



Resource 2

Guidelines for Volunteers

Use these guidelines to help you make your volunteer experience valuable for the teachers, yourself and most importantly, for the students. Remember that whether you volunteer in the classroom, school or at home, volunteering is one of the most important things you can do to build a stronger community, and improve the achievement of students.

- **Communication**
Ask for clarification on any questions you have about your responsibilities, special needs of students you are working with, time lines and school safety procedures. Share phone numbers and e-mail addresses with teachers and other parents that you are working with. Avoid interrupting teachers while they are teaching. Questions and concerns can be addressed after instructional time.
- **Supplies**
Set aside any supplies or materials that you need. Carry what you need or set aside a place where you can keep supplies in the school or classroom.
- **Teacher's Lounge**
Be clear on the use of the teacher's lounge and whether volunteers are welcome to use the lounge for breaks. Do not feel insulted or offended if parents are not welcomed in the teacher's lounge. It is often the only place that teachers have to meet informally to discuss confidential issues such as school policies and individual students.
- **Confidentiality**
All information concerning students, teachers, and other families is strictly confidential and should not be shared with others. Don't repeat stories and personal information that children share with you. However, if you suspect abuse or neglect if a child, you are obligated to report this.
- **Schedule**
If you are volunteering in the classroom, call the school if you are coming in late or will be absent. If you are volunteering from your home, let others who are depending on you know if you are going to be delayed or not able to complete tasks that you are working on.
- **Boundaries**
Children often ask personal questions. It is best to be prepared to answer them in a polite way. Have a clear idea of what your personal boundaries are regarding how you would like the students to refer to you (first name, Mr., Mrs., Ms.) and your willingness to discuss aspects of your personal life.
- **Discipline Issues**
Most schools have a discipline plan with clear-cut consequences for negative behavior and rewards for positive behavior. Many teachers add to the schoolwide guidelines by making a more specific behavior plan for their classroom. Be familiar with school and classroom discipline plans and what role you will play in that plan.
- **Dress Code and Campus Policies**
Attire should be neat, clean, comfortable and appropriate for the school setting. Be familiar with the dress code and follow it. Advocating political or religious preferences is not allowed on school campuses. The use of drugs, alcohol or tobacco is prohibited.