



## **Parent Helper and Volunteer Policy**

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### **Vision and values**

Knowing we are LOVED and through loving others, we live and learn with COURAGE and HOPE.

Through our core Christian values of Love, Courage and Hope, we aim to create an environment in which every child feels safe, secure and flourishes. Within a place of kindness, they will grow into individuals who believe in themselves and know that they are an important part of their community. They will show love and respect for themselves, others and the environment. Given outstanding opportunities for learning, they will have the drive to take on new challenges, the resilience to cope with life's hurdles and know that they can learn from mistakes made. By fostering positive relationships with themselves and others, our community will be empowered to be the best they can be, value everyone as individuals and embrace new challenges today and in the future.

## **Introduction**

At St Luke's CE Primary we warmly welcome parents and members of the community to volunteer in school to help in a range of activities. We are committed to safeguarding and this policy should be read in conjunction with the safeguarding summary for visitors found in both school sites, as well as the Guidelines for Parent Helpers and Volunteers (see appendix 1).

## **Ways to Help**

There are two main ways of helping:

1. Occasional support e.g. at sports events or school trips. These are individual events and generally parents/volunteers only commit themselves to one or two occasions.
2. Regular support - this is when parents or helpers offer regular weekly support to the school for a period of time. This would be at a time that is mutually agreed to suit both the school and the volunteer, with a commitment for a period of time (for example, a term at a time).

We encourage and recognise parents as educators; we always welcome parents into school to strengthen this partnership. We sometimes offer work experience for young adults in training, as well as volunteers of all ages wishing to contribute to their community.

## **Who will benefit from your helping in our school?**

When children see you or other family members getting involved in the school, it:

- shows them that you are interested in what the school is doing
- lets them see that you value what they are learning
- gives them a sense of security
- helps them learn about good citizenship from your example

The school greatly values your help because:

- the school will develop a better understanding of parents and the community
- children behave better when they know that their parents and carers are actively involved in the school
- it gives the school a wider range of experience and skills to draw on
- you are able to give more time to a group or an individual than the teacher
- you release the teacher to work in a more concentrated way with other children

It benefits our parents and volunteers because you:

- will get to know the teachers and other parents
- will gain a better understanding of how the school works

- will be setting a good example to young people
- will have the satisfaction of knowing that you are making a contribution to the school and to your and other children's learning
- can speak about school with your child and really know what they are talking about
- learn lots of skills which can, in turn, assist you in helping your child
- you will hopefully find the experience enjoyable!

### **What procedures do I need to follow to help at school?**

In order to ensure the safety and well-being of the children in school there are a few procedures that we need you to be aware of and adhere to:

- If you are helping in school at on a regular basis we will ask you to complete a DBS (Disclosure Barring Statement).
- Adults helping in school with the children are always under the supervision of the class teacher, who will explain the task, what is required of the children and the helper's role within that setting. Adults helping in school are not normally left alone with children.
- Please come into school through the main door, where you MUST sign in and get a visitors sticker. Please remember to sign out before you leave.

### **What are the key points when working with children?**

These are a few of the most important points to remember when you are working with children:

- It is vital to encourage the children to talk about what they are doing and to use the correct vocabulary.
- There is no rush. We give the children plenty of time to complete a task.
- Always encourage the children to do things for themselves.
- It is important that they are independent and although they need help and supervision, the end result should always be their own work.
- Don't be tempted to do the work for them!
- The learning that goes on while the children are doing an activity is much more important than the end product.

### **What kind of activities might you be engaged in?**

We might ask you to become involved in a variety of activities such as:

- Sharing books
- Working on the computer
- Making things
- Baking
- Sewing

- Topic related studies
- Helping on school visits

Sometimes just being there is what is needed! Many of the activities that we ask you to help with are the sorts of things that you might do with your children at home. The teacher will give you clear guidelines about the activity and all the materials you need.

Afterwards it is very helpful if you can talk to the teacher about how the activity went and how you got on. Please ask if there is anything that you are not sure about or if you need help.

### **Where will I be working?**

You may help in your child's class, if this is appropriate or you may be asked to help in another class where additional support for an activity would be useful.

Volunteers can also utilise their skills and help in a curriculum area such as Art or ICT. Please let us know if you have an interest or skill in a certain area.

### **How much time must I give?**

This is up to you! We appreciate all the time you choose to offer. Some volunteers prefer to have a regular time each week for a term; some prefer to arrange to help when they can spare some time. All we ask is that you let us know in advance if you have made an arrangement with the school but find that you cannot come.

### **What if...?**

If a child displays inappropriate behaviour when under your supervision?

- Tell the child firmly but dispassionately that this is not acceptable.
- If the behaviour is repeated, send the child straight back to the class teacher or send child to fetch a member of school staff.
- Do not get involved in disciplining a child; leave this to the class teacher.

