



Volunteers at South Oaks School



Welcome from the South Oaks School Staff

We are very appreciative of volunteers' commitment to the children at South Oaks. Volunteers work is an important part of what makes our school a great school.



We know that you may be a parent, friend or relative of children in this school and that makes you a familiar and comfortable adult in our building. We want to welcome you, for you add a great deal to the educational experience of our South Oaks students. This brochure has been created to give you some guidelines and suggestions about your participation. We hope that this information will give you an increased sense of direction as you consider or continue volunteering.

Thank you for your willingness to
serve in the South Oaks School community!

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Goals of the Volunteer Program

The goal of all schools is to provide the best education possible for the children of the community.

Through our volunteer program we aim to:

1. Provide volunteer help to the classroom teacher and the school, in order to better meet the needs of the individual students and the school population in general.
2. Enlist and strengthen the cooperation of parents in the education of their children.
3. Help parents and volunteers become more familiar with the operation of the school and classrooms.
4. Foster strong, positive relationships between the home and school.

How do South Oaks volunteers help?

1. By listening to and encouraging a child as he/she reads, either individually or in small groups.
2. By reading to children.
3. By baking with students.
4. By sharing a craft, skill or some other expertise.
5. By assisting the Public Health Nurse with supervision and by escorting students during immunizations.
6. By assisting the teacher with cutting and pasting.
7. By helping with crafts that require extra hands.
8. By assisting with activity days.
9. By acting as guest speakers in classrooms.
10. By assisting the Parent Council.
11. By assisting with computer activities.
12. By helping with field trips.



Who qualifies as a volunteer?

Parents, grandparents or anyone with an interest in children.



Responsibilities of a Volunteer:

1. To be an encourager.
2. To respect the rights of each child without prejudice.
3. To regard classroom incidents and behaviors with confidentiality. Each volunteer will be expected to sign a Pledge of Confidentiality (see also upcoming section).
4. To fill out **Child Abuse Registry Checks**. These forms need to be completed by all volunteers, including those that accompany students on field trips, serve as volunteer drivers for school events, or work with individual or groups in the school .
5. To treat each child as you would want your child treated by another volunteer.
6. To notify the teacher if you are unable to fulfill a scheduled obligation.

Getting Started

Before starting their first volunteer task, all volunteers are asked to be aware of the following points.

1. Volunteers must complete a Child Abuse Registry Check. This is done once during their period of volunteering at South Oaks School.
2. Upon entering the school, volunteers must go to the main office to get a "Volunteer" badge. This is worn the entire time while volunteering in the building. It is important that staff recognize the adults in the building, and it makes it easier to locate individuals when necessary.
3. To facilitate instruction, and as a courtesy to others, volunteers are asked to turn off cell phones while in the school building.
4. All volunteers must always follow correct fire safety and lockdown procedures, immediately complying with the instructions outlined by the teacher or school staff in the place where the volunteer is working.



Confidentiality

To ensure that students, staff and families feel comfortable, everyone needs 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 school staff.

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

Students come to South Oaks with varying social, behavioural and mental/emotional abilities and needs. It is the school's responsibility to help all children develop to their particular potential, from wherever they are at. As situations sometimes arise, it is not permissible to repeat what is actually confidential information about students.

Sometimes parents ask volunteers questions about how their children behave at school. This is especially likely if the individuals involved are friends outside school. It is inappropriate to put volunteers in this awkward position. Volunteers are requested not to ask or relay such information. If parents have concerns, they are to be encouraged to talk to the relevant teacher.

As individuals volunteer they may also become aware of academic and/or medical information about a child. Such information and observations about students made while working in the school needs to be respected for the sake of all of South Oaks students.

Occasionally when students become comfortable working with volunteers, they decide to share something personal about their home or family lives. This information needs to be kept private, even if the volunteer knows the child and his/her family outside of school.

If a student tells a volunteer something that causes concern, please relate it to the classroom teacher. If volunteers observe something that is troubling, they should tell the classroom teacher. The teachers are in the best position to deal with the issues appropriately.

As a staff, we ask that everyone exercise good judgment as they work and volunteer in South Oaks School.

Tips For Working With Students

- Strive to give each child the best you can and know that other South Oaks volunteers do the same when working with the students.
- Respect other volunteers 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. Wait with questions until there is an appropriate moment.
- Honor scheduled commitments and be on time.
- Find ways to be positive and notice things that are working well.
- Try to make any criticism constructive.
- Encourage the children to do their best.
- Establish a high quality rapport with the children.
- Accept the children as they are.
- Give each child genuine deserved praise.
- Be fair and consistent.
- Assume the role that the teacher has planned for you as a volunteer.
- Refer disciplinary problems to the teacher.
- When working with a child, learn and use his/her name when in conversation.
- Be a good listener.
- Be comfortable with silence.
- Be aware of school and classroom rules and procedures.
- Remember that the commitment of volunteers' time and energy helps to make South Oaks a great place to learn.