



Grants Pass School District
Volunteer Handbook

Introduction

Helping children is what teaching, parenting and volunteering is all about. To that end, this handbook has been prepared to help you, the volunteer, in understanding the procedures and conditions of being a volunteer in Grants Pass School District. We suggest that all volunteers become familiar with the contents of this handbook so that you can play an important role in the education of our students. Everyone in the district plays an important role in the success of students. We're glad that you've chosen to be an active participant.

Purpose of Volunteers

Volunteering provides the opportunity for parents and community members to be involved in a variety of school activities and to play a part in the important task of educating children.

1. Volunteers gain first-hand knowledge of what is happening in the schools and become more proficient at helping their own children.
2. Teachers receive support, therefore, increasing the quality of instruction for all students.
3. The school gains support and enrichment through the community's involvement in the education of its young people.

Parental vs. Volunteer Rights

Following are guidelines to help distinguish between the normal rights of parents in regard to visiting schools and classes and the expanded rights of those people who have fulfilled all of the district requirements for becoming a volunteer in Grants Pass School District.

Normal Parent Rights:

- A. Parents may move about the school grounds before school and after school to drop off and pick up a child.
- B. Parents may arrange, on an occasional basis, to observe their child's class so long as the observation itself, and the parents behavior during the observation, is not disruptive to the educational process. The school administrator will determine observation times and procedures to ensure the minimum possible disruption of the educational program. Parental observation is limited to observing quietly without participation with students or teacher.
- C. Parents on occasion may come to the classroom or school for special events. These events may include and are not limited to holiday/class celebrations, assemblies, holiday lunches, and PTA sponsored events.

In all of these activities, the parent is under the supervision of school personnel and does not have supervision rights over any students. Refer to district policy KK.

Volunteer Rights:

- A. Volunteers have the right to move around the campus under the supervision of school staff during the school day.
- B. The right to interact with students in classrooms and throughout the school as directed by school staff and school guidelines. This includes but is not limited to working with small

groups of students in the classroom, attending a field trip, volunteer coaches, or being an adult mentor to a student at the school.

All volunteers must be approved by school personnel after completing the application and training process. Refer to district policies IICC and IICC-AR.

Application Process

Any adult may apply to volunteer by submitting a volunteer application form to the school. If the volunteer clears the criminal background history check, training activities will occur. Final approval of the volunteer will rest with the building administrator.

Approval of Volunteers

The following are the specific rules and guidelines for volunteers to be approved to work in District 7:

1. Volunteers must be advised that they will be subject to a criminal history verification
2. The actual background check will involve the Oregon criminal history verification which is available to the district through the Oregon Department of Education;
3. The human resources department will review the results of all Oregon criminal history verifications. If a criminal history does exist, the human resources department will make a decision regarding the eligibility of the applicant to volunteer.
 - a. Any applicant to volunteer who is found to have misrepresented his/her criminal history on the volunteer registration materials, or is found to have a criminal history as indicated by the Oregon criminal history verification which would prevent him/her from being employed in the district, will not be allowed to volunteer in the district.
 - i. The principal of the school at which the volunteer completed the criminal history verification form will be notified of this decision by the human resources department.
 - ii. The prospective volunteer will be notified of his/her status by the human resources department.
 - b. All other applicants to volunteer who are found to have a criminal history may be denied the opportunity to volunteer in the district at the discretion of the human resources department.
 - i. The principal of the school at which the volunteer completed the criminal history verification form will be notified of the decision by the human resources department.
 - ii. The prospective volunteer will be notified of his/her status by the human resources department.
4. Any applicant to volunteer in the district may appeal the decision of the human resources department. That appeal should be made to the superintendent or his/her designee, who shall make the final decision regarding the applicant's eligibility to volunteer in the district's schools

Training Requirements

All volunteers must annually:

1. Read through the Volunteer Handbook
2. Agree to confidentiality standards including FERPA
3. Understand the child abuse and sexual misconduct reporting requirements –this information can be found on the district webpage (Current Parents – Parent/Community Resources page).

