STEDY #96 Volunteer Handbook



"Preparing Today's Students for Tomorrow's Workforce!"

REWARDS OF VOLUNTEERING

We know you'll enjoy your volunteer experience. Each year, many volunteers tell us they receive so much more in return than they give to the program. By sharing your time with our students and staff you will:

- Be given the opportunity to use your skills and talents.
- Gain better understanding of how children learn.
- Have a chance to meet and work with teacher and other volunteers.
- Know that the work you are doing affects the quality of education for the children of our community.
- Have a great chance to learn valuable new skills that you might use in the future endeavors.

SHARING YOUR EXPERIENCE

If you have friends or relatives who might be interested in volunteering in one of our schools, please ask them to call the office of the school that they wish to volunteer at.

EVERY VOLUNTEER MUST REGISTER

Every volunteer who works for Southwest Technical Education District of Yuma #96 must complete a volunteer application and registration/emergency form before he/she begins to work. (This includes parent volunteers.) The information you provide is extremely important in the event that you become ill or are involved in an accident while on campus. We want to make certain that you are aware of our district volunteer policies and other information included in this handbook. Please read the handbook carefully before signing the registration/emergency form.

ALL VOLUNTEERS MUST BE INTERVIEWED

In accordance with district policy, new volunteers MUST be interviewed by the principal (or a designee) of the school in which they volunteer BEFORE beginning work.

VOLUNTEER GUIDELINES

Supervision of Volunteers

School volunteers always work under the direct supervision of the professional staff at each school and only with those teachers who have requested the services of the volunteer. The district is responsible for the education, safety and well being of each student. For this reason, you can understand why the teacher or principal must dismiss any volunteer whose actions are not in the best interest of the school or students.

Confidentiality

As you work with the staff and students, information of confidential nature may be shared with you. The problems, abilities, relationships and confidences of students, their parents and the staff should never be discussed with anyone who does not have a professional right or need to know them.

Like teachers, volunteers are bound by the code of ethics to keep confidential matters within the school. The staff and students need to know they can trust you.

Please do not discuss a child's progress or difficulties with his/her parents. This is the teacher's responsibility.

Occasionally, a child might confide in you about family matters or personal problems. Keep this confidential too. If you feel that it is vital for the school to have this information in order to help the student, discuss the child's conversation (in private) with the teacher or principal.

Discipline

Students rarely have behavior problems while working with volunteers. However, our schools have detailed discipline plans, and the responsibility for discipline rests with the professional staff. Volunteers may not discipline students. Please make the teacher aware of any discipline problem that might arise while you are working with students.

Restrooms

Staff restrooms are available for volunteers. We ask that you not use student restrooms.

Dismissal of Students

Volunteers may never dismiss a student from school. Children who must leave school early for any reason must receive permission from the school office and sign out before leaving. Under no circumstances may a volunteer take a student off campus.

Dress and Behavior

Take your lead from the professional staff and dress appropriately for the job you are doing. It is best to neither overdress nor underdress. Casual clothing is fine, but we ask that your attire be neat and conservative. Your appearance should attract no undue attention.

Keep in mind that you are in a position to set an example for students. Your speech and behavior should serve as good models for the students to follow.

Health

If you are not feeling well, don't try to keep up your volunteer duties. You'll accomplish more in the long run if you allow yourself time to recuperate. (Please call in advance to let the appropriate staff member know you won't be coming in at your scheduled time.)

Schools are particularly concerned about keeping students and staff healthy. This is another reason for staying away from school if you have a contagious illness.

Your Commitment

Before you agree to volunteer, carefully consider the commitment you are making. The work volunteers do is important, wherever they work in the school. The staff and students quickly become dependent upon volunteer assistance.

Don't promise to volunteer more time than you will be able to manage. It is better to start out with a few hours a week and gradually build up to more hours or days if you find you have the additional time.

Dependability

Please be prompt and consistent! We know there will be times when you are ill, on vacation, or unable to volunteer for one reason or another. Please call the school office as far in advance as possible. Remember, the staff will be expecting you on the days you are scheduled to volunteer and so will the children! If you fail to show up at your appointed time on your appointed day, everyone is disappointed.

School Rules

Become familiar with the rules and policies of the school where you work. It is a good idea to read through the school's policy regarding the use of telephones, eating facilities, fire drills and emergency procedures. All of the schools are tobacco free. Smokeless tobacco, cigarettes, pipes, or cigars are not allowed on school grounds.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STAFF

Volunteers are an important part of the educational team. The suggestions and opinions of volunteers are always welcome. It is the professional staff, however, that is held responsible by law for the decisions that are made regarding the instruction of students and management of the school. For this reason, volunteers always work under the direct supervision of teachers and administrators.

