What did I get myself into?

A Guide to Volunteering at Fall River Elementary School

Presented by the Fall River PTO
Purpose

To provide a reference for volunteers at FRES both inside and outside the classroom on the opportunities, expectations, and community standards that are found here.
General information

- Security information
  - Application process
  - Signing in and out procedures
- Types of opportunities available
- Working with kids
- Details
Keeping our students safe: Step 1

- **Volunteer application**
  - Forms are distributed at the start of the school year.
  - Need to fill out one for each classroom you are planning to volunteer in (duplicate copies ensures that all teachers are aware that you have been approved).
  - Anyone volunteering in the building during the school day for any reason needs to have a form on file.
  - Once your application has been approved by Dr Guthals, you may start volunteering.
  - This year applications also include a section on approval for volunteering through PTO.
  - Applications must be completed each school year.
Keeping our students safe: Step 2

- **Signing in and out**
  - **Sign-in:**
    - Everyone (including preschool volunteers) needs to come to the front office first
    - Fill out the visitor log
    - Get a sticker badge
  - Be sure to **sign out** before you leave as everyone expected to be in the building must be accounted for during safety drills
  - Stay in an **appropriate area** for what you have signed in to volunteer with
  - For liability reasons and to make you a more effective volunteer, please leave other children at home while volunteering
Types of volunteer opportunities

- Classroom volunteering: what are your strengths and preferences?
  - Clerical tasks vs working directly with students
  - Individual student work vs small groups
  - Be sure to let your child’s teacher know what you would prefer: happy volunteers are the most effective volunteers!

- Parents’ Committee for the Arts
  - Acts as a clearinghouse for Specials volunteers.
  - Interest forms were distributed at the beginning of the year.

I like having conversations with kids. Grownups never ask me what my third favorite reptile is.

@simoncholland
PTO-sponsored activities

- Big Book of Jobs
- Less time/labor-intensive opportunities announced on an as-needed basis either by email or on the PTO website or Facebook page
Working with kids

- Discipline—Learn the lingo
  - PBS/ROCKS
  - Kelso’s choices
  - Bucket filling

- Working with kids in general

- Working with your own kid
Discipline/Behavior: PBS/ROCKS

- **Positive Behavior Support**
  - R = Respectful
  - O = Outstanding
  - C = Community
  - K = Kind
  - S = Safety

### Fall River PBS Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classroom</th>
<th>Respecful</th>
<th>Outstanding</th>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Kindness</th>
<th>Safety</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Be kind and cooperate</td>
<td>Stay on task</td>
<td>Listen well and follow directions</td>
<td>Treat others the way you want to be treated</td>
<td>Walk in the classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Share</td>
<td>Try everything</td>
<td>Complete your work</td>
<td></td>
<td>Keep hands, feet &amp; things to yourself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wait your turn</td>
<td>Be an active learner</td>
<td>When you make a mistake, make it right</td>
<td></td>
<td>Use materials properly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use inside voices</td>
<td>Do your best</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sit appropriately in your chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Push in your chair</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discipline/Behavior: Kelso’s Choices

- When a child comes to you to solve their “small problem,” tell them to try one to two of Kelso’s Choices first (9 options). If that doesn’t work, then an adult can intervene.
  - Go to another game (if someone is cheating or not playing fairly).
  - Share and take turns (if you and a friend both want the same toy, pencil, ball, slide...).
  - Apologize (if you hurt someone’s feelings).
  - Ignore (if someone is saying mean words).
  - Tell them to stop (doing what it is that bothers you).
  - Walk away (if someone is being unkind).
  - Wait and cool off (take a deep breath, count to 10, and think about what you need to do next).
  - Talk it out (tell the person using an I-message how you feel and what you would like them to do instead).
  - Make a deal (decide together with the other person what you can do to solve the problem. Example: “Rock, Paper, Scissors”).

- We know it’s a big problem if we feel scared or feel unsafe, or if anyone is physically hit, kicked or hurt. We know to get adult help immediately if we have a big problem.
Discipline/Behavior: Bucket Filling
(or Making the metaphysical concrete)

- The bucket filling philosophy is that everyone carries an invisible bucket that holds our good thoughts and feelings. When our buckets are full, we feel happy, and when our buckets are empty, we feel sad.