The school is required by law to report student neglect or abuse. If you have any concerns about a student, share them with your supervisor immediately.

Volunteers for whom the principal determines need further training based on their unsupervised access to students will participate in online child abuse and sexual misconduct training. The school is responsible for contacting District Office for log on information and making available a computer on site for the volunteer to participate in the training.

The Four Most Important Volunteer Qualities

Professionalism – Although the job is voluntary, the commitment is professional. Besides being responsible for maintaining an attitude of mutual respect and confidence, you should also become familiar with school and classroom policies and practices.

Dependability – Students, teachers and staff members count on you and rely on the services performed by you as a volunteer. It is essential that you contact the school if you are unable to volunteer on your scheduled day so that other arrangements can be made.

Confidentiality – Volunteers must protect the teachers' and students' right to privacy. You may encounter personal and school information while volunteering; you are not to disclose this information outside of the school setting. If student problems arise, it is appropriate to discuss them with the teacher and/or principal. Avoid all discussion of students in public situations.

Punctuality – Always arrive on time for any volunteer activity. The school day and class periods are set for specific times. If you are late, the activity may be over when you arrive and/or your arrival may be disruptive.

Guidelines for a More Rewarding Volunteer Experience

- Follow building sign-in/sign-out procedures.
- Set a good example of appearance and behavior.
- Be able to follow directions and be flexible.
- Become familiar with school and classroom policies and practices.
- Do not use discipline in any form other than suggestions for improved behavior.
- Be sensitive to students' and teachers' needs.
- Be enthusiastic and willing to learn.
- Ask questions.
- Wear identification noting you as a volunteer

Working with Children

- ✓ Smile! A relaxed, friendly attitude creates the best atmosphere for learning.
- ✓ Learn students' names and use them often. Use a tone of voice that will encourage them to feel confident.
- ✓ Be sincere and honest.
- ✓ Promise only what you know you can fulfill. Have realistic expectations; be consistent.
- ✓ Recognize that students learn best when they know what is expected of them.
- ✓ State directions in a positive form. Keep explanations short and clear.
- ✓ Accept students as individuals and listen carefully.
- ✓ Praise them even for small successes.

- ✓ Be patient. Remember that children will always “test” adults in order to establish limits so they can feel “safe”. Refer disciplinary problems to the teacher when necessary.

Ways to Help Students Learn

As you work with students, you can encourage thinking, self-reliance and build self-esteem by the way you communicate and interact with them. Consider the following techniques:

1. Ask questions that will guide children to the correct answer instead of telling them directly.
2. Encourage the student to try new methods of doing things even though you may already know an easier way
3. Encourage students to sort, combine and problem solve according to their own ideas.
4. Give the student as much time as possible to understand a new idea.
5. Use positive reinforcement to reward appropriate behavior and effort. (See 32 Ways to Say “Good Job!”) Smile, laugh, talk and listen to them.

Public Relations

Please be aware that remarks about your working experience make a strong impact. Volunteers are both “insiders” and “outsiders” who are perceived as having both access to the workings of the school and the objectivity to describe those workings in an accurate fashion. Good public relations can be fostered by responsible word-of-mouth communications. We ask that you do your part to ensure that the public is getting a fair picture of our school. You do not have authorization to speak to the media as a volunteer nor are you considered an employee or agent representing the school district at any time. The principal may on a case-by-case basis permit volunteers speaking to the media as a volunteer.

Applicable Board Policies

Board Policy KK

Visitors to District Facilities

The Board believes that a better understanding of its educational program and improved relationship between the schools and community can be developed through school and classroom visitations of parents and patrons. Such visitations should be encouraged, arranged and permitted within considerations of the requirements of the educational program, the orderly administration of the school, school grounds and classrooms and the safety and welfare of students.

The district is responsible for the schools’ supervision and administration. To ensure that school work is not disrupted and that visitors are properly directed to the areas in which they are interested, all visitors to district facilities must report to the school office upon entering school property.

