

GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEERING

“It is all about our students and teachers!”

DEFINITION

A school volunteer is a person willing to help to expand and enrich the students’ learning experiences by working under the direction of teachers and school staff.

A volunteer:

- Is any non-paid adult appointed by a school administrator or its designee.
- Includes, but may not be limited to, parents, senior citizens, students over the age of 18.
- Assist teachers supervise students on field trips, including driving students on field trips.
- Assist coaching students in special activities.

Our Human Resources Coordinator supervises the background checks for the school. All information is handled in a confidential manner.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Even if you are not sure what you might like to do as a school volunteer, you probably know when you are and are not available. Keep in mind that some employers allow flex hours or employee release time to volunteer one hour each week. Your availability, whether it is during the day, night, or weekend is an important consideration. The table below might provide some ideas when considering your availability.

*****Volunteers should check to see if their employers offer any grants or matching services for hours worked.***

TIME AVAILABLE TO VOLUNTEER	OPPORTUNITY IN CH/CHLE CLASSES	OPPORTUNITY IN LE/UE/MG/ School-Wide
School Days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Read to children ● Read with children ● Chaperone ● Recess helper ● Photocopy or production helper ● Weekly laundry ● Daily classroom snacks ● Caring for classroom pets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recess helper ● Chaperone ● Lunch supervisor (MG) ● Club or after-school activities ● Photocopy or production helper ● Mentoring or tutoring ● Caring for classroom pets
Weeknights, Weekends, Occasional Volunteer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assemble classroom materials. May include cutting, collating, creating booklets ● PFA Officer, committee lead, committee member ● UE field trip fundraising ● Deep-clean classrooms ● Cleaning or beautification of school ● Assist with art or other special projects ● Field trip chaperone ● Serve on Board Committees ● Set up snacks or pop popcorn for the faculty meeting day (first Tuesday every month) ● Help identify and/or write possible grants ● Caring for classroom pets during school breaks ● Purchase materials from teacher wish lists ● Adopt-a-Hallway maintenance committee 	

QUALIFICATIONS

All adult volunteer applicants who work in classrooms in direct contact with students must complete a volunteer training after the background check has cleared and PRIOR to volunteering. Volunteers such as field trip chaperones and field trip drivers must have a CLEARED background check. Field trip drivers must follow the instructions provided in the field trip chaperone packet PROVIDED BY THE TEACHER which includes submitting a copy of the driver's licence, copy of auto insurance, and a non-certified driving record report from DMV_PRIOR to the field trip. Without these documents, we cannot allow anyone to drive our students to a field trip.

The link to the background check procedures can be found on the school website. The background check is performed to maximize the safety of our students and to meet North Carolina's legal requirements. Casa's Human Resources department will receive notification when your application has been approved. You will be required to renew your background check ANNUALLY at the beginning of each school year.

SPECIAL NOTE FOR PARENTS OF YOUNG CHILDREN: Classroom/playground volunteers who interact with or supervise students and perform other tasks in the school building during instructional times please do NOT bring siblings. Taking preschool children with you to a classroom presents a liability problem for the school. In addition, having a young child in a classroom interrupts class procedures, disrupts the students, and prevents the volunteer from giving full attention to the work the teacher has prepared. One possibility is to buddy-up with another volunteer with a preschool child. One baby-sits while the other volunteers. Keep in mind that you can still help the school by making arrangements to do work at home.

TRAINING/ORIENTATION

Volunteer training will be offered on a monthly basis or as deemed necessary by school administration. The volunteer training will include: review of volunteer opportunities, guidelines and policies, school safety procedures, and school policies. If you are unable to attend a session, contact your school volunteer coordinator, and other training will be provided.

DISCIPLINE

Disciplinary action is the responsibility of the teachers and school staff. ***Volunteers do not enforce discipline.*** Think instruction instead of discipline. Request students to work according to the rules in the classroom. Immediately notify the teacher if there is a discipline problem.

HEALTH REGULATIONS

Please do not come to school if you are ill. This includes a cold, sore throat, or cough. You may think you are leaving the teacher shorthanded, and you may want to volunteer even though you are not well, but doing so is not good for you, the children, or the teacher. Please email the teacher when you have an unforeseen absence. Children learn by example, and we ask that you, as a role model, use good health habits when you are at school.

ATTENDANCE

Punctuality and reliability are expected since students are counting on you. Please inform teachers in advance of planned absences and call or email the school for unforeseen absences. Students will be disappointed you cannot come, but will be reassured that you cared enough to notify them.

APPEARANCE AND MANNER

Volunteers are considered non-paid employees and should be well-groomed and dress professionally. Short skirts and short shorts, exposed midriffs, low cut blouses, and inappropriate graphics/language on t-shirts are not allowable for volunteers. If you are not sure how you should dress, please ask the teacher, your supervisor, or your volunteer coordinator. Volunteers should also set a good example to students by maintaining professional conduct and language.

