

Hannah More Primary – background info and FAQs for reading buddies

The school website gives a really good picture of our school : www.hannahmore.org.uk

Our school values are:

Determination - Successful determination is when we show perseverance and look for ways to overcome obstacles. We are resourceful and resilient, even when things go wrong.

Openness - Openness is when we reflect on our strengths and weaknesses and are willing to accept help. We ask questions in order to better understand our own and others' feelings. We are curious about other people and respectful of differences. We welcome visitors and enjoy learning from them.

Nurture - We endeavour to understand how others may be feeling. We form supportive friendships and trusting relationships. We care for all the people in our school community.

Enjoyment - We have wide ranging interests and enjoy new activities. We use our imagination and share our ideas and experiences with enthusiasm.

Respect - We work well together and value the contributions of others. We manage our feelings well and express ourselves appropriately. We believe in ourselves and are ambitious.

Families at Hannah More

Children at Hannah More come from hugely diverse backgrounds; some have travelled half way around the world before starting school, others have lived all their lives in the locality. Many speak two or more languages, some have attended several schools; abroad and in the UK. Some children have parents or grandparents who attended Hannah More before them; other families have minimal experience of any formal education. It is often a challenge to work with such diverse communities, but it also offers many rewards – just as the experience of working with people from different cultures, religions and backgrounds enriches the children's educational experience, so it can the adults'.

Though diverse, our communities unite around a desire for their children to succeed. Many communities have high aspirations for their children and want to support them to achieve these.

Some children arrive at our school with very low levels of attainment. There are many reasons for this: deprivation, language barriers, limited life experience, limited schooling etc. If our children are to be successful in their later lives, we need to ensure that during their time here we close that attainment gap.

Valuing diversity

Our vision at Hannah More is of a cohesive community where diversity is celebrated. We celebrate different religious festivals and we promote tolerance. We bring communities together to share in school and class events and successes. We show sensitivity to religious and cultural needs, and we respect individuals – remembering to treat others as we would like to be treated.

We hope you will enjoy the opportunity to be part of our diverse community. Learning about the backgrounds and languages of the children and understanding the journeys some families have made is often fascinating. We encourage everyone to look beyond stereotypes and find out about individuals. You may find stories that inspire, others that shock, some that sadden, others that are uplifting. This is our community! Please play your part – be welcoming, be friendly, be open to difference, show compassion, support, be interested and help us to realise those high aspirations for every child.

Behaviour

At Hannah More, we believe that behaviour is the communication of an emotional need. Viewing it as such and being curious about the nature of that emotional need helps us to respond constructively to the child rather than negatively to the behaviour. Not all behaviours are a matter of 'choice' and not all factors linked to a child's behaviour are within their control. If you are ever concerned about a

child's behaviour, always speak to a teacher or other staff member. You should be aware of our rules which are BE SAFE – SHOW RESPECT – ENGAGE. It is often helpful to use these words to remind children of our expectations or praise them for showing these behaviours.

Safeguarding, health and safety

Adults working and volunteering in school have a DBS check and an induction meeting. We will check that you are clear about signing in procedures, what to do in the event of a fire alarm and other health and safety issues. All volunteers should report any hazards, concerns or 'near misses' to a member of staff.

Visitors must sign in at the school office and wear a visitor lanyard. Volunteers must not use mobile phones in school. Volunteers must not go in the children's toilets. We ask volunteers to pass on any concerns about a child, however small or trifling they may seem to be. All school staff have had child protection training and we use an online reporting system to record concerns. Ideally you should speak to staff on the day, or contact us afterwards if necessary, either by phone or email.

As a volunteer in school you should be aware that the designated person responsible for child protection is the Head teacher or, in her absence, the Deputy Head or the Nurture Leader. Further information about safeguarding is on the school website: <https://www.hannahmore.org.uk/our-school/safeguarding>

FAQs

Do I need special skills or specialist literacy knowledge?

No. We just want adults who are confident readers, who can share a love of books and who enjoy chatting with children. Some of our children have limited opportunities to read with adults outside of school and some of our parents lack the confidence or literacy skills to read with their children. Talking about the book, checking understanding of words and asking lots of questions are all important. Some of our children decode texts well, but don't fully understand what they are reading. Others read well, but with no expression and with limited fluency. Reading a phrase or paragraph to the child first, with lots of expression – and then asking them to re-read it to you – can be a great strategy. This is often a great place to start for children who are less confident. Be mindful of vocabulary that may not be familiar (for example, some years ago a year 6 cohort came across the word 'meadow' in a test paper and many had no idea what it meant).

Do buddies need to commit to coming every week?

We ask that buddies are able to commit to their agreed slot for most weeks during term time. As a guideline, we suggest that buddies who will miss more than one or two sessions during a term will be better suited to a different role.

Can I bring my child a gift?

Because not all children have buddies, it's not really fair if buddies bring gifts for individuals. If you want to bring a present for the class at Christmas or at the end of the year then that's lovely. We suggest a book, magazine or board game that the class can share. Some buddies like to give their child a sticker after their reading session and that's always worked fine.

I've heard that some schools have a 'no touching' rule – is this the case at Hannah More?

A high-five, elbow bump, hand-shake or arm around the shoulder as a greeting or congratulatory gesture is absolutely fine. Common sense prevails here - as well as covid awareness. Children should never sit on your knee and extended hugs are discouraged. Buddies often sit alongside children to read as this is a much better way to share a book together.

Who can I ask about other questions?

You can contact Ruth at school with any general queries: ruth.cochran@bristol-schools.uk. You can speak to any staff member if you have concerns about a child and we encourage you to do this even for very minor worries.