

Volunteer Handbook



Welcome from the Principal

Volunteers are an important link to learning for our students. As a volunteer you provide added opportunities to students by enhancing the schooling or learning environment. We are thankful for those who spend time volunteering in some manner during the school year. From weekly hot lunch worker to one time behind the scenes classroom helper, each of you, while giving what you can as a volunteer, help our students. Just as the African proverb says, “ It takes a whole village to raise a child” , we know that our students benefit from your efforts.

Thank you Volunteers. I look forward to seeing you in the school. Be sure to stop by the office and say hello when you pick up your Volunteer ID Cards.

Mr. Brian K. Smith

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I. Introduction

Welcome to the growing ranks of school volunteers. Through our school leaders, we hope to encourage increased participation and partnership in our local school community. For the children of High Park School to reach their full educational, physical, emotional and social potential requires the commitment and involvement of all the members of the community: students, teachers, parents, guardians, community organizations and school administrators.

High Park School recognizes the importance of community involvement and volunteerism and many employees contribute endless hours of volunteer time. The purpose of volunteers is not to replace the work of the employee, but rather to assist the administration and staff in improving the quality of the school environment.

Volunteers do make a difference!

Volunteer participation will be an opportunity for you to share with others in the enrichment of education for our students. You will discover the rewards of helping students achieve their personal best and at the same time gain useful experience yourself. We hope that the experience of volunteering in our school will offer you a greater awareness of the variety of challenges and opportunities confronting our education system.

II. What do Volunteers do?

Volunteers perform many different tasks in High Park School. The tasks may include but not be limited to the following:

- Computer support
- Resource room support
- Site plan committees
- Classroom parents
- Field trips
- Fundraising
- Special events
- Choir
- Library support
- Hot lunch program
- Photocopying and stapling
- Safe arrival program
- Drivers for school trips
- Reading programs
- Popcorn bag program
- Assisting Teachers with teaching materials
- Classroom cleanup
- Coaching
- Guest speakers
- Advisory committees
- Project work for staff
- School beautification
- Tutoring
- Communications (telephone committees/newsletters/flyers)
- Parent-Teacher Associations
- Health programs
- Chaperones

III. What Should a School Volunteer Expect?

A school volunteer should:

- Be made to feel that the assistance given is worthwhile and contributes to the overall value of the program in which they are participating;
- Be treated with respect and consideration by all students and staff;
- Be given a suitable assignment in line with their areas of interest, skills, and, if possible, convenience of location;
- Be given clear instructions and any training necessary for particular volunteer assignments;
- Be given proper orientation to the school with introductions to key personnel and information provided as to parking, storage of personal items, washroom and coffee/lunch facilities;
- Have an effective mechanism for two-way communication with staff (i.e. discussion time or regular memo exchange for ongoing direction and feedback);
- Be provided with direct support from staff if difficulties arise.



IV. What is Expected of a School Volunteer?

A school volunteer has the following responsibilities:

- To remember that the Principal has ultimate responsibility for all personnel, policies and programs in his/her school, including volunteers;
- To follow the policies of High Park School (i.e. signing-in procedures where requested, local school behavior codes);
- To be reliable. Accepting a school volunteer assignment means a regular commitment to be there - promptly and on schedule. Also, notifying the school in advance if you do have to be absent;
- To assist under the direction of qualified staff following their instruction closely. Work only with those staff members in your assigned school who request your help and work only with students referred to by these Teachers;
- To remember that volunteers are in the school to assist and supplement - not replace the role of paid staff;
- To remember you are a role model for students and the school community. Please maintain the highest standards of confidentiality and ethics.

V. Guidelines for Volunteers

- A school volunteer is not a Teacher or an Educational Assistant, not a therapist or a counselor, but first of all a person who accepts the students as they are. The volunteer can convey by his/her interest, attitude and sincerity that the student is a worthwhile person. Only when people feel good about themselves are they able to learn.



- Ask questions freely about programs, policies and equipment at a time appropriate both for the staff member and for yourself. Follow the staff member's established procedures. Talk to the Teacher about any difficulties at appropriate times, not in front of students or parents.

- Share your experiences and talents. Let the Teacher know in what area you excel (telling stories, singing, playing instruments, handcrafts, computer use, photography, etc.).

- Try to learn the names of students.

- Help students to tackle their work but do not do their work for them. If they get off-track, help them get back on in a tactful manner.

- Work at the student's level; sit or stand with him/her. Show your interest and involvement.

- Speak in a positive way to students – point out the things they have done right, the things they do well. Rushing them or nagging causes more problems than it solves. Belittling a person or making comparisons is harmful.

