

# GAP YEAR ASSISTANT GUIDANCE

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## Introduction

The intention of this handbook is to provide guidelines for you as Gap Year Assistants at St Andrew's Prep and, in particular, to help you to understand the ethos and day to day workings of the school.

First and foremost, we want you to be happy here at St Andrew's Prep. We pride ourselves on being a happy, inclusive school and we hope you integrate in to the community as easily and as efficiently as possible. We recognise that you have made a brave decision immerse yourself in a school, albeit on the other side of the fence as a member of staff and therefore we want to ensure we respond to that courage by providing levels of support and experience to help you develop holistically as individuals.

As a general rule, it is worth remembering that Gap Year Assistants are regarded as assistants in all realms of school life. You have a great deal of responsibility but you will always have a permanent member of staff present or nearby to help and advise you. Within the guidelines suggested there is some scope for individuality but it is necessary for certain important areas of school life to be approached with a standard policy.

Throughout your time at St Andrew's Prep you should conduct yourself according to the high standards expected of all members of staff. Your lifestyle should be akin to that of a full-time

teacher and the same levels of accountability and personal responsibility will apply. Please therefore do not do anything that will affect your ability to undertake your job effectively.

Overall, we hope that you will find St Andrew's Prep to be a dynamic and fun community, and one which develops your character during your year.

Mark Tomsett, Head of Pastoral Care

## Important Principles

The school's prospectus has at its beginning the following statement of what St Andrew's Prep aims to do:

*"Above all it is the potential and character of each individual that we seek to nurture. The confidence, happiness and fulfilment of every child is our absolute priority."*

These are fundamental principles which we believe to be important:

1. Children should be set high standards in all their work and activities but targets set must be attainable and we should help children to succeed in reaching them by encouragement and constructive criticism.
2. Children should not only value personal achievement but also value the successes of others.
3. By our own attitudes we should show that we care for manners, language, honesty, service and respect for the individual. We should beware of unconsciously moulding children's attitudes by absence from certain school events or by minimising the importance of what we may regard as 'minor' activities. As members of staff, Gap Year Assistants will be expected to be present at Chapel services, assemblies, some staff meetings and school events.
4. For all children we recognise that success is important and for their own self-esteem it is vital that children are helped towards worthwhile achievement. We operate through positive discipline – that means encouragement and support, not fear and intimidation.
5. Working at St. Andrew's Prep is not a 9 to 5 job. The greater the commitment of the staff in both time and energy, the greater the rewards with respect to enjoyment, job satisfaction and results, and since the Gap Year Assistants are often the youngest members of staff they are expected to have even more energy than most!

## The School's Management Structure

**Head** – Tom Gregory

Overall responsibility for all school activities, for welfare of children and staff and for forward planning.

**Deputy Head** - Paul Shouksmith

Responsible for day to day academic matters of the school, including teaching staff duties. Paul may require teaching assistant tasks to be fulfilled from time to time.

**Gap Year Assistant Co-ordinator** – Mark Tomsett (Head of Pastoral Care and Boarding & Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)).

Responsible for the Gap Year Assistants, their timetable and their overall welfare. Also responsible for the day to day running of Colstocks Boarding House and for the pastoral care of the boarders and pupils at St Andrew's Prep.

**Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)** – Sarah Piper

**School Secretaries** – Louisa Snell (mornings) and Katie McDonald (afternoons)

Responsible for general day to day administrative duties.

**Head's PA** – Annette Adams

Responsible for all administrative tasks relating to the Head and his diary.

**Deputy Head's PA** – Claire Groves

Responsible for all administrative tasks relating to the Deputy Head, Head of Pastoral Care Head of Wellbeing and their diaries.

**Senior Nurse** – Vicks Champion

Runs the medical centre and lives in the Boarding House. Vicks is a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL).

### **Volunteer Timetables**

The routine and duties of the Gap Year Assistants will be organised by Head of Pastoral Care, and whilst all initiatives to help staff with lessons, hobbies, trips, visits etc. are to be encouraged, please ensure that you stick to the normal routine and any changes are checked with him first. The most vital requirement of all Gap Year Assistants is that they should use their initiative, and

try to see ways in which they can help out. This way, they will soon become popular with staff and pupils alike. Flexibility is a must.

## Managing Yourself and the Children

### **Respect first, rapport second**

As members of the teaching staff, albeit junior ones and temporary, you have the difficult job of maintaining a distance from the children whilst at the same time gaining their respect and friendship. It is as much your responsibility to maintain the discipline and ethos of the school as that of any other member of staff.

**Firm, fair** and **friendly** are the three words to describe the approach to discipline. The expectation should be that children will behave in a responsible and honest manner and if they do not then they are letting themselves down and disappointing their teachers.

**Please remember that there is no corporal punishment at St. Andrew's Prep and no child should ever be hit or slapped.**

It is important that you establish a rapport with the children but not at the expense of losing their respect; being too friendly causes as many problems as being too strict. One of the best ways of establishing rapport with the children is to play games with them – football, rounders etc. - but it is essential to remember that the children you are playing with are young and possibly fragile. Therefore, take care not to be over physical and avoid getting involved in anything which could lead to injury.

Duty staff are assigned to each day of the week but all staff are expected to share in the control and supervision of pupils when they are in school. Irresponsible or potentially dangerous behaviour is not tolerated.

### **Punctuality**

It is vitally important that you turn up for your duty on time, preferably even a few minutes early. If you have any difficulties fulfilling an obligation, let the relevant member of staff know as early as possible. Sometimes you may be able to do a swap with another Gap Year Assistant, but it is still as well to alert the member of staff that you are doing this. If you have any timetable clashes, then please let the Head of Pastoral Care know and he will sort these out for you.

## **Difficulties with children**

If you have any problems with the children's behaviour you should immediately seek help from a member of staff. Gap Year Assistant should not give debarments, but if it is felt that a child needs that sort of punishment, report the facts of any incident immediately to a member of staff who will take the appropriate action. By all means recommend children for Headmaster's Merits and Stars.

## **Dress code**

When Gap Year Assistant are helping in the classroom they should be smart and dress formally. When on the games field a tracksuit is usually the "uniform" and you will be given a school tracksuit to wear. When on duty in the Boarding House then 'smart casual' wear is appropriate. If in doubt always select the traditional rather than the fashionable!

## **Confidentiality**

As a member of staff you will be privy to a large amount of confidential information about the children. This information must remain confidential and never be divulged to the children or referred to in any way.

## **Language**

Gap Year Assistant should always remember that they are setting an example to the children and that includes what they say as well as what they do. You should never swear in front of the children or use inappropriate language or slang.

## **Meals**

Gap Year Assistant are expected to attend all meals except when they are off duty. Like the other staff, they should keep a particular eye on the table manners.

## **Gap Year Assistant meetings**

The Head of Pastoral Care will arrange to meet up with you all on a regular basis so that you can air any concerns you may have and discuss any difficulties and he can give you any relevant feedback from staff meetings which you have not attended. Changes to timetables can be discussed on these occasions and any forthcoming events of which you may not be aware.

## **Personal problems**

If you do have any anxieties or concerns yourself then it is very important you talk about them and don't bottle them up, no matter how minor you think they may be. Please speak to the Head of Pastoral Care in the first instance.

## Your Role and Duties

**Boarding...** Your primary role is as a member of the boarding team and as such you will be asked to take on certain responsibilities in the early evenings in the Boarding House and at weekends. You will work closely with the House staff. They will discuss with you what they would like you to do on your duty evenings and at weekends when you will join a duty staff team with the job of keeping the boarders occupied with constructive activities. There will be trips, too, to places such as Chessington World of Adventures, Legoland, etc. when you will be required to assist.

**Teaching...** You should never be asked to teach a class on your own but you will be asked to assist in certain lessons. These will be fitted in to your own personal timetable.

**Games...** You will find yourself involved a great deal on the games field. The Director of Sport will assign you to particular games groups and you will work alongside the sports department staff and teachers. Occasionally you might be asked to take a specific group or team but this will be infrequent and only once you are fully integrated.

