

General John Nixon School

Volunteer Guidelines Summary



Thank you for giving your time as a volunteer at Nixon School. To clarify the guidelines that have been communicated informally in the past, we have prepared this summary of Volunteer Guidelines, following the lead of other schools in Sudbury. This summary is designed to provide a common base of operation for all adults in providing a safe, and respectful educational environment. Please read this information carefully and complete and return the attached form to the front desk.

CONFIDENTIALITY:

- Any and all information pertaining to students and staff are protected by privacy laws. **Volunteers may not discuss information gained by work in the school. (including with neighbors and friends).** Any breach in confidentiality would result in that volunteer not being able to work in the school. The only exception is to report a situation or concern to a staff member on duty, counselor, or principal.

ORDER AND DISCIPLINE:

- All staff and parent volunteers are expected to conduct themselves in such a way that they set a good example for the students. A positive encouraging approach in dealing with students is the norm of this school. Therefore, adults are not permitted to yell at students or in any way demean them through sarcasm or commenting negatively about them.
- School expectations for the cafeteria and recess have been generated by the students and are based upon our Core Values and safety rules.
- Parent volunteers are expected to act immediately on any safety issue that may result in harm to a child.
- If you believe that a child(ren) are violating the expectations of the school, in minor cases you are expected to act on your own (example, children need help taking turns). In any major cases (e.g. argument, fight, injury), you should take immediate action to deescalate the situation and protect children (e.g. have the children sit out on the bench) and locate a staff member to assist.

COMMUNICATION:

- Volunteers should not use their time working in school for mini-conferences with their child's teacher. They also may not use this time to visit the classroom to greet their own child.
- As a volunteer your role is to supervise the Nixon students. Therefore, it is not appropriate to bring younger siblings, talk on the cell phone or chat with other adults on the playground while volunteering. For student safety, adults should be spread out on the playground and not clustered near each other.

CORI CHECKS:

- The State of Massachusetts requires that all volunteers in a school submit their names for a CORI check, a criminal record check. The Superintendent of Schools notifies the principal, if the background of an individual would disqualify them from volunteering.

Your signature below indicates your understanding of and agreement with the above.

PRINT Name: _____ Signature: _____

Child's teacher(s): _____ Date _____



Playground Volunteer Do's and Don'ts

Reliability

- Arrive on time or call ahead if you will be late or absent. Try to find a substitute if you cannot be here for your assigned time. We count on you!

Respecting Children/Confidentiality

- Avoid thinking of children with social challenges as “bad” kids. All children in public schools have a right to be educated in the “least restrictive environment.”
- NEVER discuss children or their behavior with anyone other than to report a situation to the staff member with whom you are supervising. Discussions about a child’s social interactions with friends/neighbors can cause anxiety and is a violation of boundaries. Leave these discussions to the child’s teacher.
- If you have ongoing questions or concerns, speak to the principal or counselor.

Supervision/Focus:

- Spread out on the playground to supervise all areas & continuously move around the playground.
- Watch for warning signs of potential problems, such as loud voices, clusters of children in a circle, crying/sad faces, etc. Go over to see what is happening.
- Actively talk with children, encourage others to include those who are alone, ask them how they can solve the problem, etc.
- Do NOT use your cell phone or chat with other adults.

Safety:

- Approach any adult who is not a staff member or assigned volunteer with a badge and ask how you can help them. No one except staff and assigned volunteers may be on the playground while the children are outside.
- All students must be dismissed from the office. Parents may not pick up their children from the cafeteria or recess in order to ensure that everyone knows where children are.
- Ensure that children ask before going inside to the bathroom or nurse and check in when they return.
- Immediately stop any unsafe behavior in a calm way .

- Retrieve balls that go out of bounds. Do NOT allow children to retrieve them.
- Immediately report all physical altercations or students going to the nurse for accidents or altercations.

Bullyproof the Playground:

- Listen and follow up on each child's complaint. Say "tell me about it" and "what have you tried to work it out?" Do NOT ignore complaints.
- Actively watch for children who may be excluded, alone, etc. Ask for help from children who may be willing to reach out. Reiterate the school rule that everyone must be included.
- Understand that popular seemingly "nice" children can bully and unpopular children with challenges are often bullied. (It is a myth that bullies have low self esteem. Most have high self esteem.)
- Report ALL bullying to staff member immediately. Bullying = intentionally trying to harm AND uneven power.

Teach and Positively Direct:

- Encourage children by telling them what they are doing right (e.g. taking turns, including one another, standing quietly in line).
- Do NOT allow students to have hands on one another, pick one another up, tackle, grab, push or "play fight" even if all kids say they are just having fun. This leads to misunderstanding and is one of the primary causes of real fights. (say "where do our hands belong?")
- Give direction on what they SHOULD do in a calm, firm voice. (say "walk please" if children are running, "hands and feet to self" if physical contact). Avoid telling them what NOT to do (e.g. "Stop running.")
- Ask students if they are following school rules & core values. Ask what the rule is.
- Teach the children the difference between tattling and getting help.
- Speak with children privately when only one or two are misbehaving when possible.
- Invoke peer pressure by talking with group about what is needed, helping each other, and positive and negative consequences. This is much more effective than just telling children yourself.



Group Management 101

Helpful Phrases & Actions for the Cafeteria and Playground

- Gain student attention by clapping rhythmically and have them repeat it. Then stand silently until they are listening.
- Use a loud, firm, yet friendly voice when you need attention in a large group.
- Move near students breaking rule and wait until they comply. Then compliment them.
- Give eye contact and shake your head “no” silently for a minor infraction.
- Ask, “What is the school rule about that?”
- Compliment, “Thank you to those of you who are....” (walking/ keeping your hands to yourselves/etc.). Tell them how what they are doing helps others.
- Give positive forced choices:
 - “You can do what I’ve asked you now or you can visit with Ms. Jay to talk about it.” What do you choose?”
 - “We could line up quietly and get out in a minute, or we can wait until everyone is ready, but that may take several minutes of your recess. What do you choose?”
 - “Can you solve the problem on your own or shall we go talk to Mrs. X about it?”

BELIEVE that children will respect you, expect them to do so, and take positive actions.

Get back up from staff when you feel frustrated or don’t know what to do.