



**Great Missenden**

**Church of England Combined School**



**A Guide For  
Adults Helping  
In School**

At Great Missenden School we value highly the way in which parents so willingly and enthusiastically come into school on a regular basis, and on special occasions, to work in partnership with us.



Your help is beneficial to the children and also very helpful to staff. We are always pleased to hear when parents themselves feel that they have also gained a great deal from the experience.

We realise that many parents are not trained to manage groups of children, or know the purpose or expectations behind many of the activities in which they might become involved.

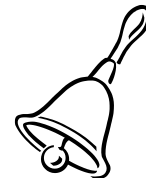
Discussion with the teacher about the task is essential. This booklet will also support you if you are helping in school for the first time.

### ***Some Important Reminders***

- Please tell the member of staff you are working with as soon as possible if you are not able to come into school. (A phone message to Reception will get the message through.)
- Always sign in (and out) of our Visitors' Book at the front entrance.

### ***Fire Practice and Emergency Procedures***

- Please ensure that you are familiar with the Fire/Emergency Procedures for the area where you are working. Staff will explain these to you and there are printed details to refer to in every classroom/area of the school.
- If the fire alarm rings then please accompany the children as they evacuate the building in silence.



### ***Confidentiality***

- **In school it is our policy never to discuss a child with any parent other than their own. If, as a parent helper, you feel you should pass on any information about a child to the child's parents, please do this via the class teacher. It is vital that you respect this policy and never pass on information regarding anything you may have heard or seen whilst working in school. If parents ask you about their child or other children, please refer them to the class teacher, and do not feel pressurised to provide information yourself. We have a Confidentiality Statement which we ask all parents to read, sign and return to the school office before coming in to help. Children have a right to privacy and respect when they are engaged in their learning. All the adults who work with them should not pass on this privileged information, and should not make comparisons between children or judgements about their learning needs.**

### ***First Aid***

- If a child has an accident, please report it immediately to the class teacher.

## ***Behaviour***

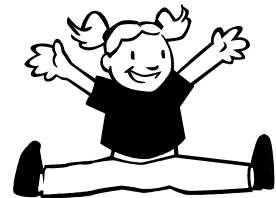
- A high standard of good behaviour is expected of all children. They should carry out reasonable requests made by helping adults without delay or argument
- It is vital that you refer any behaviour difficulties directly to the class teacher. Do not deal with these situations yourself.

## ***Group Control***

Managing a group of children effectively is a particular skill. Useful keys to successful group control are outlined below:

### **DO**

- Relax
- Smile
- Use direct eye contact
- Keep the activity moving at a fairly brisk pace
- Direct most of your talk/questioning to individuals (the other children will usually listen)
- Where appropriate, join in with the activity yourself
- Show your enjoyment in the activity



### **TRY NOT TO**

- Become tense for fear of losing control
- Allow children to laugh at another child's mistakes

### **REMEMBER**

- You may always return any child to the class/teacher
- There should be a friendly rapport between you and the children. You will gain respect by insisting on your wishes being carried out.

## ***Dress***

Since you might be asked to become "closely involved" with paint, glue, water, etc., please come dressed accordingly!

## ***A Last Reminder***

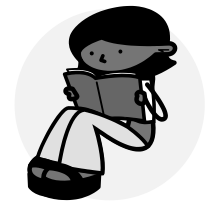
For your own safety and theirs, never lift a child and please remember not to sit a child on your knee. If they are upset, a reassuring hug around the shoulders is best.

## **LISTENING TO READING**

- Please check with the Class Teacher about **who** to hear read, and if you need to record anything in the class reading file and/or child's reading record etc.
- The child needs to come away with a feeling of SATISFACTION.
- The aim of listening to children read is to build up CONFIDENCE and provide the opportunity for reading aloud.

## SUPPORTING CHILDREN READING

- Make yourself and the child as comfortable as possible.
- Chat briefly with the child initially to put the child at their ease.
- Smile.
- Discuss briefly whether or not they enjoy the book.
- Say “let’s have a go then” (meaning that you will join in sometimes).
- Encourage the child to “sound out” any unknown words and to word build (use their phonological knowledge).
- Invite the child to read on if a word is unknown and then return to the unknown word,  
or
- Read the word for the child if they hesitate (sometimes just helping with the first sounds will help).
- Show your delight with the child’s successes.



If time allows ...

- Talk with the child at the end of the reading session about what they have read (“What do you think will happen now?”).
- Indicate that you will be looking forward to seeing how they have got on by the next time you see them.

