

Parent/Volunteer Helper Guide



Thank you for volunteering to help our children in school. Our school is open and welcoming to all parents and adult volunteers who would like to offer their time and support. Adult helpers bring with them a range of skills and experiences that enhances the children's learning opportunities whilst also giving them additional access to adult assistance.

Some volunteers come to school to help with a variety of class tasks such as 1:1 reading support and some may want to help when the children are taken on trips outside school. We welcome whatever support you wish to offer and we know you will find it a very rewarding and enjoyable experience also.

If you've not been a volunteer before and wonder what you may be able to help with then please see the list of possible support areas needed in our school in the last page of this guide. If you have any ideas outside this list then please speak to your child's class teacher to discuss further.

First and foremost, the welfare and security of the children in our school is our main responsibility and whilst we want the children to benefit from as much help and support as possible, we need to ensure it is done so as safely as possible.

This document will give all adult helpers a set of clear expectations and guidelines for working in our school.

"Together we nurture the genius in everyone"

Signing in

For Health & Safety, it is very important that we know exactly who is on the school premises at all times and where they are likely to be. All volunteers and visitors must clearly write their name, arrival time and which class/teacher they are visiting the Visitors Book at the school office. They must then collect a visitor/parent helper badge which must be visibly worn at all times in school. They must also sign out by stating the time they are leaving the school premises.

Safeguarding

At Alexandra School we have a Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, which is annually reviewed in line with statutory guidance and legislation. It can be found with the other school policies in the 'Policies' section from the 'Our School' link on the main Home page of the schools website: www.alexandra.kingston.sch.uk

It can also be found in the link [here](#) if you are reading this document online.

Safeguarding pupils is of utmost importance and all volunteers should be aware of the safeguarding policy. The designated lead for safeguarding at Alexandra School is Rachel Carr. If any volunteer sees or hears anything that causes them to be concerned about the safety or well-being of a child it is important that this is reported to the class teacher, deputy head or the safeguarding lead in an appropriate setting, respecting confidentiality.

Safeguarding Checks

It is a legal requirement that all staff and volunteers who work directly and regularly with children in roles which involve caring for, training, supervising or being in sole charge of children must hold a valid DBS (Disclosing & Baring Service) certificate at the appropriate level. Please be assured that information will be treated in strictest confidence and that these checks are done for the protection and safety of the children.

The Head Teacher has the authority to not accept the help of volunteers if she believes that it is not in the best interest of the children. Please note that whilst you are helping, the responsibility for the welfare of the children remains with the class teacher at all times.

Volunteers not requiring an Enhanced Disclosure

- Volunteers or parents who accompany staff and children on one-off outings or trips that do not involve overnight stays.
- Those who help out at specific events who do not have unsupervised access to children, e.g. school PSA events.

Confidentiality

All staff, parent volunteers and other adults working in the school must do so with professionalism and confidentiality. Whilst helping, you may see children struggling with work, being upset, misbehaving or hear/see other information

concerning a child. You may also become aware of information about children which is confidential or private to the child or their family.

It is vital that you do not disclose any details about specific children with friends, family or a child's parents. If you come across any issues or concerns please discuss these directly with the class/head teacher. If you are asked by other parents for any details regarding their children or any children you are helping then you need to be honest and inform them tactfully and politely that you cannot disclose that detail.

It is the teacher's responsibility to discuss with/inform parents of any concerns/progress regarding their child.

Volunteer's role

The Teacher is responsible for planning, teaching, managing and assessing the children in their class with professionalism and a positive atmosphere.

Your role as a parent helper/volunteer is to help, assist and support children in their learning, under the direction of the Teacher. The school expects volunteers to respect the teacher's expertise and maintain a professional, friendly and approachable attitude while they are helping.

