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# Teaching Assistant Apprenticeship

## Learner Support Handbook

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## Introduction



The role of classroom support staff in schools has been developing over many years and the role of the teaching assistant has changed over time.

In recent decades there has been a move towards the increasing inclusion of pupils with additional and special needs in mainstream schools. This has led to a greater need for additional support in classrooms, a need often satisfied through support staff and teaching assistant roles.

The Government's drive to raise standards in schools and tackle teacher workloads has also changed the way support staff are being deployed in schools and has increased the diversity and range of tasks that they carry out in order to support learning and behaviour of students in the classroom.

FW Solutions strongly believe in the vital role that school support staff play in education. We understand that you and your peers make a valuable contribution to pupil achievement and attainment within the learning environment on a daily basis.

So, for someone looking to start their career in education, we hope that this handbook acts as a useful and practical guide, providing an insight into the roles and responsibilities of support staff within education settings.

## ***The Role and Responsibilities of the Teaching Assistant***

There are a wide range of job titles for support staff that work alongside teachers in classrooms including:

- Classroom Assistant
- Teaching Assistant
- Learning Support Assistant
- Special Needs Assistant
- Higher Learning Teaching Assistant
- Learning Mentor
- Non -Teaching Assistant

In general, the term Teaching Assistant is the most common phrase used by schools (and child care centres) when referring to the many support staff roles in schools and will be the term used mostly throughout this handbook.

The primary role of the Teaching Assistant is to enable access to the curriculum, to facilitate independent learning and to promote inclusion. Teaching Assistants generally carry out a variety of functions in support of teachers and what they do varies between classes, key stages and even schools. Some support individual pupils with special needs, others support the whole class or groups within the class, especially with literacy and numeracy. Teaching Assistants may also provide administrative support, technical support or be involved in pastoral care.

The role of the Teaching Assistant can be crucial to pupils achieving greater autonomy, higher academic standards, and greater social awareness and feel part of the whole school community. It is important to note that the teaching assistant's objective is to support the teacher and or other school staff in providing a quality education to pupils. They should not be left in sole charge of a class at any time.

All support staff should feel valued and part of a team approach, to meet the needs of the pupil/s in their care. Where possible support staff should be included in planning meetings and their training needs should be identified, especially when committing to a school long term.

What skills/qualities are needed to become an effective Teaching Assistant?

Although there are a wide range of Teaching Assistant qualifications available it is not compulsory and great emphasis is placed on the skills, attributes and qualities a Teaching Assistant needs to be effective. These would include:

- Professionalism, the ability to grasp the importance of this exciting role and how to act in the correct manner when dealing with stakeholders of every kind
- An ability to get on with children and other adults – a sense of humour is an asset
- Flexibility – things can happen unexpectedly in classrooms/schools and you need to be able to cope with the pace.
- Initiative – whilst you will be working under the guidance of a teacher there will be occasions when you need to make a decision and use your initiative.
- Patience and understanding – all children will occasionally try your patience and some children need constant understanding.
- Ability to cope with stress – schools are hectic places and you can expect to be involved in hundreds of interactions in a day, remember the teacher has the overall responsibility for the pupils, but you need a cool head and the ability to stay calm.
- A reasonable level of literacy and numeracy.
- ICT skills – not essential but increasingly important to support pupils' learning
- tact and sensitivity – when dealing with pupils, their parents, information provided to you, or perhaps even the teacher that guides you.
- Being a team player – in a school you will be part of a large team who need to share ideas and information as well as accepting advice, you will need a good working relationship with the teacher and other TAs and be sensitive to their needs.
- An ability to follow policy and procedure that inform you of the way in which you must conduct yourself at all times, whilst in and out of the school setting.

Teaching Assistant responsibilities can be broken into four main areas:

- Supporting the Pupils
- Supporting the Teacher
- Supporting the School
- Supporting the Curriculum

## ***Supporting the Pupils***

In this capacity, support staff might be required to:

- Attend to the pupils' personal needs, and implement related personal programmes, including social, health, physical, hygiene, first-aid and welfare matters.
- Supervise and support pupils ensuring their safety and access to learning.
- Establish good relationships with pupils, acting as a role model and being aware of and responding appropriately to individual needs.
- Promote the inclusion and acceptance of all pupils.
- Encourage pupils to interact with others and engage in activities led by the teacher.
- Encourage pupils to act independently as appropriate.
- Assist with the development and implementation of Individual Education/Behaviour Plans and Personal Care programmes.
- Set challenging and demanding expectations that promote self-esteem and independence.
- Provide feedback to pupils in relation to progress and achievement under guidance of the teacher.
- Support pupils consistently whilst recognising and responding to their individual needs.
- Promote independence and employ strategies to recognise and reward achievement of self-reliance.
- Assess the needs of pupils and use detailed knowledge and specialist skills to support pupils' learning.
- Receive and supervise pupils excluded from, or otherwise not working to, a normal timetable.
- Support provision for pupils with special needs.
- Develop 1:1 mentoring arrangements with pupils and provide support for distressed pupils.
- Promote the speedy/effective transfer of pupils across phases/integration of those who have been absent.
- Provide information and advice to enable pupils to make choices about their own learning/behaviour/attendance.
- Challenge and motivate pupils, promote and reinforce self-esteem.
- Use equipment as required maintaining pupils' needs and supporting their participation in learning tasks and activities.

## ***Supporting the Teacher***

As a support to the Teacher, a Teaching Assistant should:

- Prepare the classroom as directed for lessons, clear away afterwards and assist with displays of pupils work.
- Be aware of pupil problems/progress/achievements and report to the teacher as agreed.
- Undertake pupil record keeping as requested.
- Support the teacher in managing pupil behaviour, reporting difficulties as appropriate.
- Gather/report information from/to parents/carers as directed.
- Provide clerical/administrative support e.g. photocopying, typing, filing, collecting money etc.
- Create and maintain a purposeful, orderly and supportive environment, in accordance with lesson plans.
- Use strategies, in liaison with the teacher, to support pupils to achieve learning goals.
- Assist with the planning of learning activities.
- Monitor pupils responses to learning activities and accurately record achievement/progress as directed.
- Provide detailed and regular feedback to teachers on pupil's achievement, progress, problems etc.
- Promote good pupil behaviour, dealing promptly with conflict and incidents in line with established policy and encourage pupils to take responsibility for their own behaviour.
- Establish constructive relationships with parents/carers.
- Work with the teacher in lesson planning, evaluating and adjusting lessons/work plans as appropriate.
- Monitor and evaluate pupil's responses to learning activities through observation and recording of achievement against pre-determined learning objectives.
- Provide objective and accurate feedback and reports as required on pupil achievement, progress and other matters, ensuring the availability of appropriate evidence.
- Be responsible for keeping and updating records as agreed with the teacher, contributing to reviews of systems/records as requested.
- Promote positive values, attitudes and good pupil behaviour, dealing promptly with conflict and incidents in line with established policy and encourage pupils to take responsibility for their own behaviour.

## **Supporting the School**

In supporting the school, a Teaching Assistant should:

- ***Be aware of and comply with policies and procedures relating to child protection, health, safety, security, confidentiality and data protection, reporting all concerns to an appropriate person.***
- Be aware of and support difference and ensure all pupils have equal access to opportunities to learn and develop.
- Appreciate and support the role of other professionals.
- Attend relevant meetings as required.
- Participate in training and other learning activities and performance development as required.
- Assist with the supervision of pupils out of lesson times, including before and after school and at lunchtimes.
- Accompany teaching staff and pupils on visits, trips and out of school activities as required.
- Recognise own strengths and areas of expertise and use these to advise and support others.
- Provide appropriate guidance and supervision and assist in the training and development of staff as appropriate.
- Deliver learning activities to pupils within agreed system of supervision, adjusting activities according to pupil responses/needs.
- Deliver local and national learning strategies e.g. literacy, numeracy, KS3, early years and make effective use of opportunities provided by other learning activities to support the development of pupil's skills.
- Use ICT effectively to support learning activities and develop pupil's competence and independence in its use.
- Select and prepare resources necessary to lead learning activities, taking account of pupil's interests and language and cultural backgrounds.
- Advise on appropriate deployment and use of specialist aid/resources/equipment.
- Contribute to the overall ethos/work/aims of the school.
- Establish constructive relationships and communicate with other agencies/professionals, in liaison with the teacher, to support achievement and progress of pupils.
- Take the initiative as appropriate to develop appropriate multi-agency approaches to supporting pupils.
- Assisting in maintaining a safe environment for pupils.

## ***Supporting the Curriculum***

To support the curriculum, a Teaching Assistant should:

- Support pupils to understand instructions.
- Support pupils in respect of local and national learning strategies e.g. literacy, numeracy, KS1, KS2, Early Years Foundation Stage, as directed by the teacher.
- Support the use of ICT in learning activities and develop pupil's competence and independence in its use.
- Prepare and maintain equipment/resources as directed by the teacher and assist pupils in their use.
- Undertake structured and agreed learning activities/teaching programmes, adjusting activities according to pupil responses.
- Undertake programmes linked to local and national learning strategies e.g. literacy, numeracy, KS1, KS2, Early Years Foundation Stage, recording achievement and progress and feeding back to the teacher.
- Implement agreed learning activities/teaching programmes, adjusting activities according to pupil responses/needs.
- Determine the need for, prepare and maintain general and specialist equipment and resources.
- Select and prepare resources necessary to lead learning activities, taking account of pupils' interests and language and cultural backgrounds.
- Be aware of and appreciate a range of activities, courses, organisations and individuals to provide support for pupils to broaden and enrich their learning.
- Assisting in the preparation of work and other activities for pupils in accordance with objectives set by teaching staff.
- Under guidance and direction of teaching staff, planning and delivering activities.

## ***Professional Behaviour and confidentiality***

In order for your school to continue offering high quality standards of care, the school will operate in a way that respects every individual and family's right to privacy. All staff and visitors are therefore expected to work within the guidelines of the school's policy which will conform to current legislation and government guidelines, and which protect confidentiality.

In practice this means:

- making it clear that gossip of any kind is discouraged among or about pupils and staff, including discussing personal details about members of staff. (e.g. reasons for absence)
- Before sharing any information about staff or pupils, ensure that the sharing is necessary. (Does this person need to know?)
- keeping personal records of behaviour confidential
- not discussing pupil or family personal matters in a general way at any time
- using teaching methods which protect confidentiality
- always encouraging students to talk to their parents or carers about any anxieties they may have, while at the same time, offering support for individuals and families from staff specialising in pastoral care.

## ***Social Media***

Your school will also expect you to understand and adhere to its detailed social media policy. Schools advocate and utilise social media policies for a number of purposes, but their overriding function is to protect staff, students and parents from the many issues that can arise as a result of posting on social networking sites.

**Staff** may be vulnerable to malicious and defamatory comments (and potentially even threats and abuse) from parents or pupils, and to allegations of grooming and other forms of online abuse. Twenty one per cent of teachers say they've had derogatory remarks made about them online.

**Parents** may become involved in online disputes with other parents through social media. They may also potentially put their child and others within the school at risk by sharing photos, videos or other information that could make the children identifiable to others.

**Pupils** are at risk of cyber bullying, and may also become involved in cyber bullying themselves. They are also vulnerable to other serious crimes such as grooming and abduction if they share too much personal information on social media.

The main aim of any school's social media policy is to keep everyone within the school safe and within the law. Because the policies aren't mandatory, schools are free to decide what they include. Often, the policies are divided into three separate sections directed at staff, parents and pupils.

### ***For staff, requirements typically include:***

- Not accepting friend requests from current pupils, or ex-pupils under the age of 13
- Notifying the parents if a child sends a friend request

- Using extreme caution when corresponding with parents via social media, and preferably using a school email address instead
- Not discussing anything to do with school, pupils or other staff members, or posting photos of school events
- Only posting things that they would be happy to be attributed to them as a teaching professional
- Not identifying themselves as being associated with the school
- Using the tightest privacy settings possible
- Not using social media on school devices, or on personal devices while on the school premises

***Parental requirements often include:***

- Not posting photos, videos or comments that include other children at the school
- Not using social media on their own devices while on school premises
- Not accessing social media while helping at school or on school visits
- Raising queries, concerns and complaints directly with the school rather than posting them on social media – whether on their own pages, in closed groups (e.g. groups set up for school parents to communicate with each other) or on the school's pages
- Not posting anything malicious about the school or any member of the school community

***Children are typically required to:***

- Not join any social networking sites if they are below the permitted age (13 for most sites including Facebook and Instagram)
- Tell their parents if they are using the sites, and when they are online
- Be aware how to report abuse and inappropriate content
- Not access social media on school devices, or on their own devices while they're at school
- Not make inappropriate comments (including in private messages) about the school, teachers or other children

Within schools, there is usually a designated social media representative that is permitted, within their school's policy, to utilise the various social media platforms that are freely available.

***Remember:***

Social media policies aren't legally enforceable, but schools can take their own action if a member of staff, parent or pupil breaches its policy. A child who breaks the rules is likely to be disciplined according to the school's normal behaviour policies (such as through the anti-bullying policy, if they're found to be involved in cyber bullying).

Schools will also take social media infringements by teachers and teaching assistants seriously. If, for example, a teacher, or teaching assistant is found to have been making inappropriate contact with a pupil on social media, they're likely to face internal disciplinary action, and in extreme cases – such as if anyone is suspected of making sexual advances to a minor via social media – the police can be involved.

## **Working in Schools**

As a Teaching Assistant, the majority of your work will take place in school classrooms at nursery, primary or secondary level. You may also have an opportunity to work in a private nursery or a crèche with preschool children.

## **The UK School System**

The UK education system is worldwide reputed for its high quality and standards. In general, the British higher education system has five stages of education: early years, primary years, secondary education, Further Education (FE) and Higher Education (HE). Britons enter the education system at the age of three and up to 18 are obliged to attend school (compulsory education), while afterward is upon their choice.

## **School Types**

Nursery Schools:	3-4 year olds (EYFS)
Infant Schools:	Reception classes for 4-5 year olds Infant classes for 5-7 year olds (KS1) Most Infant schools also have a Nursery class
Junior Schools:	Junior classes for 8-11 year olds (KS2)
Primary Schools:	Infant and Junior classes within the one school
Secondary Schools:	11-16 year olds (can cater for up to 18 years old) (KS3 / KS4)
Sixth Form Colleges:	16-18 year olds
Special Schools:	Pupils who have special educational needs
PRU:	Pupil Referral Units for excluded pupils

## **Primary**

Pre-school education is available for age's two to four/five through playgroups and nursery schools. The emphasis is on group work, creative activity and guided play.

Compulsory education begins at five in England and Wales. At primary level, there is little or no specialist subject teaching and there is great emphasis on Literacy (English) and Numeracy.

## **Secondary**

Compulsory education ends at age sixteen, though many pupils stay on beyond the minimum leaving age.

The majority of state secondary school pupils in England and Wales attend comprehensive or academy schools. These provide a wide range of secondary education for most children of all abilities from a particular district, in the eleven to eighteen age ranges.

At secondary school, teachers teach specialist subjects in addition to many cross curricular subjects such as Literacy, Numeracy, Citizenship, ICT and Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE).

## **Special Schools**

Children who have special educational needs which cannot be met in mainstream school are taught in special schools. The age range of pupils in special schools can be very varied with many providing education from pre-school level to 18 years.

The national curriculum is taught in special schools although the levels may vary dependant on the particular needs of pupils.

### ***The National Curriculum***

In England there is a National Curriculum for all pupils. It sets out a clear, full and statutory entitlement to learning for all pupils.

It determines the content of what will be taught, and sets attainment targets for learning. It also determines how performance will be assessed and reported.

In the late 1990s, the Government launched National Numeracy and Literacy strategies. The aim of these strategies is to raise standards of primary school pupils in these key skill areas. If you intend to teach primary school pupils you will need to ensure that you are familiar with the requirements of the strategies.

### **Early Years Foundation Stage**

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is the statutory framework that sets the standards that all Early Years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children are ready for school and gives children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.

### **The curriculum defines four 'key stages', and ten statutory subjects:**

- key stage 1: up to age seven
- key stage 2: seven to eleven
- key stage 3: eleven to fourteen (pre-GCSE)
- key stage 4: fourteen to sixteen (preparation for GCSE and equivalent vocational qualifications).

### **Key stages one and two are the primary phase, and key stages three and four constitute the secondary phase. There are three 'core' subjects, which are:**

- English
- Mathematics
- Science
- (In Wales Welsh is a core subject in Welsh speaking schools).

### **There are seven other 'foundation' subjects which are:**

- Design Technology
- History
- Geography
- Music
- Art and Design
- Physical Education
- A Modern Foreign Language – French, Spanish, German, Italian
- In Wales (Welsh is a foundation subject in non-Welsh speaking schools).

### **Key Stage 1**

This stage includes pupils at the primary school aged 5 to 7 years old. Basically, during the key stage 1, kids are introduced to some of the most basic knowledge on subjects like the English language, Mathematics, History, Physical Education, Geography, History and Music. During the first year of this stage, the structure of the curriculum contains the Phonic screening, a short assessment of kids' ability to decode and understand phonics properly. Typically, the student will speak loudly to his teacher a list of 40 words. At the end of this stage (same as in each of them), these pupils will sit for an examination aiming to measure their development in English, Maths and Science.

## Key Stage 2

Between 7 to 11 years pupils will be in the second Key Stage of the compulsory education. Now the curriculum aims to move them further in gaining a bit more knowledge on core subjects. At the end of this stage, they will be tested in the following subjects

- English reading
- English grammar, punctuation and spelling
- Mathematics
- Science

In English and Mathematics, the testing will be done through national assessment tests, while the teacher will independently assess the level of improvement of each student in Science.

## Key Stage 3

Pupils aged 11 to 14 are in the third stage of compulsory education. To a certain degree, this period of their education is very important because only a few years later they will sit for the GCSE national qualification. The curriculum during this stage of education will also contain new subjects at which students are supposed to get some basic knowledge before moving any further in the upcoming stages of education. The subjects learned in Key Stage 3 are English, Mathematics, Science, History, Geography, Art and Design, Music, Physical Education, Modern Foreign Languages, Design and Technology and Computing. At the end of the Key Stage 3, some students may take their GCSE or other national qualifications.

## Key Stage 4

The final stage of the compulsory education, the Key Stage 4 lasts from the age of 14 to 16. This is the most common period of time for students to undertake the national assessment tests that will lead them to take a GCSE or other national qualifications.

The compulsory national curriculum at this stage contains the “core” and “foundation” subjects.

These are the “core” subjects taught at the Key Stage 4:

- English
- Mathematics
- Science

And these are the “foundation” subjects taught at the Key Stage 4:

- Computing
- Physical Education
- Citizenship

Additionally, schools in UK are obliged to offer one of the following subjects during this stage of education

- Arts
- Design and Technology
- Humanities
- Modern Foreign Languages

All children in key stages one to three must study the first nine of these subjects. In key stage three, they must also study a modern foreign language.

Pupils aged fourteen to sixteen must study the core subjects, technology, a modern foreign language and physical education, plus either history or geography or short courses in both.

## **School Staff**

### *Head teacher*

The head teacher is the person with overall responsibility for how a school runs. Some may actually teach but this is not always possible due the amount of administration work involved in the position.

### *Deputy Head*

The Deputy Head works closely with the head teacher and the senior school management team in running the school. The deputy head will generally be an experienced teacher and the majority continue to teach alongside this role.

### *Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator*

The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator has day-to-day responsibility for the operation of a mainstream school's SEN policy and for co-ordinating provision for pupils with SEN. The SENCO gives SEN staff valuable information and support, helping with the school's SEN procedures, policy and support timetables. They should also provide staff with a list of children on the SEN register, including their teaching programme and individual education plans

### *Class Teacher*

In primary schools, a class teacher will teach all subjects to a class all day. The class teacher deals with all aspects of discipline, pastoral and everyday welfare of the children.

### *Subject Teacher*

In secondary schools, teachers teach a specific subject rather than working as a class teacher. Subject teachers will be teach a range of year groups during a day and will work with the subject department to develop the subject curriculum in the school.

### *School Governor*

All schools have a governing body that is made up of representatives from the school, teaching staff, support staff, parents and external interested parties. The body works closely with the head and makes key decisions for the school such as managing the school budget, reviewing staffing levels, interviewing new staff and managing the school facilities. The governing body do have legal obligations and responsibilities but serving as a governor is entirely voluntary.

### *EAL/ESL/TESL Teachers*

Children who do not have English as a first language may be assisted by teachers specialised in teaching English to non-speakers. These teachers are called English as an additional language teachers (EAL), English as a second language teachers (ESL) and Teaching English as a second language teachers (TESL).

### *EMTAG Teachers*

Teachers teaching ethnic minority or traveller children are called EMTAG teachers. This stands for Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Grant. The grant is given to schools to help manage pupils from these backgrounds and EMTAG teachers are employed to assist these pupils in their learning.

## **Working in the classroom**

### **Supporting pupils' learning**

Children and adults have different ways of processing information. People use the skills of looking, touching or listening in varying amounts depending on their learning style. In addition different times of the day affect individual levels of concentration; some pupils work better in the morning, others in the afternoon.

As a Teaching Assistant, you will need to be aware of the stages in the development of pupils and their individual learning styles. The pupils you will be working with will be constantly thinking and learning; gathering new information and formulating new ideas about themselves, other people and the world around them.

### **During learning activities, pupils need:**

- to explore their environment and or investigate new information/ideas
- to discover things for themselves through a wide variety of experiences
- to feel free to make mistakes in a safe and secure environment using 'trial and error'
- appropriate support from adults (and other pupils) to encourage and extend their knowledge and skills
- to develop autonomy through increased responsibility and working independently
- an appropriate learning framework in which to make sense of new information and ideas

### **The Teaching Assistant's role in supporting learning activities involves:**

- providing learning activities as directed by the teacher
- using appropriate materials and support strategies for each pupil's needs and abilities
- modifying or adapting learning activities to meet intended learning goals/objectives
- providing assistance at an appropriate level for each pupil
- encouraging pupils to make choices about their own learning
- promoting independent learning

## **Helping pupils to develop their literacy skills**

The Teaching Assistant plays a key role in supporting the teacher and the pupils during literacy activities.

You will need to work with the teacher and find out how the literacy activities are to be organised and your specific role in supporting various activities including class discussions, group activities and tasks for individuals. To support primary pupils you will help them to:

- read and write confidently and fluently
- check their reading and correct their own mistakes
- know and understand the spelling system
- use this spelling system to read and spell accurately
- develop fluent and legible handwriting
- be interested in words and their meanings
- develop and use an ever increasing vocabulary
- know about and be able to write stories, poems and factual accounts
- plan, draft and revise their own writing
- be interested in books and read for pleasure
- assess and give reasons for their literacy preferences
- develop their imagination, creativity and critical awareness

## Helping pupils to develop their numeracy skills

In providing effective assistance to a teacher during numeracy activities you will need to know and understand:

- what the pupils have to do
- the learning goals/objectives for the pupils
- the level of support pupils require
- how to report any difficulties experienced by the pupils to the teacher

## When supporting pupils in primary school with their numeracy skills you will help them to:

- know and understand numbers and the number system
- count, calculate and solve simple maths problems and make simple lists, tables and charts
- use and apply mathematics to tackle and solve practical mathematical problems
- communicate their reasoning about problems and explain their solutions using objects, pictures, diagrams, numbers, symbols and relevant mathematical language
- make mental calculations by imagining numbers and the relationships between them
- select, collect, organise and present appropriate data using graphs and diagrams

## When supporting pupils in secondary schools, you will be helping them to:

- know and understand numbers and the number system including positive and negative numbers, factors and prime numbers, equivalent fractions, how fractions, decimals and percentages relate to each other, ratio and proportion
- employ standard methods to perform mental and written calculations including addition, subtraction, multiplication and division using whole numbers, fractions, decimals and percentages
- use calculator functions to complete complex calculations and understand the answers calculators give in relation to the initial mathematical problems
- develop efficient problem solving skills
- know and understand how to use letter symbols in algebra
- set up and use simple equations to solve problems select, collect and organise appropriate data using tables, surveys, questionnaires, and CD ROMs presenting results using graphs, pie charts and diagrams relating these to the original problem
- solve increasingly demanding mathematical problems by breaking the problem down into smaller more manageable tasks and developing deductive reasoning

## Behaviour Management

Part of your role as a Teaching Assistant will be promoting the school's policies regarding pupil behaviour by consistently and effectively implementing agreed behaviour strategies as directed by the class teacher. You will help pupils follow the school rules and also work towards specific goals and expectations as prescribed by the class teacher including individual, group or class targets.

## You can promote positive behaviour and so help to prevent or reduce disruptive behaviour by:

- learning and using pupils names
- using effective communication skills and encouraging the use of these in pupils
- identifying pupils needs and interests to help develop effective learning activities
- helping to organise a stimulating working environment to encourage learning
- having well prepared learning materials
- helping to encourage parental involvement

## Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE)

**PSHE can be defined as the planned provision in schools to encourage and support the personal and social development of all pupils. PSHE helps pupils to:**

- develop and maintain positive self esteem
- develop self-reliance
- take responsibility for their own actions
- have confidence in themselves and others
- make and keep meaningful and rewarding relationships
- be aware of their own feelings and those of others
- consider and respect the differences of other people
- be active participants as citizens of a democratic society
- develop and sustain healthy lifestyles
- keep safe and maintain the safety of others

**As a Teaching Assistant, you can play a key role in the PSHE of your pupils by:**

- providing freedom for pupils to become independent
- being patient and providing time for pupils to do things for themselves
- listening calmly and attentively to pupils
- taking an interest in pupils drawings, paintings, stories and other activities
- letting pupils talk to you about their worries or problems
- being honest and open about fears
- developing and maintaining basic hygiene skills (washing hands, blowing noses, etc.)
- encouraging respect for own and others' health and hygiene needs
- being consistent with limits and boundaries
- asking pupils for their ideas and opinions and listening to those with respect and interest
- being a positive role model
- encouraging positive social play

## Professional Practice

### Team work

As a Teaching Assistant your role will involve working with a wide range of teaching and nonteaching staff in a school. You will need to know and understand the different roles of the team members in your school and the process of decision making within the team:

**The team will include all the following:**

- Other Teaching Assistants
- Class or subject teachers
- Head Teacher
- Deputy Head Teacher
- Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO)
- Specialist teachers i.e. hearing impaired or ESL teachers
- Parent helpers or volunteers
- Students on placement from college/university

**Teamwork is essential when working closely and regularly with other people over a long time. To be an effective part of the team you should ensure that you are aware of:**

- the organisational structure of your school
- your role and responsibilities within the team
- the roles and responsibilities of other team members
- how to contribute to effective team practice
- how to participate in team meetings
- key school policies including equal opportunities, health and safety & child protection.

## **Health and Safety**

As a Teaching Assistant, you must know and understand the school's health and safety policy including who is responsible for health and safety as well as the procedures for reporting any concerns or problems to the appropriate person. In your daily role you should also be aware of:

- location of safety equipment in different learning areas
- position of fire exits, extinguishers, blanket, first-aid boxes, your role during fire drills, what to do in case of fire or other emergencies and escape routes
- local and national requirements regarding health, hygiene, safety and supervision in school
- One of your responsibilities may be to ensure all equipment and surfaces in the classroom are safe, hygienic and usable

## **Child Protection**

Teaching Assistants that have contact with individual pupils on a day to day basis have an essential role to play in detecting indicators of possible abuse and neglect such as:

- outward signs of physical abuse
- uncharacteristic behaviour patterns
- Failure to develop in the expected ways

If you have concerns that a pupil at your school may be experiencing possible abuse, neglect or bullying then you must report these concerns to the relevant person. It is then the school's responsibility to refer any concerns to the appropriate agency, usually the social services department.

As a Teaching Assistant, you will need to be aware of:

- possible signs of abuse, neglect and bullying
- who you should report your concerns to
- the school's child protection policy and procedures
- the school anti bullying policy
- school policy on use of restraint
- procedures to be followed if a member of staff is abused

These are just a small number of responsibilities Teaching Assistants may experience whilst working in schools.

If you are interested in becoming a Teaching Assistant, why not contact us to discuss options available to you. FW Solutions offer a range of training schemes that will allow you to develop your career, gain a recognised level 2 or 3 qualification whilst working within a school.

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