

Volunteer Handbook

St Francis' Catholic Primary School



Our school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Welcome and thank you for volunteering to help in our school. The staff and children really appreciate your offer of help and are looking forward to working with you. We value all offers of support as volunteers greatly benefit the children's learning and enrich their school experience.

This Volunteers' Handbook provides you with useful details of school life which we hope will help make you feel welcome and valued. If there is anything that you need to know, please feel free to ask a member of staff - they will be pleased to answer any questions. We hope that you will enjoy the time that you spend with us.

We recognise that all people are different and that some people face prejudice and discrimination on the grounds of gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, age and culture. This school is a community which upholds gospel values and where every person is equally valued; in turn we expect everyone here to support and promote equal opportunities.

Keeping children safe is our priority, so with this in mind, we will ask you to read some key documents (our Safeguarding Policy, Guidance on Safer Working Practices for Those Working in Schools and Health and Safety Policy Statement) and sign to say that you have done this before you start volunteering in our school.

All activities that our volunteers carry out are subject to careful and thorough risk assessment in order that we keep our children and our school environment safe. It is a government requirement that a DBS (disclosure and barring service) check be carried out for people working in certain activities involving contact with children. Depending on the result of our risk assessment, we may ask you to fill in a form and give us documentation such as proof of identity so that a DBS check can be completed before you start volunteering with us.

This is normal procedure for **all adults** who work in our school.

We do hope you enjoy your time with us!

Who we are and how to contact us:

School phone number: 01275 855373
Email address: office@stfrancispri.org
Website: www.st-francis.n-somerset.sch.uk
Head Teacher: Mrs Caroline Hostein
Deputy Head: Mrs Catherine Hunt
Bursar: Mrs Ann-Louise Lumsden

If you cannot attend a session for any reason, please inform us as soon as possible either by email or phone so that we can make alternative plans.

Please sign in at the main reception desk on every visit as a volunteer and sign out as you leave.

All things Practical...

- Tea and coffee is available in the staffroom - please help yourself, but hot drinks must not be taken out of this area
- Adult toilets are located on the corridor to the staffroom
- Please ask your teacher to keep your belongings in the classroom or leave them in the staffroom
- Mobile phones may **only** be used in the staffroom, away from children. This is an essential safeguarding requirement
- If a child is hurt or tells you that s/he does not feel well, immediately ask a member of staff for assistance. For health and safety and legal reasons, please do not attempt to move a child or administer any kind of first aid.

Confidentiality:

During your time in school, you may read confidential information or a teacher may share sensitive information with you about a child. This is to enable you to best support the children you may be working with; **please ensure that this is not shared with anyone else, in or out of school.**

Behaviour Management:

The school operates a positive behaviour management policy and emphasis is put firmly on recognising children's good behaviour. We expect all children to be polite and treat all members of the school community with respect at all times. No volunteer is expected to deal with poor behaviour. Please do not hesitate to ask for help if you need it, rather than dealing with a difficult situation yourself.

Keeping Children Safe:

If a child shares a confidence with you that causes you any kind of concern, you must explain to the child that you need to talk to a trusted adult in school about what has been said. Never promise to keep any secrets. ALL concerns must be reported to the class teacher as soon as possible. Please do NOT ask the child any questions to ascertain facts or make any comments. If you are unable to speak to the class teacher please ask at the office to speak to the head or the deputy head teacher **before you leave your volunteering session.**

*Keep yourself safe from allegations. Don't exchange **any** personal details with the children, make sure that you're never in an enclosed space on your own with a child, don't take any photographs and don't approach any of the children if you see them out of school.*

Tips for working with children

- Always try to be fair
- Praise the children and always try to find something positive to say about a child's work
- Listen carefully and with interest in what the children have to say
- Be patient and let the child 'have a go' him or herself, sensitively helping where necessary
- If you are unsure about something, always ask a member of staff

Helping with Reading

Give the child all your attention, show real enthusiasm for the book the child is reading, ask lots of questions and do lots of talking! If the child gets 'stuck', here are a few tips that might help:

- try sounding out the word (phonics)
- look for words within words
- use picture clues
- skip the word, read on and come back to it

Helping on School Trips

Risk assessments are always carried out by staff before school trips. The teacher leading the trip will make you aware of any potential hazards which have been noted during the risk assessment process. You may also receive information about procedures for crossing roads, what children are allowed to do and where they are allowed to go and any groups of named children which are your particular responsibility.

Fire Drill

If you discover a fire:

- Operate the nearest alarm call point
- Go to the nearest telephone and dial 999
- Carry out any previously arranged duties to be done in the event of fire (these may include dedicated procedures for evacuation of the disabled - e. g. wheelchair bound /hearing impaired pupils) or go to the nearest fire assembly point.
- On sounding the alarm the fire brigade will be summoned if necessary by senior management. All staff, pupils and visitors must leave the building immediately, closing doors behind them as necessary.
- Fire assembly points have been designated and a diagram displaying where they are is placed in each room.
- Only if there is no risk of personal injury should attempts be made to tackle a fire using a suitable fire extinguisher. In addition, if there is no risk of injury, mains services such as gas and electricity should be turned off.

Action on Hearing a Fire Alarm

- Teacher or responsible adult will supervise children leaving the building by appropriate exit, closing the door when the last person is out (diagrams located in each room).
- Proceed to line up point in the Junior Playground

- Walk quickly but do not run.
- Keep calm.
- Do not stop to collect any personal belongings or books.
- Registers will be taken to the line-up points by Office Staff and distributed to teachers for roll call.
- If the fire brigade have been called there must be clear access to the site for emergency services.

VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT

Thank you for offering your services as a volunteer at St Francis' Primary School. Your offer of help is greatly appreciated and we hope that you will both gain from and enjoy your experience here.

Please read and sign this volunteer agreement sheet and hand it in at school. You will receive a copy for your records.

- I have received and read a copy of the school's Volunteer Handbook
- I agree to support the school's ethos
- I agree to treat all information I learn from being a volunteer in school as confidential
- I agree to work only as directed by school staff
- I understand that I may be required to undergo a Disclosure and Barring Service check

Signed: _____

Print name: _____ Date: _____

Signed: _____ (head teacher)

Print Name: _____ Date: _____