**Other duties you may be asked to carry out...**

**Adventurers, Brownies and Rainbows...** You will be assigned to help out with at least one of these groups who meet on a weekly basis in the afternoons/evenings.

**Hobbies...** Junior Hobbies (Years 3, 4 & 5) take place between 4.05pm and 5pm every weekday and Senior ones between 5.45 and 6.45pm. You should try to involve yourself as much as possible in this important area of school life. You'll probably find that you are approached by staff asking for your help if you show aptitude in any particular area.

**Biscuits and Milk...** These are distributed during certain break-times under the supervision of a volunteer. Prefects will assist with the distribution.

**Office Duties ...** The School Secretaries, Head's PA, Deputy Head's PA or Admissions staff may need help with administrative duties from time to time. Help will be required every day at morning and afternoon registration to query pupils missing from registers. You may also be asked, on occasion, to man the front desk on a Saturday morning. This will all be explained to you.

## Information for those residing in GAP Accommodation

### Drugs and Substances

Drugs and substances means controlled drugs and the paraphernalia of drugs or substances intended to resemble drugs, or 'legal' drugs which can be obtained from a chemist shop; performance enhancing drugs; anabolic steroids; solvents and other substances held or supplied in each case for the purposes of misuse.

- a) Anyone supplying drugs and substances must expect to be dismissed immediately.
- b) Anyone possessing or using drugs and substances must also expect to be dismissed.
- c) If there is reason to suspect that a staff member has been involved with drugs or substances, they may be asked to supply a urine sample for analysis.

### Alcohol and Tobacco

- a) Alcohol may be brought into private accommodation and consumed on school premises but discretion is essential.
- b) No resident is permitted to use tobacco or any product containing tobacco on school premises. Tampering with smoke detectors will be treated with the utmost seriousness.

### Fire

- a) Outside school hours, all residents must sign in and out of the building using the board provided.
- b) All residents must evacuate the building immediately if the fire alarm sound (other than normal test times) and make your way to assembly point.
- c) Residents are asked to check who is signed and sweep the area quickly before evacuation.
- d) Rooms must be kept tidy and floor space should be clear. Electrical appliances should, wherever possible, be unplugged straight after use. All personal electrical equipment must be PAT tested before use. Lights should be switched off when you leave the building.

### General

- a) Personal belongings should not be left in bathrooms or shower room. Anything left in these areas will be removed to aid cleaning.
- b) A rota will be devised to tidy and clean all communal areas on a weekly basis. Should additional cleaning hours be needed, residents will be accountable for this cost. The school will clean communal spaces weekly.

- c) Cutlery and crockery should not be removed from the dining room. Meals should be taken in the dining room during school term. Should crockery be used it should be cleaned immediately and all food waste disposed of correctly.
- d) Residents should be back in accommodation by 12am in the week especially if they are on duty the following morning.

These rules are for the comfort of everyone who will call St Andrew's Prep 'home' over the year ahead. Guests are not allowed within the school building unless permission has been specifically granted. Appropriate sanctions for breaches of the code will be applied and these may range from an informal warning to dismissal from post. Licence to Occupy must be signed off.

In the interests of our local neighbours, please remember that noise travels far in our community, particularly in the small hours. You must respect our neighbours by keeping noise to minimum.

## **Health & Safety Matters**

The Head of Facilities Management will give a copy of the school's Health & Safety policy to you. This is a very important document as it contains vital information such as fire instructions, first aid, use of the swimming pool, etc. The following parts are worth particular attention:

### **Fire Alarms**

In the event of the alarms sounding (other than during term-time when the system is tested) you must vacate the building and muster at the designated place.

### **Electrical equipment**

Before use in the school, all equipment should be checked for safety by the Estates Manager, Wayne Archer. Please make sure this is carried out before equipment is used. Do not use adaptors if you have several pieces of equipment from a single socket. The Estates department will provide you with extension sockets.

### **Security**

For your own safety and that of others, it is essential that you keep your premises secure. Doors should be locked behind you at night where necessary.

### **Swimming Pool**

Please follow the rules relating to the pool and never swim alone.