# Lunchtime Assistant Job Description - Scale 1B

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| **Approved by** | TVI Board / LBBD HR | **Policy owner** | Headteacher |
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## Purpose

This document provides a clear and consistent description of the Lunchtime Assistant role, its responsibilities, expectations and boundaries, supporting effective recruitment, induction, performance management and professional development.

Lunchtime is an important part of children's education and development at Thames View Infants. The role has two central purposes: to support children on their life-long culinary journey, by challenging limiting or established dispositions towards food and nurture healthy, confident, balanced and increasingly independent eating; and to develop children's social, communication and physical skills through purposeful interaction, positive relationships and safe, enjoyable and empowered play. These responsibilities require active engagement, appropriate challenge, sensitivity to individual needs and consistent professional judgement.

Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare underpin every aspect of lunchtime provision.

The role may also be referred to as *Mid-Day Assistant, Healthy Lunchtime Assistant* or *Play Leader*, without altering the underlying responsibilities or grade of the post.

**Responsible to:** Headteacher; line-managed by the leader and/or Lunchtime Supervisor.

## 1. Main Purpose of the Role

- To work as part of the school team to help every child and family achieve their best, recognising that children have one chance at childhood and one chance at their infant education.
- To support safe, purposeful and enjoyable lunchtime provision, including eating, play, care, inclusion and wellbeing.
- To develop children's confidence, curiosity and independence in relation to food and eating, recognising individual developmental starting points and needs.
- To nurture children's language, communication, social relationships, self-regulation and physical development through active adult engagement and purposeful play.
- To build warm, consistent and professional relationships with children and colleagues, reflecting the distinctive ethos and high expectations of Thames View Infants.

## 2. Deployment and Scope

- Lunchtime Assistants may be deployed across the dining hall, playground, Nursery, our SEND Provision, Lunch Club or other agreed lunchtime activities according to pupil and service need.
- The role is undertaken under the direction of the designated teacher or leader, following established school routines, procedures and agreed arrangements.

- Duties may involve supporting an individual child, a group or a class, including pupils with SEND, complex or high needs and/or social, emotional and mental health needs (SEMH).
- Lunchtime Assistants will work flexibly across different duties, locations and teams, responding appropriately to changes in rotas, staffing arrangements and pupil needs.
- The typical working pattern is one hour within the school's lunchtime period, approximately 11.30 am to 1.15 pm. Specific working times and any changes will be managed in accordance with contractual arrangements and the school's operational needs.
- The postholder must understand the responsibilities of their allocated duty, arrive punctually, remain actively engaged throughout the session and ensure appropriate handover before leaving.

## 3. Thames View Infants Ethos & Professional Culture

- Contribute to a hardworking, caring, child-centred and inclusive school in which staff support one another, maintain high expectations and continually seek to improve.
- Listen properly to children: give them full attention, allow them time to think and respond, use open questions, and avoid talking over them or discussing them as though they are not present.
- Model rich and accurate language and recognise that everyday interaction contributes to children's language, confidence and communication.
- Bring positive energy, warmth, resilience and emotional availability to the role; seek support early when needed and contribute constructively to the working environment.
- Be honest, transparent and accountable. Ask when unsure, communicate mistakes, concerns or near-misses promptly, act on advice and do not conceal matters that leaders need to know.
- Approach reasonable requests with a cooperative, flexible and solution-focused attitude, taking pride in the school and contributing to its wider life and reputation.

## 4. Supporting Lunchtime Provision

- Prepare, organise, distribute, collect and return lunchtime resources and equipment as directed.
- Help maintain calm, purposeful, safe, tidy and welcoming dining, play and indoor environments.
- Help children understand and follow established lunchtime routines and expectations.
- Support children with transitions between eating, play, classrooms and different areas of the school.
- Encourage children to participate, communicate, take turns, organise themselves and develop appropriate independence.
- Engage positively with children during eating and play, providing appropriate modelling, encouragement and practical support.
- Follow agreed arrangements for supervising children and maintaining safe, orderly lunchtime provision.
- Report difficulties, concerns or observations to the designated teacher or leader and seek guidance when necessary.

