

WITHERNSEA PRIMARY SCHOOL



Handbook for Volunteers

Working in our School

TO BE REVIEWED Autumn 2017

Welcome to our school!

Thank you for your interest in volunteering in our school.

We appreciate the help that our volunteers give us in supporting the work of the school.

We want you to enjoy your time with us and we have produced this guide to help you feel comfortable here. Please don't hesitate to ask questions if you are unsure about anything.



When you are working in the school, your **contacts** here will be

- The class teacher you work with
- The school office staff
- The head teacher – Mrs. Harper

At the back of this booklet is a plan of the school to help you find your way around the building.

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 we ask you to follow this simple routine every time you visit the school:

- Sign in and out of the building when entering or leaving (at reception)

- Wear a visitors sticker at all times in school – available when you sign in at reception
- Let your main contact (e.g. the teacher you work with) know where you are working at all times.

Where can I work?

The short answer is – almost anywhere!

Please let us know if you have preference for the age group you work with or if there is a particular task that you would like to focus on.

If you do not enjoy the volunteering opportunity that we offer you, please let us know. We value your time and energy and want you to be happy here!

We try to match our volunteers' time and talents to the needs of the school. If it's not possible to match your skills or preferences we will let you know why.



How much time must I give?

Another short answer – it's up to you!

We appreciate all the time you choose to offer. Some volunteers prefer to have a timetable and others prefer single visits when they can spare some time.

All we ask is that you let us know if you have made an arrangement that you later find you cannot keep. Your work is valuable to the school and the teacher may have been counting on you to help with an activity. Just give us a call as soon as you know you cannot come so that we can avoid disappointing the children.

If you are not able to spend time in school but still want to help, please let us know because there may be things you can do to help us at home.

Where can I go in the school?

As a volunteer you will be expected to work with the teacher/s you have decided to help. For most of the time in school you will be sharing a classroom with teachers and children. These teachers are responsible for you and if you are in any doubt about how to behave, what to do or where to go please ask the teacher.

Apart from moving about the school in the normal course of the day, we would expect you stay with the teacher who will supervise your activities.

During break times or lunch times you can:

- Join your teacher in the staff room

You can leave your personal belongings:

- in the staff room/cloakroom

You can use the toilets:

- that the staff use

NEVER use the children's toilets.

What should I do if I have a problem whilst working in school?



Come and talk to the teacher responsible for you, or a member of staff.

We expect all members of the school community to be polite, courteous and self-disciplined. The same rules apply to teachers, staff, volunteers, visitors and children. If you have problems with a pupil's behaviour, please tell us. The teachers in school are responsible for children in their care.

It is very important that you read and understand the school's policies on behaviour, health and safety, equal opportunity, bullying and confidentiality.

These will help you avoid problems and tell you what to expect. Please ask for copies of these policies and we will explain anything you do not understand.

Some key things to remember when working in school:

- Never get into an argument with children or adults. Teachers are trained to deal with problem situations and they are paid to take responsibility.
- Never tell a child off. The school has a code of discipline which children are expected to follow. As a volunteer you are not expected to discipline children. If there is a problem, tell the teacher straight away.
- The only time we would expect an adult to intervene in an emergency is to prevent a child hurting themselves or others. Do this by telling them firmly and quietly to stop. Avoid physically restraining a child unless they will damage another child or themselves and do this with great care.
- Never shout at a child.
- Never hit a child.
- Never threaten to hit or manhandle a child.
- Never be left in sole charge of a child.
- Report any incident of bad behaviour immediately.
- Please turn off your mobile phone and do not use it whilst helping with the children.
- Never take photos of children in school on your mobile phone.

Health and safety

You must comply with the school's health and safety policy observing any specific requirements whilst volunteering. Do not take part in, or ask anyone else to take part in, any action that might cause you or another person to be put at risk of injury or harm. You should always advise the school's health and safety coordinator of any potential hazard or situation that you feel puts people at risk. All policies can be accessed from the school office.

Child Protection

If you have concerns over a child or a child tells you something please let the class teacher know straight away so it can be dealt with appropriately. As a volunteer you share in a duty of care to the children.

Insurance

You will be insured for the same activities as teachers. The school's policy is available for you to see. Please read it and ask the teacher if you are unsure about anything. Basically, as long as you follow the guidelines in this booklet and in the relevant school policies you will be covered by the school's insurance for most ordinary occurrences.

If you use your own vehicle or the school's vehicle to transport children other than your own on school activities you need to check that your insurance policy or the school's policy protects you against claims from other people and for yourself.

Equal Opportunities

At our school we do not tolerate discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, race, ethnic background, colour, religion, gender, sexual orientation, history of illness, non-relevant criminal records or your marital, employment, financial or social status. As a volunteer you must treat people with respect at all times and ensure that there is no unlawful discrimination, abuse, harassment or bullying in your dealing with children, colleagues or others at the school.

The school has a legal responsibility to ask all volunteers and staff to be checked against certain lists and to have a criminal records bureau check.

You will be asked to agree to this and fill out some forms before you begin volunteering. We will help you with these forms if necessary.

