

St Theresa Buddies – Role and Information

Eleanor Marsden (2017+)

Farleigh School offers a high level of pastoral care, and is keen to provide as extensive a network of support as possible for the children and families joining the school via the St Theresa Fund for full bursaries. These children often come from different areas, backgrounds and social spheres than many of our other pupils and as such, there are many more facets of life at Farleigh in which they may need supporting.

Buddies: How it works

Each new St Theresa pupil joining the school in Year 7 receives particular attention from the St Theresa Tutor, Tonya Whithear, who is *in loco parentis* as their house-parent. Each St Theresa family is also assigned a current parent and past parent team as their own St Theresa 'Buddies'. The Buddy scheme recruits enthusiastic parents as programme ambassadors and hands-on helpers to the children and their families. These helpers have enthusiasm for the St Theresa full bursary concept, coupled with an empathy for the recipient pupils.

Buddy Teams

Buddies can volunteer as a duo of a past and a current parent, or individually, in which case the Development Office will match up and put each Buddy in contact with another to work together.

The current parent is preferably (though not always) someone with a child starting Year 7 at the same time as the recipient, who can be a friendly face at events and activities, whilst the past parent is more of an advisory role who can support the family with queries in the knowledge that they have 'been there, done that'. However, it is up to the team to decide between them how the role will be shared and how much time each can allocate to supporting the recipients.

Timeline

- *Spring before new pupil(s) start*
 - *Meet with Development Director and other Buddy to discuss role and availability;*
 - *DBS check if necessary;*
- *Summer before pupil(s) starts*
 - *Recipient parent agrees to have contact details shared with Buddies;*
 - *Buddies contact parent(s) of recipient to introduce;*
 - *Suggested meet-up of one/both Buddies with recipient and family, either in London or Hampshire, to familiarise and answer questions;*
- *Pupil(s)' first term+*
 - *Offering practical support; may be with transport, exeat guardianship or social opportunities. Also checking in with family with any queries and to meet up when family are on-site, if applicable.*

What Buddies can expect from Farleigh

Volunteering for the Buddy programme is very rewarding and we already have buddies who are involved in supporting our new recipients.

- Whilst we do try to match recipients with Buddies if there is a special preference on either side, the allocation will normally be more down to availability of Buddies.
- As a Buddy, you will receive a copy of our fundraising brochure which can answer any questions the family may have about the scheme, a copy of the St Theresa addendum to the school contract should the family need clarification, and a list of items covered by or available for rebate from the St Theresa Fund (e.g. parental travel costs to/from school, school trips, mufti days etc.)
- By way of a thank you, the School is implementing annual Buddy get-togethers to recognise the important role of Buddies and to thank everyone involved with helping the children and their family circle.
- Farleigh understands that the role, as a voluntary one, is only supplementary to the pastoral care which the school provides. If there is any instance when, as a Buddy, you do not feel comfortable, find the commitment becoming challenging or need support with a query or situation, please inform Tonya Whithear or Eleanor Marsden (below) as soon as possible. Rest assured that the children also have access to an EdPsych and further support if needed.

What Farleigh would like from Buddies

- You should be happy to support a family through their two years at Farleigh in Years 7 and 8 at the point of agreeing to be a Buddy.
- You must be happy for us to share your email and mobile number with the recipient's family in the first instance; swapping addresses or other numbers is at your own arrangement.
- If you are not DBS checked, for instance as a Children's Liturgy Volunteer, you *may* be required to complete a form for the school to DBS screen you (formerly CRB checking to work with young people.)
- Ideally, you should be able to meet the child and family the summer before they start – or at least one of the team should do so. This may be at school, your own home or the child's home, depending on the shared preference.
- Please make contact with the parent(s) of the child at least twice per term in the first year to find out how they are, if they haven't contacted you.
- Please reassure the parents at the end of Year 8 when Leavers' trips, parties and lunches can seem daunting; the bursary can accommodate most of the Leavers' activities so that the recipients do not have to miss out; please contact the school if you would like clarification.

Contacts

The Buddy scheme originates in the Development Office via Eleanor Marsden, whilst Tonya Whithear in Senior Boarding is more involved with the children day-to-day. If you have any queries about the scheme, funding or logistics, please contact Eleanor (01264 712 843) and for the child and boarding / social queries, please contact Tonya (01264 712848).