

# Kate M. Smith Elementary School

## Volunteer Handbook



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# **Kate M. Smith Elementary School**

## **Volunteer Handbook**

### **Washington County School District Mission Statement**

The mission of the Washington County Schools is to empower all students to become well educated, productive citizens by providing appropriate, high quality, and rigorous educational programs in a safe learning environment.

### **Parent Involvement Mission Statement**

The mission of the parent Involvement Program is to strengthen family involvement and family empowerment in the school by coordinating and integrating parental involvement strategies with School Improvement, Title I, Title II, Title IV and community involvement

**Due to COVID19 please use caution. Mask are not mandatory at this time, but are highly recommended for the protection of everyone.**

A volunteer is any non-paid individual who gives his/her time to school or school staff member while performing assigned duties. Duties assigned to school volunteers shall be consistent with Florida Statutes and State Board of Education rules.

Volunteering is the giving of time, energy, and concern. It is an honorable and cherished responsibility of our society. We **thank all volunteers** for their participation and dedication to the students of Kate M. Smith Elementary School.

## **Ways That Parents Can Volunteer**

There are many ways parents and/or caregivers are invited to volunteer, some of which include,

- PTO Events/Activities and Volunteer positions
- Helping children in the classroom (e.g. reading, math, art, science,)
- Field Trip Chaperones
- Copying and preparing materials
- Assisting with career talks

## **Background Check**

The state has approved legislation requiring school districts to have volunteers complete a background check if they are working with students. You may report to the district office at 652 Third Street, Chipley, FL for more information. The contact person is Amy Waymire.

## **Sign In & Sign Out (Raptor)**

All volunteers must **sign in** and **out** at the main office. As a safety measure, it allows the school to know who is or who has been in the building or on campus. (Our insurance requires the school to know who is in the building at all times.) Signing in also helps the school to find you if there is an emergency. Lastly, signing “in” and “out” enables us to collect and tabulate volunteer hours necessary for many grant applications. Also, when signing in, please wear your volunteer badge or a visitor’s tag each and every time you visit. This will help everyone, including students, to get to know you more quickly and allows the school to know that you have a reason to be there.

## **Volunteer Role**

A volunteer provides support not only to the students, but also to the teacher, the nature of which is based on the discretion of the teacher for whom you are volunteering. As a parent, you have a unique perspective and ability to understand students. However, as a volunteer, you must act in that capacity first and foremost.

Volunteers must not lend money to students, and shall not indulge the children with gifts, food, or presents.

## **Professionalism**

Although the job is voluntary, the commitment is professional. Besides maintaining an attitude of mutual respect and confidence, you should become familiar with school and classroom policies and practices. Working with the teaching staff requires flexibility and a willingness to follow directions.

Please be on time! Volunteers' timeliness affects a teacher's ability to execute their daily plan.

(Please note: Arrive early for field trips and siblings are not allowed on field trips).

Remember, too, that teacher's desks are private! Please do not go through their papers or files.

## **Dependability**

Students, teachers and staff members rely on the services performed by volunteers. If you are unable to volunteer on your scheduled day, please make every effort to contact the teacher of the school and let us know.

## **Confidentiality**

Volunteers must protect the teachers' and students' right to privacy.

Once a volunteer begins to work in a school setting, he/she 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. Regardless of how a volunteer comes by this type of information and/or develops personal opinions, it is considered privileged and must be kept personal and private. Volunteers should not be present or participate in parent's conferences or team meetings.

### **A volunteer is expected to,**

1. Never share opinions about behavior and/or academic programs of students.
2. Never share personal information about the student or student's family with other people.
3. Never share specific information with a parent about their child based on your classroom experience, whether positive or negative.
4. 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.
5. Never make comments harmful to the reputation of any pupil, professional or other volunteer.

If parents and friends ask about your work, tell them you enjoy working with the 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.

### **Respectful Behavior**

Volunteers are expected to exhibit behavior that is respectful and assumes equality toward members of the same and opposite sex, and all ethnic/racial and religious groups. Volunteers shall not make any comments that can be construed as racist, sexist, or bigoted. Volunteers shall respect cultural differences and attempt to broaden their knowledge and understanding of human relations. Volunteers shall avoid promoting any commercial products, religious doctrines or beliefs, as well as any political candidates (this includes political buttons) or parties.

### **Discipline**

Allow the teachers to discipline children. If there are incidents of misbehavior, it is the teacher's job to deal with them. As a volunteer, it is helpful to be specific about rules and expectations with students. Keep limits and boundaries in place. Consistently and calmly work with students taking a neutral stance, restating rules and expectations and offering reasonable choices.

### **Parking**

Be sure to park in the staff parking lot if parking is available. Please do not park in the bus loading zone or the car pick up loading area.

### **Refrain from Hallway Chatter**

Chatting in the hallway is disruptive to teachers and students. If you need to talk with another parent, it is best to do this quietly near the office.

### **Preschoolers/Siblings**

Please do not bring preschoolers or siblings when you volunteer. Exceptions may be made for classroom parties. Check with your teacher/administrator.

### **Coats/Purses**

Coats, purses, umbrellas, etc. may be kept in the classroom where you are working.

### **Smoking**

There is **NO smoking** on school property.

### **Dogs**

No dogs allowed on campus except for those designated as service animals. Thank you for being respectful of those with allergies, and for helping to keep our play areas clean.

### **Telephone/Cellular Phones**

There are phones in the office and the workroom for emergency and school-related calls. You may ask your teacher if you can use her/his phone when necessary. Please turn off cell phones or place them on silent mode.

**Lost and Found**

The lost and found is located just outside the office.

**Emergency Procedures**

If there is a fire, tornado, “Lock-Down”, drill or emergency exercise of any kind, please follow your class and do as the teacher instructs the students.

**Field Trip Specifics**

Field Trips can be especially challenging. Teachers recommend that volunteers,

- Act as an authority figure.
- Realize your first responsibility is to help, NOT socialize.
- Impart NO special favors.
- Abide and enforce the parameters set forth by the teacher.

**If You Need Help**

If you have questions, concerns, or just want to talk about your volunteer assignment, please talk with your child’s teacher, the staff member you are working with, or an administrator.