

Volunteer Guidelines

The administration and staff of Bethesda Elementary School are appreciative of all persons who are willing to commit time and energy to helping students succeed and to provide an excellent place of learning for all students. It takes a combined community to accomplish this, and we welcome volunteers to join in the goal of making our school be the best that it can be.

Volunteer Responsibilities

Every volunteer must register in the main office upon arrival. When entering the office, the volunteer must register in the Volunteer Sign-in Log maintained at the office counter top. The name of the volunteer and the date and time of service should be recorded. A visitor's sticker should be picked up and worn during service. At the end of the volunteer time, it is important that the volunteer signs out and records the time spent in the classroom. Volunteer hours are reported monthly to the Department of Family and Community Partnerships in MCPS.

Volunteers play a key role in the classroom and other school-related activities. Teachers plan volunteer activities, but they do understand when occasions arrive when a volunteer has to cancel. Please provide the teacher with as much advanced notice as possible if you cannot volunteer for a scheduled time. Teachers and other staff will do the same, should their volunteer requirements change.

Volunteers shall exercise mature judgment in supervising children and shall in all instances respect each student's rights and privacy. It is essential that confidentiality is maintained. Volunteers should discuss any concerns directly and exclusively with the supervising teacher/staff.

Volunteers should be willing to perform a wide range of assigned tasks. This includes activities such as copying, cutting, sorting, collating, laminating, putting up or taking down bulletin boards, and working directly with students. Each of these activities makes a contribution to the school. All are valuable to the teachers, staff, and students.

Volunteers are responsible for understanding and using the specific approach demonstrated by the teacher/staff so that the children are dealt with consistently and fundamental concepts are followed.

Volunteers should make outside arrangements for child care of non-school age children instead of bringing them to school during volunteer time.

Teachers and administrators will determine how to most effectively use volunteers. In some cases, a decision may be made to use volunteers in classrooms other than that of a volunteer's child.

Teachers will provide written and/or oral directions for activities they want volunteers to execute. If a volunteer doesn't understand the activity assigned, he/she should ask for a demonstration and/or clarification at an appropriate break.

Students need to stay focused and on task in class. Therefore, we appreciate it if distractions are kept at a minimum and cell phones are turned off or placed on vibrate.

Disciplinary action is the legal responsibility of administrators and school staff. Volunteers should not be put in a position of having to enforce discipline. If you are having a problem, immediately inform the teacher or appropriate staff member.

Volunteer Tips

To insure the most productive and positive experience for classroom volunteers, the following suggestions may be useful.

1. Set up a preliminary conference with your teacher or coordinator to discuss scheduling and duties. Teachers plan around your help so please adhere to the schedule. Call the office in advance if you need to cancel your volunteer time on a particular day.
2. Develop a set routine for receiving assignments, written or verbal. This allows you to begin tasks with a minimum of class disruption.
3. Treat your child as you would every other child in the class. Too much interaction can be disruptive to your child as well as his or her classmates.
4. Respect that a teacher's desk and closet are private.
5. Never discuss any child's classroom performance or behavior.
6. Save all questions regarding your child's performance or behavior in school for a scheduled conference.
7. Make appointments to confer with your child's teacher before or after school, not during your volunteer time.
8. Communication between teachers and volunteers are essential. If you have a concern, please discuss it with the teacher.

Please sign, cut off, and return this to your child's teacher:

I have read the above information and agree to the guidelines and responsibilities.

Child's Name (please print) _____

Teacher _____

Name of Volunteer (please print) _____

Volunteer Signature

Date