

Cochrane-Fountain City School District

VOLUNTEER MANUAL



C-FC ~ *Caring For Children*

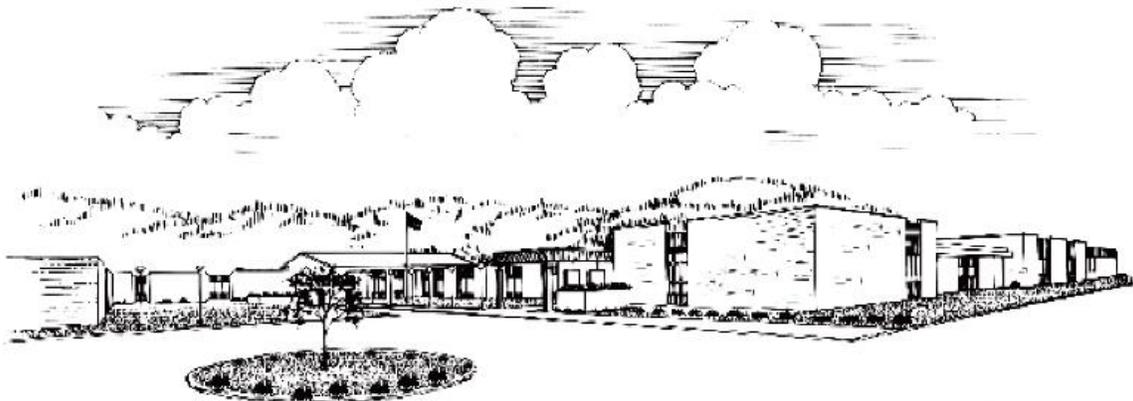


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Introduction

Welcome to the growing ranks of school volunteers. Through our school leaders, we hope to encourage increased participation and partnership in our local school community. For the children of the Cochrane-Fountain City School to reach their full educational, physical, emotional and social potential requires the commitment and involvement of all the members of the community: students, teachers, parents, guardians, community organizations and school administrators.

The purpose of volunteers is not to replace the work of the employee, but rather to assist the administration and staff in improving the quality of the school environment. Volunteers do make a difference! Volunteer participation will be an opportunity for you to share with others in the enrichment of education for our students. You will discover the rewards of helping students achieve their personal best and at the same time gain useful experience yourself.

What do Volunteers do?

Volunteers perform many different tasks in the Cochrane-Fountain City School District. The following list is a sampling of such tasks:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Site plan committees | <input type="checkbox"/> Coaching |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Classroom parents | <input type="checkbox"/> Guest speakers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Field trips | <input type="checkbox"/> Advisory committees |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fund raising | <input type="checkbox"/> Project work for staff |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Special events | <input type="checkbox"/> School beautification |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Choir | <input type="checkbox"/> Tutoring |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Library support | <input type="checkbox"/> Communications (telephone committees/newsletters) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reading programs | <input type="checkbox"/> PTO |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Assisting with playground supervision | <input type="checkbox"/> Health programs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Assisting teachers with teaching materials | <input type="checkbox"/> Chaperones |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Classroom cleanup | |

What Should a School Volunteer Expect?

A school volunteer should:

- Be made to feel that the assistance given is worthwhile and contributes to the overall value of the program in which they are participating.
- Be treated with respect and consideration by all students and staff.
- Be given a suitable assignment in line with their areas of interest, skills, and, if possible, convenience of location.
- Be given clear instructions and any training necessary for specific volunteer assignments.
- Be given proper orientation to the school with introductions to key personnel and information provided as to parking, storage of personal items, washroom and coffee/lunch facilities.
- Have a two-week trial period in each new volunteer position realizing that changes may be asked for by either volunteer or supervising staff.
- Have an effective mechanism for two-way communication with staff (i.e. discussion time or regular memo exchange for ongoing direction and feedback).
- Be provided with direct support from staff if difficulties arise.
- Be provided with the opportunity to either set up and/or use a meal account so that the volunteer can purchase school breakfast or lunch.

What is Expected of a School Volunteer?

A school volunteer has the following responsibilities:

- to remember that the principal has ultimate responsibility for all personnel, policy and programs in his/her school, including volunteers;
- to follow the policies of the Cochrane-Fountain City School District (i.e. signing-in procedures where requested, local school behavior codes); to be reliable. Accepting a school volunteer assignment means a regular commitment to be there - promptly and on schedule. Also, notifying the school in advance if you do have to be absent;
- to assist under the direction of qualified staff following their instruction closely. Work only with those staff members in your assigned school who request your help and work only with pupils referred to by these teachers;
- to remember that volunteers are in the school to assist and supplement - not replace the role of paid staff;
- to be receptive to, and participate in, orientation, training and meetings with staff, as offered. Try to “grow in the job”;
- when asked, to offer constructive feedback to staff on your experience as a volunteer and make good use of their evaluation of your performance;
- to remember you are a role model for students and the school community. Please maintain the highest standards of confidentiality and ethics.

