

THE SAMUEL SCHOOL

PARENT VOLUNTEER Manual



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Introduction

Parent involvement is an integral part of our school, through your help The Samuel School would be able to create the Godly atmosphere we desire for our students. Getting involved is a great way to show your children that you take great interest in their education. We want to welcome you and help you make the most of your volunteer experience whether you are a prayer partner, a classroom helper, a special subject teacher or a helper in any other area. We are very thankful that you consider our school a worthwhile cause. There are so many different ways to participate; we hope this handbook will help guide you.

Building a Strong Volunteer Community

Because volunteers are such an integral part. It is important for all volunteers to remember the following:

- Be responsible and safe –always put children first.
- Respect confidentially. Students and staff have a right to privacy.
- Be professional.
- Communicate.
- When things come up and you can't fulfill a promise, let someone know.
- Ask for help – don't suffer in silence!
- Share your experience with others and encourage new volunteers.

Commitment – Once you become a volunteer others depend on you.

- Try to pick what is manageable and interesting to you.
- Be prepared. Communicate with teachers and coordinators ahead of time.
- Be on time.

Getting Started

Before starting your first volunteer task, we ask all volunteers to be aware of the following points.

Safety – Act as a good role model for the children.

- Always sign in and out at the school office.

It is important for staff to know that you are in the building and it makes it easier to locate you

in an emergency.

- Always wear a “Volunteer” badge.
- As a courtesy to others, please turn off or silent cell phones while in the school building.

Sign-In/Out

YOU ARE TO SIGN IN AND OUT EACH TIME YOU VOLUNTEER AT THE SCHOOL.

For security reasons, and in case of an emergency, it is important for the school to have a record of who is in the building, for what reason, and for how long. ALL volunteers are required to sign in and out.

Identification

YOU ARE ASKED TO WEAR IDENTIFICATION WHILE WORKING IN THE SCHOOL.

By wearing a volunteer name tag, you will be immediately recognized as a person who is here to help the staff and students. Name tags are in the school office and should be picked up at sign-in time. Permanent badges will be available if you work in the school on a regular basis.

Telephone/Cell Use

Please limit your use of the school phone to very important or emergency situations. As courtesy to others, please turn off cell phones while in the school building.

Important Information

Background Checks

In the back of this booklet you will find three forms necessary to become a school volunteer. Please follow the directions for submitting each form. Please note that all district employees are subject to the same forms.

Confidentiality

All school volunteers are expected to maintain confidentiality while working in the school. All things that are seen and heard at school about children and their families should be considered privileged information. Trust must be established and maintained in order for this volunteer program to be successful. Volunteers can strengthen the bond between themselves and the school by following these guidelines:

- Treat all student information as personal and confidential regardless of source.
- Communicate relevant information about students to the respective classroom teacher or building principal.

- Seek clarification of unusual situations that occur in the school from the person(s) involved and avoid discussing such matters with non-school personnel.
- Retain a sense of perspective regarding comments heard and actions observed.
- Understand that not all information can and will be shared with volunteers, due to legal considerations.
- Deal impartially with students regardless of background, intelligence, physical or emotional maturity.
- Do not discuss student progress or behavior with the parent. All relevant information should be referred to the teacher or principal. Direct inquiries about students to the professional staff.
- Speak constructively of all school staff; however, report difficulties involving the welfare of students or school to the principal.
- Do not discuss confidential information with anyone. This information includes, but is not limited to:
 - Academic and health records
 - Test scores and grades
 - Discipline and classroom behavior
 - Character traits of children
- **All volunteers are required to sign a statement of confidentiality.**

Discipline

Discipline of students is solely the responsibility of the teacher in charge. Volunteers should in **NO** way discipline students. Should students misbehave in your presence, you should report this immediately to the teacher in charge. The teacher will then determine the necessary course of action. Also note that we expect students to treat volunteers with the same level of respect given to other school personnel. If you feel that students are not being respectful towards you, do not hesitate to discuss the matter with the teacher or principal.

Volunteer Opportunities

The Samuel School Parent Teacher Gilt PTG is a place where parents can go to find information about volunteer opportunities, school activities, and who to contact when questions arise. The PTG opportunities are listed weekly in the Eagle update.