Whenever you are supervising children, the following points will be of help:-

- Always treat children with respect, as you would want them to treat you
- If you are concerned about a child, or if a child tells you something that causes you concern then please immediately speak to class, deputy or head teacher, in an appropriate setting, respecting confidentiality
- Be friendly and positive towards them, praise them wherever possible
- Encourage them to be independent – where appropriate always let them try first before helping
- Do not raise your voice. If you speak normally to the children they will have to be quiet in order to hear what you are saying
- Tell them exactly what to do in as much detail as possible, try not to overcomplicate your request
- Don't be afraid to quietly and calmly correct a child that is misbehaving but never manhandle a child at any time. If in any doubt, speak to the nearest member of staff
- Do not let the children become over-friendly with you. They must learn to behave socially towards adults who are not close friends.
- Encourage them to be polite to one another
- If you are working in your child's own class please remember that you are there to support the whole class and that all rules apply to all members of the group, including your child
- Always sit where you are in sight of other adults/staff for your own protection

- Respect the decision of the teacher and do not question their authority in front of the children. The teacher is approaching a task or situation based on their prior knowledge of the scenario/child. If you do not agree with an approach taken by a teacher please withdraw yourself from the class and speak to the head or deputy head teacher

Volunteers are **not** allowed to do the following:

- Use their mobile phones whilst on school premises in sight of children. In case of an emergency, mobile phones may be used in the staffroom.
- Speak to a child's parents about any aspect of a child's learning or any concerns they have heard/seen about a child in school. If asked, please politely inform the parent to speak directly to the class teacher about their child
- Lift, carry or move a child in any way
- Take children off the school premises without being accompanied by a teacher

If there is anything a volunteer is not clear about then please speak to the classroom teacher. If this is inappropriate then please speak to the Head Teacher, do not discuss any concerns outside the school.

Health and Safety

All Volunteers should know these basic rules whilst they are in school. If in any doubt please speak to the class Teacher.

Accidents/First Aid

If a child is unwell or has had an accident then please immediately inform the nearest Teacher. A large number of school staff are fully qualified First Aiders, who are able to deal with any First Aid treatments.

If you are injured yourself whilst on the school premises then please either report to the school office or if in a serious condition and it is appropriate then please send a child to fetch a member of staff.

Fire

Volunteers need to familiarise themselves with the emergency evacuation procedures for the class they are in. Please ask the Teacher for this detail if you are unsure.

In the event of an emergency, it is important that the Volunteer stays with the teacher and calmly helps them to evacuate the classroom, taking the children to their designated evacuation point. Volunteers that are not in a classroom must calmly leave by the nearest exit and then take the child to their class's evacuation point.

Once at the evacuation site then please immediately inform the Teacher that the child(ren) and you are out safely so they can update the records.

Hazards

All precautions are taken to prevent hazardous situations such as trip/slip areas, storage/usage of any chemicals for cleaning, noise from current building works etc. however accidents can happen and Volunteers should:-

