

# School Volunteer Training

Volunteering is very important to Pikes Peak School of Expeditionary Learning. The school would not be able to function as smoothly without our volunteers. It is a vital asset of our school. You add so much to the educational and enrichment experiences that our children have at PPSEL and we appreciate you so much.

PPSEL has a strong tradition of parent involvement. Because volunteers are such an integral part of PPSEL, it is important to keep our standards high.

It is important for all volunteers to remember the following:

- Be responsible and safe -- always put children first.
- Respect confidentiality. Students and staff have a right to privacy.
- Be professional.
- Communicate.
- When things come up and you can't fulfill a promise, let someone know.
- Ask for help -- don't suffer in silence!
- Share your experience with others and encourage new volunteers.
- Try to replace yourself when you move on and help train the new person.

## **Confidentiality**

To make sure that students, staff and families feel comfortable, we all need to respect each other's privacy. Volunteers must be especially careful to honor confidentiality. Breaching confidentiality can be hurtful to children, their families and the staff. It can also harm the good reputation our volunteer parents have earned over the years.

To help, here are some sample issues that can arise.

**“Wasn't it cute when John . . .”** No matter how innocent, cute, funny or charming a classroom event may be, it is not okay to repeat stories about students. What happens in the classroom stays in the classroom.

**When parents ask you questions . . .** Many parents are tempted to ask you about how their children behave at school. This is especially likely if you are friends outside school. It is not okay to put volunteers in this awkward position. Don't ask! Don't tell!

If parents do have concerns, encourage them to talk to the class teacher.

**When you see or overhear something . . .** As a volunteer, you might see or hear things from staff or students which they would not want to have repeated outside the school. What happens in the classroom (or the hall, or the gym) stays at school.

If you have concerns about something you see or hear, please talk to the classroom teacher or Principal if appropriate.

**When students tell you about their family, pet, vacation, etc. . . .**

As students become comfortable working with you, they might decide to share something personal. You need to keep this information private, even if you know the child and their family outside of school.

**When you have opinions about teaching methods, teachers or other staff members. . . .**

As a volunteer, PPSEL expects you to maintain the same professionalism as any staff member. This means that you need to maintain positive communication about staff members and their methods while you are volunteering and maintain that standard after you are finished volunteering. There should never be complaining about staff members and their methods, even after you leave the school.

**Approach** - Be professional and be positive!

- Strive to give each child the best you can and know that other volunteers do the same when working with your child.
- Respect each child as an individual.
- Respect your co-workers and all school employees.
- If working in your child's classroom, try not to single them out for attention as this may make them uncomfortable.
- Don't distract teachers while they are teaching. If you have questions wait until there is an appropriate moment.
- Honor your commitments and be on time.
- Find ways to be positive and notice things that are working well
- Try to make any criticism constructive.

**Opportunities**

- Lunchroom support
- Parking lot support (morning or afternoon)
- Classroom Helper
- School Beautification
- Marketing support
- Office Support

**Items to Remember**

- Volunteers, though, are under the supervision of paid staff members and board members. If a volunteer would ever work alone with a small group of students or work in the school on a regular basis, he or she would need to have a background and fingerprint check completed and clear of any blemishes.
- Volunteers are not in charge of disciplining children. If you see something that needs to be taken care of, please direct it to the paid staff member or board member in charge.
- Volunteers should never pick up a child or be overly affectionate with a child. Maintaining professional standards is crucial for our volunteers.
- If there is a discipline issue, volunteers should direct the issue to the staff member in charge, rather than directly to the principal.

Thank you for the asset you are to Pikes Peak. We truly support all that you do!

Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_