It is not possible for helpers to bring pre-school children with them when they are helping in school and we would therefore appreciate it if you would either make alternative arrangements for your pre-school children, or perhaps wait until they are a little older and come in when they are attending Nursery or Preschool.

Occasionally children become a little unsettled when their parents are working with other children in the classroom. Therefore we may ask you to help in a different class for a while. This will be entirely at the teacher's and/or Headteacher's discretion. It would be helpful if you could 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.

### **What do I do at break times?**

Please join the teachers for a coffee and biscuit in the staffroom during the morning play. If possible, take this opportunity to tell the teacher how the activity is going and to discuss any problems you may be having.

Please do not repeat or discuss anything you see or hear concerning individuals or the running of the school. If you are unhappy or concerned in any way, go straight to the class teacher or to Mrs Easthope, the Headteacher.

### **What about confidentiality?**

Working in our classrooms, we learn a lot about the children in them. We learn about their strengths and weaknesses, their behaviour and sometimes news from outside school. It is very important that parent helper/volunteers maintain strict confidentiality of such information. Occasionally in school you will become aware of information 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.

If a child gives you a piece of information of a sensitive nature please inform the class teacher.

**Any information that leads you to believe a child is at risk should be immediately reported to the Headteacher or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (please see safeguarding summary or posters).**

Any conversation with parents outside school is a breach of the school's confidence. Even quite innocent comments could be misunderstood by other parents. It is therefore 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 progress 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 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.

**Play it safe – don't talk about any children other than your own – refer any queries to the class teacher or Headteacher.**

### **Will I be given support?**

Before you begin helping regularly you will be invited to a brief meeting with the class teacher where you will be given the opportunity to ask any questions. You will also be given a copy of the 'Guidelines for Parent Helpers and Volunteers' (see Appendix 1) and asked to sign the confidentiality agreement (see Appendix 2).

When in school, if you are unsure of what you have been asked to do, please check immediately – either with the teacher or the teaching assistant.

### **Please read in conjunction with:**

- **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**
- **Mobile Phone and Wearable Technology Policy**



# Guidelines for Parent Helpers and Volunteers



**Thank you for volunteering to help at St Luke's Primary school!**

We hope you feel warmly welcomed into the school and find your time with us rewarding, enjoyable and informative. We love volunteers helping in our school and we want you to feel successful and valued at what you do. These guidelines are intended to support you in making the best of the experience. Please never hesitate to ask if you are not sure about something – or for advice if you feel something you are doing is not working well.

## **Arriving at school**

- Make sure you wear appropriate clothing. Helpers help model sensible standards for our children.
- Sign in before you begin (and sign out at the end) and collect your identity sticker. This helps to identify people who should not be on the premises as well as being part of fire regulations.
- Help minimise interruptions to the children's learning by arriving at the agreed time and by using breaks, before or after school to speak with teachers rather than lesson times.

## **Smoking – Mobile Phones – Hot drinks in the classroom**

- You are reminded that the whole school, both inside and out, is a non-smoking site. This also includes the use of e-cigarettes.
- Whilst in class, please ensure your mobile phone/ smart watch are turned off or on silent. You must not use your mobile phone or smart watch to take any photographs or record anything that happens in school. Please ensure that your bag, mobile phone, any other personal items are kept in the teacher's cupboard or the staffroom.
- Under the school's Health and Safety procedures, only hot drinks with lids are permitted to be taken into the classroom.

## **In case of fire**

- When you start in school, please take time to read each room's notice and find out the nearest exit.
- If the fire alarm sounds make your way straight to the playground with any children you are supervising.
- Do not go back to the classroom or collect any belongings.

## **Your child**

- Please be aware that your presence in the classroom may well affect your child's behaviour in all sorts of ways.
- Prepare your child for the experience by explaining in advance that you will be in the class to help all the children, that the teacher is in charge and that you have to do what the teacher has asked you as well!
- If working within your own child's class turns out not to be appropriate for either your child or yourself, it doesn't mean you have to stop supporting at St Luke's. Please come and talk to a member of staff as all classes will be happy to have your help!

