



A Recognized School of Excellence

VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

Creek Valley...G.O. M.A.D.



A Recognized School of Excellence
U.S. Department of Education
Blue Ribbon Schools Program 1993-94

6401 Gleason Road • Edina, MN 55439
• (952) 848-3200 •

Dear Creek Valley Volunteer:

We wish to welcome you to the Volunteer Pool and thank you for donating your time, talent and efforts to our school. Involvement of many community helpers both in and out of the classrooms enhances our programs and strengthens the educational experience of our students.

Volunteers extend the teacher's professional skills and help bring further enrichment to the classroom. They also serve as bridges to the community and supportive spokespersons for the school's programs. Your value to the school is measured by more than the hours you serve!

We at Creek Valley are fortunate to have many outstanding staff members and community members who are dedicated to the education and welfare of our students. By working together, we can unite in "putting the future first." Thank you for joining our team!

Sincerely,

Kathy and Tyler Rendleman

Creek Valley PTA Volunteer Coordinators/ Co-Webmasters

How the Volunteer Pool Works

Operation

Successful operation of the Volunteer Pool requires cooperation among **staff members**, **volunteer coordinators**, and **volunteers**.

Volunteer Coordinators (Positions within the PTA)

- Act as liaisons between the school and the parent community.
- Recruit a group of parent volunteers who are willing to assist with projects and activities in the school, both in and out of classrooms.
- Arrange for training and orientation of parent volunteers.
- Place parents in volunteer positions.

Teachers, Staff Members, and the PTA...

- Identify needs for volunteer assistance.
- Provide an explanation of time, skills, and tasks involved in specific assignments.
- Supervise volunteers.

Volunteers...

- Communicate special talents, experiences, areas of interest, and hours of availability to volunteer coordinators and/or staff members.
- Attend training session in order to understand what is required of Creek Valley volunteers.
- Carry out accepted assignments in a manner consistent with the following guidelines set forth in this handbook: *Code of Ethics for Volunteers*, *Special Rules for Volunteers*, and *Guidelines for Success*.

Types of Volunteer Jobs

As a volunteer, your assignments could include the following:

In the Classroom

Preparation of materials
Giving make-up tests
Assisting with science, art or other projects
And MORE!

Outside of the Classroom

Photocopying
Preparation of materials and charts
Organization of supplies
Word processing
And MORE!

You could be asked to work in a classroom, in the office or other parts of the building, or at home. Classroom assignments may or may not require interaction with students; furthermore, you may be asked to work in a classroom in which your own child is not a student. You will have an opportunity to indicate what types of assignments interest you. The coordinators will then attempt to match your interests and time availability with the needs at Creek Valley.

Volunteer Orientation and Training

All volunteers have an opportunity to review the material covered in this handbook and ask questions of the principal and volunteer coordinators at a special meeting in the fall. If you are/were unable to attend this meeting, contact your volunteer coordinator about alternative training opportunities. Training is essential if you want to help in a classroom.

Volunteer Recognition

All Creek Valley volunteers will receive acknowledgment of their efforts, and special recognition will be given.

Code of Ethics for Volunteers

The volunteer, like the teacher, is bound by professional principles of behavior.

Respect and Dignity

A school volunteer should...

- Be appreciative of all racial, religious, and ethnic groups.
- Be accepting of individual differences among students in terms of background, gender, manners, vocabulary, values, and aspirations.
- Be courteous, impartial, and non-judgmental in dealing with students.
- Encourage positive self-concept through honest appraisal of student performance.

Confidentiality

Due to data privacy laws, the volunteer must...

- Consider all information about student progress, performance, and behavior to be CONFIDENTIAL.
- Refrain from discussing observations about a student with others, including the student's parents.
- Consider personal details learned about teachers' and students' lives to be PRIVATE information.

