



# THE FOREST FEDERATION

## Parent Helper Policy

**Please read in conjunction with induction handbook.**

### **Aims:**

- To give clear guidelines on the ways in which Parents can help in school.
- To ensure good communication between Teachers and Parent helpers.
- To provide a framework for the operation of the helper system.
- To build positive relationships with all the adults who help in school
- To value and utilise the expertise, talents and interests of adults who come into school
- To enable the children to meet and work with a variety of different people
- To facilitate individual and small group work under the teacher's supervision and guidance

We welcome a variety of adults into school as helpers. These may be parents, grandparents and other relatives of children in school, family, friends, members of the local community and people who have a particular talent, expertise or interest which is linked to a class or school-based topic.

Adults are warmly welcomed to help in school at times that are mutually agreed. Whilst we appreciate help of a regular nature in the classroom working with the children, there are a variety of tasks that can be done either outside of the classroom or at home that are of equal benefit to the staff and children, including trips, photocopying and collating etc. Sometimes we will ask for a volunteer to complete a specific one off job via the regular Newsletter such as trip support or certain activities.

At the beginning of each year and/or termly we send out a request for help on the newsletter and parents complete a form which registers when they are free, the types of activities/ help they would like to provide and it also allows them to register their skills and/or expertise which they are prepared to offer to the school (appendix 1).

All Parents who help in school on a regular basis have a formal induction where they are provided with an induction booklet outlining many areas including confidentiality, appropriate behaviour, processes and procedures, Health and Safety and Child Protection. All helpers are expected to be familiar with school routines and practices. Regular helpers will rapidly learn individual practices, but policy documents are available to give a deeper understanding of our methods and ideas. Helpers in school will be asked to sign documentation upon induction (appendix 2). All helpers who have regular contact with pupils will be asked to complete a form in order for them to be DBS (disclosure and barring scheme) cleared. The school maintains a record of all staff with DBS clearance and this updated in line with County Guidance. Only adults with DBS clearance may help in school.

All helpers must sign in and out of the 'Visitors' Book' and wear a visitors/helpers badge.

Adults helping in school with the children are always under the supervision of the class teacher, office manager or headteacher (dependent on support) who will explain the tasks, what is required of the children and the helper's role within that setting.

We aim not to put a parent in the same classroom as their child but on occasion this is necessary. We always think about this situation carefully and decide if the child /parent would be able to cope with this. If this does happen for some reason parent helpers are reminded that their presence in the same classroom as their child can sometimes cause difficulties and the importance of appropriate behaviour and responses to their child. This indeed applies to the whole school

Adult helpers are welcomed into the staffroom at break times to enjoy a drink and a chance to relax, but we do ask everyone to be aware that items of a confidential nature are sometimes discussed here and to exercise discretion.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

We also ask that CONFIDENTIALITY be maintained at all times in respect of the staff as well as children's attainments, attitudes and behaviour whilst operating in school as a helper. **Any matter that is of concern should be discussed with the Headteacher immediately in order for any misunderstandings or difficulties to be addressed as a matter of urgency.** Parents who demonstrate they are unable to be confidential in helping in school will be asked to relinquish their support.

### **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

**What kind of activities might I be engaged in?**

**We might ask you to become involved in a variety of activities such as:**

- Reading / Sharing books.
- Working on the computer.
- Playing games.
- Making things.
- Cooking.
- Sewing.
- Mathematics – mental maths, times tables.
- Theme related studies.
- Coming with us on visits.
- Photocopying / laminating / filing.
- Sometimes just being there is what is needed!

*Many of the activities that we ask you to help with are the sorts of things that you do at home.*

The teacher will give you:

- Clear guidelines about the activity.
- All the materials you need.
- A record sheet to jot down any comments as it may not be possible to talk to the teacher about how the activity went. Feedback about the children's achievements and any questions you have can then either be managed in person or using this form.

Please ask if there is anything that you are not sure about or if you need help.