- Remind students of appropriate behavior if they are disruptive or break rules. Show by example a calm, responsible attitude for dealing with problems. Remember, though, that corrective disciplines the responsibility of the Principal and the Teaching staff.

VI. Student Behavior and Discipline

The Parkland School Division #70 School Division has a clearly defined policy on student behavior and discipline. It strives to provide a supportive, caring and orderly school climate that will enable students to develop skills that can help them achieve their full potential intellectually, physically and socially. The purpose is to describe a region wide approach to student discipline and to specify the procedure applicable to student suspensions.

Good school discipline means a sense of order prevailing in the classroom, throughout the building and on the school grounds. The sense of order offers security and comfort as well as a background for teaching and learning. Discipline should proactively encourage and acknowledge good behavior and support actions that promote the pursuit of the best possible learning climate. School and classroom codes of behavior will therefore incorporate strategies for fostering, recognizing and rewarding positive behavior, in addition to outlining the potential consequences for inappropriate behavior.

School discipline is a process involving several partners in education; namely, the School Board, the educators, the parents/guardians, the students and the community. By working together, these partners can create, in each school, a teaching and learning environment that allows every student to reach his/her potential.

At High Park School, we believe that students have the right to learn without interference; to participate without intimidation; to be treated with respect and to be safe and secure. Discipline is seen as an ongoing process rather than an event. Success is most likely to occur when home and school work together in the best interest of the child. Students are encouraged to make positive choices.

Students are held accountable for their own behavior. Cooperation, mutual respect, and trust, create a positive school environment for growth and learning.

Academic Expectations

Students are expected to bring materials to class, participate actively and positively in class activities, and complete assigned homework. These behaviors are essential for students to reach their academic potential.

- 1) Respect others with language and actions.**
- 2) Listen and follow directions.**
- 3) Work safely.**
- 4) Be prepared to learn.**

Attendance

Students are expected to attend all their classes. Regular, punctual attendance is essential to academic success. In the event of an absence of the student, parents are asked to provide an explanation. Students are expected to take personal responsibility for completing assignments and activities missed.

Bus Rules

Orderly behavior on the transportation system is of the utmost importance. Children who misbehave on the bus distract the driver, thereby endangering themselves and others. Failure to follow the bus rules and/or listen to the driver will result in a bus suspension.

Playground Safety

Students are expected to play safely and use equipment wisely. The first playground area is designated for K-3 ONLY and the further playground apparatus is for grades 4-6 ONLY. Also there are various basketball and ball nets in the tarmac for all grades to play with. In the field there are places to play football, soccer, baseball and even frisbee. Students are to be mindful and play with students of the same age. Supervisors are at and about to ensure safe playing is occurring.

Respect for Others

Students are expected to demonstrate respect for others by being courteous and well mannered, being tolerant of others, being cooperative with school staff, using appropriate language, observing safe practices, and being accountable to **all** members of the school community. Harassment of others, in any form, will not be tolerated.

Respect for Property

Students are expected to respect and care for the property of others. Damage, theft, or misuse of school or personal property is unacceptable behavior and students will be expected to pay for the damage. Students are expected to assist in keeping our school a place to be proud of that is safe and clean.

Respect for Self

Students are expected to show respect towards themselves and their own property. No student in our school is old enough to legally purchase/possess/use tobacco or alcohol products. It is illegal for them to purchase/possess illicit drugs. Students in possession and/or using these substances could be faced with suspension and possible expulsion.

Specific Guidelines

The following specific guidelines help to create a positive learning environment:

- students play outside in the playground in the morning before school (other than inclement weather)
- during recess and lunch students are to play outside (other than during inclement weather), within school boundaries
- snowballs, sticks, rocks, and sand must not be thrown
- fighting is not allowed; piggy backing and play fighting are not permitted as they often lead to further problems
- students are asked to leave toys of personal value at home as we are not responsible for them.
- students are expected to remove their hats/caps/hoods in the school
- from time to time a school ban (ie Pokemon cards) may occur due to high incidences of disrespectful behavior

Student Behavior and Conduct Policy

Students shall meet the expectations for student behavior while on school property or involved in school-sponsored or related activities. Our policies are guided by the parameters as set out in the School Act and PSD 70 policy.

School Act, Section 12.

“A student shall conduct himself or herself so as to reasonably comply with the following code of conduct:

- (a) be diligent in pursuing the student’s studies;
- (b) attend school regularly and punctually;
- (c) co-operate fully with everyone authorized by the board to provide education programs and other services;
- (d) comply with the rules of the school;
- (e) account to the student’s teachers for the student’s conduct;
- (f) respect the rights of others.”

