



# **VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK**

## **PARENT VOLUNTEER INFORMATION**

Thank you for volunteering at Evergreen Academy Elementary! We sincerely appreciate your participation and involvement with our student activities. We look forward to you enjoying a very positive experience with our students and staff!

Research has shown that parental participation at school directly impacts student achievement and more extensive involvement results in higher levels of student achievement. Building a strong and supportive parent relationship is essential and a hallmark of an Evergreen education.

Evergreen Academy views the relationship between home and school as an essential contributing factor to the positive development and overall success of its students. We provide many opportunities and welcomes parents and family members to become actively involved in any chosen area(s) of interest. These may include:

- ❖ Planning and organizing class and school-wide events
- ❖ Classroom presentations and demonstrations, including but not limited to occupations, art, science, reading, and multi-cultural week
- ❖ Participation in OPT, the Organization of Parents & Teachers
- ❖ Serving as chaperones on field trips
- ❖ Help advertise and support student council events and community outreach programs
- ❖ School beautification projects
- ❖ Promote and support campus leaders' coffees and parent gatherings
- ❖ Managing the uniform exchange
- ❖ School-sponsored family events

### **KEYS TO BUILDING & MAINTAINING A SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIP**

Evergreen Academy appreciates your willingness to be an involved member of our school community and values its parent volunteers. The following guidelines will contribute to a successful partnership.

#### ***What we anticipate from our volunteers:***

- ❖ Be familiar with and follow our school protocols for student safety. Questions regarding school safety protocols should be directed to the leader at your child's campus.
- ❖ Treat all students, members of staff, and parents with respect.
- ❖ Be professional in appearance and conduct. This includes conducting all communications in a professional and respectful manner.
- ❖ Understand that information about students, staff, and school affairs is considered confidential and is not to be discussed with anyone, except with the staff member responsible for coordinating the event. If you have additional concerns that cannot be addressed by that staff member, please bring them to the attention of the campus leader.
- ❖ Provide as much notice as possible if you are going to be absent when you are scheduled to volunteer or participate in a school event.
- ❖ Support Evergreen Academy's school procedures and policies.

***What you can expect from us:***

- ❖ **Information:** We will educate you about our school policies and procedures.
- ❖ **Guidance:** We will provide you with the training and information that you require to do your task, and we will answer your questions in an accurate and timely fashion.
- ❖ **Respect:** We will respectfully listen to your opinions, ideas, and suggestions because you are valued.
- ❖ **Appreciation:** We will thank you each day for your time and valued assistance.

***While interacting with the students, keep in mind the following ways to show you care:***

- ❖ Smile
- ❖ Thumbs up
- ❖ Specific verbal praise

## **VOLUNTEER PROCEDURES**

The welfare and safety of our students are always of paramount importance to us. As such, Evergreen Academy implements safety guidelines that it strictly enforces throughout the school day.

### ***Background Checks***

Evergreen Academy will not, under any circumstances, knowingly become involved with anyone who has been convicted of child abuse or sexual molestation. Our school requires, as part of its pre-volunteer process, that a background check is conducted on all individuals before Evergreen Academy will consider accepting them as a school volunteer and/or field trip volunteer. Please note that all volunteers must be at least 18 years of age.

All parents who volunteer at any campus on a recurring basis (at least once per week) or as a chaperone on a field trip are required to undergo background checks which may include the following, depending on applicable licensing requirements by state and age:

- ❖ Criminal Background Check
- ❖ Suspected Child Abuse Index
- ❖ Fingerprint Clearance (completed where required)

### ***Signing In & Out***

In our efforts to keep our campus safe, it is necessary for us to always be aware of all individuals who are on site and of their whereabouts. We, therefore, require all parent volunteers, visitors, and maintenance workers to report to the office to sign in upon arrival, without exception. All visitors are also required to sign out in the school office at the end of their visit.

### ***Identification***

Upon checking in at the school office, all school volunteers and chaperones must sign in. It is essential for all staff members and students to easily recognize individuals who are authorized to be on the school grounds. After signing-in, all visitors are given a badge which he/she will be required to wear in a visible location on their person while on the campus.

Volunteers must always be under the direct supervision of a teacher/authorized staff member and may never, under any circumstances, be left in charge of a class.

### **STUDENT BEHAVIOR POLICY**

Children find security and direction where there is consistent guidance and routine. It is the role of the volunteer to uphold Evergreen Academy's school guidelines and assist the children in conducting their behavior in a positive manner. Our goal is to teach students to exhibit self-control, while managing their emotions and anger. This can only be accomplished by consistent, firm, and loving methods. No corporal punishment, including but not limited to spanking, hitting, slapping, tapping, and pulling on any part of the body, will be used.

#### ***NEVER interact with a child when you are ANGRY***

If you become angry, upset, or feel that you need to remove yourself from the situation for any other reason, advise the nearest staff member and then remove yourself from the situation. Under NO CIRCUMSTANCES should you touch a child when angry or upset.

Because it is best to avoid interacting with the students when you are highly emotional, you will be excused from the remainder of the activity or event. If you are at the school, return to the office to sign out. If you are on a field trip, discuss options for arranging your return home with the staff member in charge.