## 5. Supporting Pupils' Wellbeing, Inclusion and Behaviour

- Build warm, reliable and appropriately boundaried relationships so that children feel safe, heard, valued and ready to learn.
- Promote inclusion and participation for all pupils, including those with SEND, disabilities, SEMH needs, communication needs, medical needs, English as an additional language or other barriers to learning.
- Support emotional literacy, co-regulation and self-regulation using the school's agreed language and approaches.
- Promote positive behaviour through connection, calm consistency, positive language, limited choices, restorative and solution-focused conversations, and the school's two core expectations: do what you should be doing and always try your best.
- Recognise changes in presentation, wellbeing, communication, attendance, engagement or behaviour and report concerns promptly to the appropriate teacher, leader, Inclusion Team or safeguarding lead.
- Seek help early.

## 6. SEND & Personalised Support

- Support the inclusion and participation of pupils with SEND, disabilities, SEMH needs, communication needs, medical needs, English as an additional language or other barriers to participation.
- Follow clear instructions and established routines or reasonable adjustments for individual children, including agreed visual supports, communication approaches and sensory strategies.
- Support children with SEND during ordinary lunchtime routines and activities under the direction of the designated member of staff.
- Seek advice and appropriate training from the SEND/Inclusion Team, including guidance on relevant strategies used successfully in classrooms and other school provision.
- Report relevant observations or concerns to the teacher or appropriate member of staff.
- Lunchtime Assistants are not responsible for independently planning, delivering, monitoring or evaluating specialist SEND interventions, feeding programmes or therapeutic provision.

## 7. Safeguarding & Child Protection

- Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare is everyone's responsibility. Maintain a child-centred approach and act at all times in the child's best interests.
- Read, understand and follow the current version of Keeping Children Safe in Education, as required for the role, together with the school's Child Protection Policy, Staff Code of Conduct, whistleblowing procedures and related safeguarding guidance, including the School's Allergy Policy.
- Attend safeguarding induction and required refresher training; remain alert to signs of abuse, neglect, exploitation, child-on-child harm, online harm, radicalisation and other safeguarding risks.
- Listen carefully to disclosures, do not promise confidentiality or investigate, make an accurate and timely record, and report every concern immediately through the school's agreed procedure to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or deputy.
- Report concerns about the conduct of adults, including low-level concerns and allegations, using the school's safeguarding and whistleblowing procedures. Never assume that somebody else has passed information on.
- Maintain safe professional boundaries, use only school-approved methods to communicate with pupils and families, and follow the school's rules on phones, photography, social media, online conduct and acceptable use.

## 8. Personal Care, Continence & Intimate care

- Provide toilet training, continence support and related personal or intimate care where required as an integral part of the role, following the child's agreed plan and the school's Intimate Care Policy.
- Protect the child's dignity, privacy, comfort, voice and wellbeing; encourage the greatest possible independence and explain care in an age-appropriate manner.
- Follow agreed hygiene, infection-control, safe-working, recording and communication procedures, including arrangements for soiling incidents and informing families.
- Undertake intimate care only after appropriate induction or training and within competence; report concerns, changes in need, injuries, marks, disclosures or difficulties immediately through the correct safeguarding route.

## 9. Health, Safety & Medical Support

- Follow the school's Health and Safety Policy, risk assessments, emergency, evacuation and lockdown procedures, accident-reporting arrangements and instructions for site safety.
- Take all reasonable care of pupils, colleagues, visitors, equipment and the school environment; identify and report hazards, defects, accidents, near-misses or unsafe practice promptly.
- Follow individual medical or care arrangements where directed and appropriately trained.
- Follow the school's Allergy Policy and all relevant dietary, food-safety and choking-prevention procedures, including individual arrangements for children requiring additional supervision or support when eating.
- Provide and record first aid only where authorised, trained and acting in accordance with the school's procedures; obtain appropriate help without delay when a child is unwell or injured.

- Provide clear, factual accounts of incidents and ensure that information is passed promptly to the staff responsible for communicating with families.

## 10. Working with Parents, Carers and External Professionals

- Treat parents and carers as partners, approaching every family with kindness, empathy, respect and without judgement or assumptions about circumstances that may not be visible.
- Communicate professionally, clearly, courteously, promptly and in a solution-focused way. Share positive information as well as concerns, within the responsibilities of the role and agreed school arrangements.
- Maintain professional neutrality and boundaries inside and outside school. If approached about school matters informally or through personal channels, direct the parent/carer to the appropriate school route.
- Do not provide parents with assessments, opinions or information about children's learning, progress, behaviour or additional needs unless specifically authorised to do so.
- Refer questions, concerns or requests for information to the class teacher or appropriate member of staff.

