

Welcome to all our Volunteers,

We thank you for being part of our community as volunteers at our school. As Christians we are called to help others and I think helping children is the greatest calling of all.

Beyond the Christian caring you demonstrate by volunteering, other benefits of an effective volunteer program are evident. Volunteers add richness to programs and assist student learning. Volunteers enhance student success and provide added opportunities for special attention. Volunteers demonstrate positive attitudes towards education, which has shown to have a tremendous influence on student achievement.

On behalf of our entire school community, I welcome you to St. Francis of Assisi Academy and hope that you find being a volunteer a rewarding experience.

God bless,

Diana Atkinson

Principal

St. Francis of Assisi Academy

#10 32156 Hwy 552E

Foothills, AB T1S 4Z1

AND NOW THESE THREE REMAIN:

Faith, Hope and Love

BUT THE GREATEST OF THESE IS LOVE.

1 CORINTHIANS 13:13

Saint Francis of Assisi Academy's Volunteer Handbook

Background:

Christ the Redeemer Catholic Schools recognizes and appreciates the many volunteers in our schools as they form an integral part of our school communities. They provide important non-instructional services which assist teachers and staff directly or indirectly in achieving educational objectives. Volunteers are to be encouraged and are to be treated as valuable resources.

Whenever volunteers work directly with students in a variety of capacities, policies and regulations must be in place to best ensure the safety and well-being of students and to facilitate the enhancement of the programs being provided.

A "volunteer" is any individual who without compensation assists in the school or assists students during a school related activity, including a field trip, either in groups or on a one-on-one basis, and includes a volunteer driver that transports students, but does not include a guest speaker, a visitor to the school, a parent/guardian assisting his/her own child, a post-secondary institution practicum student, a School Council member or parent fundraising group acting solely in that capacity, or any district student or employee.

Desired Outcome:

In offering to volunteer in our schools, parents and community members truly provide the students with real life models of service. Volunteers have played a major role in Catholic education since the time when parishioners joined their efforts to establish the first Catholic schools. The tradition of volunteerism has been strong in our schools and each year grows stronger as more people, parents, as well as community members, become involved. Christ the Redeemer Catholic students will be served in a safe, caring and nurturing environment by a committed team of adults who model Catholic values and virtues.

Procedures:

Volunteers

1. Principals shall be responsible for volunteers present in the school or performing volunteer activities for the school while not on school premises. The Principal shall be advised of and approve all volunteer positions in the school.
2. Volunteers shall at all times act in accordance with Division policies and regulations, school policies and rules, and endeavor to conduct themselves in such a manner to be in keeping with the Division's vision, mission and fundamental beliefs.

3. All volunteers shall be required to complete a "***Volunteer Registration Form***" annually and prior to commencing any volunteer activities in the school.
4. All volunteers who are to be assisting with school activities at a school on any given day shall register by signing in at that school office at the beginning of each day or upon their arrival. Schools staff shall be instructed that a volunteer register or log shall be kept and made available to the school Principal at all times. The volunteer register shall contain legible names of the volunteers and their expected location or classroom assignment during the course of their duties during the day. While engaged in volunteer activities, all volunteers shall wear appropriate identification.
5. All volunteers are subject to the direction of the Principal at all times. In appropriate circumstances, the Principal may delegate such authority to a staff member. In the event that there is a conflict between the direction of a staff member and the Principal, the Principal's authority shall prevail.
6. Principals are encouraged to develop processes and procedures that may be unique to their school environments and communicate these to their volunteer communities in a manner befitting the environment.

II Provision of Criminal Declaration, Records and Child Welfare Checks

1. All individuals, including minors under the age of eighteen, assuming volunteer activities with a school, shall be required to advise and declare in writing whether or not they now have or have ever had a criminal record, prior to assuming any volunteer duties regarding:
 - Involvement with sports teams;
 - Overnight field trips
 - Activities involving the supervision of students where Division staff members are not in attendance at all times;
 - Driving students in Division or non-Division owned vehicles.
3. Criminal record checks may also be required at the sole discretion of the Principal or the Superintendent in any circumstances where it is deemed appropriate. Under exceptional circumstances, the Superintendent may waive the requirement for the provision of a criminal record check.
4. In circumstances where a criminal record identifies prior convictions or investigations, the nature and date of the offence/investigation, and any other relevant factors shall be considered by the Principal prior to allowing the individual to assume any volunteer activities on behalf of the school. In circumstances where the Principal requires assistance in making this determination, the Principal shall contact the Superintendent. Where it is determined that circumstances are incompatible with the participation of the volunteer in school activities, the volunteer shall not be

allowed to volunteer. This determination by the Principal, or by the Principal and Superintendent is final. If circumstances are such that a material change occurs, the individual may be reconsidered for a volunteer activity at a later date.

