

# Indian Queens C P School

## Voluntary Help in School

### **A Position Statement**

The staff and governors of Indian Queens C P School have a welcoming and friendly attitude towards voluntary helpers working in the school. Voluntary helpers contribute an enormous amount to schools in the form of general support, time, attention to individuals and small groups, and often financial savings. This document is intended to clarify the nature and various purposes of voluntary work in the school, to give guidance to voluntary helpers in the school in order that their work in school is consistent with that of the staff, and to protect voluntary helpers from assuming a role and responsibility that is not within their jurisdiction and which, though well intentioned, may result in criticism, particularly from parents.

#### **The nature of voluntary help**

Voluntary support in the school is by definition any work which is offered free of charge and may include

- work within the classes, working alongside the teacher assisting the children
- work within the classroom in a supportive capacity, tidying, sorting, preparing materials, displays, preparing and clearing up resources
- providing additional adult supervision at times when the staff present need help in this area due to the nature of the activity - this is largely related to safety and security and frequently occurs with out of school visits or activities
- extra-curricular activities which take place out of school hours, either at lunch-times or after school. This may take place without the direct supervision of the staff and be largely within the control of the voluntary helper(s)
- additional work within the school not directly related to the classroom work. This may include small repairs and improvements to the building, help with administrative work, assistance with events held during the evenings.
- providing transport for children to attend an event beyond the school\*

***NB The work may not replace work which is already the responsibility of employed staff.***

Voluntary help should be given with the sole intention of benefiting the children either directly or indirectly. There should be no expectation on the part of the voluntary helper that there should be any reward or favour gained, save that of seeing the children benefit from their help, and gaining a clearer understanding of the work that takes place within the school. The school hopes that voluntary helpers in school feel valued and respected by all members of the school, staff and children alike, and gain enjoyment and satisfaction from working as part of a committed and professional team of people. Voluntary helpers should understand the issues relating to groups of adults working in the same environment as children, and that unless under exceptional circumstances, there will be no more than one voluntary helper working in any one classroom or area at any one time. Furthermore, though voluntary staff should always be well looked after by staff, and use all the facilities where required, no volunteer should use the staff room during break or lunchtime (space; confidentiality etc).

***Normally, voluntary helpers will not work in the same class as their own child, though this is usually a matter for discussion when allocating a class / area to work. Voluntary helpers should expect NOT to work in the same class as their child.***

## Aims

Voluntary work in school may serve a number of different purposes. When a person begins to work in a voluntary capacity in school the purpose of the work should always be clearly identified.

These may include:

- giving a child individual support and encouragement under the supervision of a qualified teacher or trained member of the support staff, thereby building confidence and enabling the child to stay 'on task'
- monitoring and guiding a group of children to work as directed by the teacher, reinforcing and supporting the group in working independently and within the original intention set by the teacher (again, staying on task')
- helping with specific skills which children may not have acquired e.g. information technology, research skills
- providing assistance to ensure tasks and activities are carried out safely e.g. swimming, design and technology, environmental work beyond the classroom
- assisting trained staff by carrying out and completing tasks set out by the class teacher (or a member of the support staff working under the jurisdiction of the teacher) thereby enabling the trained staff to do work with or for children which might not otherwise be possible due to limitations on time
- accomplishing tasks already negotiated and agreed upon by a member of the teaching staff, at a time previously arranged as convenient to both parties, thereby saving the school either or both time and/or money

Voluntary work in the classroom may include reinforcement of skills and knowledge already acquired or taught. It should not include direct teaching, unless in the form of giving incidental, though relevant, information. This will not be the case with extra curricular activities which take the form of clubs. In these cases a short statement indicating exactly what the purpose of the club will be should be agreed and then communicated to parents before they agree to their child attending.

Voluntary helpers should meet with the Headteacher prior to beginning work in the school in order that the purpose of their work in school be clearly identified and the contents of the leaflet 'Voluntary Work in School' (Appendix 1) discussed and clarified. All voluntary helpers should retain a copy of this guidance. It is intended to provide security to both school and helper, hopefully preventing any situation arising which would cause confusion or misunderstanding. In no way is it intended to deter people from working within the school on a voluntary basis.

\*In this case a Voluntary Drivers Declaration Form must be completed.

## Indian Queens C P School

### Guidance for Voluntary Helpers Working in School

Thank you for volunteering to work in school. Your help is greatly appreciated by both staff and pupils alike and we hope you enjoy your time in school with us.

Working in a school is a highly responsible and sensitive job. Parents have entrusted their child(ren) into our care and expect us to ensure that the children are safe and secure within a stimulating and challenging learning environment. It is our job to do everything we can to ensure that each child is happy, keen to learn and at all times has the opportunity to do so. To this end the staff must work closely together to ensure that our expectations of children are consistent and that children feel able to go to any member of staff for help or reassurance knowing they will be treated kindly and fairly. At the same time children must also learn that they are expected to behave responsibly and kindly themselves, regardless of whom they are working with.

- Always try to listen to a child and understand what they are saying. You may have to decide whether you can help or whether someone else should. Do not be afraid to ask another member of staff for advice if you are in any doubt.
- If you are in any doubt as to what you should do then ask for guidance. Children are expected to do this, staff do it whenever they need to, so should you.
- Never ignore a child who is rude, disrespectful or disobedient - remind them calmly but firmly what is expected of them. Any refusal by the child to correct inappropriate behaviour should be brought to the attention of the class teacher, either immediately or if that is not possible, as soon as convenient. Children do not benefit from 'getting away with' behaving badly - it merely encourages a repetition of the behaviour at a future time. It is not sneaking to discuss concerns you have about a child with a class teacher, but they or the Head/Deputy are the only ones you should discuss the matter with. No one else.
- **All staff in the school are expected to maintain the highest confidentiality with regard to the individual children in the school. You will make observations about children in school which you should not discuss outside the school. Again parents trust staff not to talk about their child(ren) with anyone beyond the school - including family.**
- Be clear about what you have agreed to help with and if you do anything differently or extra, make sure the class teacher or Head/DH is aware of this. They will be ultimately responsible for what you do so they have a right to know in advance what this will be.
- If you agree to work in school between certain times and you find that for one reason or another you are unable to get on with the agreed tasks, do ask if there is anything else you can help with.
- Staff are actively discouraged from 'gossiping' within the school about local matters which are not the school's concern, or relate to individual families. Whilst this is a difficult area to define, talking about and passing opinion on a local issue might constitute gossip, where communicating a factual piece of information (not hearsay) which staff might need to be aware of would not.
- If you have any concerns at all about your work in school, or anything you observe whilst in school, please talk initially to the class teacher, or if that is not possible or appropriate, to the Headteacher or Deputy Head. You may want clarification on something or have a concern. Whatever the situation you should discuss the matter rather than take 'direct action'. Under no circumstances should you discuss the situation beyond the school as this is unlikely to address the situation at all. It will most certainly not be helpful.
- If staff are concerned/critical about others they talk to the Head or DH, no one else. Voluntary staff should do the same. Trust and respect of one another are of the utmost importance and leads to a staff who all work well together for the benefit of the children.
- It is appreciated if voluntary helpers would allow staff to talk in confidence with each other during play and lunchtimes in the staff room. At other times. Voluntary helpers are always welcome to use the staff room.

Agreed and signed by:

Voluntary Helper.....Date .....

PRINT NAME .....

Headteacher.....Date .....

DETAILS OF VOLUNTARY WORKER

Name	
Address	
Telephone Number	
Mobile Number	
CRB clearance and date	
Former experience	
Details and times of voluntary work	