

# **BRIARWOOD ELEMENTARY VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK**

## **WELCOME**

Thank you for your interest in volunteering at Briarwood Elementary. Children benefit greatly when their parents and other family members are involved in their learning and school experience. Many of our programs and activities would not be possible without the helping hands of our volunteers. We appreciate any amount of time and contribution you are able to give. We look forward to your participation in our efforts to achieve success for all students at Briarwood Elementary.

We compiled this volunteer information to make your job as a volunteer effective, efficient and pleasant. We tried to anticipate all the questions you're likely to face as a volunteer. But if you still have questions or need clarification, feel free to ask any staff member for assistance.

## **SIGN IN PROCEDURES**

**Sign In:** Whenever you come to school to volunteer, please make a visit to the school office your first stop. We ask all volunteers and visitors to sign our volunteer sign-in book. This information helps us keep track of who is on our campus and how to locate individuals in the event of an emergency.

**Volunteer Badge:** As you sign in, you'll notice a box of brightly colored volunteer badges. Please take one and clip it to a visible spot. This badge lets staff members know that you belong on our campus and that you've checked in at the office.

**Sign Out:** When your volunteer assignment is over, please make one more trip to the office to sign out (indicating how long you were here) and to return your badge.

## **USING MACHINES AND MATERIALS AT SCHOOL**

Making photocopies of classroom materials is a common volunteer assignment. However, we ask that you do not use the copy machines unless you've been trained or have previously used similar equipment. Do not hesitate to let the teacher know that you've not been trained or that you are not comfortable with the machines. All volunteers are encouraged to attend Volunteer Training at the beginning of the school year. It includes instructions on operating the various machines in our workroom.

If you have any difficulty using the machines, there is usually someone else in the workroom that has learned to solve a similar problem. Speak up and ask for help. If you still need assistance check with the office staff. If there is a major paper jam or problem with one of the machines that needs attention, please notify the school secretary.

Sometimes a teacher will need to interrupt your copying assignment to make something quickly. Thank you for understanding and allowing them to "cut in" on you.

The teacher should be able to supply you with the materials you'll need for your project. Most teachers have supplies in their classrooms. The office may have extra pens, pencils, etc. If you need something, don't hesitate to ask.

## **PREPARING MATERIALS**

If your volunteer time includes preparing materials such as cutting, tracing patterns, gluing, etc. feel free to use the workroom located in the main office if it is not convenient to work in the classroom. Please assist our custodial staff by cleaning up your workspace when you are finished.

## **WORKING WITH CHILDREN**

We value the efforts of all of our volunteers, but those who work directly with the children have an especially important task. In no time, you will establish a relationship with the children and they will look forward to your visits. The teacher will give you directions or ideas about how he/she prefers that you spend your time. Don't hesitate to ask for clarification if you don't understand his/her directions. Here are a few pointers on working with children:

1. Relax and be yourself
2. Speak directly to the child
3. Use your voice in a reassuring and supportive manner
4. Use positive directions and praise (*pointing out what they're doing right works better than focusing on what they're doing wrong*)
5. Give directions and ask questions one at a time
6. Give choices whenever possible
7. Encourage creativity
8. Appreciate the child's efforts
9. Listen to the child
10. Have fun

## **COMMUNICATION**

If you have questions or concerns about teaching methods or programs, please ask the teacher. Please remember, that as individuals our methods may be different. We welcome your insight, but ask that you respect the teacher's knowledge and judgment. Your tact, flexibility, patience, and persistence are appreciated.

If a student problem arises (instructional, medical, or operational), please refer the child to the teacher or a regular staff member.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

As a volunteer, you will likely work with many different children and see students perform in different areas and at different levels. We ask that you keep your knowledge

of how specific children are doing in confidence. Teachers appreciate your feedback about the children you work with, but that information must be kept in confidence when you leave the school. Please remember that only the teacher should discuss a child's progress with that child's parent. Also, please do not refer to a child's abilities in front of other children. We appreciate your assistance and understanding on this matter.

## **VOLUNTEER ETIQUETTE**

Please respect the workspace of our office staff. There are many confidential materials on their desks and on the countertops behind their desks. For this reason, we ask that you stay in front of the desks and counters. If you need supplies or materials that are stored behind the desk, please ask for assistance.

For your convenience, there are three phones available for your use. They are located in the office waiting area, in the office conference room, and in the workroom. You'll need to dial "9" to access an outside line.

If you've been asked to record a message on the *Phone Messenger*, please contact the secretary to schedule a convenient time.

## **VOLUNTEER EXPECTATIONS**

Reliability is one of the most important requirements of a volunteer. Please come on your scheduled day and at the assigned time. If you can't come as scheduled, please notify the teacher by phone so he/she can make other plans or adjustments. Volunteering takes a big commitment and we plan our day around your being here.

## **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

While on campus, we ask that you fully participate and follow emergency procedures during any safety drill or emergency. You set an important example for the children.

## **BEFORE YOU GET STARTED**

Before you start volunteering at Briarwood Elementary, there are a few items to review:

- ✓ Complete the Washington State Patrol form (sections C and D). This form must be completed annually. If you have completed this form for another school or group, you may provide us with a copy for our file.
- ✓ Complete the Issaquah School District Volunteer Request for Background Information form. You must sign this in the presence of a school witness.
- ✓ Complete and sign School Volunteer Checklist.

- ✓ Attend a Volunteer Training session to learn how to operate the office machines (photo copy, die cutter, comb binder, etc.)
- ✓ Invite a friend to join our volunteer community