



ST MICHAEL CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

POLICY FOR PARENT VOLUNTEERS

Mission Statement:

Excellence • Enrichment • Enjoyment

Date policy accepted by the Governing Body: September 2026

Date for review: July 2027

Introduction

We feel that the involvement of parents in education is vital and we encourage active participation in many ways. Some parents come in 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.

Some parents would like to help when children are taken on visits outside school. When organising a school trip and we are in need of parent volunteers, we will ask parents that have joined our list of volunteers. This group of parents will be required to have completed a DBS check and will be familiar with this policy and other school policies and ways of working.

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 will be asked to sign to say that they have read it, fully understand it and will adhere to it. (See page 8)

We hope you find the information in this document helpful. If there is anything else you feel would help, please let us know.

Aims

We aim to:

- Provide a rich and balanced curriculum, encouraging creativity and promoting high standards, so that children can learn successfully
- Value individuality, promote respect for other cultures and beliefs and provide equal opportunities for all
- Encourage children to respect and value themselves and others
- Acknowledge the solid learning foundations from children's early years. Helping them to move on with growing independence and confidence
- Develop a positive partnership with families and the wider community
- Encourage children to take responsibility for themselves and others and for their learning and their environment
 - Create an environment, which is welcoming, secure, supportive and fun and where all achievements are valued
- 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.

Parent helpers have a valuable role in helping us to fulfil these aims

Information Required

DBS Checks: There is now a requirement for schools to carry out a Disclosure and Barring (DBS) screening 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 only done in the best interests and safety of the children.

Security: for security reasons, please use the front door by the School Office 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 onto the five aside pitch at the back of the playing field.

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.

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. You will receive a copy of these during your first visit.

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 children to be independent. Encouragement and support are required whilst not “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 different adult. If this happens, quietly 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.

- 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 or 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 our 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 Head Teacher 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 Head Teacher, who is the lead Child Protection Officer.

- Volunteers in school are asked not to use the time to deal with issues regarding their own children. If you wish to speak to the class teacher or another member of staff, you should make an appointment in the usual way.

- Please do not worry about your child's behaviour while you are helping as often he/she will behave quite differently if mum/dad is there. Most children soon get used to their parent helping in class and settle down after a few weeks.

- Please don’t have favourites – as humans we are drawn to certain individuals but it is important that all children in school are given equal time and attention.

- We have to follow very careful guidelines on aspects of physical contact with children:

- 1 Please remember not to initiate physical contact with children and discourage overfamiliarity

- 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, 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 to all staff, parent helpers and other adults working in the school to work to a policy of confidentiality. You may see children struggling with work, be upset or misbehaving and 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 Year Group Leader or the Head Teacher.

Guidance for Volunteers for School Trips

We do appreciate your help on school trips – it would be difficult to organise visits outside school without parent volunteers. If you have any questions about a school trip, please see the class teacher.

Please note:

- Parents may not necessarily have their own child in their group during a visit. The final decision on which adults will supervise which groups will be made by the class teachers.
- The teacher will give parent helpers a list of children for whom they are responsible.
- All children are told that they must stay with their group and the group adult at all times.
- If the trip involves a coach journey, please help the children in your group put on and fit their seatbelts. Children are not allowed to eat or drink on bus/coaches. The class teacher has sick bucket/bags, if needed.
- The class teacher is responsible for ALL first aid and medication but may delegate this to volunteers if they have had the appropriate training.
- The class teacher leads the rules, routines and expectations for the day. Please help the teacher by ensuring your group follows all instructions e.g. when to eat and drink.

- If there is a medical or other emergency, let the class teacher know immediately. The class teacher is responsible for contacting the school and associated parents in emergency situations.
- If you need to leave your group for any reason, e.g. to take a child to the toilet, please inform another adult. Please stay in groups of at least 3 children.
- Parent volunteers are asked to keep the same degree of confidentiality as in school. If you have any queries or problems concerning the trip, please direct these in the first instance to the class teacher, or if you would rather, the Headteacher on return from the trip.
- Parent volunteers **must not** take photographs, videos or audio recordings of children on their phones/cameras and not access any social media sites or messaging apps whilst in school/on a trip. Mobile phones should be switched to silent and used only in an emergency.
- Please make provision for any younger siblings as they cannot, under any circumstance, come along with the Parent volunteer whether it be to go out on a school trip or to stay with them in school.

Hearing Readers

One of the tasks that you will probably be involved in is reading with the children. This is an important but time consuming task. The exact approach will depend on the reading level of the child.

Beginning readers

1. Children should be aware that you read from left to right, turning the pages that way and reading the lines left to right and top to bottom.
2. Read the book together to start with.
3. Discuss the pictures and the story.
4. Read the book again pointing to each word as you read.

Early readers

1. Ask the child to point to each word as they read it.
2. Discuss the pictures and the story.
3. Read the story together.
4. Ask the child to find key words which are repeated several times in the book i.e.. 'the', 'up', 'in', etc.
5. The children should be aware of full stops and that you need to pause at a full stop and not to run sentences together.
6. The children need to be 'chunking' words by looking at each phoneme - so they would know ing as i, ng - 2 units of sound Extending reading.

As the children can read more words try to get them to work out new words by making a good logical guess. Maybe the picture will help.

If the child has good knowledge of initial sounds, looking at the first letter strings or small words within words, sound out the whole word e.g. ing in king.

Try to get the child to read to the end of the sentence and then go back to work out an unknown word.

Even with competent readers you should discuss the stories and pictures.

Also you can try to encourage the children to use expression or put on suitable voices.

Discussion Questions

The following are examples of the types of questions to use when discussing a story.

- What was the story about?
- Who was the main character?
- What sort of a person was he? What makes you think that?
- Was that a sensible thing to do? Why?
- What should he have done? What would you have done?
- Which part did you like best? Why?
- What would have happened if....? Why do you think they did ...? Try to relate some ideas to the children's own experiences. i.e.
- Can you....? • Have you ever?

Thank You

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.

Further Recommended Reading

Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings 2022

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/58cff74e414fb598d9e95d5a/t/620cea472d3d466599469ca0/1645013576358/GSWP+Feb+2022+final.pdf>

POLICY FOR PARENT VOLUNTEERS

Mission Statement:

Excellence • Enrichment • Enjoyment

Confirmation of compliance

I hereby confirm that I have read, understood and agree to comply with Saint Michael Catholic Primary school's Parent Volunteer Policy.

Name

Signed

Date

Once completed, signed and dated, please return this form to the Headteacher