1. *Parents play a vital role in developing student behavior and conduct. It is the expectation of High Park School and Parkland School Division No.70 that parents will:*
 - review the school's expectations for student behavior and conduct with their child(ren).
 - work with the school to resolve student behavioral issues when they affect their child(ren)
 - co-operate with and support the school's disciplinary action.

2. *Failure to meet the expectations for behavior and conduct will result in some or all of the following consequences:*
 - problem solving, monitoring, or reviewing behavior/ expectations with student, and/or reprimand
 - parental involvement
 - temporary removal of privileges
 - detention of student
 - temporary exclusion of student from class
 - in-school suspension
 - out-of-school suspension
 - behavioral contract with student
 - restitution for property damage to an individual or board
 - involvement of police
 - exclusion from a school or expulsion from all Division schools.

3. *Grounds for disciplinary action that could lead to suspension or expulsion exist where a student has demonstrated unacceptable behavior such as:*
 - conduct which threatens the safety of students and/or staff
 - possession of a weapon on a student's person, or in a student's backpack or desk, that is dangerous to students and staff. (A weapon is anything used, designed to be used, or intended for use in causing death or injury to any person, or for the purpose of threatening or intimidating any person.)
 - displaying or brandishing a weapon in a threatening or intimidating manner
 - assaulting another person (verbally or physically)
 - possession or use of drugs, tobacco products, alcohol, or inhalants in school, on school property, or during school related activities
 - contravention of Division policies and regulations related to student harassment, smoking, student attendance, and student rights and responsibilities
 - theft
 - willful disobedience and/or open opposition to authority
 - use or display of improper or profane language
 - willful damage to school or others' property
 - interfering with the orderly conduct of class(es) or the school
 - contravention of the code of conduct as set out in the [School Act](#).

VII. Volunteers as Mentors/Helpers:

“A Position of Trust”

Volunteers who work in a one-to-one relationship with students have a unique opportunity to help these students build feelings of competence and self-esteem, thus creating an environment for enhanced achievement. But with opportunity comes responsibility. As a student begins to realize that there is someone who does care, who takes a personal interest in the individual, that student may show increasing trust in the volunteer. It is essential that nothing happen to damage that trust.

This means that the volunteer must:

- Be a role model for the student;
- Accept the student as an individual;
- Follow through on all promised commitments.



VIII. Disclosure of Possible Abuse

In Alberta, it is a legal obligation to report any suspected case of child abuse. If a child indicates to a volunteer that he/she has been or is the victim of abuse, or if a volunteer has strong suspicions that a student may be an abuse victim, the volunteer must inform either the supervising Teacher or the Principal.

One of the most difficult things to handle may be when the student asks the person in whom they have confided to “promise not to tell”. A volunteer cannot make such a promise and should be clear about that to the child. Don’t try to “counsel” the child. Remain merely a sympathetic “listening ear” without being judgmental or trying to offer solutions. Assistance and counseling should come from those professionals with the responsibility and experience to provide it.

IX. Speaking About Confidentiality

Perhaps one of the greatest obstacles in the path of effective use of volunteers, especially parent volunteers, is the worry on the part of Teachers and Principals regarding the possible misuse of privileged information. Once anyone begins to work in a school setting, he/she becomes privy to knowledge about children’s behavior patterns, academic ability, emotional maturity, relationships with others, etc. In some cases, information of this nature is imparted in order that the volunteer might work more effectively with the child. In other cases, it is simply acquired in the course of frequent contact in the school.

In addition, volunteers are in a position to learn more about staff members than would normally be learned from their “public image”. One also forms personal opinions about the professional competency of individual Teachers and Principals.

There is nothing wrong with the volunteer possessing such knowledge and arriving at personal conclusions. This knowledge or these opinions, however, should never be shared in the community or with anyone who has no legitimate need to know. Similarly, care must be taken not to make comments harmful to the reputation of any pupil, professional or other volunteer.

If problems develop, the line of communication regarding a situation in the school is always first with the staff member concerned and then, if necessary, with the Principal.

A volunteer has every right to expect that his/her participation will be treated with the same confidentiality and respect.

X. Liability Insurance

Any person who voluntarily transports students in his/her own vehicle for a school activity shall follow procedures as provided through school administration, based on Parkland School Division #70 policy regarding “private use of vehicles”. Please see the school office for a form in regards to this matter.

XI. Recognition

Volunteering is the giving of time, energy, and concern. It is an honorable and cherished responsibility of our society. High Park School wishes to thank each and every volunteer for their participation and dedication to the students of this school.

Together we can make each child’s years in High Park School a solid foundation upon which to build a lifetime of successful achievement.

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