



Dear all,

Welcome to the new academic year! We hope everyone enjoyed the long summer break. We are all refreshed and ready for the new term!

Here are a few reminders as we start the new school year:

Most volunteers will be starting to get to know 3 new children this term; please pass the [Child Details forms](#) to your school so that they can provide you with information on why the children have been chosen for support. Remember to keep completed forms securely; forms can contain confidential information which must be treated in the strictest confidence. You can print the form directly from our website if you do not have any from last term or contact your fieldworker (<https://www.abctoread.org.uk/volunteers/resources/>)

Our 'Getting to Know You' sheet has some useful conversation starters which can help volunteers get to know their new children. If you would like a copy please contact us.

GDPR: We are always mindful of confidentiality. It is essential that we do all keep child /school /volunteer information securely. It is possible to identify an individual even when no names are used, so please remember this especially when you may be chatting informally to other volunteers.

Please remember to let your school and children know if you cannot make one or your ABC to read sessions in school. Many of the children we work with are very vulnerable and they do look forward to your regular visits. Schools do say that it can be disruptive when sessions are missed and children can feel let down. If you are going on holiday please do remember to tell the children you are working with as well as informing school staff. Also please let your fieldworker know and, if you can, please offer to make up missed sessions.

Book Exchanges

We are looking forward to seeing everyone at our book exchange meetings this term (details on the right). Volunteers are welcome to attend any of the venues; drop in any time during the sessions (or stay for the whole time!) and enjoy refreshments whilst browsing our books and chatting with other volunteers.

Do remember to follow our social media pages where content is added most days:

Twitter <https://twitter.com/ABCtoread>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/abctoread2>

Right: West Berkshire volunteers getting together before the end of a school year.



BOOK EXCHANGE DATES

WINDSOR - 14th September

10-11.30am—Redwood House, 9 Queen Annes Road, Windsor SL4 2BJ

READING - 21st September

10.30 - 11.30am - St. Marks Church Hall, 94 Cranbury Road, Reading RG30 2TA

WEST BERKS. - 22nd September

10.30 - 11.30am Thatcham Town Council Chamber, Brownsfield Rd, Thatcham RG18 3HF

WOKINGHAM - 15th September

12.30—2.30pm Jennett's Park Community Centre, Tawny Owl Square, Jennett's Park, Bracknell RG12 8EB

VOLUNTEER WORKSHOP

5th October

10.30-1pm

Crowne Plaza, Reading
Refreshments on arrival and parking on site

Summer activities

We took part in a variety of activities over the summer, including a project we created for 'Graft Thames Valley'.

You can have a look at our ABC to read 'end of year' video which was created by Graft Thames Valley: https://youtu.be/IRR3bgrZs_U via @YouTube.

We are so proud to have been able to run this project and work with the students of Graft who have done an amazing job with little or no experience.

Graft Thames Valley are a small but dynamic charity that aims to eradicate barriers to employment for disabled or disadvantaged people struggling to find a job. The skills that they have gained from this project will enhance their CV. Since completing this project, two of the students went on to find employment with their new found confidence.

Tips on how to enhance your volunteering sessions!

Ideas to improve communication—A common difficulty volunteers often report to us is lack of contact with the class teachers. We all know how busy schools are so here are some tips to help improve this.

- ◆ Sometimes it is possible to speak to the teacher either side of the ABC to read session. Some volunteers have found it useful to arrive at school early, perhaps to catch teachers before the class returns from lunch break. Others have stayed behind at the end of the school day.
- ◆ ABC to read volunteers are always welcome to use their school's staff room. Taking a packed lunch to eat there may provide an opportunity to speak to staff.
- ◆ The 'Child Details' form we provide now asks for the email address of each teacher so do drop them a line. For those without email, ask at the school office for an appointment to speak with the teacher or leave a note.
- ◆ We always advise volunteers to be proactive. Teachers like to know what children have been enjoying in their ABC to read sessions. We suggest volunteers send a brief report of this work towards the end of each term (it does not have to be detailed, just a summary.) This will often encourage feedback from the teacher too.

If you have any difficulties contacting teachers do let your fieldworker know – we are here to help!

How not to say NO!

- ◆ When a child is reading aloud, don't interrupt them to correct a mistake if it does not affect the sense of the story. If you think a child may not have understood a particular word, refer to it when you have finished the chapter/book, rather than break the flow.
- ◆ Set yourself the challenge of not saying 'No' to a child. You could instead say: Very nearly..... Good try..... What about..... So close..... You're getting there..... Are you sure? Almost..... Try again..... Have another look..... Not quite..... Maybe now.....

Afternoon tea at Ascot races

We were fortunate to receive an invitation from the Trustees of Berkshire Community Foundation for two of our members to have afternoon tea at Ascot Racecourse on 6th September. This was to celebrate the wonderful achievements of Berkshire's voluntary sector during the Covid pandemic.

Right: Volunteers, Kate & Liz, at Ascot



Volunteer workshop - 5th October

As we were unable to hold our AGM in our usual way in June, we will be presenting our highlights of the year, combined with a presentation for volunteers. This will be held at Crowne Plaza, Reading, from 10.30am - 1pm. Refreshments will be provided from 10am.

We will have a speaker, Annie Marie from 'Unlock your Wellbeing', who will be presenting the topic of "Managing stress for volunteers and children; increasing resilience and self compassion" along with our trustee Pauline.

The High Sheriff of the Royal County of Berkshire will also be handing out certificates to our long serving volunteers.

Finally...ABC to read Christmas cards!

Looking ahead..... Shop for Christmas cards early with ABC to read! We will be selling ABC to read cards again this year, priced at £4.50 for 10 beautiful cards. If you would like some please let the office know. The designs available (shown below) are 'Santa's special delivery', 'Mistletoe' and 'Tree of books'. These will also be available to buy at the workshop on 5th October.



Please note that the office will close for the October half term break on Thursday 21st October and will re-open on Monday 1st November