## 11. Communication, Confidentiality & Professional Conduct

- Communicate openly, honestly and appropriately. Raise concerns, problems, uncertainty, mistakes and near-misses early so that they can be addressed; do not sit on important information.
- Protect confidential and personal information. Share it only with those who have a legitimate need to know and through approved professional channels, with safeguarding information always passed on in accordance with procedure.
- Exercise particular discretion where staff live within the school community, have children attending the school or have personal relationships with pupils' families. Confidential school matters must never be discussed through personal or community relationships.
- Ask when unsure and raise problems, mistakes, concerns and uncertainty early.
- Avoid gossip, speculation, workplace cliques and discussions that undermine trust, relationships or professional reputations.
- Maintain courtesy, integrity, discretion and professional boundaries in person, in writing and online. Nothing about the school, its pupils, families or confidential business should be discussed on social media or in unofficial messaging groups.
- Read school communications, including email and the Weekly Diary, regularly; act on relevant information and notify leaders promptly where information appears missing or incorrect.
- Be reliable and punctual and communicate promptly if late or late in line with School Policy.

## 12. Records, Data Protection & Digital Learning

- Use school devices, systems, digital learning platforms, classroom technology and approved communication tools confidently, safely and appropriately; seek training where needed.
- Support pupils to use technology safely and purposefully, follow online-safety and acceptable-use procedures, and report concerns or security incidents immediately.
- Take care of school equipment and report loss, damage, defects, data breaches or access problems promptly through the correct route.

## 13. Spoken English: Statutory Fluency Duty

- This is a public-facing role. The postholder must have a command of spoken English sufficient for the effective performance of the role and be able to communicate clearly and effectively with young children, colleagues, parents/carers and visitors as required.
- The required standard is proportionate to the responsibilities of the Lunchtime Assistant role.
- The requirement concerns spoken-language proficiency. It does not concern a regional or international accent, dialect, speech impediment, manner or tone of communication, origin or nationality. The school will apply the requirement fairly and transparently, consistently with the Equality Act 2010 and its duty to make reasonable adjustments.

- The fluency duty does not require staff to speak only English. Other language skills may be used where helpful and appropriate to communicate with children or families, while safeguarding, confidentiality and school procedures continue to apply.

This section reflects section 77 of the Immigration Act 2016 and the official Code of Practice on the English Language Requirements for Public Sector Workers, particularly paragraphs 1.1, 1.5, 2.2–2.11 and 5.2–5.5.

## 14. Professional Development & General Responsibilities

- Participate in induction, safeguarding and other training required for the role.
- Listen to and act upon instructions, advice and feedback from teaching assistants, teachers and leaders.
- Work collaboratively and communicate information necessary for children's safety and the effective operation of lunchtime provision.
- Promote equality, diversity, inclusion, British Values and mutual respect.
- Maintain the standards of conduct expected of all Thames View Infants staff.
- Undertake other reasonable duties consistent with the general character and level of responsibility of the Lunchtime Assistant role.

## 15. Lunchtime Assistant Role – Scope and Limits

### Role level

- Work under the direction of the designated member of staff, following established routines, instructions and procedures.
- Exercise straightforward day-to-day judgement within those instructions and seek guidance whenever unsure.
- Recognise that lunchtime requires active supervision, purposeful engagement, effective communication and consistent professional judgement, particularly during busy periods.

### Lunchtime Assistants will:

### Food, eating and dining

- Encourage children to develop healthy, confident and balanced attitudes towards food, broadening their experiences and challenging established reluctance or limiting dispositions through positive relationships and appropriate encouragement.
- Promote positive mealtime conversation, good manners, hygiene and enjoyment of food, helping children understand, in age-appropriate ways, the benefits of a varied and balanced diet.
- Recognise children's individual starting points, sensory needs, food anxieties, restrictive eating and agreed feeding arrangements. Never force, shame or coerce a child to eat.
- Support children's independence in eating, including developmentally appropriate use of knives, forks and spoons, rather than routinely doing things for them.
- Provide particularly patient and nurturing support for Nursery children and those at the earliest stages of eating development, including through Lunch Club where directed.
- Promote healthy choices, positive mealtime conversation, good manners, hygiene and enjoyment of food.
- Adapt to different allocated duties within the dining hall, maintaining safe, calm and orderly routines.
- Report concerns about food intake, eating difficulties or children's wellbeing promptly through agreed channels.

