid and medication.
- The class teacher sets and leads the rules, routines and expectations for the day.
- Please help the teacher by ensuring your group follows all instructions e.g. when to eat and drink.
- 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.
- If you need to leave your group for any reason, e.g. to take a child to the toilet, please inform the Class Teacher.
- Parent volunteers are asked to keep the same degree of confidentiality on visits 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, phase leader on return from the trip.





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## **Appendix 4** **VOLUNTEER IN SCHOOL PROTOCOL**

Please read and sign the document below to confirm your agreement with the following school expectations as a volunteer:

As a school we agree to:

- Explain your tasks/jobs carefully so that you are clear about what we would like you to do with the children
- Share the school behaviour and ethos policy with you to help you understand how we manage behaviour
- Ensure that the children you work with behave and work well
- Treat you with the highest respect and care
- Share relevant information about the children you are working with
- Let you know in advance the overall plan for the day and let you know if this changes!
- Treat anything you tell us with confidentiality
- We agree not to ask you to:
  - Deal with difficult or challenging behaviour
  - Carry out a task that you feel unprepared to complete

Signed:..... Date: .....

Class Teacher/Volunteer Co-ordinator/Headteacher

Volunteer Helper: ..... (Printed Name)

As a volunteer helper I agree to:

- Use the school behaviour and ethos policy and inform the teacher if I see any inappropriate behaviour



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- Inform the teacher/Designated Teacher if I observe anything that concerns me in school
- Treat any information with total confidentiality
- Inform the school if I am unable to come into school for any reason by 8.30am in the morning
- Respect and listen to the guidance of the teacher at all times
- Complete the appropriate CRB/List 99 safeguarding checks
- Disclose any criminal allegations to the Headteacher prior to starting as a volunteer helper
- I agree not to:
  - Look at or compare children's work, records or staff records
  - Share any information about a child or member of staff with anyone outside the school staff team

Signed:..... Date: .....