Guidelines for Volunteers

- A school volunteer is not a teacher or an educational program assistant, not a therapist or a counselor, but a friend who accepts the students as they are. The volunteer can convey by his/her interest, attitude and sincerity that the student is a worthwhile person. Only when people feel good about themselves are they able to learn.
- Ask questions freely about programs, policies and equipment at a time appropriate both for the staff member and for yourself. Follow the staff person’s established procedures. Talk to the teacher about any difficulties at appropriate times, not in front of students or parents.
- Share your experiences and talents. Let the teacher know in what you excel (telling stories, singing, playing instruments, handcrafts, computer use, photography, etc.)
- Try to learn the names of students.
- Help students to tackle their work but do not do their work for them. If they get off-track, help them get back on in a tactful manner.
- Work at the student’s level; sit or stand with him/her. Show your interest and involvement.
- Speak in a positive way to students – point out the things they have done right, the things they do well. Rushing them or nagging causes more problems than it solves. Belittling a person or making comparisons is harmful.
- Remind students of appropriate behavior if they are disruptive or break rules. Show by example a calm, responsible attitude for dealing with problems. Remember, though, that corrective discipline is the responsibility of the principal and the teaching staff.

Student Behavior and Discipline

The Cochrane-Fountain City School Board has a clearly defined policy on student behavior and discipline. The Board strives to provide a supportive, caring and orderly school climate that will enable students to develop skills which can help them achieve their full potential intellectually, physically and socially, in accordance with the Public-School Program and the School Board’s policies. The purpose of the Student Behavior and Discipline Policy is to describe a district-wide approach to student discipline and to specify the procedure applicable to student suspensions.

Good school discipline means a sense of order prevailing in the classroom, throughout the building and on the school grounds. The sense of order offers security and comfort as well as a background for teaching and learning. Discipline should proactively encourage and acknowledge good behavior and support actions, which promote the pursuit of the best possible learning climate. School and classroom codes of behavior will therefore incorporate strategies for fostering, recognizing and rewarding positive behavior, in addition to outlining the potential consequences for inappropriate behavior.

Finally, school discipline is a process involving several partners in education; namely, the School Board, the educators, the parents and guardians, the students and the community. By working together, these partners can create, in each school, a teaching and learning environment that allows every student to reach his/her potential.

Volunteers should be made aware of the Parent/Student Handbook and the individual classroom disclosure in order to successfully support the efforts of the school administration and staff.

Volunteers as Mentors/Helpers “A Position of Trust”

Volunteers who work in a one-to-one relationship with students have a unique opportunity to help these students build feelings of competence and self-esteem, thus creating an environment for enhanced achievement. But with opportunity comes responsibility. As a student begins to realize that there is someone who does care, who takes a personal interest in the individual, that student may show increasing trust in the volunteer. It is essential that nothing happen to damage that trust.

This means that the volunteer must:

- be a role model for the student,
- accept the student as an individual,
- follow through on all promised commitments.

Disclosure of Possible Abuse

In Wisconsin Public Schools, it is a legal obligation to report any suspected case of child abuse. If a child indicates to a volunteer that he/she has been or is the victim of abuse, or if a volunteer has strong suspicions that a student may be an abuse victim, the volunteer must inform either the supervising teacher or the principal.

One of the most difficult things to handle may be when the student who asks the person in whom they have confided to “promise not to tell”. A volunteer cannot make such a promise and should be clear about that to the child. Don’t try to “counsel” the child. Remain merely a sympathetic “listening ear” without being judgmental or trying to offer solutions. Assistance and counseling should come from those professionals with the responsibility and experience to provide it.

Speaking About Confidentiality

Perhaps one of the greatest obstacles in the path of effective use of volunteers, especially parent volunteers, is the worry on the part of teachers and principals regarding the possible misuse of privileged information. Once anyone begins to work in a school setting, he/she becomes privy to knowledge about children’s behavior patterns, academic ability, emotional maturity, relationships with others, etc. In some cases, information of this nature is imparted in order that the volunteer might work more effectively with the child. In other cases, it is simply acquired in the course of frequent contact in the school.

In addition, volunteers are in a position to learn more about staff members than would normally be learned from their “public image.” One also forms personal opinions about the professional competency of the individual teachers and principals.

There is nothing wrong with the volunteer possessing such knowledge and arriving at personal conclusions. This knowledge or these opinions, however, should never be shared in the community or with anyone who has no legitimate need to know. Similarly, care must be taken not to make comments harmful to the reputation of any pupil, professional or other volunteer.

If problems develop, the line of communication regarding a situation in the school is always first with the staff member concerned and then, if necessary, with the principal.

A volunteer has every right to expect that his or her participation will be treated with the same confidentiality and respect.

Cochrane-Fountain City School District respects each student’s right to the confidentiality and privacy of their educational information. Consistent with our commitment and as required by Federal law, we will make every attempt to protect the privacy of student information so that such information is not heard, read or otherwise shared with others for any reason other than to promote the best educational outcomes for our students.