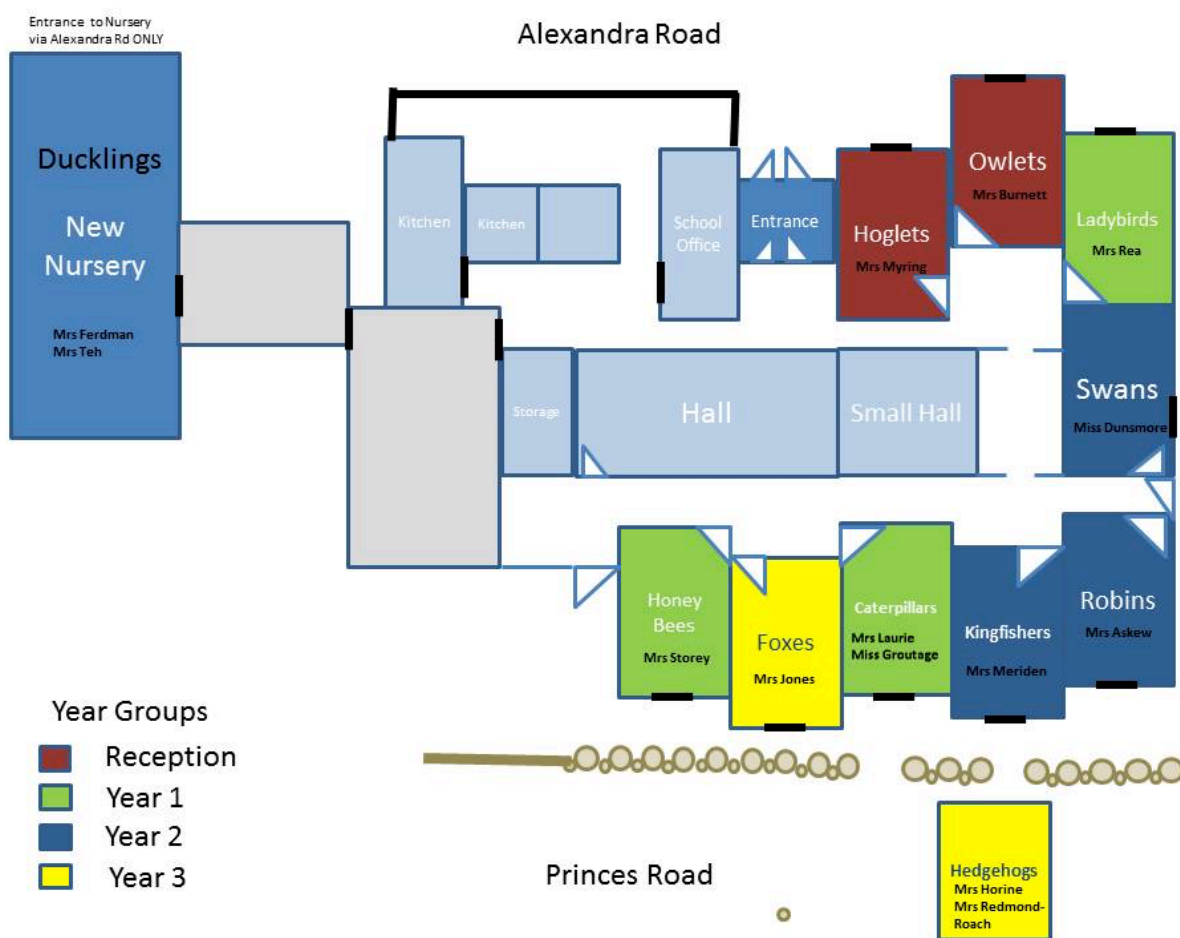
- report hazards and/or incidents to the school office/nearest teacher?
- Cooperate with any incident investigations
- Follow any safe working procedures and instructions from the school

Final Note

Thank you for offering your time and support to our school, we regard you as an extended member of the team. Our duty to you is to make your time with us enjoyable and fulfilling.

If you are unhappy about any time you have spent volunteering here, please let the Headteacher know, do not just stop volunteering. Likewise, if you have seen something the school is doing very well we would love to know.

Working together, we make a great team!



Different ways to volunteer at school:

- Listening to children reading on a 1:1 basis
- ICT (information & communications technology) support i.e. helping with maths, science work etc
- Handwriting practice
- Helping to change Reading Books but ensuring the children keep within their reading level (as advised by the class teacher)
- Supporting children choosing their books from the Lending Library
- Helping children to focus within small group work
- Expand creative skills, such as art
- Helping with supervision of children on school visits
- Lunch-time help to support, listen and talk to the children whilst allowing them to be as independent as possible cutting up their own food and opening their own packed lunch items
- Helping with in-school events such as nativities or performances

Tips supporting Reading:

Reading is a very important life skill for children, your approach to support will depend on the age and level of the child.

Early readers

- First, look all the way through the book together, introduce any new vocabulary to the child
- read the book together , helping the child to sound out unfamiliar words
- Discuss the pictures in the story
- Read the book again, pointing out the words as you read
- Ask the child if they can find key words repeated in the book i.e. 'the', 'in', 'to', 'up' etc
- Children should be aware of full stops and that they need to pause their reading at a full stop and not run sentences together

Extending reading

- As children learn to read the smaller words try to get them to phonically read out bigger words if they are stuck.
- If the child is stuck on a word encourage them to read the rest of the sentence and then go back to see if they can work out the unknown word. Maybe using the picture to help them.
- Even with competent readers you should discuss the story and pictures.
- You can also encourage children to use expressions or put on suitable voices while they are reading.

Discussion Questions

What was the story about? Which part of the story did you like best? Who was the main character? What sort of person was s(he)? Was that a sensible thing to do? What should s(he) have done? What would have happened if....? Perhaps relate some ideas to the children's own experiences i.e. Have you ever ...?