1. Teachers’ work must not be impeded by interruption of visitors or by unreasonable demands on their time.
2. Visitors must not contact individual students except as authorized by the principal and/or teachers.

3. When in the interest of orderly educational programs and the safety of students it is determined by the principal that some specific visitor or visitors shall not be permitted to enter the school facilities, the principal shall do the following:
 - a. Advise the person that he/she is refused admission and give that person an explanation for the refusal;
 - b. If possible and appropriate, attempt to arrange alternative visitation of school facilities.
4. A visitor with permission to visit may be directed to leave when any teacher or administrator reasonably believes the visitor has engaged in physical violence, loud or disruptive speech or behavior, violation of a posted school rule or illegal conduct. A visitor may also be directed to leave by the staff member administratively in charge of the building if the visit would be disruptive to the educational program or school order; would impede the work of teachers through visitor's interruptions or unreasonable demands on teacher time; or if the visitor's course of conduct would conflict with Board policies, district or building regulations or would violate the law.
5. A direction to leave revokes any permission to visit or license to enter. Whenever possible, the direction should be given in writing or followed by written notice which identifies the issuer and gives a brief statement of the reason for the direction to leave. The principal's office should be notified of any direction to leave and given a copy of any written notice.
6. Those who insist on remaining despite a principal's request to leave and who thereby create disruption of the carrying on of school business are subject to citizen's arrest and a report made to the Grants Pass Public Safety Department. Failure to leave will render a visitor liable for criminal trespass pursuant to Oregon Revised Statutes.
7. Any visitor, who believes that he/she has had a visit unfairly limited, may request a meeting with the superintendent. The latter shall meet promptly with the visitor, investigate the dispute and render a written decision. The superintendent's decision may be appealed to the Board.
8. Any visitor who commits a violent act or threatens to commit a violent act toward a student or staff member while on school grounds, at a school-sponsored event using District transportation or any such act or threat if it causes a substantial disruption to the educational process, shall be reported immediately to the principal and superintendent. The superintendent shall immediately contact any student involved

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Readopted/Revised: 5/10/11

Board Policy IICC

Volunteers

Citizens who voluntarily contribute their time and talents to the improvement and enrichment of the public schools' instructional and other programs are valuable assets. The Board encourages constructive participation of groups and individuals in the school to perform appropriate tasks during and after school hours under the direction and supervision of professional personnel.

Any person authorized by the district for volunteer service into a position having direct, unsupervised contact with students will be required to undergo an Oregon criminal records check.

Recruitment, utilization, coordination and training of volunteers is the responsibility of administration and will be carried out as directed or delegated by the superintendent. Every effort should be made to

utilize volunteer resources in a manner which will ensure maximum contribution to the welfare and educational growth of students. Volunteers are under the direct supervision of building administration and services may be terminated at any time. Termination of services can be appealed to the Superintendent.

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Board Policy EEAE

Student Transportation in Private Vehicles

Transportation of students will be by the district's transportation system or by a district employee's automobile, properly insured, except as provided below. Principals may authorize parents, employees and other designated adults in privately-owned vehicles, to drive students other than their own children on field trips or on other school activities under the following conditions:

1. The school administrator has approved the activity;
2. A permission slip signed by the student's parents has been received by the principal or his/her designee, granting permission for the student to participate in the field trip and to ride in a privately owned automobile;
3. The parent or employee or other adult driving the automobile is properly licensed to drive and has provided proof of insurance. Such insurance shall meet or exceed minimum requirements of the state of Oregon;
4. The vehicle contains an adequate number of seat restraints, including when applicable, a child safety system for a child four or five years of age or who weighs between 40 and 60 pounds, regardless of age, and the adult driver requires their use. The child safety system must elevate the person so that a safety belt or safety harness properly fits the individual and meets the minimum standards and specifications of law. Training in the proper installation and use of child safety systems may be required.

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