



Policy for Parents and other adults in School

When children are enrolled at Sunnylands Primary School, teachers, parents and other key adults in a child's life, become partners in their care and education. Through complementary roles, mutual support and open communication the bond between home, community and school can greatly enrich a child's general progress and experience of school.

In addition to providing ongoing assistance with homework, uniform, etc. parents and friends are encouraged to become actively involved in the life of the school in many ways, for example, as librarians, as gardeners, as members of the Parent's Group or as helpers on educational visits. It is our hope that such involvement is enjoyable for the volunteers as well as useful to the children and staff.

Without wishing to dissuade or offend those who are enthusiastic and generous with their commitment to school, it is important that we follow procedures that will give confidence to children, parents and staff and to the volunteers themselves.

Sunnylands Primary School uses DENI's definition that "a volunteer is an individual who, subject to the satisfactory completion of the procedures set out below, either (i) assumes unpaid duties in a school on a regular basis on more than two occasions or (ii) is engaged by the school to accompany or assist in school visits or trips; summer activity schemes or residential activities; or to undertake coaching in sports activities."

Recruitment of Volunteers

There are many opportunities for people to become involved with school and individuals may wish to be generally available, or to offer their assistance with a particular age group or task.

Most children are not ready to have their parents assisting the teacher in their own classroom as it may be difficult to adjust to a different relationship. Therefore it is

the policy of Sunnylands Primary School that it is better for the parent to volunteer to work in another area of school life than that involving their child. A parent should only be involved in an aspect of school life involving their child if it is felt by the Principal/SMT that the pupil and other children will not be affected. During such times the pupil and parent must remember that the teacher in charge is responsible for behaviour etc and should be given their appropriate place.

All volunteers follow the same procedures and a list is held in school of those people who:

- have applied to be volunteers;
- who have completed the necessary paperwork (see appendices);
- and who have been vetted by DENI, NEELB and AccessNI criminal records procedures.
- People are encouraged to volunteer at any time and application forms are readily available from the office, through any member of staff. Parents or friends of the school may be asked to help when a particular need arises but an appeal for volunteers is made annually to allow time for clearance by NEELB.

Code of Conduct

Whilst helping in school, volunteers are entitled to be treated with the respect and in a manner appropriate to a member of staff. If other parents have concerns/complaints they should approach the principal in line with proper procedures and not the volunteer directly. Parent Group members will wear their t-shirt to identify themselves and other volunteers will be issued with badges that identify them as volunteers at Sunnylands Primary School.

As semi-professionals, volunteers at Sunnylands are expected to:

- demonstrate their support for education and give their full attention to the task in hand;

(For this reason volunteers should not bring children with them to school unless as part of the group with which they are working. Parents who volunteer outside school hours may at times find it necessary to bring siblings to school. At these times, those children must be under the parents' direct supervision. The parents are responsible for their own children's safety and must keep the children with them at all times.)

- treat what they see and hear in school as confidential;

(Working with other people's children is a privilege with responsibilities. Children observed in the classroom or the school should not be discussed outside, even with that child's parents. Questions relating to individual children should be addressed to the child's teacher or the principal.)

Volunteers would not normally have access to children's records. An exception might be relevant medical information.)

- arrive on time and be ready to start the agreed task;

(Sunnylands relies on volunteers to support much that is important in the life of the school and its children. It is important that

volunteers are available for the duration of the task. If they must cancel, the volunteer is asked to call the office as soon as possible to allow time to find a replacement.)

- leave all matters of discipline to the teacher with responsibility. (Volunteers may address behaviour or safety issues if the teacher is temporarily unavailable. The volunteer should inform the teacher as soon as possible, who will take over.)
- accept direction and supervision;

(Volunteers are not intended to take the place of staff but to provide assistance and enrichment. They should be consistent with the teacher in supporting the school's ethos and behaviour. Volunteers should, therefore, agree to operate under the direction of Sunnylands staff.)

- clearly communicate interests and expectations;
- present a positive role model;

(Volunteers should be patient, flexible, appreciative, respectful, and considerate, particularly in their dealings with children.)

- adhere to the school's health and safety policy;
- adhere to the school's pastoral care and child protection policies;
- dress in a manner that is appropriate for professional working in a primary school;
- refrain from inappropriate language or topics of conversation;
- adhere to the school's smoking policy; and
- silence mobile phones inside the school building or any venue for an educational visit.

At all other times when the volunteer is at the school in their role as a parent, they should adhere to the guidance for other parents.

Volunteers' Rights

Volunteers have the right to:

- be recognized for their valuable contributions to the educational experience of our children.
- be assigned worthwhile tasks;
- Access any school policies and procedures that are relevant to their roles;
- receive any training or supervision that is necessary for the success of their activities;
- receive support and be assured that any complaint against them will be dealt with through the school's formal general complaints procedure.

Review This policy will be reviewed annually.

