



HAPPY HOUSE VOLUNTEER AND VISITORS GUIDELINES.

INTRODUCTION

The Happy House is run on a strong foundation of love and family in the interests of all - children, staff, friends, visitors and volunteers. We welcome visitors and volunteers as they bring with them their skills and open a window on the outside world for our family. We always do very our best to ensure that they make, and get, the most out of their time with us.

The interests of the children, our beneficiaries, are paramount and we never lose sight of the fact that we are exclusively child focused. Before volunteering with us we ask you to understand the preparation required physically, psychologically & also financially. All volunteers are required to show their commitment to our Happy House family, which is entirely dependent on charity, by raising £500 (or equivalent) before they arrive, regardless of the duration of their stay. They may do this however they wish, by taking part in a sponsored challenge, by holding events, or asking friends and family for donations. We can help them by providing publicity and information material. We do not at any time accept that any funds raised are used for personal use and expenses, such as flights accommodation etc. This money must be paid into the charity account before departure.

We must emphasize that there is a great difference between being a tourist or volunteer when coming to the Happy House.

Tourists are on holiday, whilst volunteers are coming to work with us to benefit our children and are expected to comply with the Happy House policies and procedures, which are tried and tested.

The following guidelines are to help you understand the Happy House way before you arrive, what to expect of us and what we expect

from you - always with our children's needs and interests at the forefront of all we do.

Guided tour

On the day of arrival all volunteers are taken for a guided tour where everything is clearly explained. You are free to make any observations or ask any questions which we are happy to answer. All departments are well demarcated and situated and you will be expected and timetabled to help in several of them. You might be required to help in the office, school, library, computer room, kitchen, garden, laundry room depending on your interests and also the needs of our family in specific areas.

Personal property

Please ensure that you make proper arrangements with the administrator should you wish to leave your handbag, back pack or any other personal belongings in the front office.

Donations of goods and gifts

If you are bringing donations of goods for our home please hand them over to the director or administrator in the main office for proper recording and disbursement. Please do not directly distribute any items without office guidance since we document and account for everything that is donated, whether money or goods. It is not appropriate to make gifts to staff.

Points worth noting

- ⚡ Kids are not allowed to play with your telephone handset, computer, kindle, camera etcetera. If they have to look at pictures please guide them through.

- ⤵ Do not interrupt classrooms through unnecessary movements hence distracting kids from learning. For instance if a group of kids are having a session do not interrupt or sit nearby which could distract or encourage them to come and sit on your knee etc.
- ⤵ Never allow the kids to play with or even braid your hair. It is much better to read a book with them or to play a mentally stimulating game.
- ⤵ Kindly don't carry our babies around when they should be encouraged to crawl or to learn or even perfect their walking skills. And please do not carry the toddlers they are all well able to walk and run.
- As a team player remember that your services are meant to compliment the efforts of the paid staff and not relieving them off their duties. Kindly insist on working under the guidance of a staff member at all times. In school for instance do not agree to teach a class if you are not qualified and also if the class teacher is not with you.

In school

If a child is in school it is worth noting that they learn in many ways. For instance, children learn from other children through interactions, copying, sharing and self assertion.

Children also learn through doing which enhances their motor and muscle co-ordination skills. It is better, for instance, to let a child express themselves artistically by using a crayon to draw a picture rather than having you do it for them.

If a child needs correcting in any way it must be done lovingly &

encouragingly in order not to break their self esteem which we are continuously striving to build.

To sum up we encourage our children to think and act for their own good as opposed to creating severely dependent & helpless young people. We are in full support of child participation depending on the age and capability of the child.

Trips & Outings

As we said in the beginning everything is done as a family. We cannot allow any trips for any child/children which may mean others are left behind. When our children go on a trip or outing, they do it as a family.

Photographs and networking

When you are volunteering please remember that it is not always appropriate to be using a camera, especially during school time. Before you take pictures of any of the children please ask for guidance from the office. Remember we have day scholars with paying parents in our school. It could be extremely damaging if a picture of such a child was taken and shared on Facebook or other social networking sites which could portray them as a "needy child". We must respect the privacy of these children. Equally, if you are writing updates to your friends please respect the privacy and interests of our children and our staff. Do not disclose their backgrounds etc and if you are in any doubt seek advice from the administrator.

Clothes

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Please come to work dressed appropriately. The work is hot and dusty so be prepared for your clothes to get dirty. You may dress casually but please do not wear revealing clothes. Keep jewellery to a minimum.

Water

You may drink the water from at the Happy House but we should advise visitors and volunteers to provide their own bottled water.

Official reports

You will be expected to work in a team while you are with us and therefore you will be timetabled into your tasks and asked to ensure that you are there in good time and do not leave ahead of your allotted time. Just as in any workplace, if you need to take time off for any reason you must make arrangements with the office so that other arrangements to cover for you can be made. If any volunteer comes to the Happy House with a hangover or too tired to work due to late nights they will be asked to leave and return when they can be a team player. If you are sick and unable to come in please phone in as early as you can so that your role can be covered. Please phone Velma 0713214372.

Complaints

If you are unhappy about anything whilst you are at the Happy House or have any concerns about any aspect of the way we operate please discuss your problems with the administrator, not with staff members or other volunteers.

Emotional attachment

Children need a cuddle and loving them is part of our everyday work here. However, we would ask you to understand that constantly picking up and cuddling a child can be detrimental to them and impact negatively on their emotional and physical growth and development.

Nor is it acceptable to develop a favourite. If a child gets special treats or more attention the other children are obviously left feeling unloved or unworthy. We avoid favouritism at all costs because we want every one of our children to feel loved and secure so that they can develop their full potential.

Local Beliefs & Customs

Homosexuality is illegal in Kenya and is punishable by imprisonment or deportation. Many Kenyans have beliefs about homosexuality similar to those in, for example, the UK and America in the 1940s and 1950s. It is important for gay, lesbian, or bisexual volunteers to know about these conservative attitudes to be able to live and work productively in Kenyan communities.

Anyone volunteering with us is representing the Happy House for their entire stay - whether they are actually with our family or on time off, so we would be grateful if you remember that your behaviour will reflect on us.

Kenya is a highly religious society. The Happy House is in an area where people are extremely polite and swearing of any kind is rarely heard and considered very bad manners, so please do not use bad language while you are with our family or outside in the local community.

And finally

We really appreciate your interest in our Happy House and want you to enjoy and get the very best from your time with us. By working together, we will learn from each other and help our children to grow and flourish in the process.

I have read and understood the above guidelines and wish to comply fully.

Full namesignature.....

Date