Here are some of the ways a parent volunteer can help:

- act as a classroom helper
- mentor or tutor students
- participate in the fall and spring sub sales

- help organize, cater, or work at fundraising activities such as bake sales or car washes
- act as a lunchroom or playground monitor
- help to plan and chaperone field trips, and other events that take place away from the school
- help to plan and chaperone in-school events (plays, talent show or graduation ceremonies)
- organize or assist with a specific club or interest group (if you have an interest in an activity that isn't currently available to students, offer to help get a group started — for example, a chess club or cycling team)
- assist gym teachers with sports and fitness programs
- help the school administrators prepare grant proposals, letter-writing campaigns, or press releases, or help with other administrative needs
- help during open house
- work as a library assistant or offer to help with story time or reading assistance in the school library
- sew costumes or build sets for theatrical and musical productions
- help with the school playground
- help out with visual arts, crafts, and design courses and projects
- hold a workshop for students in trade or technical programs
- volunteer to speak in the classroom or at a career day, if you have a field of expertise that you'd like to share
- supervise or judge experiments at a science fair

The Samuel School would like parents to get involved in other areas of the school. At least one parent/guardian from each Samuel School family is responsible to fulfill these basic requirements:

- Attend the Back-to-School Orientation at the start of school each year
- Attend parent-teacher conference in the fall of each year (and others as requested)
- Participate in at least two fundraising events each school year
- Attend the State of the School Address meeting in January
- Volunteer in some capacity in one school event or activity

The Parent Teachers Guild (PTG) is run by Virginia Peck is you have any questions please contact her by email at vpeck@samuelschool.com or find her information in Parent Section of Renweb.

Role of the Volunteer

Volunteers in the classroom can assist teachers in a variety of ways, thereby freeing the teacher to focus more time on the teaching/learning process. An organized program of volunteer assistance can provide a unique contribution to the educational program by helping assume some of the many roles of the teacher.

Volunteers should arrange to meet with the teacher before beginning as a classroom volunteer. The first visit or two should be spent observing the classroom, getting to know the students and the style and routines of the teacher. This will help the children to become familiar with you before you begin.

The teacher is in charge of all phases of classroom activity and the volunteers will take directions from the teacher. Your activities should support the efforts of staff members but not replace them or exceed their authority.

Try to match your interest, abilities and time availability with the school needs. Contact the building principal for specific details regarding school need, requirements and scheduling option.

Maintain good communication especially in the event of an absence or schedule change. If you cannot fulfill your commitment for any period of time, please contact the school or classroom teacher as soon as possible so other arrangements can be made.

Follow school regarding signing in and out, wearing badges, using school materials and maintaining health/security standards. Know emergency procedures for fire, illness, etc.

If you have concerns about something you see or hear, please talk to the class teacher or Principal if appropriate.

When students tell you about their family, pet, vacation, etc.....

As students become comfortable working with you, they might decide to share something personal. You need to keep this information private, even if you know the child and their family outside of school.

When you have a concern... If a student tells you something that causes you concern, tell the classroom teacher. If you observe something that troubles you, tell the classroom teacher. The teacher is in the best position to deal with the issue appropriately.

Approach – Be professional and be positive!

- Strive to give each child the best you can and know that other volunteers do the same when working with your child.
- Respect each child as an individual.

- Respect your co-workers and all school employees.
- If working in your child's classroom, try not to single them out for attention as this may make them uncomfortable.
- Don't distract teachers while they are teaching. If you have questions wait until there is an appropriate moment.
- Honor your commitments and be on time.
- Find ways to be positive and notice things that are working well
- Try to make any criticism constructive.

Remember your time and energy is helping to make The Samuel School a great place to learn.

Ways to Assist the Teacher

- Assist with teacher – planned activities.
- Read teacher – prepared instructions to pupils.
- Read stories.
- Check to see if work is completed.
- Prepare students for daily program changes.
- Help with lunch.
- Operate audio – visual equipment.
- Review previously taught materials.
- Help children to understand and follow directions.
- Listen to children read.
- Share a hobby, talent or experience.
- Help with field trips.
- Assist with school parties and special days.
- Help with assemblies.
- Keep classroom materials in order.
- Help inventory and maintaining records for ordering supplies.
- Maintain the bulletin board
- Collect papers for evaluation by the teacher.
- Assist with displays throughout the school.
- Assist with children practicing skills.

