The Marguerite E. Peaslee School

Volunteer Handbook

Welcome to our Peaslee School Community!

Volunteers play an important and valuable role at our school. If your interests lie in helping in the classroom or at specific events, staff and students alike will appreciate your effort. We hope you will find this volunteer handbook useful and informative. Please review this material as it was created to help you maximize your effectiveness as a volunteer.

Please remember that your time and dedication as a volunteer are crucial to the success of our learning team at Peaslee School. The amount of time you can offer is not as important as your willingness to work together for the benefit of our school community. Thank you for caring enough to share your time and skills!

Table of Contents

Opportunities for Volunteering:

There is a wide range of opportunities for volunteers at Peaslee School. Volunteers may be used in our classrooms, library, computer lab, teachers' workroom, and also at home. The tasks assigned to volunteers vary depending on the school's needs.

Classrooms: In some classrooms, volunteers are asked to listen to children read, read to children, help with a cutting and pasting project, assist with readers' and writers' workshops, file materials, and serve as room parents.

Room Parent: Room parents coordinate a variety of activities and to serve as a liaison between the PTO, families, and the classroom. These responsibilities may vary from teacher to teacher. Your child's teacher will provide the specifics. Often the PTO arranges Room Parents for classrooms.

Library: The library offers a special set of opportunities for volunteers. The primary responsibilities of weekly volunteers are to assist with circulation (checking books in/out), shelving and assisting the children in the location of materials. There are many other project-based opportunities including, but not limited to, filing, processing new books, mending and managing the overdue list. Some of these may be completed at home.

Computer: The computer lab is another area that lends itself to parent volunteers. Work in this area will vary based on the needs of the teacher and his or her students. Computer assistance may also be used in the classrooms.

Clerical Tasks: There may be volunteer opportunities at the school, which help the children and teachers, but take place in the teachers' workroom or the office area. These might include laminating, binding, or making copies. These tasks would be demonstrated by the teacher or at a training session to help make volunteers comfortable in these areas.

At Home: Sometimes volunteers are asked to help a staff member by preparing materials at home. This might include cutting, typing, making games or activities, tracing, and even completing a book order. The library sometimes has home projects, such as covering books.

Special Interests: Additionally, our school community would be interested in having volunteers with special skills and/or knowledge. Let us know your interests and availability. For example, travel experiences can often support and enhance the existing curriculum.

PTO: The PTO offers a wide range of opportunities to lend a helping hand. Activities include fundraisers, school spirit events, administrative assistance, and hospitality for

various school events. Additional information on these and other opportunities will be coming your way in newsletters and flyers.

Creating a Positive School Environment

The Marguerite E. Peaslee Elementary School is committed to creating a positive school environment for each of its students, faculty, staff, parents, and volunteers. We expect students to be respectful to each other and adults in the building. In cooperation with the students, each teacher establishes expectations for a positive classroom experience. Volunteers should be familiar with the expectations and goals of the faculty or staff with whom they will be working.

Behavior

As a volunteer, you should talk to the teacher about your role in dealing with behavior issues in the classroom. You can set a positive tone in the classroom by calmly resolving annoying or disruptive behaviors (making noises, poking, negative remarks). You should talk to the teacher about methods for getting the class' attention that may include non-verbal signals (5 claps, raised hand). You should defer to the teacher for serious discipline issues. In the event of dangerous or destructive behavior, you should take immediate action and report the incident to the teacher.

Work Expectations

1. Please sign your name in the volunteer log in the office, take a volunteer badge and let the staff know that you are here. You will need to wear a volunteer badge so that the school community can easily identify you. You can find the badges on the blue table in the office. Volunteers must sign out and return badges at the end of each visit.

2. Please be on time for your volunteer job. The faculty and staff depend on your support. Often the success of the activity depends on the number of adults who will be present in the classroom. Each moment of the scheduled activity is planned; therefore, if you cannot meet a specific time, please give fair warning to the teacher so that he or she can make other arrangements. Library volunteers are encouraged to arrange for a substitute if they are unable to meet their commitment on a specific day.

3. Please remember to dress appropriately for the activity of the day. You may be involved with some messy hands-on activities.

4. Please stay in your assigned area. An unannounced visit to the classroom can often be disruptive to the teacher and students.

5. Please plan to come alone when you are working in the school. You will be able to direct your full attention to your work and the students with whom you are working. Most of our school activities are not set up for pre-school aged children.

6. Please remember that *volunteers are required to maintain the confidentiality of the students in the classroom*. Each child has specific learning strengths and weaknesses that must not be shared with others.

7. Please work with every child in your assigned task. The activity often requires your direct supervision of several children and your helping hands to ensure its success.

8. Please remember that to be an active participant in the school, you may need to ask questions that will help you navigate through your assignment.

9. Please do not bring food or drink into the classroom. Many students have food and other environmental allergies. Please check with the classroom teacher before bringing any items into the classroom.

Volunteer Training

Volunteers must participate in Volunteer Training each year. There will be opportunities each school year for training in the following areas:

General training session for confidentiality, ethics, expectations, and discipline

Computer lab: training in specific software and equipment such as scanners, digital cameras, LCD projector

Office: training with office equipment such as copiers, laminator, binding machine, Riso machine

Library: training with Librarian to check in materials, shelving, etc.

Classroom: Writing Workshop, Math Centers, etc. (as determined by teachers)

Please look for information regarding times and dates for these training sessions or speak to your classroom teacher.

Safety

Safety is a priority of our school community and in order to maintain a safe environment for everyone, we ask that you comply with the following:

1. During the school year, the school is expected to participate in Fire Drills. Anyone in the building at the time of these drills is expected to follow the procedures and leave the building. Once out of the building, everyone (students, staff, visitors) is expected to stay away from the building, to listen to the directions of teachers, and to respect the no talking expectation. Do not return to the classroom or send students back to the classroom at these times.

2. Volunteers are required to complete a CORI (Criminal Offense Record Investigation). The form is completed in the presence of the school principal or secretary. A valid Driver's License/Identification Card and social security number are required.

3. Please remember that moving of heavy equipment (television, computer, etc.) is to be done ONLY by adults.

4. Tuberculosis tests may be required for adults who work with children. Please contact the school nurse if you believe that you need testing. If you have already had a TB test, please provide the information to the school nurse.

Volunteer Policy and Registration

Our School Handbook states:

"All volunteers and visitors must protect and respect confidentiality. Peaslee staff members do not discuss your child outside of school. Visitors and volunteers must uphold and support our policy, which protects the confidentiality for all staff members and students. We expect you to refrain from commenting on, reporting about, or discussing any child in and out of the school. By supporting our policy of confidentiality, dignity and respect will be afforded to all members of the Peaslee Community."

Our school wide expectations include: Be Positive, Be Aware, Be Willing, Be Safe. By adhering to the above guidelines, volunteers have an opportunity to model our school's expectations.

Peaslee School Volunteer Registration

Please return to your child's teacher.

Volunteer's Name (please print):
_____

Availability (specify days and times you can volunteer):
_____
_____

Address: _____

_____

Phone:(Day)_____ (Evening) _____

Email address _____

Children in school (Name & Grade Level)

_____ _____

_____ _____

I am interested in helping:

in the classroom _____ in the library _____(also return library form)

at home _____ with clerical tasks _____   in the computer lab _____

other (please specify special interest) _____

I am willing to work in any classroom. _____

I have participated in a training session. _____

Additional information: _____

_____

I have read and agree to follow, the Peaslee School Volunteer Policy.

_____ _____

Signature   Date