Student Contact

As a volunteer you will meet many delightful students. We know that you will enjoy working with them! We recommend that when working with students individually or in small groups, you work in a highly visible areas within our school

Supervision

It is the professional staff who, by law, is held responsible for the decisions that are made regarding the instruction of the students and the management of the school. However, the suggestions and opinions of volunteers are always welcome. For this reason, volunteers always work under the direct supervision of teachers and administrators and in accordance with Edina School Board policy.

Dependability

To establish reliability, the volunteer should...

- Always arrive on time.
- Complete any requested preparation prior to arrival.
- Finish all assignments as agreed.
- Notify the staff as far in advance as possible of an inability to fulfill a commitment or complete an assignment.

Cooperation

To develop a working relationship with the staff, the volunteer should...

- Be supportive of the staff in its educational efforts.
- Observe all school rules or policies, including health and safety procedures.
- Concentrate on assignments and refrain from using classroom time to discuss concerns about his or her own child.
- Accept assignments willingly and follow directions as given, keeping in mind that the staff member is the supervisor.
- Handle school equipment and material in a responsible manner.

Tax Deductions

Your out-of-pocket expenses connected with volunteering are deductible on your federal tax return. Generally, you can deduct your mileage and auto expenses, parking fees and direct gifts of money. Unfortunately, you cannot deduct the value of your time, child care costs or meals. It is important to keep accurate records. For more information, ask for publication 526 from the Internal Revenue Service.

Special Procedures for Volunteers

Sign-in

YOU ARE ASKED TO SIGN IN AND OUT EACH TIME YOU WORK 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 visitors are required to sign in.

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 at the sign-in table in the hall outside the school office and should be picked up at sign-in time. Permanent badges/ buttons are available if you work in the school on a regular basis.

Staff Responsibilities

VOLUNTEERS MAY NOT provide instructional materials, evaluate achievement, counsel, or discipline students, discuss student progress with parents, or have access to student records.

Teachers are responsible for decisions regarding the instruction of students and school management. As a volunteer, you are an important part of the education team, and your suggestions and opinions are always welcome.

Discipline of Students

YOU MUST REFER ALL DISCIPLINE PROBLEMS TO THE TEACHER, PRINCIPAL OR STAFF PERSON IN CHARGE OF THE AREA.

Again, the school's professional staff is responsible for student discipline.

Observing School Rules

Parking

Please use any parking space outside Door 2. Enter the school using Door 1, only. For security reasons, all other doors will be locked during the school day. The office is located to the right of Door 1.

Telephone Use

Please limit your use of the school phone to very important or emergency situations.

Restroom Use

Please use the restrooms located near the staff lounge, Room 408. As a security measure, children are instructed not to use student restrooms occupied by an adult.

Fire Drills, Severe Weather and Emergency Procedures

You should participate in fire drills and follow the instructions of the staff members during other emergency procedures.

Use of Lunchroom and Teachers Lounge

You are welcome to have lunch in the cafeteria with you child. Also, feel free to use the lounge (Room 408).

Health Considerations

There are numerous students with medically necessary restrictions at Creek Valley. Please be considerate of sensitivities to perfumes, latex and foods (especially peanuts and tree nuts). Do not give food to any student without teacher or parent authorization. Food served to students in the school must be commercially prepared and packaged. Food prepared in individual homes is not acceptable for distribution to students in the school. Please notify teachers before bringing treats so arrangements can be made for inclusion of all students on special days. Encourage hand washing to avoid spread of illness and allergens. **Latex balloons and products are not allowed in the building.**

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. Please be aware that some staff members have never worked with volunteers before. This could be a new experience for them, too.
- 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 you 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!
- Document your mileage for tax deduction purposes.
- 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 teacher.
- 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.

Laws & District Policies Impacting Volunteers

MN Municipal Tort Liability Act

School districts are subject to liability for the torts of their officers, employees, and agents acting within the scope of their employment or duties. Employees, officers, or agents include any person acting on behalf of a school district with or without compensation.

School districts must exercise reasonable care in retaining and supervising volunteers who, acting in the scope of their volunteer duties, may pose a threat of injury to members of the public.