### **Appropriate interaction with the children**

- Ensure that you interact appropriately with children at all times. Children sometimes naturally test boundaries when working with someone new. If a little reminder does not obtain an immediate improvement, please refer to the teacher. Similarly, volunteers should not attempt to discipline other children (e.g. tell them to hurry up, or tell them to behave). If you have concerns, do inform the teacher so they can deal with it, but do not deal with it yourself. If a child has an accident or reports to you that they are feeling unwell, please tell the class teacher immediately.
- While you are in the classroom you may sometimes see children's challenging or distressed behaviour. We manage behaviour positively but sometimes you will see children being encouraged to reflect on their behaviour choices. However sorry you feel for them, please do not give them any comfort or support. You will not always be aware of what has happened up to that point and it is very possible to inadvertently undo positive but difficult steps being taken to learn from whatever incident took place. If you have any concerns at any time about the way a child has been treated, or any aspect of classroom practice, please raise the issue immediately with the Headteacher.
- It is possible you may also see children "in crisis". You will be briefed on any children who may be likely to display distressed behaviour, which may often appear to just be challenging or disruptive behaviour, yet the reasons behind children's ability to self-regulate and meet the expectations of the school environment can often be incredibly complex. If you see a child in crisis, please be discrete and do not interact with the child, but follow instructions from the teachers in protecting both the dignity of the child in crisis and the welfare of those around them. This can be the most challenging aspect of any inclusive school, but whilst ensuring everyone's safety first and foremost, we choose to meet children's distress with love and understanding and to encourage and educate all our children to do the same.
- We have to follow very careful guidelines on aspects of physical contact with children. Please remember not to initiate contact with children – let them take the lead, but do not encourage over-familiarity. If a child asks to go to the toilet, refer them to the class teacher rather than take them yourself. If you are working with our youngest children and they need help dressing/undressing for playtime and role play etc., encourage the child to do as much as possible for themselves. No adult in school is permitted to remove/insert earrings. All first aid must be carried out by a qualified member of staff.

### **Safeguarding and confidentiality, including use of social media**

- Working in our classrooms, we learn a lot about the children. We learn about their strengths and weaknesses, their interests, their behaviour and sometimes we learn about their lives outside school. It is very important that parent helpers maintain strict confidentiality of all such information. Occasionally in school you will become aware of something about a child 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 and must not be shared with anyone other than members of staff linked with that child.
- If you learn anything of a sensitive nature please inform the class teacher.
- **Any information that leads you to believe a child is at risk should be immediately reported to the Headteacher or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (please see safeguarding summary or posters).**
- Any conversation with parents outside school about your time working in school would be a breach of the position of trust in which the school is held. Even quite innocent comments could be misunderstood by other parents and thereby inadvertently cause harm to the children or their families. It is therefore 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 progress 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 suggest that if they are worried in any way about their child then they must discuss the matter themselves with the Headteacher or their child's class teacher.

- Regarding the use of social media - while the school recognises that parents and volunteers may have personal networking accounts, these **must not** be used to share anything about the school, staff, pupils or anyone else as a result of your time helping in school.
- **Play it safe: don't talk about any children other than your own. Refer any queries to the class teacher or Headteacher.**

*Thank you for offering to help at our school. We regard you as a friend of the school and member of our team. We have a professional duty to you - just as we have to all members of staff - to make your time with us happy and fulfilling.*



Appendix 2



# Volunteer helper - Confidentiality and Use of Technology Agreement



Thank you for volunteering to be a helper at St Luke's C of E Primary School. Your help and support to the life of the school in this role is greatly appreciated.

The role carries certain responsibilities on your part, including the requirement to be strictly confidential about school matters. By signing this agreement, you agree to uphold the position of trust in which St Luke's CE Primary School is placed by the children and families it serves. This means you will not share pupil / family / staff information with anyone that breaches confidentiality.

Examples of confidential information are:

- Information about staff, pupils, and events that occur in school. For example, a parent who knows you are a helper at the school may ask you how their child is getting on (e.g. academically / behaviour / friendships). To prevent and misunderstanding, you should advise the parent to speak to the class teacher;
- Information about home or family circumstances divulged by children or overheard;
- Information accessed by 'privilege' e.g. notices on staff noticeboard /conversations.

Mobile Phone Use:

- Volunteers are not permitted to make/receive calls/messages during contact time with children.
- Emergency contact should be made via the school office.
- Volunteers should have their phones/smart watches on silent or switched off during contact time with children.
- Phones must be stored securely, away from children (not carried in a pocket or in a classroom drawer) e.g. the staffroom, classroom cupboard or a locker.
- Mobile phones can be used during break and lunchtimes but should never be used in a space where children are present
  - Volunteers are not at any time permitted to use recording equipment on their mobile technology e.g. to take recordings of children or sharing images.

If you see something in school that concerns you, please discuss the matter with the head teacher.

**Any information that leads you to believe a child is at risk should be immediately reported to the Headteacher or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (please see safeguarding summary or posters).**

I understand that I may have access to confidential information and that it is my responsibility to maintain the integrity of this information and to keep it private. I further understand that disclosure of confidential information may result in me no longer being required to be a volunteer helper.

Name of volunteer:	
Signed:	
Date:	