

Volunteer...

touch a life

Everybody can be great. Because anybody can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and your verb agree to serve.... You don't have to know the second theory of thermodynamics in physics to serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love.

~ Martin Luther King, Jr.



Volunteer Handbook

The Franklin Public Schools Volunteer Program's goal is to coordinate a community-wide system of volunteers who are willing to work within the schools to help enhance and augment the educational experience of Franklin Children.

Franklin Public Schools

Dr. Sara Ahern, Superintendent of Schools
Lucas Giguere, Assistant Superintendent of Schools
Joyce Edwards, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching & Learning
Miriam Goodman, Director of Finance
Paula Marano, Director of Student Services
Lisa O'Keefe Trainor, Director of Human Resources
Christopher Nayler, Director of Lifelong Learning



School Committee

Dr. Anne Bergen, Chairperson
MaryJane Scofield, Vice Chair
Jennifer D'Angelo,
Timothy Keenan
Judith Pond-Pfeffer
Denise Spencer
Elise Stokes

If you want to touch the past, touch a rock. If you want to touch the present, touch a flower. If you want to touch the future, touch a life. ~Author Unknown

From the Superintendent of Schools

Dear Volunteer:

On behalf of the Franklin Public Schools, I want to welcome you to join us in our important work. We take great pride in our school system and are pleased that you have decided to serve as a partner in the education of our students. We have long recognized that there are many outstanding resources in our community and this program is an exciting opportunity for you to become involved.

We hope that this handbook will assist you to make your time with us productive for you and beneficial to our students and staff. Please feel free to ask us for any assistance you need to make your volunteering a positive experience for all.

We welcome your suggestions and contributions, and, most of all, your talent and experience. Your efforts enable us to provide a far richer experience to our students and for that we are very grateful.

Sincerely,

Sara Ahern

Sara Ahern
Superintendent of Schools



Guidelines for Volunteers

The staff at each school value your commitment and participation in the Volunteer Program. The following suggestions are made to help your contribution in school programs to be a profitable, rewarding one for you, the children and the staff.

1. Due to increased building security, all doors are locked. You will need to buzz in.
2. Sign in and pick up a volunteer badge at the office and go directly to your assigned area after you have signed in. This enables us to know who is in the building and where to locate people in emergencies. After completing your assignment, remember to sign out and leave your badge.
3. Use a positive approach and always encourage the children. Their desire and need for recognition, attention, success, and love is strong, persistent and demanding.
4. Refer all discipline problems to the teacher for appropriate action. The presence of an adult prevents much misbehavior. Stop obvious misconduct, but leave the actual disciplining to the teacher. (ABOVE ALL – NEVER TOUCH A CHILD IN ANGER.)
5. Teachers will be glad to help you with suggestions and support to enhance your participation, so please ask.
6. If you are going to be absent from your volunteer assignment, please notify the office of the school at which you volunteer.
7. Your full attention should be given to your volunteer assignment, so please make childcare arrangements your other children.
8. Please arrange conferences concerning your own child(ren) in the routine manner. It is extremely difficult for teachers to respond to spur-of-the- moment and casual questions about your child(ren).
9. New volunteers are required to attend an orientation. This requirement may be satisfied either by attending a formal orientation, or by meeting with the school's assistant principal/head teacher to discuss the volunteer guidelines. EACH YEAR, volunteers must sign a CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT before helping in the schools. Volunteers must also participate in the CORI (Criminal Record Information) process EVERY YEAR.
10. When volunteering at the schools, please provide your own transportation. Volunteers are not to ride the school buses to get to their volunteer assignments.

*You make a living by what you get. You make a life by what you give.
– Winston Churchill*



School Volunteers

The Franklin School Committee recognizes the diverse talents and skills represented in the community and welcomes the volunteer assistance of citizens in helping the professional staff carry out the instructional program of the schools.

While volunteers will not be asked to assume the professional responsibilities of the school staff, they may assist in the classrooms by working with individual children or small groups; may assist in developing and maintaining collections of instructional materials; and may perform other services of assistance to children and teachers.

The basic requirement for volunteer service will be an interest and enjoyment in children and a belief that they can learn.

All new volunteers must attend a volunteer orientation prior to volunteering, and sign a confidentiality sheet. Returning volunteers only need to sign the confidentiality sheet each year.

The principal or designee will assume responsibility for the selection, training, and supervision of volunteers in his/her school.

The School Committee will give public recognition in appreciation of the services of all volunteers. Short-term volunteers or those serving on an irregular basis shall require the approval only of the principal, or the superintendent or designee in the case of system-wide service, who will ascertain that their role is commensurate with their training or experience.

