



**Oregon Episcopal School**

# **Parent Volunteer Handbook**



## **A Message from the Lower School Administration**

Dear Volunteer:

Thank you for sharing your time and energy to help us provide the best educational environment possible for your children. Parent involvement is welcome in a myriad of ways, and we are delighted to have you share in the responsibility of educating our students. We also welcome many grandparents, special friends and older students as volunteers. We look forward to working with all of you this year.



David A. Lowell  
Head of Lower School



Christine O'Toole  
Assistant Head of Lower School

## **Getting Ready to Volunteer**

## **Signing-up to Volunteer**

OES uses an online volunteer database, **Volunteer Spot**, where you will find a listing of all the volunteer opportunities at school. The listing includes a description of each position as well as an opportunity to sign up. Volunteer Spot will automatically record your volunteer hours. Other volunteer opportunities can be found on our Volunteer page on the OES website:

<http://www.oes.edu/giving/volunteers/index.html>.

## **Completing the Background Check**

Before you can volunteer with the students you will need to complete a **background check**. Information about the online background check may be found on the Volunteer page of our website:

<http://www.oes.edu/giving/volunteers/index.html>.

## Volunteer “Check-in”

Our student’s safety is of the utmost importance! Therefore, the Lower School has implemented a check-in system for volunteers. Upon arrival on campus, volunteers will stop at the Lower School Office and complete the sign-in sheet. The process is simple – note your name, cell phone, date, location, activity, time in and estimated time on campus. A volunteer badge will be provided at the time of check-in, which will be worn throughout your campus involvement.

This system:

- Enhances community safety, by identifying who is on the campus grounds.
- Improves communication, by providing a way in which to contact volunteers while on campus - - as it has been asked that cell phones be turned off during volunteer duties.
- Ensures an effective emergency preparedness plan, in the event of an earthquake, fire, etc.--- we will know who is physically on campus.

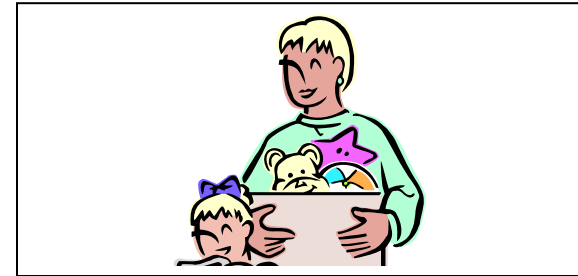
## Volunteers can help students by:

- Having a warm, friendly attitude
- Learning the children's names
- Allowing them to make mistakes--and pointing out the part they did right
- Accepting students as individuals
- Being patient
- Asking questions
- Taking notes for the teacher
- Encouraging and pointing out what the children do well
- Referring disciplinary problems to the teacher when necessary



## Teachers appreciate:

- Getting to know their students' parents
- Room parents' organizational abilities
- Clerical help
- Classroom party planning
- One-on-one help for students
- Volunteer confidentiality
- Advance notice if you can't work your shift (if possible)
- Wednesday envelope stuffers
- Monthly treats in the mail room
- And so much more. . . !



## General Volunteer Responsibilities

### Professionalism

It is our policy to encourage participation by parents and other community volunteers in the Lower School to enrich the educational opportunities for all students. Although the work is voluntary, the commitment must be professional. Besides being responsible for maintaining an attitude of mutual respect and confidence, volunteers should be familiar with school and classroom policies and practices. Volunteering to work with the teaching staff requires flexibility and a willingness to follow the teacher's directions.

Cell phones should be turned off or set in the silent mode while you are working with children.

## Frequently asked questions about volunteering:

*How often may I volunteer in my child's classroom?*

While we don't have a set number of hours per week a parent may volunteer, we want there to be equal opportunity for all interested parents to volunteer. We also respect the classroom as the children's workplace, where they learn to spread their wings safely. Having a parent in the classroom too often makes this more challenging for a child and can cause other children to feel left out. One or two hours per week in the classroom is a reasonable amount of time. If you want to volunteer more, we suggest one of the many out-of-classroom opportunities. Talk to your Room Parent for ideas



*What is the role of the Room Parent?*

The Room Parent is the liaison with the teacher and the coordinator of volunteers in his or her child's classroom. The Room Parent ensures that all parents have an equal opportunity to volunteer.

*How should I prepare my child so that she is comfortable "sharing" me with her classmates?*

Let your child know when you will be coming to school to do a job for the teacher. In most cases, you will be working with other children and won't have time for a special visit with him or her at that time. Arrange for lunch dates at school occasionally, as a special treat for your child.

*My schedule doesn't allow me to volunteer on a regular basis. Is it okay if I drop in when I have the time?*

Teachers have specific jobs for volunteers and need to plan ahead. There may be tasks you can do at home on your own schedule. Check with your child's teacher or Room Parent.

## Classroom Responsibilities:

If you are working with children in the classroom, the teacher will give you specific instructions. In general, you should be aware of the following:

### Children learn in a variety of ways:

- Doing, rather than by observing or listening to a lecture
- Asking questions
- Searching for answers
- Discovering, experimenting and repeating experiences which build confidence
- Discussing
- Working with others
- Playing games
- Making mistakes and trying again

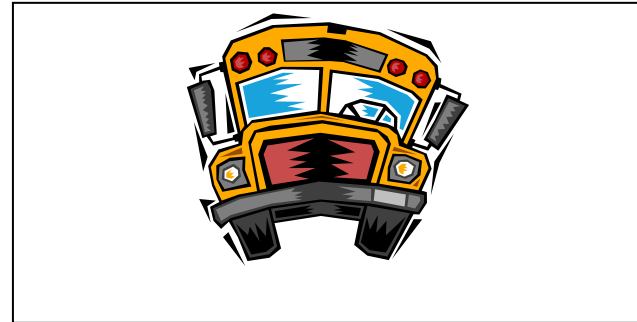


## Dependability and Punctuality

Students and teachers rely on the services performed by volunteers. Five or ten minutes is an eternity to a young child who is looking forward to your arrival! We ask that you arrive five minutes before your scheduled service, and do your best to find a substitute if you are unable to volunteer on your scheduled day. In the event you cannot find a substitute, please call the school (503-768-3143) so the teacher can be notified.

## Discipline

Classroom management will be discussed at the Parent Partnership Coffees in the fall. Your child's teacher may also discuss his/her particular management system, but you will not be expected to discipline any child. If you have a problem that is not disrupting others, let it go, and tell the teacher when you have a chance. If a child's behavior is disrupting the learning of others, ask the teacher for help - even if you have to interrupt.



## Field Trips, Parties and other Special Events

The teacher will give you clear instructions about your role. Please stay within the parameters so that everyone is safe and has a good time. Read any written instructions carefully ahead of time so you'll be ready to do your job when you arrive. If you have questions, please ask the teacher before the bus leaves! We also ask that you not "improvise." For example, maple bars for all on the bus may sound like a good idea, but trust us, it's not! When in doubt, ask.

Parents who are traveling with a classroom on a field trip will be responsible for their own transportation. There may be an occasion when the classroom teacher will ask parents to ride with the class on the bus.

## **Safety**

Please do not bring siblings when you volunteer. Your full attention is needed for the job you are asked to do with the students. If you need a babysitter, please trade off with a friend or another volunteer.

Become familiar with the fire and earthquake evacuation procedures for the space in which you are working with children. Check with the teacher if you have questions.

If there is an accident, let the teacher know immediately. Before you leave school, check in at the office and fill out an Incident Report.

**All food brought for student consumption must be store-bought and contain no nuts, nut products, or nut oils.** Some children have serious allergies to these products, which could have a fatal result within a short period of time. Before serving any food to children, double-check with the teacher regarding allergies.

## **Confidentiality**

Volunteers have a responsibility to protect the teachers' and students' right to privacy. You must not disclose school affairs or personal matters that come to your attention. Discuss student progress, problems or concerns only with the teacher with whom you are working. Leave the teacher a note or contact him or her later if it is not convenient to talk before you leave. Other concerns related to students or curriculum may be discussed with the classroom teacher or Lower School Administrators. Discuss concerns related to parent volunteerism with the Room Parent or Grade Representative.

If you should hear other volunteers discussing such matters openly, please help them direct their comments to one of the appropriate people listed above. Such talk is inappropriate and unprofessional. All parents have the right to feel secure knowing their child's progress or behavior will not become the topic of parent volunteer conversation. If a parent asks you to comment on his or her own child's progress, please refer the parent to the teacher. You may say you enjoy working with the child, but that you do not have the expertise to evaluate the child's progress.

If a volunteer fails to maintain confidentiality, he or she may be asked not to continue to volunteer in the classroom.



**Notes:**