### **CHILD ABUSE & SEXUAL MOLESTATION PREVENTION**

All Evergreen school staff members and volunteers share the responsibility for preventing and reporting suspected child abuse and sexual molestation. Abuse can be mental, emotional, physical, or sexual injury to a child. Every parent who regularly volunteers and/or goes on any overnight field trip will be provided with Child Abuse Prevention Training material.

#### ***Molestation Prevention at School***

Evergreen Academy expects all volunteers to limit opportunities for molestation by responding quickly and appropriately to suspicious situations and taking immediate action or filing a report when warranted. Volunteers are expected to adhere to the following guidelines:

- ❖ Volunteers and visitors are never to be left alone with a child; another teacher or adult must be present at all times.
- ❖ Report any misconduct or questionable behavior to the campus leader.
- ❖ Volunteers are prohibited from driving students on field trips or for any other reason, and are prohibited from driving all school vehicles.

## **BATHROOM PROCEDURES**

The following safety precautions are to be adhered to at all times.

### ***Adults:***

- ❖ No adult is permitted to use student designated bathrooms, which are to be used only by Evergreen students.
- ❖ Volunteers and chaperones are prohibited from entering any bathroom with a student.

### ***Elementary Students***

- ❖ Students may buddy up with a partner to use the restroom.
- ❖ If a child needs a change of clothing, please send them directly to the office. The office will either provide a change the clothing or notify the parents, depending upon the circumstance.

### ***Pre-kindergarten Procedure:***

- ❖ When using the outside restrooms, volunteers are to assist an Evergreen fully qualified teacher in counting students upon leaving the classroom and upon returning to the classroom. Volunteers may never be left alone with students per licensing requirements.
- ❖ In the event that a child needs a change of clothing, the volunteer should alert the teacher in the classroom, and the teacher will assist the student with changing clothes.

## **FIELD TRIP PROTOCOLS**

We encourage parent volunteers to chaperone on some field trips. Chaperones should follow all directions given by the teachers, as well as the staff at the field trip venue.

Evergreen Academy school safety protocol should be followed at all times under the direction of the teacher. Elementary students should remain in sight of the group chaperone at all times unless they are using the restroom facilities and then they should go in pairs.

Chaperones will be given a list of the students they are responsible for. Additional information, such as a map of the venue, the trip schedule, time line for lunch and departure, and materials that may enhance the students' learning experience may also be provided by the teachers.

## **THANK YOU**

Thank you for your participation and for reading, understanding, familiarizing yourself with, and agreeing to abide by the procedures outlined in this Volunteer Handbook. We know you are just as committed to the enrichment and safety of our students as we are.

Please detach and return the acknowledgement and waiver on the next page. If you have questions about any of the procedures described above, please contact the leader at your child's campus.

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## VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND WAIVER

1. I have read, understood, and agree to abide by the policies and procedures described in the Evergreen Academy Volunteer Handbook. I further agree to familiarize myself with and adhere to the policies within the Parent/Student Handbook.
2. As a volunteer, I understand that I will not be compensated for any time spent volunteering, nor am I entitled to benefits, including employment insurance benefits upon the termination of my volunteer services.
3. I am aware that participation in volunteer services may require physical activity (e.g., standing, lifting, and carrying) and will require the exercise of reasonable care to avoid injury. I understand that if I am injured during volunteer activities, I am not covered by Evergreen Academy's workers' compensation program. I authorize Evergreen Academy personnel to seek emergency medical treatment on my behalf in case of injury, accident, or illness to me arising from volunteer services. I understand that I will be responsible for medical costs incurred as a result.
4. I understand and acknowledge that certain risks of injury, damage, loss, or other harm are inherent in volunteer services and assume responsibility for any such risks associated with my participation. These risks may include, but are not limited to, accidents, acts of nature, my negligent or intentional acts, or the negligent or the intentional acts of others. I understand that while the Evergreen Academy has taken steps to reduce the chances of these risks, it has no control over most risks and, thus, cannot and does not guarantee the safety of me or my property during my volunteer service, and that I must take reasonable precautions to protect myself and my property. I acknowledge and expressly assume all risks and dangers associated with volunteer services, whether described above, known or unknown, and inherent or otherwise. I take full responsibility for any injury or loss, including death, which I may suffer, arising in whole or in part from my volunteer services.
5. As consideration for volunteering, I (for myself and my assignees, heirs, guardians, and legal representatives) voluntarily waive and release all claims against the Evergreen Academy, its affiliates, officers, directors, employees, volunteers, agents, representatives, successors, and assigns (collectively "the Released Parties"), that are in any way related to or arising from my volunteer services and to the fullest extent permitted by law, including but not limited to, claims for bodily injury, personal injury, emotional distress, property damage, or wrongful death. I hereby agree to indemnify and hold harmless the Released Parties with respect to any claims of injury, death, or other loss or damage to person or property suffered by any person related to or arising from my volunteer services.

I have carefully read this agreement and fully understand its contents. I am aware that this is a release of liability and sign it of my own free will.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Child's Name/Grade (Please Print)

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Child's Name/Grade (Please Print)