Long-term volunteers are those whose services are continuing and of a regular nature involving responsibility for some segment of the school program which might otherwise be done by a staff member such as a tutor, coach or secretary. These individuals shall require the same level of approval that the position would require if it were to be filled by a paid employee.

All volunteers will serve under the supervision and control of the School Committee for purposes of liability coverage. All who are in direct contact with children will participate in the Convicted Offenders Record Information (CORI) process. Volunteers are not covered by Worker's Compensation Insurance.

We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future. ~ Franklin Delano Roosevelt



Volunteer Communication Skills

Communication skills and a belief in good communication will help each volunteer provide the kind of experience that makes successful programs. The three areas listed here are crucial to good communication with all children.

Review the concepts, think about them, discuss them with other volunteers, try practicing them at home or with friends. Then use them as tools which will help you meet your goals as a volunteer.

Speak for Yourself

- Use “I” statements when you talk; children want to know what you think.
- Speak for yourself, not others; children are interested in your experiences and values more than in generalizations.
- Say what you mean and mean what you say. You have feelings and it’s okay to share them. This is a real life experience and not a protected environment.

Listen to others

- Provide time and space to listen. Design it into your plans.
- Take time to listen to the group as a whole, but also provide opportunities to listen to the children on a one-to-one basis.
- Listen with your eyes and heart as well as with your ears.
- Share with the children what you hear; they will let you know if you heard them right.
- Make opportunities for the children to listen to each other and to you. Everyone likes to be listened to.
- Take time to elicit information from other volunteers and parents, and then listen carefully to what they say.
- Be open and accepting of what you hear; it will encourage sharing and speaking for oneself.

Ask Good Questions

- Use a variety of question asking methods.
- Ask yes/no questions which allow for specific choices.
- Ask open-ended questions which give the children a chance to respond in whatever direction they please. They will share what’s on their minds as well as what’s important to them at the time.
- Help the children along by asking questions which get them generating answers for themselves, i.e., what are three things you would like to do at our next session?
- Know that good question asking can many times provide the answers that are so laboriously sought after in problem solving.



Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not.
~Dr. Seuss

Confidentiality is important!

Each volunteer will be required to sign a confidentiality statement and return it to school before your assignment begins.

By signing the Confidentiality Statement, the volunteer agrees to:

1. Keep confidential any information about the teacher-student learning process.
2. Discuss individual students with school staff ONLY.
3. Limit any information concerning a particular child on a need-to-know basis.
4. NEVER discuss any child outside of the school environment with ANYONE.

PLEASE PUT YOURSELF IN THE OTHER PARENT'S POSITION AND ASK YOURSELF THIS QUESTION... "Would you want someone making a comment about your child?"



I can no other answer make, but, thanks, and thanks. ~William Shakespeare

VOLUNTEER INFORMATION FORM

To be eligible to volunteer in Franklin Schools and chaperone on field trips you must fulfill the following requirements:

1. Attend a volunteer orientation once. Please contact your child's school principal to arrange this.
2. Fill out a CORI Form (criminal offender record information.) A new form must be completed every year. Please return this form directly to the Office.
3. Sign the confidentiality statement below. This is required every year for all returning volunteers for each student's classroom.

Please note that parents, guardians, and family members who visit the classroom infrequently are considered "VISITORS" and are only required to sign in at the office and wear a visitor badge.

Please complete this form for each student's classroom

Child's Name _____ Teacher _____ Grade _____

PARENT/GUARDIAN NAME _____

ADDRESS _____ PHONE _____

MAILING ADDRESS (IF DIFFERENT) _____

CHECK ONE: RETURNING VOLUNTEER NEW VOLUNTEER

LIST THE SCHOOLS IN WHICH YOU ARE CURRENTLY VOLUNTEERING:

1. Date you attended volunteer orientation: _____

2. HAVE YOU COMPLETED THE REQUIRED CORI FORM? No Yes Date _____
(CRIMINAL OFFENDER RECORD INFORMATION to be completed every year)

3. CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT (needs to be signed every year!):

By accepting an assignment for the Franklin School volunteers, I agree to respect the confidential nature of my assignment and to be prompt and dependable. I will abide by the rules, regulations and procedures of the Franklin Public School System and the Franklin School Volunteers.

Volunteer Signature: _____ Date: _____

If you have children in the Franklin Public Schools, please list:

Child's Name School Teacher Grade

*** Please return this form to the principal's office