Furthermore, the school has a duty of care to pupils and all people working in the school to make sure that your volunteering does not put anyone at risk. This may mean that the type of volunteering you will be allowed to undertake is restricted in some circumstances but if this is the case we shall explain why. Obviously everybody is not suited to all activities but the school will only take into account relevant criteria when deciding whether you are suited to a particular role. For example, a criminal conviction for fraud may mean that it is inappropriate for you to volunteer to deal with finances and a history of back pain or disability allowance will mean that you cannot undertake physical tasks likely to conflict with your own health and safety.

If you feel that you have been unfairly discriminated against please discuss this with the head teacher. You can also contact your local volunteer centre or Volunteer Bureau listed in the local telephone directory.

Will I be able to volunteer if I am claiming benefits such as Job Seekers Allowance?

Guidance from the Employment Service states that benefits such as JSA, Income Support, Incapacity Benefit and Severe Disablement Allowance will not usually be affected as long as you do not receive any payment other than your out-of-pocket expenses (such as travel expenses, child care or special clothing for the job). The rules and the names of benefits sometimes change so if you are in any doubt, contact your local Volunteer Bureau (in the telephone directory) who will advise you. Your Volunteer Bureau is not a government agency and will give you free and independent advice.

Induction and training

Our school values the work of volunteers and recognises that training can sometimes be helpful. Not only does training help you to help us, it can also mean that you learn useful new skills. We want to offer all our volunteers training if they think it would be helpful for them to carry out their duties in the school. Most training will be very informal and you will not be required to write anything or be tested! But, for some jobs you might like to consider more formal training for which you gain certificates or accreditation. This could be especially valuable to you if you want to learn new skills to use in our school or elsewhere.

From time to time your teacher or person responsible for you in school will discuss your work with you. They will want to know if you have any queries or concerns, whether you are satisfied with your role or if you would like more training for the tasks that you do.

The school will also occasionally invite you to take part in consultations about our volunteering policy. You may be asked to advise us on things we might improve so that we continue to make this a worthwhile place for volunteers to be.

The volunteering experience at our school

Volunteering should never be a substitute for paid work but volunteers at our school can expect to be treated fairly and with many of the same entitlements as paid employees, including clarity about the work we expect you to do, your responsibilities, induction, training, supervision, support and personal development.

We also expect a high standard of commitment from our volunteers who will have to abide by, and be subject to, the school's agreements, codes of conduct, policies and procedures.

People volunteer for many reasons. For example, they may choose to volunteer to build up new skills, gain experience and confidence, to socialise, gain a better understanding of how schools work or simply to give something back to society. All of these are legitimate reasons to volunteer. We aim to offer you diverse opportunities for training and work at the school.

Volunteers have a right to join a relevant trade union.



What work should I not undertake?

Some activities would bring volunteers into conflict with employed persons and may strain industrial relations. The school can give you guidance notes on this if you wish.

Health and safety regulations will prevent you from undertaking some activities. You should read these regulations.

Some activities will expose you to unnecessary risks and teachers supervising your work should ensure that this does not happen. For example, you should not be left alone with children. You should be clear about your role and responsibilities at the school. If in doubt, ask the head teacher.

You should not be asked to do anything that you do not feel comfortable with or be put under any moral pressure.

Do I need to fill in any forms?



For legal reasons, all adults working in schools with children must undergo criminal records checks. This is for the safety of the children which you will agree is of prime importance. We will help you fill out the forms if you wish.

We shall only ask for relevant information from you. We will tell you why we need the information and all written information will be kept confidential.

What about confidentiality?

We expect our volunteers to abide by the same rules of confidentiality as the teachers and other staff at the school.

It is essential that any information you learn about individuals must not be disclosed to anyone outside the school. This includes any Child Protection concerns. In addition please do not post any comments relating to your work in school on social media.

What if I am not happy?

We will ensure that you have an opportunity each half term to discuss how you feel about your volunteering but if you are not happy about your volunteering in the meantime please tell us!

Please do not just leave. Whether it is the work you have been asked to do or a different sort of problem, we will be pleased to listen and help if we can. It is the least we can do in return for your valuable time and commitment.

And finally.....

We would like to thank you for volunteering at our school. We regard you as a friend 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.

Please use the attached form to make your first contact after you have read this volunteers' handbook.

Give it to any teacher or hand it into the office. If you would like to know more before making a commitment please talk to:

- The Head Teacher – Mrs Harper
- The Deputy Head – Mr Sutherland
- The Business Director – Mrs Siddle

Thank you!

Withernsea Primary School

At Withernsea Primary School we demonstrate a commitment to the safeguarding of adults and children. By applying to be a volunteer at our school, you are hereby supporting in the safeguarding of children, and adhere to the policy and procedures written in the safeguarding and safer recruitment policies.

Volunteers in School Application Form

FULL Name: _____

Previous name (if any) _____

Date of Birth: _____

Address: _____

In order to access a current CRB clearance you will need to supply evidence of identification to support your application. The school will need to record the identification provided.

If you already hold a current CRB you will still need to provide the school with the same identification to comply with safeguarding regulations.

The form attached itemises the types of valid identification you can choose to provide.

.....

Office use only:

Documentation seen:

Evidence of current address:

Authorising Officer: