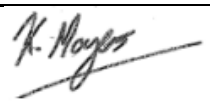
Gateway Primary School Policy Cover Sheet

Policy Name:	**Volunteer Helpers Policy**
Adopted at / by:	**FGB**
Signed on behalf of the Governing Board	
Name:	**Kevin Moyes**
Date:	**September 2024**
Signed on behalf of Headteacher:	**pp.**
Name:	**Kayleigh Anstee**
Date:	**September 2024**
Review period:	**2 year**
Date of next Review	**September 2026**

Volunteer Helper Policy

Policy and guidelines for parents and other people in the community who come into school to work with us.

We welcome you into our school and thank you for your offer of help.

INTRODUCTION

Gateway Primary School actively encourages supportive relationships between school, home and our communities. The pupils benefit from the voluntary help given by parents and others in the community, but the acceptance of voluntary help always depends upon its appropriateness.

In the interests of the safety and well-being of pupils, helpers are asked to read this policy and discuss it with a member of staff **prior to beginning work in school**.

PERMISSION TO WORK IN SCHOOL

In accordance with government guidelines, our governors insist that an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service Check (DBS) is carried out on any new helper working in school. You will be required to fill in the relevant online form, which is completed in the school office. If police clearance to work in school is not granted then you will be informed before you start.

When you volunteer in school you will have access to children and the school has processes to follow as part of our safeguarding duties.

If you are supervised by a member of staff at all times, for example working alongside a teacher or teaching assistant in the classroom, this is an ‘unregulated’ activity and so the school is not required to obtain a DBS certificate. However, as we are committed to having really robust safeguarding in school, we will apply for one.

If your volunteer role means that you will have unsupervised contact with children, for example hearing a child read in the corridor, this is a ‘regulated’ activity and the school is required to obtain a DBS certificate. We also have to completes a check to confirm that a volunteer hasn’t been barred from working with children.

When we do a DBS check, a member of the office team will tell you what ID documents you need to bring in.

PARENTS WITH PRE-SCHOOL PUPILS

Unfortunately we are unable to accept any offers of help in school if it would mean a pre-school child would also have to attend.

CONFIDENTIALITY

It is very important that anyone working in the school is aware of the necessity for total confidentiality regarding any information learnt about any individual – child or adult.

OUT OF SCHOOL QUESTIONS

Any questions you may be asked regarding the school or a pupil out of school hours must be referred to the teaching staff.

STAFFROOM

All visitors to the school are very welcome to use the staffroom being mindful that some of the information in the staffroom may be of a confidential nature.

We have a strict policy of no hot drinks to leave designated areas unless they are in specific safety mugs. Please see a member of staff if you require one of these. It would also be appreciated if you could wash up cups after use, or put them in the dishwasher.

FIRE DRILL

Please familiarise yourself with the fire evacuation procedure and fire safety notice in the room you are working in. All fire exits are clearly labelled. If you do hear the fire bell, please take part in the drill by leaving the school by the nearest and safest exit, taking any pupil in your care with you.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Please make sure that you sign in the visitors' book on entry into school. It is located by the hatch in the school office. Please do this before commencing work in school. You will also be given a visitors' badge to wear whilst working in school. Please remember to sign out and return your badge before leaving.

If any child you are working with should sustain an injury please inform the class teacher immediately. Medical facilities are located in our school office and a number of staff are trained to deal with minor injuries. Please do not treat an injured child yourself.

The class teacher should inform you if any child you will be working with has a specific medical need of which you may need to be aware.

Potentially unsafe equipment should never be left unattended; this is especially the case with sewing equipment and cooking utensils. Pupils should be kept well out of the way of hot ovens.

Helpers should always avoid being with one child in isolation, anywhere in school.

The Designated People for Safeguarding concerns are Mrs Gardner, Mrs Anstee, Mrs Scovell and/or Mrs Summers. Should you have a child disclose information to you that raises concerns please speak to the class teacher or one of the designated people.

There is no smoking or vaping anywhere on school grounds

TIME AND PLACES TO WORK

Please arrange a convenient, regular time to come and help in school with your child's class teacher. If you are ever unable to help when you are expected, please ring the school to let us know as soon as possible, as the teacher will have planned for you. Normally you will be working in the classroom, Library or in any shared areas.

Whilst many parents prefer to work in their child's class, this may not always be possible. If a teacher feels that your presence helping in your own child's class is having an adverse effect on your child, they may ask you either to defer working in the school until your child is more settled or ask if you would be willing to help elsewhere. Similarly if one particular class has a lot of parent helpers and others do not, we may ask you if you would mind working elsewhere for the benefit of all our pupils in school.

JOBS YOU MAY BE ASKED TO DO

You may be asked to help with work in a variety of tasks with pupils. These may include: reading, playing language or mathematical games, art, design or technology activities, cooking, gardening or accompanying educational visits.

We like to give people jobs they feel happy and confident about. Please do tell us what you would particularly enjoy doing with the pupils! If you have particular talents, don't be shy of telling us.

TASKS

Teachers and helpers will agree the activity to be carried out. Preferably this will be an activity which a helper enjoys, and feels he/she can make a contribution to in school. We want all helpers to enjoy their time spent in our school.

Teachers and helpers should feel able to request that the task is changed or halted if necessary. Helpers should feel able to express concerns in an atmosphere of trust.

PUPIL BEHAVIOUR

Teachers are delighted to hear about tasks which have gone well, and where pupils have responded well. Showing your pleasure in a task well done is encouraging to pupils as well as staff. Helpers should take a kind, yet firm, positive approach with pupils. Refer a child to a member of staff if the child is displaying behaviour which challenges. Helpers should not feel they have failed if they have to return pupils to class if they are unable to manage, or where they are uncomfortable with the relationship. There is always a wide range of ability in each class, so please remember every piece of information you learn about any child in school is strictly confidential.

Please remember never to discuss any child out of school.

Specific guidance for supporting reading in school.s

READING

Helpers often listen to pupils read. Reading should be an enjoyable experience. Please help to make sure that it is for the pupils you work with.
Please do not make written comments in home/school books.

Any comments written by pupil's parents in the home/school books should be referred to the teacher. Any comments you think you would like to make yourself could be jotted down on scrap paper and passed on to the teacher. Please only change books after discussion with the teacher.

NOTES ABOUT HELPING PUPILS LEARN TO READ AND ENJOY BOOKS

It is important that reading is a pleasant experience. Our aim is to make pupils life-long readers – not just reading at school and never again! If a child does not understand what he/she is reading it is a pointless activity.
All pupils need teaching and support but some will need extra help to enable progress. Periods of reading should be short. Pupils may choose to read for longer and enjoy books, shared or alone.

Reading is not just reading school schemes. It may be sharing a library book, talking about the story after reading alone, maths instructions or instructions on worksheets.

STARTING THE SESSION

Find a quiet place. Make sure that the child holds the book and not you! It is better for the child to have the book on the table in front of him/her, when reading aloud to someone. Look at the pictures and discuss them. If it is a passage – a continuation of a story, talk about the story so far. Ask the child to predict what will happen next.

For some pupils remind them, or read first part to them.
New book: Look through pictures – talk about them. "Let's have a go" – meaning I'll help at times.

Start at new sentence, paragraph.
Younger pupils should be encouraged to point to the words. (Please do not do it for them.) Be sure to encourage respect for books (turning pages carefully and not folding the book back, please).

Praise at every opportunity.

Praise for:

- reading sentence correctly correcting him/herself
- making sensible guesses
- using context
- using the first letter
- getting the word correct when given a prompt.

Give the child time to think of unknown words – don't jump in too quickly. Don't leave pupils too long. Encourage guesses of unknown words using pictures and context. If child knows text from memory – follow text with finger. Ask – "Where does it say … …?"

Play 'hunt the word' game afterwards or before if you know the child may need reminding. Make it fun – not a chore. Allow the child to talk about their book. Too much over-correcting spoils enjoyment.

FURTHER POLICIES WHICH WILL SUPPORT YOUR WORK AT SCHOOL.

- Communication Policy, including exclusions and bullying
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Safeguarding Policy

STRATEGIES FOR UNKNOWN WORDS

Pause briefly
Look at the picture – (re-read last few words of text and pause)
Look at the first letter – young pupils: Look at first three letters – better readers
Tell the child the letter sound if s/he does not know it
Where the child is able, split longer words to help them, e.g. to…day
If it is a difficult word/proper noun – tell
If it is distracting to the story – tell

i.e**. PAUSE … PROMPT … PRAISE.**

Pupils' moods change. Progress may not be constant. Be sensitive to how the child is feeling.

Reading should be free from worry – non competitive.

Pupils love repetition and the familiar. Repeat a story you have all enjoyed.

Encourage expression.
Talk about the passage.
Ask questions like … "Which did you like best?"
"Why?"
"What would you have done if …?"

When a child is reading very well, then you can ask them to read out loud to you so that it is really interesting, in a clear voice. This is a skill in itself. You could encourage expression/voices for speakers. Question vocabulary understanding and ask questions about the story, especially if the meaning is hidden.

Finish on a positive note so that the child looks forward to the next session. Indicate you are looking forward to it.