

St Gregory's Catholic Academy



Parent Helpers in School

2014

Thank you for coming to help in school - we are delighted that we are able to use your time, skills and patience to the benefit of children at this school. By helping in school, you are helping to raise the standards of education by giving extra individual attention to the children and giving teachers a chance to spend more time working on aspects of the curriculum which will help children to achieve better results. This pack tells you much of what you will need to know whilst you are working in school. If you have any questions or suggestions please let us know.

Working with children

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. Planning sheets or worksheets with written explanations may also be available but do not hesitate to ask if you are not clear about what is expected.

When working with children on any kind of activity, 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?" "Why or how 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. He or she will want the activity to be successful and will want to help

you make it so.

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. Our aim is that everyone gives each other care and consideration and the importance of good behaviour and effort is constantly promoted. If you can help to reinforce good behaviour when you are in school the value of the time you spend will increase tremendously. You may find it helpful to read the school's Behaviour and Discipline Policy available from your class teacher.

What you will 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. You might;

- hear children read
- work with groups of children on work set by their teacher
- help in the library
- help in lessons such as Literacy, Numeracy, PE, Art and ICT
- photocopy
- set out and clear away equipment
- display children's work
- cover and repair books the list is almost endless!

When you will help

Your help is welcome at just about any time during the school day. Help is even needed before and after school hours, but this is likely to be more difficult for you.

Let the school know when you are available, but be realistic about what you offer. It's usually best to start with a short time each week and then add to it if you find you have more time free. It doesn't have to be a whole morning or a whole afternoon - an hour a week can be very helpful. Try to make it the same day and time each week. That makes it easier for you to remember and easier for the school to plan. If for some reason, you can't come to school as arranged, please let everybody know - giving as much notice as possible.

If you are working away from children, for example mounting work or mending reading books, you will be given the necessary equipment by the class teacher and shown where to work. If you run into difficulties please feel free to ask.

At break times you are very welcome to join us in the staff room for a drink. Don't worry about paying for your drink as we provide refreshments for parent helpers. If there are a lot of visitors in the staff room teachers sometimes find it difficult to get a drink and it is helpful if parents allow teaching staff to get their drinks promptly as they have to be back in classrooms when children return from the playground.

Child Protection

If at any time you are worried about something you see or a child may tell you, it is vital that you tell the class teacher as soon as you can, but without other children hearing you.

Health & Safety

Whilst helping in school you will be covered by the school's insurance policies for accident and third party risks etc.

Please read the Fire Procedures which are displayed in each classroom.

Under no circumstances should you be alone with a child in an enclosed space without the specific permission of the Headteacher or the Deputy Headteacher.

Confidentiality

Although it may be pleasant to work with your own children this can have a detrimental effect on their attitude and concentration so the school discourages parents working in the same class as their child.

While you are helping in school, you will have access to confidential and often sensitive information about children, particularly children with special needs and about other adults. Like all other people working in school you will have to keep such information strictly confidential and we ask all parents to behave professionally and to respect the private nature of certain discussions and information. When you are at home you might often tell your friends how well or badly their child has behaved or done their work, but school is different. Many parents object very strongly to another parent telling them about their own children. The school's policy is that it is for the class teacher to decide when to discuss children's behaviour or work with parents and what to say. Under no circumstances should you talk about specific children other than with the teachers employed at the school, without the specific agreement of the Headteacher.

Parent helper declaration

I have read and understand the 'Parent Helpers in School' information and in particular the sections on Child Protection, Health & Safety and Confidentiality.

Signed _____

Print Name _____

Date _____

Please complete this and hand it in to the school office. Thank
you