



# Parent helper handbook

## **What will I do?**

There are lots of ways you can help in school. What you will actually do depends on what is needed at the time and also on your own interests and skills. Whatever you do, you will get as much information and guidance as possible.

If you are not sure what the teacher would like you to do when you arrive, please ask a member of staff.

When you work with children at school you will always be under the supervision of one of the teachers, who will let you know what we want you and the children to do. If you have specific skills which could be used in school, please let the teacher know and she/he will try and use your time and skills in the most productive way possible.

Each activity or task that children are engaged in has a clear purpose and it is important that you understand what that is if the children are to benefit from your presence. Do not hesitate to ask if you are not clear about what is expected.



### **Talking to the children**

When working with children, talking to them and in particular questioning them is a very useful way of helping them to think and learn. For example, in a cooking activity ask, "Did the mixture change when it was cooked?" or "Why did that happen?".

Don't worry if you feel you can't explain it properly, the important thing is to encourage the children to think and talk about what they are doing. If at any time when working with a group you feel that a particular child is not responding to you or is making it difficult for you to work with other children do let the class teacher know.

### **What about my children?**

Although it is pleasant to work with your own children this can have a detrimental effect on their attitude and concentration and you may be asked not to do so. Equally you may not want to work with your own child. Please discuss this with your child's teacher.



### **Finally...**

In case we teachers forget to say so please be assured that we really do appreciate your help (we may be too busy or harassed to say so but we do!!) If you have any worries or queries, or any good ideas on how we can improve something, please let us know.

## **Confidential Information**

Occasionally in school you will become aware of information about children which is confidential or private to the child or their family. This is a delicate matter that requires a great deal of tact on your part. But, any conversation with parents outside is a breach of the school's confidence. Even a comment such as, 'your Jimmy reads well,' is not acceptable, as others will wonder why you have not said that to them.



It is very important to treat anything you hear or see in school with regard to particular children as being in absolute confidence and entirely a matter within the school. Any information that leads you to believe a child is at risk should be mentioned to the headteacher

Similarly you may find that parents who are friends will ask about the progress or behaviour of their children in school. Again, it is very important that you firmly suggest that if they are worried in any way about their child then they must discuss the matter themselves with the head or the class teacher.

## **Enhanced CRB Disclosure**

To ensure the safeguarding and welfare of all our children here at Bishops Down we will carry out a full enhanced CRB disclosure on any adult helping in school regularly. These procedures will help us to identify anyone unsuitable to work with children.



## **Supervising the children**

Like all other adults in school, you will have high expectations of children's behaviour. The children should be courteous, use polite language and listen when others are speaking. Encourage them by praise and by setting a good example. If any child misbehaves, please make sure that the teacher knows about it. The aim at Bishops Down is that everyone gives each other care and consideration and the importance of the School Rules is constantly promoted in assemblies and discussions.

If you can help to reinforce good behaviour when you are in school the value of the time you spend will increase tremendously. In short, the following may help:

- Always treat children with respect and in the same sort of way that you would expect them to treat you. They should refer to you as Mr or Mrs in Key Stage 2 even if they know you outside school.
- Be friendly towards them and praise the children wherever possible.
- Model behaviour – if the teacher asks the class to stop, show the children what to do.
- Avoid shouting. If you speak normally they will have to be quiet in order to hear what you are saying.
- Give clear and simple instructions.
- Don't be afraid to quietly and calmly correct a child that is misbehaving but never manhandle the children at any time. If in doubt, speak to the staff.
- Do not let the children become 'silly' or 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 concerned about a child for any reason, have a word with the class teacher or the headteacher. Do not speak directly to the parents of the child.

## Hearing Readers

One of the tasks that you will may be involved in is reading with the children. This is an important but time consuming task. The exact approach will depend on the reading level of the child.

Beginning readers:

1. Children should be aware that you read from left to right, turning the pages that way and reading the lines left to right and top to bottom.
2. Read the book together to start with.
3. Discuss the pictures and the story.
4. Read the book again pointing to each word as you read.

Early readers:

1. Ask the child to point to each word as he reads it.
2. Discuss the pictures and the story.
3. Read the story together.
4. Ask the child to find key words which are repeated several times in the book i.e. 'the', 'up', 'in', etc.
5. The children should be aware of full stops and that you need to pause at a full stop and not to run sentences together.



Extending reading:

As the children can read more words try to get them to work out new words by making a good logical guess. Maybe the picture will help. If the child has good knowledge of initial sounds, looking at the first letter strings or small words within words, sound out the whole word e.g. 'ing' in king.

## What else?

Try to get the child to read to the end of the sentence and then go back to work out an unknown word. Even with competent readers you should discuss the stories and pictures. Also you can try to encourage the children to use expression or put on suitable voices.



## Discussion Questions:

The following are examples of the types of questions to use when discussing a story:

- What was the story about?
- Who was the main character?
- What sort of a person was he?
- Was that a sensible thing to do?
- What should he have done?
- Which part did you like best?
- What would have happened if....?

## Using the helpers reading record books:

When you have heard a child read please enter the page number that they have read up to. You may put a short positive comment e.g. good, well done, etc but we do ask that parents and helpers do not put any negative comments in the books or suggestions of what the child needs to do. Please ensure that you initial the comment so we know who the child read with at a later date.

## Changing Reading Books:

Books will usually be changed first thing in the morning, but this may vary from teacher to teacher and will usually be done with a member of staff in KS1 or Early Years. If you have any queries, please check with the teacher