CONFIDENTIALITY

VOLUNTEERS MUST MAINTAIN STRICT CONFIDENTIALITY concerning information they see and hear about students and staff, including students' grades, records and abilities. Failure to maintain confidentiality can result in loss of volunteer privileges. Keep information about students between yourself and the teacher. A misplaced comment can be devastating to a student, the family, and the volunteer program. If you have questions or concerns, talk with the teacher or Head of School.

WHEN VOLUNTEERING

Always:

- Report to the school front office to check in and check out
- Wear your volunteer id card

These requirements are necessary because:

- Safeguarding our students and maintaining campus security is of the utmost importance.
- Verified volunteer service can be used as work experience for future employment.
- Individual volunteers will be recognized for their dedication and service to our schools. The record of volunteer attendance is one basis for consideration of these awards.

COMMUNICATING WITH STUDENTS

The following suggestions are provided to help you communicate with students to get positive results.

- Be sure the students understand what you're saying. We sometimes use words they do not comprehend.
- Keep your voice as low as possible. The students will get louder as your voice increases in volume.
- Instruct students as though you expect them to comply. Give sufficient warnings and time. Example: "Jason, in five minutes you'll need to stop painting and put your apron away."
- If students gain your attention and praise only when they behave, they will soon learn that you expect proper conduct.
- Positive statements greatly influence students' attitudes about themselves and contribute to their success-building experiences.

SOME EXPRESSIONS TO BOOST A STUDENT'S SELF-IMAGE:

- "I like the way you're working."
- "That's right! Good for you."
- "That's quite an improvement."
- "Good thinking."
- "You should be very proud of the way you worked today."
- "It looks like you put a lot of thinking into this."
- "That's respectful behavior. Thank you!"

FAQ'S

How do I become a volunteer?

Complete a background check at <http://www.cemcs.org/volunteer-background-check-procedures/>
For classroom volunteering, contact your teacher. For school-wide volunteering, contact the Volunteer Coordinator at: volcoord@cemcs.org. You will be asked to complete a background check. Once your background check is approved, you will be invited to a mandatory volunteer training. This training provides important information such as: What to do in an emergency, Volunteer Guidelines, ways to better communicate with children, etc. You will not be placed in a volunteer position prior to clearance from the Human Resources Coordinator. Your school volunteer coordinator or teacher will inform you when your application has been processed and cleared.

I do not have teaching experience. Can I still volunteer?

Yes! A teaching background is not required since volunteers work under the direction of professional staff. Qualifications for a school volunteer are: a personal desire to help, sincere interest in students, ability to follow school procedures and policies, and a willingness to make a definite time commitment. Any necessary training will be provided by the teacher or at a special workshop.

How do I find out which volunteer services are needed?

Your teacher and Casa's Volunteer Coordinator will assist you in your placement. Your volunteer assignment is determined by your skills, interests, and preferences, as well as by the needs of our school and teachers.

I would like to volunteer, but I have a younger child. Can I bring my child with me?

Classroom/playground volunteers who interact with or supervise students and perform other tasks in the school building during instructional times, please do NOT bring siblings. Taking preschool children with you to a classroom presents a liability problem for the school. In addition, having a young child in a classroom interrupts class procedures, disrupts the students, and prevents the volunteer from giving full attention to the work the teacher has prepared. One possibility is to buddy-up with another volunteer with a preschool child. One baby-sits while the other volunteers. Keep in mind that you can still help the school by making arrangements to do work at home.

What do I do about discipline?

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My friends and neighbors will ask me about school. What may I say?

We want you to talk about your school and your involvement. But you may have access to "privileged" information, which must be treated as confidential. Privileged information is important school business and must never be discussed outside of the school. This may include positive or negative stories about students and staff. Just think about if you were dealing with a sensitive personal issue: You would not want others to broadcast your personal business. It is also a violation of the federal law to reveal student information. Remember that criticizing school personnel and school practices are not acceptable. Issues with the school should be discussed with the appropriate school personnel. In school, you are a professional working with other professionals.

VOLUNTEER CHECKLIST

I have:

- completed a background check
- attended a Volunteer Training
- talked with the school's volunteer coordinator and/or teacher.
- been assigned to a teacher or supervisor of a project/activity.
- a specific place and time to work.

I know:

- the school layout, parking, and facilities available.
- school and classroom discipline policies, procedures and rules.
- fire drill procedures and safety rules.
- where and when to report to work.
- where the sign-in and name badges are located.
- what to do if I must be absent.
- what to do if I am working with a substitute teacher.
- where instructional materials/tools are kept.
- what is expected of me.