

Volunteer handbook



The governors and staff of St. Martin's Catholic Primary School welcome you and thank you for enquiring about being/offering to be a volunteer helper in our school.

The aim of this leaflet is to support your role in school to make it an enjoyable and worthwhile experience for you, our children and our staff.

Volunteering Opportunities

There are lots of ways that you can help our school community. Many people offer to listen to readers or to help out in the classroom. If you would like to do this, it is helpful if you can commit to a regular time slot so that we can timetable you to work in the same classroom each week. That way, you can start to build relationships with the children and adults in the class. We also need volunteers who can help with projects such as gardening or decorating, and people who are willing to help run events to raise the profile of the school in the local community. These opportunities do not require the same regular time commitment as they are often one-off events. Please speak to Katherine Tilling (Headteacher) or Fiona Duncan in the office if you are interested in volunteering for our school.

PSA

We have an active and friendly PSA but they could always use more help. Whether it's helping with the Advent Fayre, a cake sale or serving tea and coffee after Mass, there's lots you can do. Please let us know if you'd like to be involved.

Signing In and Out:

All visitors **must report to reception on arrival** and sign the visitors' log and collect a visitor's badge in order that we know who is on the premises at any one time. Please sign out when you leave - this procedure is in place to meet safeguarding protocols and fire regulations.

Our School Day:

English and Maths tend to be taught in the mornings but sometimes may take place in the afternoons. Activities may be more varied in Lima Class. Children take part in learning activities both indoors and outdoors. Examples of tasks that you may be asked to help with are:

- Art and Craft work
- Practical Maths
- Food activities
- Group reading or sharing a book with one child
- Visits to the local community or further afield to support learning and sporting activities.

Talk with the teacher about what you are being asked to do and tell him/her of any skills you have which you would like the opportunity to share. Activities are negotiable and you

need to be comfortable with what you are being asked to do. The class teacher will explain what he/she would like you to do - don't be afraid to ask questions about anything you are unsure of.

Working with the Children

- Always be confident about the task you are undertaking even though it may be new to you! Be positive and clear in your explanations.
- Be friendly with the children but not over familiar. It is important that the children give you the same amount of respect as other adults in the school. Encourage children to use your 'grown up' name, for example, Mrs Baker.
- Make positive comments about a pupil's work wherever possible. Encourage children and always show a genuine interest. Be a good listener.
- Questions are an important tool in learning. Use open ended questions such as: 'Why do you think ...? What other way could you think of ...? Could you have got the answer any other way? Explain to me how you ...?'
Questions that ask children to reflect on their learning are also valuable. For example: 'What have you learned about ...? What have you done well? What do you think you can do to improve ...?'
- When you've finished working with a child it is good to reflect on how the activity has gone. Praise the children when they have done well with their learning and attitude. When they haven't done so well, use phrases like: 'Next week, you should think about ...' and 'I think it would help your learning if ...'

DBS Checks

We take the safeguarding and welfare of our children very seriously so all volunteers will be asked to undergo a disclosure and barring service check.

Safeguarding and Disclosures

We all have a responsibility to keep children (under the age of 18) safe, both at home and in school. It is possible that a child may tell you (or try to tell you) things relating to some form of abuse or harm.

Harm is identified in four ways:

Physical - when a child is deliberately hurt or injured.

Sexual - when a child is influenced or forced to take part in a sexual activity. This can also be an activity such as being made to look at inappropriate images.

Emotional - when a child is made to feel frightened, worthless or unloved. It can be by shouting, using threats or making fun of someone. It can also be when children see their parents, or visitors to the home, fighting or using violence.

Neglect - when a child is not being taken care of by their parents/ guardians. It can be poor hygiene, poor diet, not keeping appointments for additional support, not coming to school and being left home alone.

If a child discloses they might be subject to abuse:

- React calmly
- Listen carefully to the child, particularly what is said spontaneously.
- Do not promise confidentiality. Explain to the child that you must pass on the information if you are worried about their safety.
 - Do not ask leading questions or make judgements. Clarify and check your concern if you feel that you are not sure, by using, for example, "tell (T), explain (E), describe (D)" but as soon as you believe that there might be a genuine issue, ask no further questions. This would compromise further enquiries. Only trained investigators should question a child. Reassure the child that they are doing the right thing. Don't keep what you have been told to yourself. Immediately speak to the class teacher or with the designated safeguarding leads – **Mrs Tilling, Mrs Williams and Mrs Jenkins.**

REMEMBER...if in doubt...ask Please do not leave our school without telling someone or doing something.

Health and Safety

All volunteers are responsible for the health and safety of the children in their care. Please ask a member of staff on matters concerning health and safety especially if you observe a risk that needs action. Policies are available on request from the school office.

First Aid

We have several qualified first aiders in school who are on hand to deal with any first aid treatment. We ask that volunteers do not administer first aid of any kind. If a child requires first aid, please see a member of staff.

Confidentiality

As a volunteer you are in a position of mutual trust. It is important that you do not keep records of, or take information off school premises about pupil progress or attainment. The use of mobile phones, especially the taking of photographs without permission is also prohibited to safeguard our children.

Please do not talk about day-to-day happenings in school e.g. perceived misbehaviour of pupils, to friends or acquaintances. If other parents ask you questions about things or about a child (whether it be their own or another), please do not say anything but refer them to the class teacher or headteacher.

All these matters may seem quite harmless but sometimes information is misunderstood or misinterpreted which can result in parents becoming worried or anxious. Also, they may gain an inaccurate picture of what happens within our school.

Fire Regulations

In the instance of a fire drill you will hear a continuous alarm. Please leave by the nearest exit - and follow the lead of the class teacher. Please encourage children to move quietly and without panic to our identified assembly point which is on the playground.

Break Times

You are welcome to use the staffroom at break times; however, you may also wish to spend time with the children. If you do go onto the playground, please let a member of staff on duty know that you are there. There are staff toilets that you are welcome to use.

Other General Points to Help

- Our children understand what is acceptable behaviour: there is an expectation of good behaviour and mutual respect.
- Should any disputes arise, please refer to a member of staff rather than dealing with it yourself.
- Please avoid paying special attention to children you know very well or are related to. This can cause children embarrassment or become upsetting for those whose parents are not able to volunteer.

Communication with the School

If you have arranged to come into school and can't make it one day, please contact the office to let us know as soon as possible.

Thank you!

Finally, we hope you will enjoy your time working with us and the children - remember if you are ever unsure, just ask!

Thank you for your time and support.