5. If in the course of volunteering with the school, a volunteer is charged with an offence under the Criminal Code of Canada, the volunteer must immediately notify the Principal of all criminal charges laid, excluding minor traffic offences unless the volunteer is engaged in activities involving the use of a motor vehicle. Such events may lead to a suspension of the volunteer's duties until such time as the matter is determined by the courts or otherwise settled.

6. Costs associated with the provision of the criminal record check shall be the responsibility of the school.

III Collection, Use and Disclosure of Volunteer Personal Information

1. All Volunteer Registration forms shall be kept for two years from the date of completion.

2. The volunteer register shall be kept for two years from the date of completion by the school.

3. In the circumstance where an 'incident' occurs during a school activity and which involved, directly or indirectly, a volunteer, the Principal shall supply all relevant documentation to the Superintendent for retention.

4. All criminal record checks shall be provided directly to the Principal in a sealed envelope by the prospective volunteer. Upon being provided to the Principal, the Principal shall review such criminal record checks and thereafter ensure that such records are kept in a secure location within the school, and be available for review by the Principal or the Superintendent.

Under no circumstances shall criminal reference checks be shared with individual school staff members. Where the Principal is responsible for making the determination of whether an individual shall assume volunteer duties, the Principal may discuss the potential role and responsibilities of the volunteer position, but shall not disclose any criminal history of the individual whatsoever.

VOLUNTEER CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

I, _____, agree that I will act at all times to preserve the

(Name of the Volunteer)

confidentiality of all personal information of which I become aware during the course of fulfilling my duties as a volunteer at St. Francis of Assisi Academy.

I further agree that in particular I will preserve the confidentiality of any personal information which I receive with respect to students, parents, staff and administration. I will hold all such information in the strictest of confidence and I shall not use, copy or disclose such information to any other individual within or outside of the district, in whole or in part, in any manner or form, unless I have obtained the permission of the Principal.

Executed and witnessed this _____ day of _____, 201____

Print Name of Volunteer

Signature of Volunteer

Signature of Principal

Our Volunteer Program

Volunteers can help the school in many ways:

- Assisting in the classroom can help the teacher individualize instruction and meet the needs of students in a more effective way.
- There are often materials that need to be prepared for the classroom; volunteers can be of great help in this area.
- Often parents have information or skills that they can share. We are always pleased to have guests in the classroom.
- Field trips are an excellent extension to the curriculum. Volunteer supervisors are absolutely necessary for these events.
- Our library will be a hub of educational activity, once it is set up. Volunteer help makes this area run smoothly so that materials are always available to our students.

All these jobs are important, as are many more. We appreciate the work that you do and hope that you enjoy being an integral part of the St. Francis of Assisi Academy Community.

A Home Away From Home

Coffee and tea are available during breaks from the teacher you have volunteered to assist. We ask that you please refrain from using the staff room during breaks, as we truly respect the staffs' right to a quiet, confidential place to rest. The staff member for whom you are volunteering will determine your workspace.

In the interest of security, please stop at the office every time you are volunteering to sign in and pick up a volunteer badge. When you are leaving be sure to drop off the volunteer badge.

We love all children, however, for the purpose of an effective, uninterrupted learning environment for our students, and from our experience, we ask that preschoolers and strollers not be brought into the classrooms.

Volunteer Code of Ethics

Volunteers are integrated into many parts of our school. This makes it critical for everyone involved to have a clear understanding of school expectations. The following guidelines are provided for this reason:

1. Volunteers shall at all times act in accordance with Division policies and regulations, school policies and rules, and endeavor to conduct themselves in such a manner to be in keeping with the Division's vision, mission and fundamental beliefs.

