



## Leen Mills Primary School

### Information and Guidance for Parents and Other Helpers

Our responsibility to our pupils is to ensure that from the information they receive, they can critically assess its value to themselves and that the information is aligned to the Christian ethos and values of the school and British values which include democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

#### **Welcome**

Thank you for volunteering to help our children in school. We feel that the involvement of parents in education is vital and we encourage active participation in many ways. Some parents come to school to help with a variety of tasks such as art, food technology and especially reading and usually work with small groups in specific classes.

Other parents help when children are taken on visits outside school.

We believe that our school should be open and welcoming to all who would like to support the children.

However, our overriding concern is for the safety of the children in our care. This document sets out the school's policy, which is to ensure that the children benefit from as much help and support as possible, and are provided at the same time with the best possible security. All parents who help in school on a regular basis will be provided with a copy of this document.

We hope you find the information in this document helpful. If there is anything else you feel would help you, please let us know.

#### **Aims**

- To ensure that parents, carers and other volunteers are welcomed and valued as members of the school community.
- To give clear guidelines on the ways in which parents can help in school.

#### **Information**

**DBS checks:** There is now a requirement for schools to carry out a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check for all staff and volunteers who have regular contact with children. All schools need to hold a register of the checks undertaken. In order for you to work in school as a volunteer, you will need to complete an online DBS check.

(Please ask for more details at the school office). Please be assured that all information will be treated in the strictest confidence and that these checks are done only in the best interests and safety of the children.

**Security:** For security reasons, please use the front door by the School Office and sign yourself "in" and later, when you leave "out". This enables us to know who is on the premises in case of fire or other emergencies. We will issue you with a "Visitor" badge

**Fire Procedures:** The fire alarm is a continuously ringing bell. When it sounds, the teacher will lead the children from the room through the designated exit. If you are working with a small group of children in another part of the school, make sure that all the children are there and then take them out by the nearest fire exit into the playground. Do not let them go back into the classroom for personal belongings. Take the children to the rest of their class and tell the teacher that you are there.

**Attendance:** If you are helping on a regular basis and are unable to attend, please let the class teacher or school office know to assist planning.

### **Guidelines**

Parents and other volunteers helping in school with the children are always under the supervision of the class teacher who will explain the task, what is required of children and the helper's role within that setting. Parents are expected to work co-operatively and professionally with staff. If you are unsure of what you have been asked to do, please check immediately, either with the teacher or a teaching assistant.

Parent helpers are encouraged to use positive feedback rather than a negative response to things that have gone wrong.

Please encourage the children to be independent. Encouragement and support are required whilst not "doing" things for the children.

Helping to clear up is an essential part of learning too. We want all children to see clearing up as a natural part of the activity and you as helper should never be the one who clears everything away.

Children will sometimes "push the boundaries" when with a helping parent. If this happens, quietly tell them what they are doing wrong and remind them of what they should be doing. However, if they continue, please send the child to the class teacher; discipline is the responsibility of the class teacher, not the parent helper.

We seek to promote positive and acceptable behaviour and in doing so will actively praise and reward "good" behaviour.

Whilst you are in the classroom you will sometimes see children being disciplined. Please do not give them any comfort or support. You will not always be aware of what has happened previously, or the warnings that have been given.

Children very quickly learn from the actions, words and attitudes of people around them. Therefore it is important that all our own behaviours in school are those we want the children to copy.

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 in advance by explaining that you will be in the class to help all the children, the teacher is in charge and you have to do what the teacher has asked

If a child does or tells you something that causes you concern, please tell the class teacher or Headteacher as soon as possible after the disclosure in an appropriate setting so that others cannot overhear.

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 Key Stage Leader or the Headteacher, who is the Designated Child Protection Officer. In his absence, Mrs Goldson and Mrs Davies are the Senior Designated persons.

### **Physical Contact**

We have to follow very careful guidelines on aspects of physical contact with children:

1. Please remember not to initiate contact with children, especially physical contact and discourage over-familiarity.

2. If you are helping dress/undress for PE etc encourage the child to do as much as possible for themselves.
3. Please do not lift, carry or move a child in any way.

### **Confidentiality**

Please do not use the opportunity as a parent helper to seek additional information about your own child or other children e.g. looking in drawers, books.

Everyone working within the school is expected to respect their position and access they have to confidential information.

It is very important that all staff, parent helpers and other adults working in the school work to a policy of confidentiality.

You may see children struggling with work, be upset or misbehaving or hear/see other information concerning a child while you are with us in school.

It is not just children's progress that needs to be kept confidential. Some children have medical needs to which we must attend; some families have complex circumstances which mean a child mustn't join in some activities; and some children may be experiencing a traumatic time at home and their behaviour at school may be affected. **Please do not share anything** you have seen or heard in the classroom with friends or family or a child's parent.

We have well defined procedures for informing parents of what has happened whilst the children are in school and we will be the first to discuss any issues where we have concerns.

If a parent helper is approached by a parent and asked for information s/he should refer that parent to the class teacher.

Similarly, parent helpers and volunteers working in the classroom should do so on the understanding that they support the teaching staff and will not pass opinion on such matters as discipline or teaching styles outside the school.

If you are concerned about something you have seen or heard, or you have any queries or problems, please find a convenient moment to speak to the class teacher or, if necessary the Headteacher.

### **Thank you**

Finally, a big "thank you" for your time, enthusiasm and patience. Both children and staff reap enormous benefits from your involvement in school and we hope that you enjoy helping in school and find it to be a rewarding experience

September 2015

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