## PLEASE DO NOT

- Attempt to speed up a slow reader.
- Discuss a child’s reading skills with other parents.

## USING THE COMPUTERS

This is an area where volunteer



help proves to be extremely

valuable:

- Ideally the helper and the teacher should sit together and ‘learn’ a new educational program (but this is not always feasible).
- When the helper feels confident it is best to start with a single child before progressing to supervising a small group.
- Take the lead from the teacher regarding whether it is appropriate for the children to select the program themselves. (Older children might need to save and edit their work).
- Question children as they work. See if they know what they are doing.

- Encourage them all the time, especially when they encounter difficulties.
- When appropriate, help them to consider ways of improving their work.
- It may be appropriate for you to act as 'scribe' to record pupils' ideas.
- The class teacher might ask you to support the child to feed back to the class on how they managed with the task.

## ART/CRAFT SESSIONS

Regardless of the activity or the age group of children you are supporting, the following always apply:

- Aprons on and sleeves up!
- Emphasise safety, especially in the carrying and use of scissors.
- Explain, demonstrate and guide, but please do not 'take over'.
- Resist the temptation to make items look 'better' once the children have finished.
- Never throw away anything a child has made.
- Insist that the children help to tidy and clean up.



## COOKERY

Cookery sessions provide a range of valuable experiences for the children and it is so much easier to operate a programme of cookery sessions with volunteer help. There is a wealth of discussion available in a cookery session both between the adult and child and between the children themselves. Try not to inhibit discussion but equally do not allow children to discuss non-relevant areas.

*Discuss in particular:*

- |         |   |  |
|---------|---|--|
| Texture | - | What do the ingredients feel like?           |
|         | - | What happens when we add liquid?             |
| Colour  | - | How would you describe the original colours? |
|         | - | Do the colours change?                       |
| Changes | - | Dissolving                                   |
|         | - | Freezing                                     |
|         | - | Heating                                      |
|         | - | Cooking                                      |
| Smell   | - | Do you like the smell?                       |
|         | - | What does it remind you of?                  |



There is lots of scope for *Mathematics*:

- Counting (numbers of cup or spoonsful)
- Weighing
- Timing
- Measuring
- Shape
- Cost

There can be perfect opportunities for children to learn about *food from different areas and cultures*:

- Which spices do you use at home?
- Where do you think certain ingredients are grown?

*Skills of prediction* can be encouraged:

- What do you think will be inside here when we cut it?
- How many items do you think we are going to make?

### *Health and Safety Issues*

Clearly cookery sessions could be very unsafe if there were to be poor control/supervision. There are also many chances to teach children about healthy eating and good hygiene.

### Rules of the Kitchen

- Hands must be washed
- Aprons must be worn
- Long hair should be tied back
- Areas should be kept orderly throughout the session
- No bowls, utensils or fingers to be licked
- Washing up and tidying up are important
- Sinks, worktops and tables must be left clean
- No running

It is usually possible to emphasise certain issues frequently as you cook:

- Kitchen safety (knives, burns, heat, etc.)
- Salmonella risk (wash hands after handling eggs)
- Food hygiene (food to be cooked quickly then cooled)

## SCHOOL VISITS



The success of school visits depends on careful planning and good organisation. Volunteer help is often necessary as close supervision is vital for health and safety reasons. Good assistance can also enrich the quality of the children's learning

experience. Volunteers must therefore be well prepared. Individual teachers will outline the purpose of the visit and the programme for the day to you. Regardless of the age of child or type of visit, the following rules always apply:

Standards of children's behaviour are the same as when they are in school:

- The children are representing Great Missenden School. Well behaved and good mannered children confirm our good reputation.
- On a coach journey the children should remain seated and belted at all times, unless a member of staff gives them permission to move.
- Children should stay close to their group leaders (or report back to them as arranged).
- All the necessary risk assessments are carried out prior to any visit and volunteers will be provided with a copy.

### **WHAT TO DO WHEN THERE IS NOTHING TO DO!**

Establish with individual teachers which particular jobs they would find it most useful for you to do in any spare moments. Almost every teacher will appreciate the following:

- Sharpening pencils
- Tidying bookshelves
- Mending books
- Sorting jigsaws/equipment
- Washing equipment eg paint and glue pots, brushes etc.



Reading a story or simply holding a conversation with a small group of children is a valuable way to fill a few spare moments, but do check first to establish whether the children should be busy elsewhere!

**Finally, we hope you find this guide helpful to you as a volunteer. Thank you for all your time, effort, enthusiasm and support in school. If you have any questions regarding helping in school, then please do not hesitate to ask us.**