

Little Bennett Elementary School Volunteer Guidelines

From what we get, we can make a living; what we give, however, makes a life.
Arthur Ashe

Introduction

The Little Bennett administration and staff are appreciative of all persons who are willing to commit time and energy to making Little Bennett Elementary School an excellent place of learning for all students. It takes many hands to get the myriad of jobs completed each year. WES welcomes volunteers to join in the goal of making our school the best that it can be.

Definition of Terms

The Volunteer Coordinator is the person designated by the PTA and approved by the principal to coordinate the volunteer program, including interviewing when necessary and keeping track of volunteers through a volunteer sign-in log kept in the school office. Volunteers are persons who are willing to donate their time and energies to assist principals, teachers, and other school personnel in implementing various phases of school programs. Non-school age children are infants, toddlers, and preschoolers.

Orientation

At the beginning of each school year the volunteer coordinator will convene an orientation seminar for volunteers. During this orientation, guidelines and established routines will be introduced as well as basic training in the use of various school machines and equipment. Those serving in other specialized academic areas will receive additional orientation as necessary by their respective supervising teachers/staff prior to beginning their volunteer responsibilities. Throughout the year the volunteer coordinator will meet with the volunteers as necessary. Every volunteer must register in the main office upon arrival. When entering the office, the volunteer must register in the Volunteer Sign-in Log maintained at the far left office counter top. The name of the volunteer and the date and time of service should be recorded. A volunteer sticker identifying the volunteer should be picked up and worn during service. At the end of the volunteer time the volunteer should report to the office and sign out.

Volunteer Responsibilities

Volunteers play a key role in the classroom and other school-related activities. Therefore, dependability and promptness are essential. Except in an emergency, volunteers are requested to give at least 24 our notice if they are unable to fulfill their responsibilities. Teachers and other staff will do the same, should their volunteer requirements change.

1. Volunteers shall exercise mature judgment in supervising children and shall in all instances respect each student's rights and privacy. Volunteers should discuss any concerns directly and exclusively with the supervising teacher/staff.
2. Volunteers should be willing to perform a wide range of assigned tasks. This includes activities such as copying, cutting, sorting, collating, laminating, putting up or talking down bulletin boards, and working directly with students. Each of these activities makes a contribution to the school. All are valuable to the teachers, staff, and students.
3. Volunteers are responsible for understanding and using the specific approach demonstrated by the teacher/staff so that the children are dealt with consistently and fundamental concepts are followed.
4. Volunteers should make outside arrangements for child care of non-school age children instead of bringing them to school during volunteer time.

Teachers and Little Bennett Staff

1. In all activities, the volunteer is an extension of the Little Bennett professional staff. Be aware of each student's right to privacy and to ensure confidentiality, share only necessary information.
2. Each faculty and administration will determine how to most effectively use volunteers. In some cases a decision may be made to use volunteers in classrooms other than that of a volunteer's child.
3. Teachers will provide written and/or oral directions for activities they want volunteers to execute. If a volunteer doesn't understand the activity assigned, he/she should ask for a demonstration and/or clarification at an appropriate break.
4. Under no circumstances should ongoing instruction be interrupted. Time on task is a number prerequisite for quality academic performance in a school. One interruption can cause a loss of up to 15 minutes of quality thinking time if you consider the time it takes to build up to a teachable moment.

Parent Volunteering Tips

To insure the most productive and positive experience for classroom volunteers, the following suggestions may be useful.

1. Set up a preliminary conference with your teacher or coordinator to discuss scheduling and duties. Teachers plan around your help so please adhere to the schedule. Call the office in advance if you need to cancel your volunteer time on a particular day.
2. Develop a set routine for receiving assignments, written or verbal. This allows you to begin tasks with a minimum of class disruption.
3. Treat your child as you would every other child in the class. Too much interaction can be disruptive to your child as well as his or hers classmates.
4. Respect that a teacher's desk and closet are private.
5. Never discuss any child's classroom performance or behavior.
6. Save all questions regarding your child's performance or behavior in school for a conference.
7. Make appointments to confer with your child's teacher before or after school, not during your volunteer time.
8. Arrive and leave as scheduled to avoid confusion or disruption.
9. You are not responsible for discipline. Please work closely with your teacher or administrator if discipline issues arise.
10. Teachers, not volunteers, are responsible for communication to parents. If you have an issue, please discuss it with the teacher or administrator. (One exception to this is in the Junior Great Books Program with the question of cost, payment and value of the program.)