

VOLUNTEER EXPECTATIONS

- Keep your commitments. When you cannot show up, find a substitute. Avoid setting up your teacher to have to re-plan major portions of the day.
- Be flexible about what you are willing to do.
- Follow attached Volunteer Orientation Guidelines for classroom etiquette, working with students in large group settings, discipline, working with small groups, confidentiality, and downtime.
- Maintain confidentiality.

MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

Signing in

- Sign in and out in the office on arriving.
- Get and wear a Volunteer badge out of the hanging holder next to the office. Remember to return it before leaving school.
- IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT YOU SIGN OUT WHEN YOU ARE READY WALK OUT OF THE BUILDING. This is particularly important in the event the school is having a fire drill or an actual emergency. The fire department checks the volunteer sign in sheet and the front office staff must account for everyone on there who has not signed out.
- Thank you for attention to this important detail.

Using the copy machine

- Each teacher has a 4-digit copy machine number. Use this number when making copies of class lists, monthly calendars, etc.
- Please ask the secretaries if you need help with the copy machines.
- Teachers have 1st priority with the copy machine, as they have limited time to sneak in copies...please be respectful of their needs.

Finding/Using supplies

- Most supplies will be provided by the teacher.
- Rolls of colored butcher paper are at various locations in the halls.
- Clean up after yourself.

Distribution policy

- Papers for class-wide distribution (calendars, class lists, newsletters) are to be approved by the teacher before distribution.

Sibling policy

- Please obtain teacher approval to bring siblings to class parties.
- Siblings are not allowed on field trips, in the workroom, or in the classroom while the parent is scheduled to work.

Encourage "kid trading" with other moms, to allow those with small kids to volunteer on a regular basis.

VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION

Thanks so much for your willingness to join our class and help out. Any assistance you can give will be greatly appreciated! Below are a few thoughts I hope are helpful to you when you are in class.

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE

- Watch the teacher and “model” his/her strategies.
- We are in the classroom to benefit the students, so adult visiting is not appropriate. Children will model YOUR behavior, so demonstrate active listening and attention to work at hand.
- If you need a moment with the teacher about your own child, please leave a note. It is not an appropriate time to “conference”.
- THE PARENT –vs.- THE CLASSROOM HELPER CHALLENGE: When you come to class, try to leave “the parent” behind. Feel free to observe your own child, but exercise restraint. Only say to your child what you might say to any other child. Only be as hard on your child as you would any other. Let your child grow as an individual, encouraged by your dedication to the importance of education. Try not to hover!

WORKING WITH STUDENTS IN LARGE GROUP SETTINGS

- Listen to the teacher’s directions so you are clear as to the task at hand and can better help the students.
- Begin by stating what was done well. Be specific—“I see good listeners”, “I see people working on task”, etc.
- Show acceptance of the student’s feelings. When a child is negative or complains, acknowledge the feeling with a

specific word; for example, “that sounds discouraging... frustrating...”

- Redirect
 - Do not accept “I don’t get it”. Find out what is not understood.
 - As appropriate, go over the directions again one item at a time. See what the student does understand. See if the student can predict what would make sense and be correct.
 - Find different ways to explain the task. Often times, having another student explain the task may be helpful.
 - Try not to give answers.
 - Give genuine praise.
 - Circulate and watch the students. One may not tell you when one needs help. Help to re-focus when necessary.

DISCIPLINE

- Observe how your teacher handles discipline. Look over the teacher’s discipline policy and ask about specifics.
- Let the teacher handle major problems.
- Positively reinforce students.
- Standing near a student, or lightly tapping a student on the shoulder, often helps a student refocus.
- Quietly redirect as needed; try not to embarrass.
- Get at eye level when speaking to a student.
- Humor works well, if it does not ridicule.
- Questioning often redirects a child; for example, “Where might I find....?”, “What are you working on?”

WORKING WITH SMALL GROUPS

- Ask for a specific behavior. “I need to see your eyes/hands still/books closed.” Then wait to get it. This takes patience but will certainly pay off. Do not proceed until you have everyone’s attention.
- When you give a direction, ask for a response in some way. Don’t go ahead without understanding; for example, “Give me a thumbs up if you know...”
- Do not accept rude behavior. Without lecturing, you can identify a behavior as rude. If necessary, ask a child to leave the group. Children need to know their limits.

CONFIDENTIALITY

We all have a right to respect and privacy. Students have those rights in respects to their behavior and academic performance.

- If you need to discuss a difficulty with a certain student, it should never be done within “earshot” of other students. Too often we do so and forget children are intelligent and sensitive people. Children will repeat what they hear and the results can be cruel.
- If you need to discuss student performance, please speak to the teacher. Please do not discuss children after you have left the classroom.
- Teacher may need to share information with you in order to make your job easier. Please “forget” the information when you leave.

DOWNTIME

If the teacher has not given specific instructions, is busy, or your usual “job” is finished, here are suggestions for filling your time:

- Straighten up sink area, papers in cubbies, centers around the room.
- Model correct behaviors. Help students.
- Observe and get ideas.
- Check the To-Do list on the parent/project table/notebook.