

GORING CHURCH OF ENGLAND (AIDED) PRIMARY SCHOOL



Goring C E Primary School

Faith, Love and Learning

WORKING TOGETHER

Guidance for Volunteer Helpers
on Relationships with
Children & Young People

November
2017

Dear Parent Helpers

Thank you for sparing your time to help in school. We greatly value the support given by parents and it is a recognised strength of the school. Your presence in the classroom aids the learning and enjoyment of individuals and groups of children and supports the class teacher in providing a rich and varied curriculum.

Introduction

This guidance is for volunteer helpers who work directly or indirectly with children at Goring First School.

We aim to provide a safe and secure environment in which pupils can be educated and staff can work. Child abuse occurs across the country and is not restricted to certain sections of society. While many child abusers are known to the victims, either as relatives or friends of the family, some meet children in other contexts and a small minority of abusers may gain access to children in schools.

This guidance is intended to:

- Give practical advice to help volunteers ensure their conduct and relationships with pupils are, and are seen to be, entirely proper;
- Inform volunteers of procedures to follow when they suspect a child may have been abused (physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect);
- Ensure that volunteers know the school's Code of Conduct.

Confidentiality

When working with children, in whatever capacity, we are in a privileged position. We have the trust of other parents and the people we work with. From time to time, you may be asked by parents to comment on the behaviour or progress of their child or of another member of the class. In this situation, you should refer the parent to the class teacher.

If you have any comments or queries about a child in the class, please see the class teacher. As a parent yourself, I am sure you will appreciate that other parents do not like to feel that their child is the subject of discussion outside the classroom.

Health & Safety

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to do everything reasonably practical to provide and maintain buildings and equipment, systems of work, a workplace and a working environment which are safe and without risk to health.

It is the duty of all volunteer helpers to take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves, their colleagues and persons who may be affected by their

actions at school. Volunteer helpers are required to co-operate with any person in a position of responsibility to enable statutory duties or requirements to be achieved.

A Code of Conduct

It is important that when helping in school, you make every effort to minimise the possibility of an allegation being made against you. Attitudes, demeanour and language, as well as behaviour, all require care and thought. It is also important to ensure account is taken care of a child's right to privacy and modesty when providing for a safe and secure environment.

Areas Relating to Conduct

Being alone with pupils

You should not be alone with an individual pupil. If this cannot be avoided you should ensure that you are in a room with visible access, leave the door open and be in an area frequented by other people. You should alert a member of staff if it is possible that you may be alone with a pupil.

Physical Contact

In all circumstances you must avoid the use of physical contact, as this may be misconstrued by the child, parent or casual observer.

There may be occasions when a distressed child needs comfort and reassurance which may include physical comforting such as a caring parent would give. In such situations you should inform a member of staff and not make avoidable physical contact yourself.

Transporting pupils

Volunteer helpers cannot be required to transport pupils in their own vehicles. Where it is deemed essential that a member of staff transports a pupil, this will be undertaken by the Headteacher and a second adult must accompany them.

School Trips

When on a school trip or visit, pupils may exhibit behaviour and attitudes different to those seen in school. Volunteers may be with pupils for a longer period of time and there may be more social interactions than normal. Volunteers must act with the same caution and discretion as at any time in school.

Following an incident where a volunteer helper feels that his/her actions have been, or may be, misconstrued, you should write down what has happened and give it to the Headteacher immediately.

Pastoral responsibilities

Volunteer helpers should not become involved in discussions of an intimate nature with pupils. If a pupil attempts to involve you in a discussion about intimate or sensitive issues, please inform a member of staff. All staff must keep a log of the date, time,

duration and subject of pastoral discussions of a significant nature and alert the Headteacher.

Children with particular difficulties

First aid should only be administered by a qualified person. If a child requires First Aid, please consult a member of staff.

Some pupils may require support for tasks such as changing. If you assist a pupil you should ensure a member of staff is present or nearby.

Pupil punishment

Corporal punishment is outlawed for all pupils. There are no circumstances in which physical contact with a pupil may be used as punishment.

Physical restraint

In no circumstances should a volunteer helper be involved in physically restraining a child. The school has clear procedures in relation to this.

Procedures Where Child Abuse Is Suspected

What should be done if abuse is expected?

If, during your time in school, you suspect a child displays signs of abuse or neglect, you should see the Headteacher **without delay** (or the Deputy Headteacher in her absence). Suspicions may be aroused by signs of injury or comments made by the child. The school has clear procedures for dealing with suspected abuse.

The designated teacher for child protection is the Headteacher (or the Deputy Headteacher in her absence). She is responsible for co-ordinating action and liaising with Social Services and other agencies. The Headteacher will report the alleged abuse to the Social Services Department and take further action in accordance with the West Sussex Child Protection Procedures.

Any concerns or worries about a child's welfare should be discussed with the Headteacher who in turn may wish to discuss the matter further with Social Services.

If a child makes a disclosure

In these circumstances it is very important to take the following steps:

- Listen to what is being said, without displaying shock or disbelief. All allegations must be taken seriously and procedures must be followed.
- Reassure the child, but only so far as is honest and reliable. Do not promise confidentiality; we all have a duty to refer. It should be explained that you are concerned for the pupil's wellbeing and that you will have to tell the Headteacher.

- The child must be allowed to disclose without questioning or prompting. Do not ask the child to repeat it all for a member of staff. A written record of the information given and the action taken should be made and given to the Headteacher, dated and signed. It is not the responsibility of teachers to investigate suspected abuse.
- Get support for yourself after dealing with a disclosure if you need it.

Conclusion

It would be impossible to lay down hard and fast rules to cover all circumstances in which opportunities for conduct to be misconstrued might occur. It is therefore advisable to exercise caution.

It is essential that you follow the above advice and do not discuss any issues relating to a child with anyone other than the Headteacher (or the Deputy Headteacher in her absence).