The DOs and DON'Ts of Volunteering

To capably assist the school with additional services, all volunteers are requested to keep in mind the following:

- DO take a personal interest in helping and working with teachers, staff and students.
- DO be willing to learn more about fostering the process of growth and development in children.
- DO participate in training programs offered to volunteers.
- DO be willing and able to follow directions from teachers and staff.
- DO be adaptable and flexible when working with children.
- DO have a cooperative attitude in working with school personnel.
- DO be imaginative, creative and optimistic.
- DO be consistent and dependable.
- DO keep all student information strictly confidential.
- DO have a sense of humor as well a patience and understanding.
- DO accept each child for who they are.
- DO let the teacher be responsible for discipline.

- DON'T forget to sign in and out of the office every time you're in the building.
- DON'T scold when pointing our errors. Use a positive approach.
- DON'T become annoyed when students don't understand something the first time.
- DON'T be afraid to laugh at yourself.
- DON'T lose your temper.
- DON'T do a student's work for them.
- DON'T discuss student's work with anyone but the teacher.
- DON'T ask teachers or others for personal information about students.
- DON'T threaten or punish students
- DON'T intervene or contradict a teacher once a problem has been handled.
- DON'T forget to contact the teacher or school if you can't fulfill your commitment.

Guidelines for Success

Working with Staff Members

- Be prompt and dependable
- Tell staff members what your skills are so they can use your talents.
- If this is your first volunteer position in a school, you'll find there are many exciting things to learn.

- Communicate your questions and comments. If you don't understand something, always ask for clear directions. If you are unhappy or concerned about something, discuss the situation with the staff involved. If you still have concerns, see the principal.
- Remember that routine tasks are important. Because volunteers are able to assist with these jobs, teachers are free to spend more time working with students or planning for instruction.
- The opportunity to learn new skills is one of the benefits of being a school volunteer. Be willing to try new tasks assigned by staff, but accept only the amount of responsibility with which you feel comfortable.

Working in the Classroom

- Always arrive on time.
- Learn the names of students in your assigned classroom and call students by name whenever possible.
- Observe the teacher carefully to see how he/she works with students.
- Divide your attention equally among all students with whom you work.
- Be positive, reassuring, and patient.
- Show interest and enthusiasm.
- Help the students see their successes.
- Help the teacher pick up when your project is completed.
- Leave promptly when your work is done.

Reminders from Staff and Coordinators

- Sign in and out each time your volunteer.
- Always wear a name tag in the school.
- Call the office if you are going to be late for an assignment.
- Remember that confidentiality is a **MUST!**
- Ask questions! No question is inappropriate if you don't know the answer.
- If you have constructive criticism...tell us! We welcome your comments.
- **REMEMBER THAT YOU ARE AN IMPORTANT PART OF OUR EDUCATIONAL TEAM!** Your efforts are greatly appreciated.

When Working with Students

- The most valuable thing you have to offer as a volunteer is friendliness and caring.

- Accept children as they are. Be ready to accept differences in background, values, and vocabulary.
- Be enthusiastic – it's contagious!
- Closely observe the techniques used by the teacher and try to model them.
- If you don't know something don't be afraid to say so to students.
- Be caring but firm. Patiently allow the students to think and to formulate answers, but keep them on task.
- Encourage and affirm the students. Use positive comments that will allow the students to feel good about themselves. Praise even the smallest effort or success.
- Call the student by name at every opportunity.
- Be patient. Everyone has good and bad days.
- Do not give students any materials, including food, without first discussing it with the teachers.
- Talk in a quiet controlled voice. Avoid talking down to students.
- Start with the work the students can get right and proceed slowly into what he/she needs to learn. End every session with something positive.
- Be comfortable with silences. Allow the student time to think.
- Above all, keep your sense of humor and enjoy your volunteer experience.