

*Marion C. Early R-5  
School District  
Volunteer Handbook*



Volunteering at MCE School is easy as 1, 2, 3...

1. Read the Volunteer Handbook so that you are familiar with the school's guidelines and procedures.
2. Return a completed Volunteer and Room Parent Questionnaire Form & Application to the school office.
3. Sign a Volunteer Confidentiality Agreement and return it to the school office.

### **Welcome all VOLUNTEERS!**

The Marion C. Early R-5 School District welcomes volunteer participation in our school's programs and activities. There are many opportunities to volunteer and to actively participate in the educational program. Research indicates many positive outcomes for children when parents and community members volunteer and actively participate in their child's school. We welcome you to MCE and thank you for your willingness to partner with us in providing an excellent educational program.

Your service as a volunteer will add significantly to the programs offered. Your involvement helps build a school community that emphasize academic excellent, community responsibility, basic skill, individual strengths, technology integration, and lifelong love of learning. As a volunteer, you provide enrichment opportunities that enhance the educational experience for students while supporting teachers and staff. You also help build a strong foundation for students as they select a career path or post-secondary education. Your participation helps us to fulfill our mission of creating a safe, positive innovative educational environment and a great place to learn for all children.

As you enhance and support our school, it is important to help students be excited about learning. By modeling for students the kinds of behaviors and attitudes they need in order to succeed, you help them to develop into productive citizens of school and community.

### **Overview of the Volunteer Handbook**

This handbook will give you an overview of the school volunteer program and the variety of opportunities that you many choose to pursue. It is our hope that you will find personal satisfaction in what you do. Some of the options are:

- Volunteering in the classroom
- PTO Committees—please contact a PTO officer if you are able to help
- Volunteering “outside” the classroom (making copies, creating bulletin boards, etc.) The manual contains a few general guidelines that all volunteers should follow when working at a school. They will help you have a successful experience. Thank you for your willingness to help!

## **How To Become A Volunteer**

In order to volunteer in any school, **two** documents must be submitted to the school. These are available in the office as well as on the school website.

### **Document 1: Volunteer and Room Parent Questionnaire Form & Application**

Complete the Volunteer Questionnaire Form & Application and return it to the school office.

### **Document 2: Volunteer Confidentiality Agreement**

Missouri laws protect students against invasion of privacy. For this reason, we require volunteers to sign a Confidentiality Agreement. This must be signed and returned to the school's office before you begin to volunteer.

### **Your Role as a Volunteer**

*"Volunteers don't interfere."* If you volunteer in a classroom, you should make prior arrangements with the teacher with whom you will work. When working with students individually or in small groups, be sure to follow instructions from the teacher very carefully. While parents' involvement in their children's education is very beneficial, students and teachers need to focus on their work. We ask that volunteers come and go quietly in order to avoid interrupting instructions.

### **Identification and Sign-In**

Student safety is critical to our school. Therefore, you must always report to the office before you begin your volunteer activity. Register with the office secretary and pick up your visitor sticker.

Volunteers must wear their visitor sticker while in the building and during the duration of the activity. This will ensure that students and staff can easily identify you. Any adult without a sticker will be sent to the office to sign in. Safety is vital to all of us, which will give our students the best possible school environment. We appreciate your cooperation!

### **General Guidelines**

Your appearance should be neat and consistent with the dress code of the school district. This would apply to field trips or outside activities. In the case of inappropriate dress, t-shirt slogans, advertisements for tobacco or alcohol products, etc., the building principal may ask a volunteer to leave the school.

Please remember to be on time. When you are late or do not come in for your volunteer session, it can upset the routine of the classroom and students. Reliability is expected from volunteers because teachers and staff plan for your assistance.

Our school is a drug free workplace. Drugs of any kind are not permitted to be in the presence of children. Please be aware of what you have in your pocketbooks or backpacks.

Tobacco of any kind is not permitted on the school grounds at any time. This includes the parking lot and recess areas.

To be prepared for emergencies, learn the correct procedures for responding to emergencies and for following the rules for fire and disaster drills. Please see the classroom teacher or secretary for instructions.

It is not always in the best interest of a child to have parents, grandparents, guardians, etc, volunteer in their children's classrooms. Therefore, volunteers may be utilized in classrooms other than those in which their children are enrolled.

### **Guidelines for Working with Students**

Whether you are working in the classroom or another part of the school, you should maintain close contact with the supervising teacher(s) about lessons being covered, activities being planned, and the needs of individual students.

Volunteers should never be alone with students!

Know the school's expectations. If you are not sure of something, please ask. Be aware of the limits of your duties. You should expect the teacher to provide you with specific ways in which you can be most helpful. Remember, when something comes up you are not to intervene, but report it to the teacher or office.

Some students need to be guided toward acceptable behaviors. You can help by being a good role model who is kind, fair, and courteous. Inappropriate behavior is often a way to gain attention. If you observe this kind of behavior please bring it to the teacher's attention.