2. All volunteers shall be required to complete a "Volunteer Application Form" annually and prior to commencing any volunteer activities in the school.
3. Respect the confidentiality of the teacher and the students, and refrain from discussing them outside the school setting.
4. Practice tolerance and understanding towards the children and teachers with whom you come in contact.
5. Be dependable. Follow through on tasks by attending at the times or dates arranged. Inform the school of any absences as far in advance as possible.

Confidentiality:

- Maintaining confidentiality is crucial for everyone working at the school. It is important to remember that children, problems, or responses are not to be shared with the community.
- As a trusted volunteer in our school, confidentiality is the most important aspect of our code of ethics. Please help us to ensure that confidentiality is scrupulously maintained.

Positive Role Modeling:

- Remember that you are a model for problem solving, decision making, showing respect for others and many other processes.
- Children learn from watching others. Letting them see positive, patient people in many different situations helps them to value and apply these qualities.

Please be Reliable:

The teachers and students rely on your support. You are missed when you cannot fulfill your commitment. We do understand that due to unforeseen circumstances it is sometimes impossible for you to attend. If you do know that you cannot come, we would greatly appreciate advance notice so that we can make other arrangements.

Ask Questions If You Are Not Sure:

The teachers select carefully the activities they ask you to do with the children. All of the activities are an integral part of each child's program. This means that it is important to have consistency between activities done with the teacher and those undertaken by volunteers. The best way to ensure this is to ask for and get clarification if you are unsure.

Inform the Teacher:

- Inform the teacher should problems occur while you are volunteering. In some cases, this may mean asking an individual to return to the classroom until you have a chance to talk with the teacher.
- Please arrange an appropriate time to talk with the teacher.

Student Conduct:

- We expect the students to behave in a Christian manner towards each other at all times. We expect children to respect others and others' property, to apply themselves diligently to their schoolwork and to apply the teachings of Jesus in their daily lives.
- Our students are familiar with the school rules. They are good at making decisions and working through problems of many different kinds. All they usually need is a helping hand.

Consistency:

Consistency is an important part of maintaining an effective learning environment. This booklet and discussions with the teacher you assist are strategies we use to facilitate this important consistency. This consistency is also a major factor in whether or not the learners are able to transfer concepts, processes, and strategies from one situation to another.

Active Learning:

The most effective learning occurs through personal experience and active involvement. This means that the learners must be the "doers of the action". They must be the ones to hold the pencil, turn the pages, cut the lines and make the decisions. Please remember that whatever the children can do for themselves they should do, even if it is quicker and easier for an adult to do it.

Language:

- Language is powerful. As a volunteer the type of language you use can serve to encourage student risk-taking and task ownership. It can also serve to undermine confidence and discourage effort. It is very important to be aware of the type of language that will facilitate the former rather than the latter type of student response. This means that what you say and how you say it is critical to maintaining the supportive tone of the learning environment. The tone of the phrases below may help you to get a sense of how to work most effectively with our learners.

- What do you think? What do you usually do?
- Hmmmm, that's a tough one (pause to allow the learner to take the lead)
- How can I help? What would you like me to do?
- Let's see if we can think of how to do this? Any suggestions?
- How do you think we can solve this?
- What's your idea? Can you tell me again?
- Why don't you read it to me? Can you tell me a bit more?

Rules and Decision Making

- Legally, the classroom teacher is responsible for the activities in their area of jurisdiction. Volunteers should not expect to decide without consultation on what they are to do, this is the role of the teacher.
- Good relationships develop over time and with them comes trust. Each of our staff members is an individual and should be treated as such.



FIELD TRIPS

Field Trips are a vital component of the learning process. Some of the expectations we have in this area are as follows:

- As in all volunteer activities, confidentiality is important. Situations involving other people's children should not be shared with the community.
- Punctuality is crucial.
- Be aware of the goals and objectives of the field trip so that you can enhance the children's learning experience.
- You are responsible for the safety and the well-being of the students in your group.
- Discipline and control of the students must be maintained at all times. No matter what the child has done, their dignity is always to be preserved.
- Any incidents must be reported to the teacher promptly. The teacher should handle consequences for inappropriate behavior.

