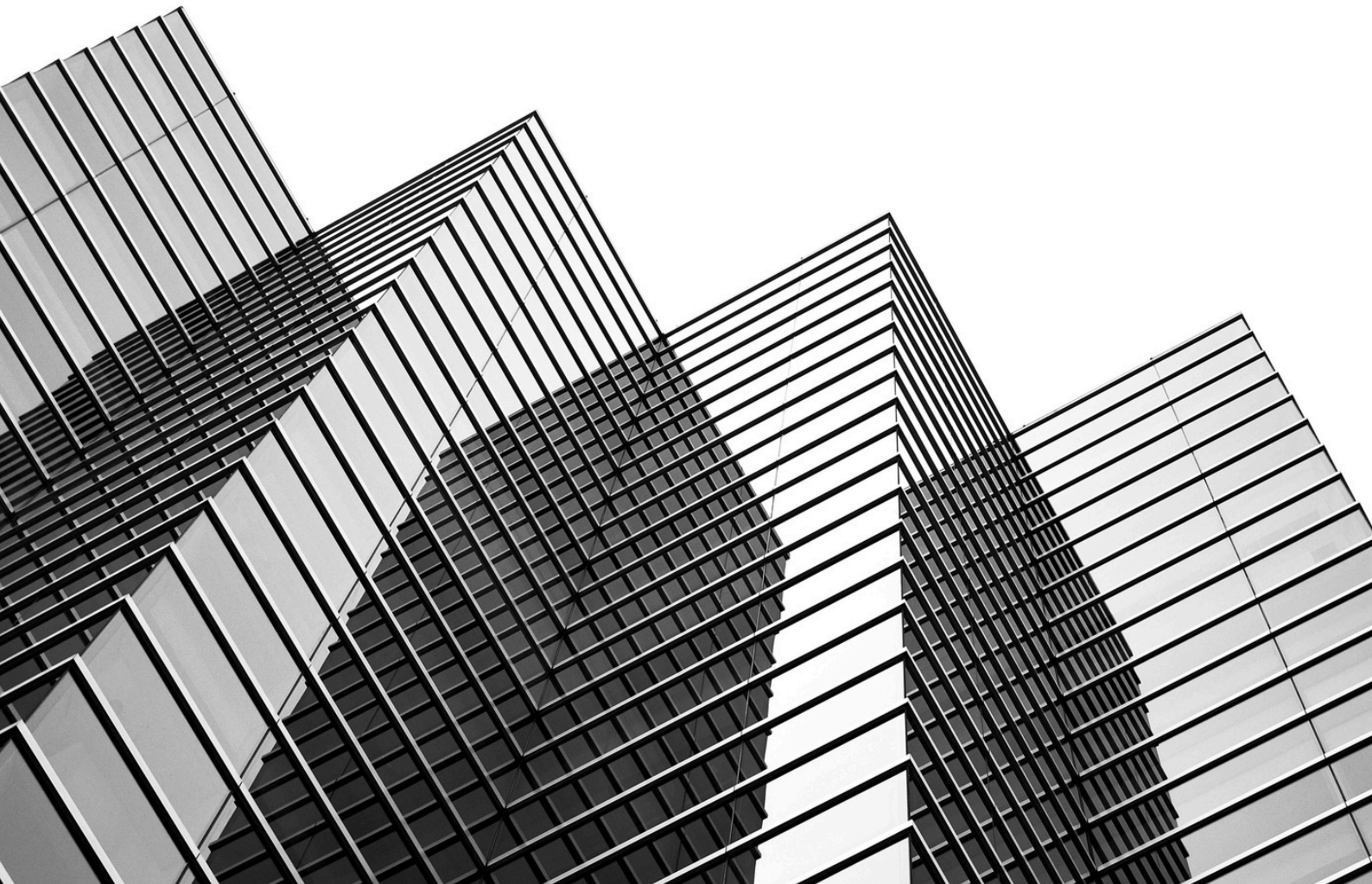




Volunteer Handbook



Thoughts About Volunteering



“The future our schools provide is, in large measure, dependent upon our involvement.” — President Gerald Ford

“Nothing you do for children is ever wasted. They seem not to notice us, hovering, averting our eyes, and they seldom offer thanks, but what we do for them is never wasted.” —Garrison Keillor

“Those who can do. Those who can do more, volunteer.”

“All we can ask in our lives is that perhaps we can make a little difference in someone else’s.” — Lilian Davis

“Doing things for others always pays dividends.” —Claude N. Bristol

“Nobody can do everything, but everyone can do something.”

“The fragrance remains on the hand that gives the rose.”

