

# 2016-17 Volunteer Handbook Introductions

If you are a returning volunteer, we would like to take a moment to thank you for your time and talents in the past and welcome you back. If you are a new volunteer, we wish to welcome you and thank you for your interest in volunteering. On behalf of the students and staff, we sincerely appreciate your time spent here at the school, whether it is one hour or one hundred!!!

It is the intent of Three Oaks Elementary to utilize volunteers to enhance our educational programs. As a volunteer, you are assisting the staff in their day-to-day endeavor to provide the best possible educational experiences for each child in the school. So that you can be more effective, you may want to better understand your role and how your volunteer tasks relate to Three Oaks Elementary. Volunteers work under the direction and guidance of school personnel. They will not replace salaried staff, nor will their presence mean that fewer staff members will be needed.

There are countless volunteer opportunities here at Three Oaks Elementary and you may not always be assigned to your child's classroom. Volunteer service needs vary from teacher to teacher. Some teachers have several volunteers while others only want one or two or even none. Please do not be disappointed if your child's teacher does not need help most of the time. There are many opportunities to help around the school along with other classrooms that may need the help. Please contact Shannon McMahon or Lori Reichart in the office at 239-267-8020 if you are interested in volunteering.

A volunteer provides many things: an extra pair of hands, an extra measure of personal warmth, a valuable special resource for school-wide enrichment, a bridge between the instructional program and the community. We cannot buy what volunteers give our school nor can we thank them enough!

## Why Volunteer?

There are as many different reasons for volunteering, as there are volunteers. Understanding your goals for volunteering will allow you to use your talents most effectively. Some of these reasons are:

- To experience the satisfaction of helping someone
- To have an opportunity for personal growth
- To develop new skills
- To meet new people

- To explore career options
- To use time in a meaningful way
- To remain active and productive in the community after retirement
- To pursue a personal interest or hobby
- Most Importantly, to create a closer tie with your child's school

## Orientation Highlights

### CONFIDENTIALITY

Volunteers must protect the teachers' and students' rights to privacy. Remember that some of the information you will encounter while volunteering in school will be of a highly confidential nature. Respect the confidential nature of anything you see or hear. Share any concerns you may have only with those in authority at the school. A student's behavior, academic progress, health issues, or personal information must remain in the classroom. If parents and friends ask about your work at the school, tell them you enjoy working with the children and discuss the activities you do rather than specific information about the child, the teacher or the school. If you have specific concerns please consult privately with the classroom teacher or the administration.

### DEPENDABILITY

Volunteers are responsible for maintaining a professional attitude. Take your volunteering seriously – the kids you serve do! If volunteering in the classroom, please remember that you are included in the day's lesson plan – the staff and students count on you to be there. If illness or any emergency arises, please call the office of the school where you volunteer as soon as possible. Ask the secretary to inform the teacher you will not be there.

### VOLUNTEER APPLICATIONS

Anyone planning to volunteer in the school including attending field trips must complete a volunteer application and submit it to the office prior to volunteering. State and District Policy requires our school to complete a background check on anyone having contact with the students – for safety of our children.

## **VOLUNTEER ID BADGE**

We are doing the volunteer ID badges with lanyards again this year (If you already have one, please reuse it again). Fall Picture Day is Tuesday, September 20th - you can get your picture taken on picture day between 7:30 and 8:00 a.m. We will also be giving out volunteer pins to place on your lanyard for volunteer hours of service totaling 30, 75, 100, 150, 200, etc.

## **SIGN IN AND SIGN OUT AND ID REQUIREMENTS**

Every person in the school building must be identified if the school is to be a safe learning environment for the students. Please sign in each time you come into the building. If you do not have a volunteer ID badge, please bring your drivers license so it can be scanned for background check and it will print out a nametag for you. If you have a volunteer ID badge, you will not be required to scan your license through the Drivers License Scanner in the office. You will however be required to sign in that you have entered the school in the volunteer binder in the front office. PLEASE DO NOT ENTER THROUGH ANY OTHER LOCATION OF THE SCHOOL GROUNDS – ALL VISITORS MUST SIGN IN AT THE MAIN OFFICE.

It is also important for you to sign out when you leave the school. In the event of an emergency, the staff must be able to immediately identify who is in the building. While you are in the building, always wear your ID badge or name tag where it is visible to staff and students.

## **VOLUNTEER HOURS- SIGN IN/SIGN OUT**

We do keep track of volunteer hours, not only to recognize our volunteers once they have completed 30, 75, 100, etc. hours of volunteer time, but also to qualify for the Five Star School Award for volunteer service which we have won for several years in a row. There is a binder by the one exterior door in the office to sign in every time you volunteer and then to sign out when leaving. Please be sure to enter your start and end time so we can log your volunteer hours. If you are coming to the school for any other reason, please do not sign in on the volunteer sheets. We accumulated over 11,000 volunteer hours last year alone!! If you volunteer at home or outside of the school, please pick up a “volunteer at home” sheet at the volunteer desk and hand it in monthly to Shannon McMahon in the office.