Is there anything volunteers should not do?

Yes! The professional staff at your school is responsible for everything that goes on in your building including student instruction, safety and discipline. Volunteers supplement and support the program, but may not:

- Provide curriculum or teaching plan
- Discipline students
- Take charge of the classroom for any length of time.
- Have access to materials in a student's permanent record files (psychological records, grades, health histories, and the like).
- Diagnose student needs.
- Evaluate achievement.
- Counsel students.
- Discuss student progress with parents.

A volunteer is never considered a substitute for a member of the school staff.

WHEN WORKING WITH STUDENTS

- **Call students by name at each opportunity.**
  A child's name is very important. Make every effort to pronounce and spell each child's name correctly.
- **Closely observe the techniques used by the teacher.**
  Try to model these instructional methods when working with students.
- **Accept children as they are.**
  Each child is unique. Some children may be very different from your own children. Be ready to accept the differences in background, values, vocabulary and aspirations.
- **Be firm with students, but also warm and friendly.**
  Let each child know that you care about him/her.
- **Encourage and praise children.**
  Use positive comments that will make children feel good about themselves, even when they are having difficulty. Avoid saying anything that will make students feel badly about themselves or their ability to learn. Be ready to praise children for even the smallest successes!
- **Remember that children never forget.**
  If you promise the children something, be prepared to keep the promise. Be careful not to make promises that you will be unable to keep.

- **Encourage students to do their own thinking.**
  Try not to give students the answers before they have had an opportunity to solve questions on their own. Give children plenty of time to answer your questions. Silence often means that a child is thinking. Beware of occasional students who may try to get you to do their work for them.

- **Follow the teacher's lead.**
  Always be consistent with the teacher's rules for classroom behavior. Don't allow children to do things that their teacher doesn't allow. Remember, the teacher is always available and ready to handle discipline problems. Make sure the children with whom you are working do not disturb the rest of the class.

- **Reinforce good behavior.**
  When children (especially younger students) are behaving well, always let them know how proud you are of them and how much you appreciate their effort. This will encourage them to try even harder. If possible, do not pay attention to a child who shows minor misbehavior problems, but do note things the child is doing well and praise him/her for it.

  Remember it's OK if you don't know all the answers

  Admit to the children that you don't know the answer or are not sure what to do. Work the answer out together with students or feel free to ask the teacher for assistance.

- **Keep students on task.**
  You will want children to learn as much as possible during the short time they spend with you. Keep the lesson or activity moving. Try to avoid letting one or more students get you or the group off track for long periods of time by discussing topics that have nothing to do with the lesson.

- **Supervise students carefully.**
  Under no circumstances should you leave a student or small group of students without supervision. Be fully aware of what students are doing at all times.

- **Know when to give or not to give.**
  Your positive words of encouragement will go a long way in helping students to become excited about learning. Younger children may also enjoy stars, stickers, stamps and especially little notes of praise from the volunteer. You and the teacher can discuss the use of these motivational materials.

  Please do not give students food without first checking with the teacher. Volunteers may not give students advertisements of fund solicitations.

SIGN-IN PROCEDURES

Each volunteer must sign in and out in the school office.

For security reasons and in case of an emergency, it is important for administrators to know who is on campus and why. In addition, the district must have a record showing the days and hours each volunteer works on campus for the purpose of liability insurance coverage.

Finally, a record of each volunteer's hours enables the school to evaluate its volunteer program and recognize volunteers for their contributions of time.

VOLUNTEER NAME BADGES

By wearing a volunteer name badge you will be immediately recognized as a person whose specific purpose is helping students and teachers. (Without name badges, volunteers are sometimes mistaken for visitors or strangers as they move about campus.) Your name badge will show you are part of the school's educational team.

VOLUNTEERS REPRESENT THE SCHOOL

As a volunteer, you not only serve the needs of the children, you also provide a vital link between the school and the community. Students, their parents, and the community will view you as a representative of the school. They will pay close attention to what you say about the staff and the educational programs.

Sometimes the community hears about the negative aspect of education or stories about the few students who misbehave. Because of your volunteer experience, you will be able to share the many positive things that students and staff are doing. You will have an opportunity to let the community know the wonderful things that are happening in their schools. (Remember not to share confidential information).