Elements of negligence in hiring include:

- a volunteer being unfit for the position,
- the school district knowing or should have known the volunteer was unfit,
- the school district failing to conduct a reasonable investigation, and
- the negligent hiring causing injury.

School districts must defend and indemnify their officers and employees when they are sued for money damages, if the officer or employee was not guilty of malfeasance in office, and willful neglect of duty or bad faith.

MN Government Data Practice Act

The Data Practice Act applies to all records collected, created, received, maintained, or disseminated by a school district. Educational data includes data regarding a student which is maintained by a public educational agency or institution.

Public data, or directory information, may be made public and includes a student's name, address, telephone listing, date and place of birth, dates of attendance, major field of study, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height (if a member of an athletic team), degrees and awards received, and most recent previous educational agency or institution attended. Parents may ask the school district not to release any or all of this directory information. Private data is only accessible to the subject of the data, with certain limitations. A student and a student's parent may give consent to release educational data.

Volunteers may not release private data on students. Personal data is private data in many cases, and may not be released without consent of the employee or volunteer.

MN Human Rights Act

The Human Rights Act protects anyone wishing to benefit from, or utilize, the services of an educational institution from discrimination of the following grounds: race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, status with respect to public assistance, sexual orientation, or disability.

Community Relations Policy 1250

Visits to the Schools

The Board of Education and staff of the school district welcome members of the community and other interested persons to periodically, and subject to the considerations set out below, visit the schools of the district. School improvements often come from suggestions originating in such visits.

The superintendent is authorized to establish such regulations as will:

1. Encourage visitors to observe the schools.
2. Provide for appropriate hospitality for visitors.
3. Channel expressions of approval as well as constructive criticism to the Board.
4. Ensure that such visits will enhance the effect of the educational program rather than hinder it.

Board of Education members who visit schools of their own volition have no more authority than any other citizen. Board members have authority only in regularly called meetings of the Board, or when delegated specific tasks by Board action.

Adopted: 6/29/71
Amended: 1/08/79

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT 273
Edina, Minnesota

Community Relations Procedure 1250 (a)

Visits to the Schools

Parents, citizens, alumni, and other adult visitors are welcome and encouraged to visit our schools. The Edina Public Schools recognizes the multiple benefits of a partnership that needs to exist for students to succeed in our schools, and visits are an appropriate vehicle and enhance that partnership.

However, the School Board, the superintendent, and the building principals of the district reserve the power to decline to give permission for or to withdraw permission for parents, citizens, alumni, and other members of the public to visit the schools of the district if such action is deemed necessary to ensure the physical or emotional safety of the students of the district or to prevent disruption of the district's educational programs.

Visitors must, however, first come to the office in compliance with the building's school visitor procedure and so that they may be directed to the teacher, student, or class they wish to see. They will be shown every courtesy.

All visitors will wear a badge or button so that students and staff will be aware that they have checked in with the office.

The office will make every effort to see that classes are not interrupted while in session for the admission of guests.

For the protection of everyone, teachers are asked to courteously direct all visitors who are not wearing a visitor's badge or button to the office. For the same reason, all agents, repair person, etc., must report to the building office and receive a visitor's badge or button before approaching any person within the building.

Parents wishing a conference with a teacher should not expect to interrupt the teacher's class but should telephone the school in advance to arrange an appointment.

In the event of an emergency which requires that parents have immediate contact with their student, parents may either call or go to the office to:

1. explain the circumstances of the emergency; and
2. request that their student be called to the office to meet with them and/or talk to them on the telephone.

Community Relations Procedure 1250 (b)

Community Relations

Building administrators are given the discretion, where circumstances so dictate and on a case by case basis, to adopt and enforce more specified and/or restrictive rules to govern visits to the schools. The superintendent is to be advised of each such instance.

Established: 6/29/71
Revised: 11/13/78
Revised: 8/21/95

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT 273
Edina, Minnesota