#### **What are the key pointers when working with children?**

#### **These are a few of the most important points to remember when you are working with a group of children**

- It is vital to encourage the children to talk about what they are doing to use the correct vocabulary.
- Always encourage the children to do things for themselves. It is important that they are independent and although they need help and supervision, the end result should always be their own work. Don't be tempted to do the work for them! The learning that goes on while the children are doing an activity is much more important than the end product!
- When playing games with the children, try and encourage the idea of taking turns and being a good loser. The real joy of a game is the taking part!
- Follow the schools reward and sanction policy and ensure that you manage children consistently with the support of the teaching assistants and class teachers.

#### **Who will benefit from your helping in our school?**

#### **The children will value your help because:**

- They will benefit from your skills and experience.
- They can spend more time in small groups or receiving individual help.
- Your support and encouragement can help to make an activity a really worthwhile learning experience.
- You have the time to listen and talk.
- You can help to increase a child's confidence in dealing with a wider range of people.
- They should make further progress and support their attainment!

#### **The teachers greatly value your help because:**

- You probably have skills which the teacher does not have.
- You are able to give more time to a group or an individual than the teacher.
- You release the teacher to work in a more concentrated way with other children.
- You may help with school administration helping with these time consuming tasks.

#### **Yourselves because:**

- We hope that you will find the experience enjoyable.
- We hope that you will gain a greater understanding of how children learn.
- We hope that you feel that you have learnt something through the experience.

#### **What does 'sharing books with children' mean?**

#### **A few quick pointers to help you when you are asked to read or share a book with a child:**

The teacher will indicate whether you should read to the child or the child should read to you. If this is not clear, ask.

- If the child appears 'stuck' tell them gently to use their phonics and 'sound it out' or encourage a sensible guess based on what has already been read or look at the illustrations for clues and if all else fails, tell them the word. Quite often a lack of confidence will inhibit them from making an attempt and their fear of 'getting it wring' will quite often result in silence.
- Encourage the child to predict what might happen next and discuss how they feel about the story and the characters.

- Make the experience an enjoyable one, sharing with the child your love of books. This is a moment for quality time for you both.

## **APPENDIX 2**



# **THE FOREST FEDERATION**

## **Parent Helper Papers**

NAME:

- I confirm that I have been made aware that the school has clear policies for the following and that I am familiar with the contents of these policies and where they are located (staff room and admin office)
  - Safeguarding Children
  - Whistleblowing
  - Critical Incidents (now called Emergency Action Plan and includes Bomb Threat Procedure Guidelines, Hazardous Substances, Emergency Procedures for Dealing with Suspect Packages)
  - Reporting and Investigating Accidents and Violent Incidents
  - Health and Safety
  - Freedom of Information
  - Helpers in School
  - Confidentiality
  - Complaints and Grievances
  - (ICT) Security and E Safety Policy for Schools
  - Administration, Storage and Control of Medicines and Drugs
- I am aware of the location of the 'Asbestos Register', its contents and the procedures relating to visitors to school and the disturbance of asbestos.
- I am aware of the schools' risk assessments for everyday activities and the location of these risk assessments (staffroom and head teacher's office)
- I have been made aware of the designated person for Safeguarding Children (child protection) and Health and Safety – Mrs. Gethin and the deputy person in her absence.
- I know what to do if a child makes a disclosure to me or I have concerns about a child
- I am aware of the schools' procedure for Emergency Evacuation
- I have received a Health and Safety Induction
- I am aware that the use of mobile phones and personal cameras or video cameras are NOT permitted in school.
- I am aware that I must not bring in to school or use any personal electrical appliances.
- I am aware that I must inform the head teacher of any substances hazardous to health (such as personal medication) that I have about my persons and that on request I will surrender these for safe storage.
- I am aware that if in any instance I have needed to use reasonable force to restrain a pupil I must record this appropriately (using the Behaviour Incident Sheets located in the staff room) and inform the head teacher immediately.
- I agree to inform the head teacher of any issues, medical or otherwise which may impact on my safe and effective working with children.
- I understand that CONFIDENTIALITY must be maintained at all times in respect of the staff as well as children's attainments, attitudes and behaviour whilst operating in school as a helper. Any matter that is of concern I will discuss with the Headteacher immediately in order for any misunderstandings or difficulties to be addressed. I understand that if I demonstrate I am unable to be confidential in helping in school I will be asked to relinquish my support.

Signed:

Date: