



Volunteering at Dunston - your child's school

What is a classroom helper?

Classroom helpers volunteer to assist teachers on a regular basis, usually in primary schools. They help with tasks like listening to pupils read.

Reading practice is very labour-intensive, and helpers can make a big difference to teachers and children.

Classroom helpers are often, but not always, parents of children at the school and are not the same as classroom assistants, who are paid staff.

The role of classroom helper

Classroom helpers usually commit to spending regular slots of time in school each week. This time can vary from half an hour to half a day at most.

Many schools prefer not to put you in your child's class because they consider it disruptive for your child, and possibly unfair to classmates whose parents can't volunteer.

Classroom helpers make a big difference in improving standards. Even if you're not helping in your child's class, research shows that having a parent who volunteers improves a child's experience of school. This may be because you're more 'plugged in' to school and know what goes on during their day. It's a great way to get behind the scenes.

How to become a classroom helper

If you're interested in volunteering, you can either talk to your child's teacher, our office staff or to Mr Burgess the Headteacher at school.

Before you can work in a school, you need to have a police background check. It's a standard procedure – carried out by the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) in England and Wales and by Disclosure Scotland in Scotland.

You'll be asked to fill out a straightforward form which is sent off for processing – the check takes 4-6 weeks. If you have any police convictions, you may still be able to volunteer, depending on the kind of conviction.