Information that students tell you about their personal lives is private and confidential. If you hear something that may be a threat to students, report the matter immediately to the teacher. Such information should never be repeated to other individuals (refer to the Confidentiality Agreement).

Students may want to share many interesting things about school, peers, and family. While this shows the student is comfortable with you, please remember that the task at hand is most important. Explain that the discussion can be revisited after the work is complete.

Smile! Be happy, encouraging, and interested. When working with students, try to maintain eye contact and face them as directly as possible. When working with individuals or with a group, explain the work to the group. Work with each student to check for understanding for the lesson. Give praise whenever a small part of the total work is complete. Share time with students equally.

You will gain students' confidence as you and the students get to know each other. Don't be afraid to show true feelings. If you feel nervous, tell the students. With their help, you will become more at ease in your role as a volunteer.

Having you in the school is a great treat for your own children and for all students. Let students

know your name; you might even write it for them. Ask students their names and make notes in order to remember them.

After meeting the students, you may start your tasks right away. As you get to know each student better, you will learn more about their interests and needs. You will get positive results by using a friendly and calm manner with the students.

### **Reporting Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect**

Any volunteer who has reason to believe that a child has been subject to abuse or maltreatment must report it to the appropriate authorities, Division of Family Services (1-800-392-3738) as well as report it to a teacher, guidance counselor, or the principal. School personnel will also proceed by contacting the appropriate authorities.

### **Student Discipline**

As with all employees, volunteers may not touch a student in an aggressive, disciplinary, or sexual manner. It is the teacher's responsibility to discipline children. Any concerns that you have about individual children and how to manage their behavior should be brought to the teacher.

Speaking to the children in a calm, focused way will go far in getting their attention and cooperation. Telling them directly what you expect of them and what the standards are for the activities will give them a framework to focus their efforts.

Remember...it is necessary to approach volunteer work with a sense of commitment, open-mindedness, resourcefulness, and initiative. By doing so, volunteering will be a rewarding experience for both you and the teacher.

### **Obligations of Confidentiality**

All volunteers should have a positive attitude about our school. All information is confidential and should not be discussed with anyone. However, it is your responsibility to notify the teacher or administrator in charge if you have concerns about a student or if you are unsure as to what should be done; trained staff members will help you handle the problem.

*Please note that, at the discretion of the building principal, failure to follow this procedure could result in removal as a school volunteer.*

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## Volunteer Questionnaire Form & Application

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail Address:

\_\_\_\_\_

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Do you have a child in this school? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Child's Name/Grade

\_\_\_\_\_

Child's Name/Grade

\_\_\_\_\_

Child's Name/Grade

\_\_\_\_\_

When are you available to volunteer? (please specify **days, hours** or **other considerations**):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever been arrested other than for traffic violations?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

If yes, explain:

\_\_\_\_\_

Please check the activities where you would like to volunteer. (Note: we will make every effort to match you to the activity you choose. Volunteers will be placed where and as needed.)

\_\_\_\_\_ PTA Activity Helper (Book Fair, Box Tops, PTA meetings and special events, etc.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Student Tutoring (pair reading, math fact practice, assist with writing assignments)

\_\_\_\_\_ Student Mentor (work directly with a struggling student by assisting them and providing a positive role model)

\_\_\_\_\_ Classroom Helper (preparing instructional materials, assisting with special projects, etc.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Library Helper (shelve books, repair books, assist students with research)

\_\_\_\_\_ Other Ideas:

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# ***VOLUNTEER CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT***

## **Marion C. Early R-5 School District**

There are federal and state laws that protect the privacy rights of students and families. In a school situation, there are many instances in which confidential information is discussed in order to better understand students and how we can help them. When working in the schools as a volunteer, there may be times when this information is heard. Our staff will make every effort to prevent this from happening; however, as a volunteer you must agree that if you do hear information about a student or family you will not repeat this outside of the school. This will ensure the protection of our students' interest and their families, thus creating a better environment for all.

Additionally, laws govern special education confidentiality, FERPA (Family Education Rights and Privacy Act), IDEA and (Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act). All bodies of regulations indicate that confidentiality must be maintained relative to special education students. Therefore, any written or verbal communication with anyone who does not have a right to know is in violation of the laws. A volunteer should not discuss a child's disability with any individual outside of the classroom instructor, building principals, or staff member. The volunteer should not use any written or verbal statements outside of the school that would divulge the child's disability; this includes notes, email, text messages, and/or social media sites. In essence, only those who work directly with the student are considered as those with a "need to know". If at any time these terms of confidentiality are violated by a volunteer, termination of volunteer services may occur.

As a volunteer:

- I realize that I am subject to a code of ethics similar to that which binds the professionals in the field in which I work.
- I will keep confidential matters private.
- I also understand that volunteering at the Marion C. Early School District is a privilege and not a right. The school's principal reserves the right to deny or remove any volunteer violating confidentiality or any district policy. **By signing this agreement, I am stating that I will not divulge information about any student or family to any person outside the school setting.**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Volunteer Name (please print)**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Volunteer Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date**

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