



VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

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TETSWORTH PRIMARY SCHOOL

<u>Section</u>	<u>Contents</u>
1.	Welcome
2.	Our Commitment to you
3.	Your Commitment to us
4.	The School Site
5.	Key Contacts
6.	Signing in and out
7.	Where can I..?
8.	Working with Children
9.	Health and Safety
10.	Child Protection and Safeguarding
11.	Checks
12.	Safe Practice
13.	Confidentiality
14.	Policies
15.	Conclusion

The Volunteer Handbook is the “one stop shop” for most of the information relating to volunteering in our school. The Handbook is regularly checked for inaccuracy or out of date information, but please let us know if you spot anything amiss.



1. Welcome

Our school is friendly, caring and committed to excellence in learning. We aim to support children sympathetically and encourage positive attitudes to learning, school and life. We believe that the higher the expectations we have of our pupils, the greater their achievement will be. We are classified with 'community school' status.

Working closely with parents, we want all children to develop their full potential and to acquire knowledge, understanding and skills in a wide variety of subjects and activities. We also trust that they will find enjoyment and satisfaction in learning and working with other children and adults.

We are proud to be associated with John Hampden Primary in Thame. The two schools have been federated since September 2009. The Executive Headteacher for both schools is Mr P.Hankey who is sited at John Hampden Primary School but who is fully involved in the running of Tetsworth Primary School. The Head of Teaching and Learning at Tetsworth Primary School is Mrs A. Bowden.

2. Our Commitment to you

As one of our valued volunteers, we are committed to giving you the following:

- A friendly and supportive environment;
- Enthusiastic and cooperative children;
- A staff member to support you in your volunteering (usually the teacher you are supporting);
- Recognition for the work that you do at our school.

3. Your Commitment to Us

We are well aware that your time and energies are given freely and willingly. Most volunteers work in school at a set time each week, and if you can commit to this for at least half a term, we would find this helpful. However, we do not insist that you commit to working for a fixed or indefinite period of time, or give notice when you wish to stop volunteering at Tetsworth Primary School. However, we do ask that you agree to and abide by the guidance found in this handbook and the accompanying policies. We would also ask that you let us know if you have made an arrangement that you later find you cannot keep. Your work is valuable to the school and your link staff member may have been counting on you to help with an activity. Just give us a call as soon as you know you cannot come. In addition, when you do wish to cease volunteering, please let the school know.

4. The School Site

Volunteers should enter and leave via the front door to the school so that you are able to sign in and take a visitor's badge and sign out and return the visitor's badge.

The school office and Head of Teaching and Learning's office are both situated within the Victorian building that can be seen on entering the school campus. A small kitchen, staffroom, hall and Class 4 (pupils in Year Group 5-6) are situated in this building.

The newer building is the home for Class 1, Class 2 and Class 3. Class 1 is for Nursery, Reception, Class 2 for Year Groups 1 and 2, Class 3 for Year Groups 3 and 4.

5. Key Contacts

If you are supporting a particular teacher in class then they will be your main point of contact. While you are volunteering at Tetsworth Primary School your other contacts will be:

- The school administrators – Mrs K. Denham/Mrs J.Mann
- Headteacher – Mrs A. Bowden

6. Signing in and out

All visitors to school are required to visit the office when they arrive. The office is located in the Victorian building. As a volunteer, you will need to sign in and be given a visitors badge that must be worn so that it is clearly visible. The badge should be worn for the duration of your visit. Children are taught to recognise this badge, and to tell a member of staff if they see someone wandering around school without one.

7. Where can I...?

This section is designed to answer some of the common questions.

Where can I park?

Unfortunately space is limited. The car park is for school staff and official visitors only. However it is possible to use the Swan Hotel car park situated next to the Village Green.

Where can I leave my belongings?

It's not a good idea to bring too many personal belongings and valuables to school with you. However, the teacher you are supporting will let you know where you can leave your coat and bag, etc.

Do not use or have on display a mobile phone or any other type of equipment that has photographic capabilities.

Where can I work?



The teacher with whom you are working with will give you a suitable space to work in.

Where can I go?

You will be working in a classroom or shared space attached to the class you are volunteering to support. For safeguarding reasons we ask that you leave the site as soon as your session has finished and that you do not visit other classrooms. If you need to speak to a member of staff other than the teacher you are supporting then we ask that you make an appointment via the office in the usual manner. If you are with us over a break time we want you to feel relaxed and comfortable and the teacher who is supporting you will make sure you are offered a drink. As there is sometimes a need to discuss confidential matters during breaks we are not able to welcome you into the staffroom.

Where can I go to the toilet?

Adult toilets are located just off the main hall in the Victorian building. If you are unsure where to find them, please ask a member of staff.

When might I be asked to stop my volunteer work?

Occasionally we may need to ask you to stop your volunteer work due to timetable changes or if you have a child or children whose learning is being affected by you being on site. In either case a full explanation would be given.

8. Working with Children

Whether you have previous experience of working with children or not, here are some guidelines to help you be successful in your voluntary work at Tetsworth Primary School.