“What do we live for, if it is not to make life less difficult for each of us?”—George Eliot

“Great opportunities to help others seldom come, but small ones surround us daily.”—Sally Koch

“We make a living by what we do, but we make a life by what we give.”—Winston Churchill

“There is no better investment of time and money than in the life of a child. They are the future.” —Alma Powell

“The miracle is this—the more we share, the more we have.”—Leonard Nimoy

Volunteering Benefits Students

- Increases learning and academic success.
- Shows and tells students that adults consider them important.
- Sets a good example for students about volunteering.
- Adds more eyes and ears to focus on students.

Volunteering Benefits School and School Staff

- Promotes positive partnerships.
- Expands understanding of instruction and learning.
- Builds outside support for schools and education.
- Increases communication and trust with school and families.
- Decreases discipline issues.
- Frees up teacher time for working with students.

Volunteering Benefits Volunteers

- Sparks insight into how schools work.
- Causes a better understanding of students and how they learn.
- Causes a better understanding of educational expectations/standards.
- Builds trust with school staff.
- Lessens communication barriers between home and school.
- Creates a sense of making a difference.
- Increases self-confidence and builds job skills.

**VOLUNTEERS
NEEDED**

Volunteering Comes in Many forms

There are nearly as many ways to volunteer as there are volunteers out there willing to volunteer. More traditional ways include working in the classroom helping with group projects or interventions, putting together resources for the teacher, helping with supervision at an event or during the school day, chaperoning on a field trip, helping out with an evening PTCO sponsored event or with a school/PTCO event during the day.



Some ways you can help at MCAA

- Helping during 9th Block
- Lunch supervision
- Drama—practices, costumes, make-up, set design, performances, transportation
- Music—transportation, supervision, performances
- Art—supervision, showings
- Chaperoning and transportation to field trips
- Chaperoning dances
- Chaperoning club events
- Promotion/graduation
- Music Week
- Senior Showcase
- Membership on Site Council/LCAP; membership in PTCO; membership on CTE Advisory Committee; membership on any site focus group, etc.



Characteristics of Successful Volunteers

- Enjoy students and have patience with young people and adults.
- Take pride in volunteering.
- Exhibit a great sense of humor—at appropriate level for students and appropriate times.
- Show enthusiasm and optimism.
- Follow through and show initiative.
- Respect others and the wide array of school roles and responsibilities others have.
- Learn from others and are open to new ideas and suggestions.
- Understand the importance of being a part of a team.

Basic Requirements to Be a Volunteer

Marysville Joint Unified School District requires all volunteers to have a current TB test and to be fingerprinted through the district office. MCAA has added acknowledgement of this document via a Google Form.

Expectations of an MCAA Volunteer

- Dependability—if you say you are going to be there, be there. If something comes up, please have the courtesy to call ahead.
- Confidentiality—you will be privy to information about both staff and students that must remain on campus. Do not share with others information about students, staff or any others you might learn while volunteering.
- Respectful—treat students, staff and all members of our school community as you would like/expect to be treated.
- A good role model—by displaying respect, courtesy, appropriate language, treatment of others, we show our young adults what is acceptable and the norm.

Volunteering Dos and Don'ts

- Do be positive when dealing with students; sometimes their interactions at school are the only positive ones they receive.
- Do respect teacher schedules—they can't always talk in the middle of class time.
- Do remember you are there for all of the students and don't focus only on your own.
- Do earn and give respect.
- Do be consistent—in your attendance and in your approach.
- Do be proactive. If you aren't enjoying what you are doing, talk with the teacher, office or PTCO to find something that you would enjoy doing.
- Be fair. Treat all students with respect and dignity.
- Refrain from imposing your political or religious views upon students, staff or others.
- Refrain from bringing any children not enrolled in the school during the school day (liability issues), including on field trips.
- Refrain from using your cell phone while in the classroom, unless an emergency arises.
- Refrain from becoming too familiar with students. Never, ever, put yourself in a position where you are alone with a student behind closed doors or in another area that is not visible to passersby.



Safety Precautions for Volunteering with Students

Working with students is rewarding, but as society's expectations have changed over time, professional relationships have been redefined and the protection of persons under 18 years old from abuse and sexual harassment is a critical aspect of court action and case law today. Specific language that will protect individuals is difficult to express because there are so many gray areas. Always err on the side of caution and if you have questions or concerns or need more information, please ask.

Playing it safe: Touching children carries a risk. A volunteer can easily be accused of impropriety or unnecessary physical contact. Being alone with a student can prompt an allegation of intimacy if care is not taken and consequences could include legal action and loss of volunteer privileges.

Exercising good judgment: School volunteers and staff must use good judgment to determine whether or not to touch students and under what conditions. It is important to consider several factors.

Before touching, consider these things—

- Males should consider and monitor their behavior very carefully, as the majority of accusations are leveled against men.
- Some individuals and people from certain cultures are uncomfortable with touch of any kind. If a student indicates discomfort by word or action, you should avoid physical contact, except in cases where touching is necessary for the student's safety.