- Each of us also has an invisible dipper. When we use that dipper to fill other people's buckets (by saying or doing things that are kind, considerate and respectful), we increase their positive emotions as well as fill our own bucket. But when we use that dipper to dip from other's buckets (by saying or doing things that decrease their positive emotions), we diminish ourselves.

- Even the youngest child understands that actions and words can either fill a bucket or dip into it.
The Bottom Line:

Working with a parent volunteer is a privilege; send a child who is abusing that privilege back to the classroom.
Working with your own kid

- Depending on the activities the teacher has planned, you may not always get to work with your child (although teachers generally try hard to accommodate this).

- Understand that your help might be better used outside the classroom (i.e., in the pod) if your presence is distracting to your child.
What’s in a name?

- Certified staff are referred to by Title and Last Name.
- Classified staff and volunteers may choose to use either their First or Last Name preceded by a Title.
- In the presence of students, parents should refer to teachers and staff by the names that the students are expected to use.
Assorted nuts and bolts
#1 Rule

Volunteering should be enjoyable, and the teacher wants to know if it's not so s/he can help
Student privacy is a priority

- Always maintain student **confidentiality**

- Don’t take or post pictures on social media of other parents’ children without their permission. This includes during field trips, Fox Trot, Carnival, or other large school events.

- Avoid going into the teachers’ lounge, particularly when staff are present
Mind your manners

- Please save parent-teacher conference-type conversations for another time
- Please limit cell phone use
- Use school-appropriate language
- Follow the school dress code
  - T-shirts with obscene or racial comments, spaghetti strap tank tops, spandex shorts, short shorts, midriff shirts, and swimwear are not allowed.
  - Shorts/skirts are to be longer than your fingertips when arms are hanging straight down to your side.
  - Clothing that bares or exposes traditionally private parts of the body including, but not limited to, the stomach, buttocks, back, and breasts may not be worn. No underwear should be showing.
  - Caps/hats should not be worn in the building.
Personal space

- Don’t allow students, including your own, to sit on your lap
- Be mindful of physical interaction with students.
  - Touch should be kept to shoulder or at most a side-to-side hug
  - Should be initiated by the student.
Burning question: What if a child wants to go to the bathroom or get a drink?

- Usually, students should take care of this outside of the time with a volunteer as this time is limited.
- If it’s an emergency, send them back to classroom to get a pass before going (so the teacher is aware of their coming and going).
- Never restrict a student from the bathroom--always err on the side of letting them go.
What about me and my needs?

- Volunteers are permitted to use the “adult only” restrooms in the pods instead of the student restrooms.
- Classroom volunteer supply kits were donated to each teacher at the beginning of the year. These contain a variety of useful tools in one convenient place.
Attendance

- Do your best to arrive on time and let the teacher know if you will be late or need to cancel
- **Email** is generally sufficient for this
- In cases where *immediate communication* is necessary (e.g., field trip chaperone), volunteers should **call the front office**, who can get a message to the teacher quickly
Beware the book binding machine!
(and other cautionary tales)

- Although you may become adept with the paper cutter or the die-cut machine, parent volunteers are not permitted to use the photocopier, riso, or laminator.

- The front office may be able to help with additional resources (including Friday folder fliers or a small number of copies).

- If you’re unsure, ask for help with directions, and let the teacher know if assigned tasks are out of your comfort zone or expertise.
Fall River’s Gordian Knot: Parking

▪ The east side of the north end of our parking lot is reserved for preschool parents only. This is because preschool parents are required to sign their children in and out of school.

▪ Please avoid parking in areas designated for staff (west side).

▪ Both the preschool and staff parking areas are designated by signs.

▪ The best parking spot is on Deerwood or at Stephen Day park, due to our limited parking lot.

▪ During the day, parking is permitted along the north side of the drop-off lane, but be sure to be gone before the end of the school day.
Questions?