



## **Banham Primary School**

### **Information and Guidelines for Parents and Other Helpers**

#### **Welcome**

Thank you for volunteering to help our children in school. We feel that the involvement of parents in education is vital and we encourage active participation in many ways. Some parents come to school to help with a variety of tasks such as art, cooking and especially reading and usually work with small groups in specific classes. Other parents help when children are taken on visits outside school.

We believe that our school should be open and welcoming to all who would like to support the children – although within our overriding concern is for the safety of the children in our care. This document sets out the school's policy, which is to ensure that the children benefit from as much help and support as possible, and are provided at the same time with the best possible security. All parents who help in school on a regular basis will be provided with a copy of this document and agreement with it is assumed.

Volunteers have a wide range of past experiences and expertise related to schools, but we hope everyone finds the information in this document helpful. If there is anything else you feel would help you, please let us know.

#### **Aims**

- To ensure that parents and other volunteers are welcomed and valued as members of the school community.
- To give clear guidelines on the ways in which parents can help in school.

## **Information**

### **DBS checks**

Our school carries out a DBS check for all staff and volunteers who have regular contact with children. All schools need to hold a register of the checks undertaken. In order for you to work in school as a volunteer, you will need to complete a DBS form (available from the school office). Please be assured that all information will be treated in the strictest confidence and that these checks are done only in the best interests and safety of the children. If you are only volunteering for a short, set period of time, we may decide that a DBS check is not necessary, but in those circumstances you will not be allowed to be on your own with any children.

### **Security**

For security reasons, please use the main daytime entrance at the front of school and sign yourself “in” and later, when you leave “out”. This enables us to know who is on the premises in case of fire or other emergencies. We will issue you with a “Visitor” badge which should be worn at all times.

### **Fire Procedures**

The fire alarm is a continuously ringing bell. When it sounds, the teacher will lead the children from the room in silence through the designated exit. If you are working with a small group of children in another part of the school, make sure that all the children are there and then take them out by the nearest fire exit into the main playground. Do not let them go back into the classroom for personal belongings. Take the children to the rest of their class and tell the teacher that you are there.

### **Break times**

Parent helpers are welcome to join us in the staff room for tea or coffee at break times. However, we do ask everyone to be aware that items of a confidential nature are sometimes discussed here and to exercise discretion.

### **Attendance**

If you are helping on a regular basis and are unable to attend, please let the class teacher or school office know to assist planning.

### **Policies**

All parent helpers need to read the Safeguarding Policy and Behaviour Policy, both of which can be found on the school website, or in Policies folders in classes and the staff room. If you would like your own paper copies, please ask at the school office.

## Guidelines

- Parents and other volunteers helping in school with the children are always under the supervision of the class teacher who will explain the task, what is required of children and the helper's role within that setting. Parents are expected to work co-operatively and professionally with staff. If you are unsure of what you have been asked to do, please check immediately, either with the teacher or a teaching assistant.
- Parent helpers are encouraged to use positive feedback rather than a negative response to things that have gone wrong.
- Please encourage the children to be independent. Encouragement and support are required – but not to the extent of “doing” things for the children.
- Helping to clear up is an essential part of learning too. We want all children to see clearing up as a natural part of the activity and you as helper should never be the one who clears everything away.
- Children will sometimes “push the boundaries” when with a helping parent. If this happens, quietly tell them what they are doing wrong and remind them of what they should be doing. However, if they continue, please send the child to the class teacher; discipline is the responsibility of the class teacher, not the parent helper. If you are familiar with our PATHS programme please feel free to refer to that.
- We seek to promote positive and acceptable behaviour and in doing so will actively praise and reward “good” behaviour.
- Whilst you are in the classroom you will sometimes see children being disciplined. Please do not give them any comfort or support. You will not always be aware of what has happened previously, or the warnings that have been given.
- Children very quickly learn from the actions, words and attitudes of people around them. Therefore it is important that all our own behaviours in schools are those we want the children to copy.
- Please be aware that your presence in the classroom may well affect your child's behaviour in all sorts of ways. Prepare your child for the experience in advance by explaining that you will be in the class to help all the children, the teacher is in charge and you have to do what the teacher has asked you as well!
- If a child does or tells you something that causes you concern, please tell the class teacher or Headteacher as soon as possible after the disclosure in an appropriate setting so that others cannot overhear.
- If you have any concerns at any time about the way a child has been

treated or any aspect of classroom practice, please raise the issue immediately with the Headteacher, who is also the lead Child Protection Officer.

- We have to follow very careful guidelines on aspects of physical contact with children:
  1. Please remember not to initiate contact with children and discourage over-familiarity.
  2. If you are helping dress/undress for PE etc encourage the child to do as much as possible for themselves.
  3. Please do not lift, grab, carry or move a child in any way.
  
- Please do not use the opportunity as a parent helper to seek additional information about your own child or other children e.g. looking in drawers, books.
  
- We use surnames when addressing staff as a mark of respect. The school is organised and run in an orderly fashion and we expect parents to support this by being mindful of their conduct and dress.

## **Confidentiality**

Everyone working within the school is expected to respect their position and access they have to confidential information.