- Be friendly and encouraging with the children, especially when working with them for the first time. Expect them to be a little nervous – introduce yourself and explain that you are there to help them with their reading/learning, etc.
- Remember that though we need to be friendly, we are not making friendships, and it is important that the children give the same amount of respect as other adults in the school. Expect children to use your 'grown up' name, e.g. Mrs Smith.
- Our children are usually enthusiastic and cooperative. You are not responsible for managing their behaviour beyond making a reasonable attempt to help the child focus on their task. Be positive and clear in your explanations, and remember you are not there to negotiate about what the children have to do.
- If a child is overly enthusiastic and silly, ask them politely to settle down to help them and others concentrate. If a child is not engaging at all with their work, remind them of the purpose of the activity and that you are there to help them.

- If your reasonable attempts to help the child engage with their task are not working, use a final reminder, e.g. 'If you can't settle down you will have to go back to see your teacher.'
- The children know you are not a teacher, so don't feel embarrassed or disappointed if you need to seek extra support. It's better not to march the child into the classroom and explain in front of all the other children what they were doing wrong! Simply ask the child to return to class and explain to their teacher why they have been sent back. You should check later on that they did so.
- When you have finished working with a child it is good to reflect on how the activity has gone. Praise the children when they have done well with their learning and attitude; when they haven't use phrases like 'Next week you should think about...' and 'I think it would help your learning if...' rather than telling the children off.
- Remember that the children are always watching – it's good to let them see you interacting respectfully and cooperatively with other adults in the school.

9. Health and Safety

You must comply with the school's health and safety policy, observing any specific requirements whilst volunteering. Do not take part in, or ask anyone else to take part in, any action that might cause you or another person to be put at risk of injury or harm. You should always advise a member of staff of any potential hazard or situation that you feel puts people at risk. They will then report this as necessary.

Fire Safety & Fire Drill

Each classroom has a notice with information about fire procedure. The fire alarm is a continuous ringing of an electric bell. If the fire alarm sounds then staff, children and visitors should evacuate the buildings through their nearest fire exit. As a volunteer you should follow the class teacher and line up near them. If you are working with a child in another space, you should leave the building through the nearest fire exit and take the child to join their class line in the main play area as far from the buildings as possible.

Emergency Situation

A phone call using the internal phone system will indicate a security alert and all children should be kept **inside** the classroom until there is a second call to signify the 'all clear'.

First Aid

If a child is injured or has an accident, please find a trained member of staff. Names of trained staff can be found in the kitchen (old build) and in the toilet for disabled children/adults.

10. Child Protection and Safeguarding

All volunteers must sign to say they have read and understand the Safeguarding Policy and the relevant sections in the most recent edition of the DfE guidance - Keeping Children Safe in Education. As volunteers will have contact with children and therefore are particularly well placed to observe outward signs of abuse or neglect. As a volunteer you are obliged, where necessary, to inform the school of any concerns which may arise. While you cannot promise confidentiality (**i.e. you must make it clear to the child that you'll have to tell someone**), you must ensure that once you have passed the matter on you do not discuss it with anyone else. The following staff members are Designated Leads for the school and have received specific training to deal with Child Protection issues:

- Mrs A. Bowden and Mr J. Surman – on site
- Mr Paul Hankey (Executive Headteacher) – can be contacted at JHS 01844 212291

If you are in any doubt about the safety of a child, immediately tell the class teacher or one of the Designated Leads. More information can be found on the school's safeguarding notice board which is placed in the staff room. Please see the school's Safeguarding Policy for further information.

11. Checks

A DBS check should have been completed before your volunteering begins or a risk assessment will be in place until such time as you have DBS clearance. We also ask volunteers whom we have known for less than one academic year to provide us with the names of two people whom we can contact for a reference. In exceptional circumstances, the type of work you will be allowed to undertake may be restricted, if there is some relevant reason that makes some tasks inappropriate (e.g. certain criminal convictions, personal health issues etc.). If this is the case, we will always explain our reasons, and trust that you will appreciate how important our responsibility for child protection is.

12. Safe Practice

When volunteering in school, always follow these simple steps:

- only work in public areas such as classrooms, corridors or in the hall;
- try to work close to where other volunteers or staff members are working;
- avoid any physical contact with the children;
- try to ensure that your conversation with children is friendly but not over-familiar;
- never accompany children into the toilets;

Tetsworth Primary Volunteer Handbook



- **do not use or have on display a mobile phone or any other type of equipment that has photographic capabilities**

13. Confidentiality

The information we hold about you and your volunteering is confidential, and as such, will not be shared with any third parties without your consent. We ask that you respect the confidentiality of staff and pupils at Tetsworth Primary School by not discussing things you have seen and heard while volunteering, especially when sensitive information about pupils is involved. We have a confidentiality policy / agreement that we expect all volunteers to sign and adhere to.

14. Policies

The policies that you will need to read and sign to say you have understood are:

- Allegations of Abuse Against Staff and Volunteers
- Behaviour Policy
- Confidentiality Policy
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Safeguarding Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

Please see the classteacher of the class where you are volunteering or Mrs Bowden (TPS Headteacher) if you do not understand or have any concerns about any of these policies.

15. Conclusion

We hope this document provides you with all you need to know about becoming a volunteer at Tetsworth Primary School. If there is something we have overlooked, please let us know by speaking to a member of staff.

We look forward to working with you and hope that you find school life enjoyable and rewarding.