## SAFETY

Within this handbook, you will find a section titled “Volunteer Responsibilities” and one titled “Staff Responsibilities.” The roles and responsibilities of the two are very different. Among those differences is the issue of discipline. Discipline is not your responsibility.

The physical and emotional safety of our children is of utmost importance. You should be visible to staff members at all times. You also need to protect yourself from the possibility of a student’s misinterpretation of circumstances. For your safety as well as that of our students, it is required that when working with a child you must be within sight and sound of school staff. At no time are you allowed to be alone with a child.

As a caring adult in the lives of children, children are likely to open up to you and share information about themselves and their families. Should you feel uncomfortable or concerned about any of the information children share with you, please share this information with the child’s teacher or the administration immediately.

Make certain that all personal possessions are out of the reach of children. Ask staff members where you can safely store these items while in the building. It is important to remember that items that we carry and consider harmless or helpful can be extremely dangerous to others.

It is a sign of the times that we must be concerned with blood-borne pathogens. Accidents involving bodily fluids should be immediately referred to the office or custodial staff.

## **Responsibilities of the Volunteer**

Volunteers are responsible for maintaining a professional attitude of mutual respect and confidence.

### **Volunteers should also:**

- Attend orientation prior to beginning volunteer work at the school.
- Wear ID nametag while volunteering at school.
- Be punctual and reliable. -Notify the school in case of an absence.
- Sign in and out and record volunteer hours on the time sheet provided.
- Practice the professional ethics of confidentiality (not discussing teachers, students or school affairs at any time).

- Be willing to offer supportive and supplemental service under professional supervision and direction.
- Be capable of adjusting to each teacher's individual style and following his/her directions.
- Practice professional dress code and behavior while at school or as a chaperone on a field trip. Remember, you are acting as a role model for students. Also treat your own child the same way as any other student while volunteering in the class.
- Contact the school's Principal if you are having difficulties regarding your role as volunteer.
- Keep talking to the teacher to a minimum and on task since the teacher's time is with the students, this is a disruption to the classroom.
- Please silence cell phones especially when volunteering in the classroom.

**Volunteers may never:**

- NEVER consume alcohol or use tobacco products during school sponsored events and most importantly while designated as a chaperone on a field trip.
- Assume responsibility for an entire class. Only school board staff may supervise a class alone.
- Contact or discuss with parents or other community members regarding performance or behavior of students.
- Administer any form of medicine to a student.
- Remove a child from the classroom.
- Discipline a student. Please refer problems to the appropriate staff member.
- Have access to materials in students' permanent record files.
- Diagnose student needs or evaluate achievements or counsel students.
- Have younger non-school age children with you while volunteering and overseeing students at school or on a field trip due to safety reasons.

**STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES**

Volunteers are an important part of the educational team. The suggestions and opinions of volunteers are always welcome. It is the professional staff, however, that is held responsible by law for the decisions that are made regarding the

instruction of students and school management. For this reason, volunteers always work under the supervision of the professional staff.

## Effective Ways to Work with Children

- Be warm and friendly – learn the children’s names and show interest in what they are doing and saying – you are very important as a listener.
- When working with children, encourage them to do their own thinking – give them plenty of time to answer; silence often means they are thinking and organizing what they want to say or write.
- If you don’t know an answer or are unsure of what to do, admit it to the children and try to work it out together – always feel free to ask the teacher of the children for help when you need it.
- Use tact and positive comments – encourage children – look for something worthy of a compliment, especially when children are having difficulties.
- Accept each child as she or he is – you do not need to feel responsible for judging a child’s abilities, progress or behavior.
- Respect a child’s privacy – confidentiality is essential to our school. Information gathered or impressions made about a child must remain confidential.
- Maintain a sense of humor and be flexible. No two days or children are alike.
- Be consistent with the teacher’s rules for classroom behavior, schedule and atmosphere.
- Wear comfortable clothes and don’t hesitate to get down to a child’s level.

## Ways to Support T.O.E.

**\*\* There are still many other opportunities for you to support our school; these include:**

**Clipping Box Tops and Tyson Food Labels:** Clip your Box Tops for education and Tyson Food Labels. Tyson Food Labels are worth \$.24 cents each when clipped and turned into the school. Box Tops can be clipped from hundreds of participating products and are worth \$.10 each when our school redeems them. You or your child can drop those off in the main office.

**Ink Jet Print Cartridges:** Do not throw away those old ink cartridges turn them into the school to be recycled and then we receive cash for the school!

**Amazon Smile:** Go to Amazon Smile ([smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com)) and choose Three Oaks Elementary PTO as your charitable organization to get started earning funds for our school. Enjoy the same wide selection of products, pricing, and convenience on Amazon.com but 0.5% of the price of eligible purchases go back to our school !!

\*\* Please make sure to put your child's name and teacher's name on any of the above items when turning them into the office (*You do not have to label each individual label putting the name on the front of a Ziploc baggie will work*).