Confidentiality

Confidentiality is a legal requirement—any information you learn at school about students or adults is confidential. A good rule of thumb is to treat information about others at school in the same way you would want them to handle that information if it was about you or your family and report to a staff member if you see or hear actions that concern you.



Student Photos

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) allows every public school parent the right to prevent photographs at school being taken of students in that family. School staff and volunteers are obligated to abide by the federal law. The easiest way to avoid blurring the lines is not to take pictures of students, unless expressly asked to by the teacher or the administration. Additionally, the advent of social media makes this an even trickier prospect. Please do not post photos of other people's children on Facebook, Instagram, etc. Obviously, taking and posting pictures of your own children is ok, but posting pictures of other children without written permission on file in the office, you could set yourself up for some discomfort with another parent and the possibility of no longer being able to volunteer and/or chaperone. Some families have policies of never posting pictures of their children online.



Preventing harassment, intimidation and bullying

Harassment, intimidation and bullying means any intentional electronic, written, verbal or physical act including but not limited to one shown to be motivated by race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, mental, sensory, or physical disability or other distinguishing characteristics, when the intentional electronic, written, verbal or physical act:

- physically harms a student or damages the student's property; or
- has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's education
- is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, embarrassing or threatening educational environment; or
- has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

This can take many forms including, but not limited to slurs, rumors, name-calling, jokes, innuendoes, demeaning comments, drawings, cartoons, pranks, gestures, and hazing.

Schools are supposed to be safe, nurturing places for adults and students to learn and grow. To safeguard that environment, school staff and volunteers are asked to be aware of and to report any activities that threaten the safety or well-being of others.

Examples of other types of prohibited harassment include written or verbal abuse, slurs, jokes, threats, pranks, or comments that stereotype individuals because of their race, color, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, disability or other legally protected status.

If you believe you or a student have experienced harassment of any kind, immediately report it to site staff or administration.

Some More Information about Confidentiality

Volunteers must protect the teachers' and students' right to privacy. Once a volunteer begins to work in a school setting, (s)he becomes privy to knowledge about children's behavior patterns, academic ability, emotional maturity, relationships with others, etc. In some cases, information of this nature is imparted so that the volunteer can work more effectively with the child. In other cases, it is simply acquired in the course of frequent contact in the school.

In addition, volunteers are in a position to learn more about staff members than would normally be learned from their public image. One also forms personal opinions about the professional competency of individual teachers and staff. Never share knowledge and/or opinions about the professional competency of individual teachers and staff in the community or with anyone who has no legitimate need to know.

Never make comments harmful to the reputation of any pupil, professional or other volunteer. If parents and friends ask about your volunteerism, tell them that you enjoy working with children and discuss the activities you do rather than specific information about the child, the teacher or the school. If problems develop, the line of communication regarding a situation in the school is always first with the staff member concerned and then, if necessary, with the Principal.

To make sure that students, staff and families feel comfortable, we all need 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 staff. It can also harm the good reputation our volunteer parents have earned over the years.

Some More Information about Confidentiality (continued)

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

When parents ask you questions. . . Many parents are tempted to ask you about how their children behave at school. This is especially likely if you are friends outside of school. It is not okay to put volunteers in this awkward position. Don't ask! Don't tell! If parents have concerns, encourage them to talk to the classroom teacher.

When you see or overhear something. . . As a volunteer, you might see or hear things from staff or students which they would not want to have repeated outside the school. What happens in the classroom (or the hall, or the quad) stays at school. If you have concerns about something you see or hear, please talk to the classroom teacher, other trusted staff or to the Principal, if appropriate.

When students tell you about their family, pets, vacation, etc. . . . As students become comfortable working with you, they might decide to share something personal. You need to keep this information private, even if you know the child and their family outside of school.

When you have a concern. . . If a student tells you something that causes you concern, tell the classroom teacher as soon as possible. If you observe something that troubles you, tell the classroom teacher. The teacher is in the best position to deal with the issue appropriately and is a mandated reporter should the issue warrant reporting to CPS (CPS reports should be made on the same day there is a concern, so please do let the teacher know as soon as possible).



Quick Reminders about Volunteering

- Never discuss students with anyone but their teacher or school staff that works with them.
- Always have a positive, interested and friendly attitude with students.
- Always be calm and avoid getting frustrated with students.
- Don't compare your students' work to that of other children in their classroom; every child is different.
- If your child is in the classroom in which you are volunteering, treat all students the same and do not give special treatment to your child.
- If you are volunteering in your child's classroom and this is causing a disturbance and hindrance to the learning of any students, including your own, you will be asked to volunteer in another classroom.
- Laugh with the students, but make sure you never laugh at them.
- Volunteers are encouraged to have a schedule for when they volunteer. They need a clear understanding of responsibilities and tasks. Please ask your classroom teacher(s) for guidance with this.
- We want as many volunteers as possible, but if volunteers break school rules, mistreat students, display inappropriate language or behavior, breach confidentiality, are convicted of a crime, etc., they will be asked not to come back as a volunteer.
- Volunteering is a mutually beneficial privilege. Please do not abuse this privilege.