### Outdoor play and physical development

- Prepare, organise, maintain and put away a good range of safe, attractive and appropriate play resources.
- Actively engage in children's play rather than relying on passive supervision.

- Actively monitor and promote safe play, intervening promptly and consistently where play becomes unsafe, excessively boisterous or inappropriate. Do not allow unsafe behaviour or activities to continue unchallenged, and seek additional support where necessary.
- Teach and lead traditional playground games, including *What's the Time, Mr Wolf?* and *Oranges and Lemons*, encouraging participation, cooperation and enjoyment without reliance on toys.
- Teach and model basic physical and football skills, organising purposeful, appropriately supervised activities rather than simply allowing unsupervised ball games.
- Identify damaged, missing or insufficient play resources; report shortages and persistently follow up delayed replacements or orders, escalating unresolved concerns appropriately.
- Help children recognise when they are hot or cold and make sensible decisions about clothing and layers, following the school's approach while exercising appropriate adult judgement about weather, safety and individual developmental, sensory or medical needs.
- Adapt and encourage children's play and physical activity to suit the weather and ground conditions, promoting vigorous activity when appropriate in cold weather, managing muddy or slippery areas safely, and ensuring suitable shade, rest and protection from excessive sun or heat, in accordance with the school's procedures.

## Social communication, relationships and behaviour

- Employ talk4Learning, commentary, modelling and scaffolding to develop the language of play, friendship, negotiation, turn-taking and conflict resolution.
- Help children initiate play, express preferences, negotiate boundaries, resolve disputes and develop increasing independence in social situations.
- Maintain clear, consistent expectations and hold children appropriately accountable for their actions, emphasising the certainty and consistency of responses rather than severity.
- Anticipate difficulties, intervene early and use the school's agreed behaviour and regulation approaches.
- Seek guidance from the SEND/Inclusion Team about children with high needs or recurring dysregulation and apply agreed strategies consistently.
- Escalate persistent non-compliance, unsafe behaviour or situations beyond the postholder's authority or competence promptly to a senior leader.

## Wet play and indoor supervision

- Take responsibility for the safe, calm and orderly supervision of an allocated class or group during wet lunchtimes, following agreed school arrangements.
- Maintain clear expectations for behaviour, movement and use of the classroom.
- Organise permitted games, approved age-related videos or other suitable activities, keeping children purposefully and safely engaged.
- Supervise transitions and leave the classroom or indoor area tidy and ready for the afternoon.
- Seek assistance promptly where additional support is needed.

## Communication, handover and accountability

- Know the allocated duty, relevant procedures, individual children's agreed arrangements and how to obtain support.
- Communicate effectively with colleagues and provide timely, factual handover to class teachers or designated staff about relevant eating, behaviour, injuries, wellbeing or safeguarding concerns.
- Follow the school's first-aid and accident-reporting procedures, recognising that necessary recording or follow-up may sometimes need to be completed after the scheduled lunchtime session.

- Respond constructively to advice in the moment, including guidance given during busy or demanding periods.
- Raise and escalate concerns about inadequate resources, unsafe practice, unmet needs or failures to follow procedures. Where areas are inadequately supervised, act promptly to safeguard children, alert the appropriate leader and use the school's safeguarding or whistleblowing procedures where concerns are identified or not appropriately addressed.

## Lunchtime Assistants will not:

- plan or deliver curriculum teaching or targeted learning interventions;
- assess pupils' attainment or make independent decisions about their educational provision;
- provide planned teacher or Teaching Assistant cover;
- independently introduce specialist feeding, medical, therapeutic or behavioural programmes without appropriate authorisation and training;
- undertake staff management, performance management or other duties belonging to a senior lunchtime leadership role; or
- routinely undertake duties which properly form part of a Teaching Assistant or higher-graded post.

Where a Lunchtime Assistant believes that they are being asked to undertake duties beyond the responsibilities of the role, they must raise this promptly with the designated leader or Headteacher.

The Lunchtime Assistant role does not replace, substitute for or carry the responsibilities of a Teaching Assistant post.