

St Mary Magdalene C of E Primary School

Headteacher: Mrs Pearson

Assistant Headteachers: Mrs Turvey & Miss Cave



Volunteer & Student Handbook

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1. Welcome

Thank you for your interest in volunteering at our school. We appreciate the help that all our volunteers give in supporting the work of the school.

We want you to enjoy your time with us, and we have produced this guide to make sure you feel comfortable, supported and appreciated. There is a lot of information here, but please don't hesitate to ask questions if you are unsure about anything!

2. Our commitment to you

As one of our valued volunteers, we are committed to giving you the following:

- A friendly and supportive working environment
- Enthusiastic and cooperative children
- Recognition for the work that you do and its impact on learning
- A reference if you apply for paid work here or elsewhere

3. Signing in and out

It is important for security and fire regulations that all volunteers working in the school can be identified and located at all times. We ask you to follow this simple routine every time you visit the school:

- Only enter the school via the front entrance.
- Sign in and make sure you are wearing your ID badge at all times.
- When you have finished, please return your badge to the office and sign out.

4. Where can I leave my belongings?

It's not a good idea to bring too many personal belongings and valuables to school with you; however, the staff member you are working with will let you know where you can leave your coat and bag, etc.

5. Where can I go?

Most of the time, you will be working in a classroom or shared spaces. If you need to visit other classrooms (for example, to collect children for reading), please be as discreet as possible while lessons are taking place.

At break times, we want you to feel relaxed and comfortable and, therefore, you are welcome to use the staff room for somewhere to sit. There are tea and coffee making facilities in there, so make yourself a drink. You may prefer use the playground to get a breath of fresh air, or alternatively, you could sit quietly in the classroom where you have been based.

6. Where can I go to the toilet?

There are toilets near the entrance which you are welcome to use, but please do not use the children's toilets.

7. Working with children

Whether you have previous experience of working with children or not, here are some guidelines to help you be successful in your voluntary work:

- Be friendly and encouraging with the pupils, especially when working with them for the first time. Expect them to be a little nervous – introduce yourself and explain that you will be helping them with their reading/spelling, etc.
- Remember that although we need to be friendly, we are not making friendships, and it is important that the pupils give you the same amount of respect as other adults in the school. Expect children to use your 'grown up' name, e.g. Mrs Smith.
- Our pupils are usually enthusiastic and cooperative. You are not responsible for managing their behaviour beyond making a reasonable attempt to help the pupil focus on their task. Be positive and clear in your explanations, and remember you are not there to negotiate about what the pupils have to do.
- If a pupil is overenthusiastic and silly, ask them politely to settle down to help them and others concentrate. If a pupil is not engaging at all with their work, remind them of the purpose of the activity and that you are there to help them.
- If your reasonable attempts to help a pupil engage with their task are not working, use a final reminder, e.g. 'If you can't settle down you will have to go back to see your teacher.'
- Please don't issue punishments. If you have any concerns at all, go and get help from a member of staff immediately. Miss Cave is our behaviour lead.
- When you have finished working with a pupil, it is good to reflect on how the activity has gone. Praise the pupils when they have done well with their learning and attitude; when they haven't, use phrases like 'Next week you should think about...' and 'I think it would help your learning if...' rather than telling the pupil off.
- Remember that the pupils are always watching – it's good to let them see you interacting respectfully and cooperatively with other adults in the school.

For more information, you can read the school's Behaviour Policy. If you are apprehensive about this area, the best advice is to watch members of staff or other adults working with children, even for the first few weeks. If it just isn't working with a particular pupil or group, please let someone know.

8. Health and safety

You must comply with the school's Health and Safety Policy (available on the school's website), 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 your link staff member or the school business manager of any potential hazard or situation that you feel puts people at risk.

If you are involved in an accident whilst volunteering at the school, please seek first aid if required (a list of qualified first aiders is available in all classrooms), and ensure you report the incident to your link staff member or the school office.

9. Equal opportunities

At our school, we do not tolerate discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, race, ethnic background, skin colour, religion, gender, sexual orientation, history of illness, non-relevant criminal records or 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 pupils, colleagues or others at the school.

If you feel that you have been unfairly discriminated against please discuss this with the headteacher.

10. Child protection

Because of the school's duty of care to all pupils and adults in the school, we must ensure that your volunteering does not put anyone at risk.

The school's designated safeguarding lead (DSL) is Miss Cave, but you can also speak to Mrs Pearson or Miss Wain.

It is possible that pupils may tell you (or try to tell you) things relating to some form of child protection. If this happens, do not question the pupil; let a staff member know immediately, and allow them to deal with it.

While you cannot promise confidentiality within school (i.e. you must make it clear to the child that you'll have to tell someone), you must ensure that once you have passed the matter on you do not discuss it with anyone else.

If you are in any doubt about the safety of a child, immediately tell a staff member or the DSL.

11. Safe practice

To protect the pupils you are working with, and yourself, from any false accusation, follow these simple steps:

- Only work in public areas such as classrooms and corridors.
- Try to work close to where other volunteers or staff members are working.
- Avoid any physical contact with the pupils.
- Try to ensure that your conversation with pupils is friendly but not over-familiar.
- Never accompany pupils into the toilets.

12. Confidentiality

The information we hold about you and your volunteering is confidential, and as such, will not be shared with any third parties without your express consent, unless legally required.

We ask that you respect the confidentiality of staff and pupils at our school by not discussing things you have seen and heard whilst volunteering, especially when sensitive information

about pupils is involved. We have a confidentiality agreement which we ask you to read and sign.

13. Insurance

You will be insured for the same activities as teachers. As long as you follow the guidelines in this booklet and in the relevant policies you will be covered by the school's insurance for most occurrences.

14. Timings of the school day

8:45 am	Start of the school day
12pm – 1pm	Lunch
3:15 pm	End of the school day

15. Key contacts

Main school office	Mrs Dallison
Headteacher	Mrs Pearson
Assistant headteacher	Mrs Turvey & Miss Cave