Quick Field Trip Reminders

Field trips can be especially challenging, considering that students are being taken to an environment they may not be familiar with and teachers are trusting the chaperones to keep a watchful eye over the students. If you are chaperoning a field trip:

- Do not bring any additional children with you or you will not be counted as a chaperone and may jeopardize the entire field trip (we have strict guidelines for chaperone to student ratios and chaperones with non-enrolled children cannot mingle with the student groups in a closed field trip setting).
- Act as an authority figure, because you are.
- Realize that your first responsibility is to help, not to socialize.
- Impart no special favors to any of the students.
- Abide and enforce the parameters set forth by the teacher/advisor.
- Chaperones should refrain from using electronic communication devices while on a field trip, unless an emergency arises. You are there to chaperone, not to be on the phone; think about what you would expect of somebody else watching your child on a school field trip.
- Make sure you have a list of student names for those you are responsible for and an established understanding with them about meeting times, etc. if the field trip is more loosely structured.
- Try to help the students remember that they are representing our school and community and that their behaviors could reflect poorly or positively on the school and on our ability to return to the field trip site/competition/etc.

What Every Parent Should Know (1/3)

Researchers have been studying the effects parent attitudes and actions have on their children's academic success for more than 30 years. The results have been consistent. Anne Henderson and Nancy Berla summed it up in their book *A New Generation of Evidence: The Family is Critical to Student Achievement*, which reviewed the existing research: "When parents are involved in their children's education at home, they do better in school. And when parents are involved in school, children go farther in school and the schools they go to are better."

Much of the information here is taken from publications by Henderson, a consultant at New York University's Institute for Education and Social Policy, and various coauthors that examine parent involvement research; and from publications by Joyce Epstein, director of the National Network of Partnership Schools at Johns Hopkins University; the National Center for Parent Involvement in Education, which Henderson helped found; and summaries of research prepared by the Michigan Department of Education, San Diego Unified School District, and others.

Major Benefits

Research shows that when parents are involved in their children's education, the children are more likely to:

- Earn better grades
- Score higher on tests
- Pass their classes
- Attend school regularly
- Have better social skills
- Show improved behavior
- Be more positive in their attitude toward school
- Complete homework assignments
- Graduate and continue their education.

What Every Parent Should Know (2/3)

More Is Better

Parents can serve many different roles in the educational process: home teachers, advocates for their children, volunteers, fundraisers, boosters. And they can even serve in decision making and oversight roles for the school. The more parents participate in a sustained way at each of these levels, the better for student achievement.

Start Early

When parents get involved early in their children's education, the results are more pronounced and long-lasting.

At All Levels

Studies indicate that parent involvement in education has a positive effect at all grade levels: elementary, middle, and high school.

A Significant Difference

One study found that students from families with above-average parent involvement were 30 percent more successful in school than those with below-average involvement. Success was measured by GPA; test scores in math, science, reading and social studies; promotion and retention rates; and teacher ratings.

Also Significant

Another study found that in schools where teachers reported high levels of outreach to parents, test scores grew at a rate 40 percent higher than in schools that reported low levels of outreach to parents.

Home and School

A three-year study of 12,000 high school students concluded that, "When parents come to school regularly, it reinforces the view in the child's mind that school and home are connected and that school is an integral part of the whole family's life."

What Every Parent Should Know (3/3)

Parents Benefit, Too

When parents become involved in their children's education, the parents are more likely to:

- Be more confident at school
- Be more confident in themselves as parents and their ability to help their children learn
- Be held in higher esteem by teachers and have teachers expect more from their children
- Enroll in continuing education to advance their own schooling

A Final Note

Why should parents get involved? Because involvement can make a dramatic difference for their children.

Why should school administrators encourage involvement? Because it can make a significant difference, both in school atmosphere and in the success rate of students—especially when parents are included as partners in the educational process.

Parent involvement is a powerful tool. Spread the word.

Taken from <https://www.ptotoday.com/pto-today-articles/article/399-involvement-matters-what-to-tell-parents?start=1>





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This handbook includes information from the following sources:

- Hebron Harman Elementary School PTA Parent Volunteer Training, June 2013
- Everett Public Schools Volunteer Handbook
- Cumberland County Volunteer Handbook, June 2012
- Carroll County Public Schools Volunteer Program Handbook 2011-2012
- Central Union School District Volunteer Training, September 2012
- <https://www.ptotoday.com/pto-today-articles/article/399-involvement-matters-what-to-tell-parents?start=1>