Liability Insurance

Volunteers, when acting in a Board approved activity, are insured under the Self- Insurance Program in the same way as the Board, teachers and all other staff with respect to their actual or alleged negligence or error or omission. However, it is the duty of any person who witnesses any incident which, in today’s litigious society, could become a claim, or receives any word that a claim may be made, to notify the superior in charge without delay. It must then be relayed to the Board so that the Self-Insurance Program will have the opportunity to investigate while it is fresh in everyone’s mind.

Recognition

Volunteering is “the giving of time, energy, and concern. It is an honorable and cherished responsibility of our society.”

- ❖ The Board wishes to thank each and every volunteer for their participation and dedication to the students of the Cochrane-Fountain City School Board. Together we can make each child’s years in the Cochrane-Fountain City School Board a solid foundation upon which to build a lifetime of successful achievement.

Chaperone Responsibility Guide

All Chaperones for the Cochrane-Fountain City School District must have on file a copy of the Chaperone Responsibility Guide. The guide, found at the end of this handbook, may be submitted to the school secretary or supervising teacher. Once submitted, the chaperone will be able to chaperone any school field trips for the remainder of the school year.

School Volunteer Registration Form

All volunteers for the Cochrane-Fountain City School District must have on file a copy of the School Volunteer Registration Form. The form, found at the end of this handbook, may be submitted to the school secretary. Volunteers are to sign in and out in the school office when acting as a volunteer.

COCHRANE-FOUNTAIN CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
CHAPERONE RESPONSIBILITY GUIDE

All student activities shall have an adult as a supervisor. The adult shall be a school district employee or designee by the school principal or superintendent. All student travel and activities shall be approved for travel by the school superintendent or school principal. The chaperone for any student activity shall adhere to the following:

- 1.* The chaperone assumes responsibility for students in their charge at all times. Students shall be supervised at all times and never left alone.
- 2.* Students shall follow all school rules when on travel status.
- 3.* Parent permission forms shall be completed and signed by each student attending an out-of-school activity. The form shall include a medical release responsibility signed by the parent.
- 4.* The chaperone shall insure and enforce student discipline and appropriate behavior at all times.
- 5.* The chaperone shall maintain personal and professional conduct commensurate with the highest ideals of the Cochrane-Fountain City School District.
- 6.* The chaperone shall refrain from all alcohol consumption and not frequent an establishment that serves alcohol when on a school sponsored activity.
- 7.* The chaperone is familiar with all pertinent rules, regulations, policies, and procedures of the school district.
- 8.* The chaperone shall report any infraction of school rules to the supervising teacher or employee at the first opportunity.
- 9.* The chaperone shall have a contingency plan should an unforeseen circumstance be encountered.
- 10.* The chaperone shall have in his/her possession a valid driver's license.
- 11.* Shall adhere to any other duties, pertinent to the activity that may be required.

Signed _____ Date _____

Administrator _____

School Year _____

COCHRANE-FOUNTAIN CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
SCHOOL VOLUNTEER REGISTRATION FORM

Completion of this form is required in order to volunteer in the C-FC School District

Last Name, First Name, Middle Name

Birthdate

Street Address, City, State, Zip

Social Security #

Home or Cell Phone

Work Phone

Email Address

Health Restrictions, if any

Emergency Contact and Phone / _____

Have you ever been convicted of a crime? (circle one) Yes No

I would like to volunteer in the following settings at C-FC and understand that a background check may be required in order to do so. Check the appropriate boxes that apply:

- One on One Small Group Chaperone school-sponsored trip
- Not directly working with students Chaperone school-sponsored activity

AS A VOLUNTEER, I AGREE TO ABIDE BY THE RULES AND POLICIES OF THE COCHRANE-FOUNTAIN CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT AND PUBLIC RECORDS LAWS. I HAVE RECEIVED, READ, AND UNDERSTAND THE VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK, AND I AGREE TO ABIDE ALL PROVISIONS OF THAT RULE, INCLUDING THE REQUIREMENT THAT I MAINTAIN STRICT CONFIDENTIALITY WITH INFORMATION TO WHICH I HAVE ACCESS WHILE PERFORMING MY DUTIES. I ALSO UNDERSTAND THAT ALL PERSONALLY IDENTIFIABLE INFORMATION REGARDING STUDENTS IS CONFIDENTIAL AND THAT I MAY NOT DISCLOSE OR DISCUSS ANY SUCH INFORMATION EXCEPT TO OR WITH THE TEACHER. I HEREBY AUTHORIZE THE COCHRANE-FOUNTAIN CITY SCHOOL BOARD TO UNDERTAKE A BACKGROUND CHECK. MY SIGNATURE ON THIS FORM IS DEEMED TO CONSTITUTE CONSENT AND NOTIFICATION THAT A BACKGROUND CHECK OR SEARCH MAY BE CONDUCTED AS AUTHORIZED ABOVE.

Applicant's Signature

Date

.....
FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Volunteer Placement _____

Date Background Check Completed _____

Comments _____