It is very important that all staff, parent helpers and other adults working in the school work to a policy of confidentiality. You may see children struggling with work, be upset or misbehaving or hear/see other information concerning a child while you are with us in school. It is not just children's progress that needs to be kept confidential. Some children have medical needs to which we must attend; some families have complex circumstances which mean a child mustn't join in some activities; and some children may be experiencing a traumatic time at home and their behaviour at school may be affected. **Please do not be tempted to share anything you have seen or heard in the classroom with friends or family or a child's parent.** We have well defined procedures for informing parents of what has happened whilst the children are in school and we will be the first to discuss any issues where we have concerns. If a parent helper is approached by a parent and asked for information s/he should refer that parent to the class teacher.

Similarly, parent helpers and volunteers working in the classroom should do so on the understanding that they support the teaching staff and will not pass opinion on such matters as discipline or teaching styles outside the school. If you are concerned about something you have seen or heard, or you have any queries or problems, please find a convenient moment to speak to the class teacher or, if necessary the Headteacher.

**Thank you**

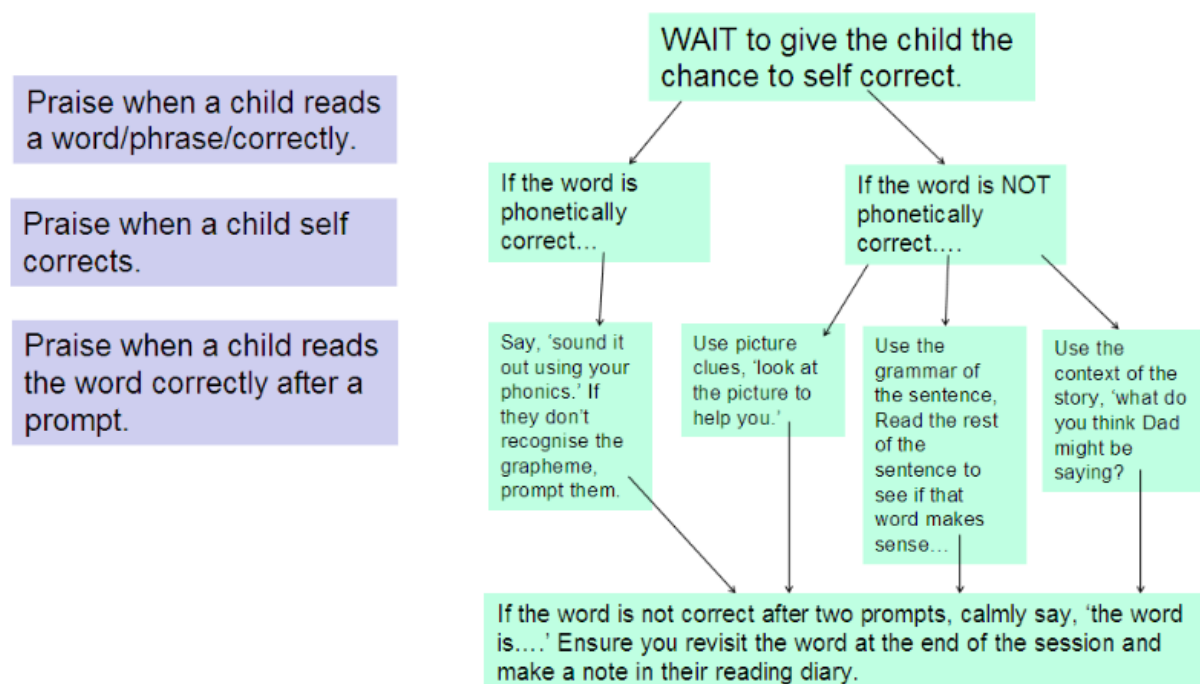
## Hearing Readers

Many parent helpers and volunteers are sometimes, if not usually, used to help us hear readers. Here are a few tips to bear in mind when hearing readers:

- Be positive – give lots of encouragement to readers to help us foster an enjoyment of reading. Don't be afraid to suggest ways for children to improve but always focus on the positives first and only give them one thing at a time to improve on.
  - Phrase things in a positive way – “That was tricky but brilliant. You tried so hard today. Next time it would be even more fantastic if you remembered to use a little more expression! But, well done!
- Feedback to Teachers and Parents – In the child's reading record, please note anything that the children have found difficult in a positive way, e.g. *Brian read beautifully and only found 'the' and 'was' a little tricky. Well done!* Or *This text was tricky but Sharon tried hard, good work!*
  - If you have any concerns, please mention them to the class teacher at an appropriate moment – usually at break or lunch.
  - Never write a negative comment or concern in a child's reading record.
- Decoding strategies
  - Sounding out and blending:
    - 'The c-l-ow-n did t-r-i-ck-s'
  - Look for clues in the pictures
  - Split longer words into smaller parts
    - Thundering – Thun + der + ing = Thundering
  - Read to the end of the sentence then go back
    - 'Mrs Smith was de\*\*\*\*\* when she found her lost cat.'

When reading successfully....

When reading inaccurately....



- Comprehension – stop at various parts during the text to check the reader has established meaning.
  - What happened after...?
  - Who was it that...?
  - Describe what happened at...?
  - Who spoke to...?
  - Can you tell why...?
  - What do you think could happen next...?
  - Who do you think...?

More sophisticated comprehension questions:

- What was the main idea...?
- Who was the key character...?
- What differences exist between...?
- Can you provide an example of what you mean...?
- Can you explain which part of the text tells you that...?

### **Finally....**

....a big “thank you” for your time, enthusiasm and patience! Both children and staff reap enormous benefits from your involvement in school and we hope that you enjoy helping in school and find it to be a rewarding experience!

Paul Seeman  
January 2017