



# Shelton Classroom Volunteer Handbook

## Welcome!

If you are reading this handbook, you are about to offer your valuable time to our students and our school. Thank you! The suggestions in this handbook are offered so volunteers feel prepared and their time at Shelton is as successful as possible.

Please take time to review this information, sign the last page and return it to the school.

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## Getting Started:

*How can I help Shelton's teachers?*

- If you like to work with students, you can help in the classroom doing whatever the teacher needs. This can be sitting with a small group of students assisting with an activity, reading with students, working with an individual student or helping revise and correct assignments. Special education, choir, art and ESL teachers can often use help too!
- Teachers also need help with projects like stuffing Friday Folders, cutting materials and assembling handouts.
- You can help organize or volunteer at school events like classroom parties. Emails or flyers are sent home when volunteers are needed for school activities, listing the specific needs.
- You can also help teachers around Shelton in places like the playground, cafeteria, computer lab and media center.

*I'd like to help in the classroom. How do I find out which teachers need help?*

If you would like to work with a specific teacher, feel free to contact that teacher. Some teachers will have a classroom volunteer coordinator (VC) and may refer you to their VC. Others may communicate their needs themselves.

You can also contact the PTSA volunteer chairperson Maggie Bengston ([maggiiebengston@hotmail.com](mailto:maggiiebengston@hotmail.com) / 720-308-9009). Maggie will assist you with finding a good fit for your time and interests.

*I've never volunteered in a classroom so how will I know what I'm supposed to do?*

Each teacher's needs are different. You can discuss your interests and comfort level with specific subjects and tasks with the teacher prior to volunteering to ensure a good fit for you and the teacher.

*For how long / how often would I need to be in the classroom?*

It's up to you and the teacher! Some teachers only need help for an hour and other teachers may need help for a whole morning or an afternoon (2-3 hours). You can come in once a month, once a week, whatever works for you and the teacher.

*How will I know what days/times the teacher needs me?*

The classroom VC and/or the teachers will have a schedule either online or in their classroom, listing the days and times when volunteers are needed.

*I'd like to help in the classroom but don't think I can do so regularly. Can I still help?*

Some teachers prefer consistency, meaning it is best for them to have regular weekly volunteers who are familiar with their needs. However, there still may be opportunities to help even if you can only volunteer occasionally. Check with the teacher and with the PTSA volunteer chairperson.

*My schedule doesn't allow me to be in the classroom during the school day. Is there anything else I can do to help?*

Tons! Some of the project help (cutting things out, assembling, etc) can be done on your own time. That work can be sent to and from home with your Shelton student so you don't even have to be in the building to help.

Some activities take place after school hours so as those activities are planned, you can review the needs and help as your schedule allows. The PTSA often needs help outside of school hours too.

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## **OK, I've Signed Up to Volunteer! What's Next?**

*What do I do when I arrive at Shelton for my volunteer assignment?*

- Please set your cell phone to vibrate.
- Sign in at the front desk and get a name tag. Indicate on the sign-up sheet where in the building you expect to be (teacher's name, media center, etc).

*What do I do when I arrive at the classroom?*

- Enter the room quietly and avoid distracting students and the teacher from whatever activity is taking place.
- Sometimes teachers will have a task ready for you and you can get started right away. Other times teachers may need you to wait for a few moments until they can give you instructions.
- Students may be excited to see you—this is what is so great about being in the classroom but please do not allow your presence to be a disruption!

*The teacher has asked me to correct papers. How do I know what kind of grade to assign?*

The teacher may want you to identify mistakes, add encouraging comments or meet with the student to go over the mistakes instead of you assigning a grade. Ask first to make sure you understand what the teacher expects.

*My child loves it when I am in his/her classroom. Can I work with just my child?*

It is most beneficial to the teacher and students to have volunteers working with all children. Please let your child know in advance that you will be working with all children in the classroom so your child knows what to expect.

*I have an older/younger child who is not a Shelton student. Can I bring my other child with me when I volunteer?*

For general classroom volunteering, it is best to not have other children with you so that you can focus your attention on the students. For school events such as assemblies and parties, other children may be welcome to accompany you. If in doubt, check with the teacher.

*I saw a student acting inappropriately. What should I do?*

Notify the teacher and let the teacher handle the problem. Do not discipline a student.

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## **A Few Last Reminders:**

### ***Confidentiality***

- While volunteering at Shelton, you may witness awkward situations or learn about individual student's special needs or circumstances. Please be respectful of the privacy of all parties involved and do not discuss sensitive information with others. Even an offhand comment can snowball into an unpleasant or hurtful situation.

### ***Reliability***

- If you sign up to volunteer at a specific day/time, please be reliable and show up! If you are unable to make it, please let the teacher or VC know ASAP via email or phone.
- If you decide you are no longer able to volunteer regularly, let the teacher or VC know so he/she can find a replacement.

### ***Classroom Etiquette***

- Please remember that you are entering the teacher's domain and to be respectful of how teachers manage their classroom. They may be using instructional tactics or guiding students to a conclusion that may not be immediately obvious to you.
- To minimize distractions, use a quiet voice when working with students or asking the teacher a question.
- Please be respectful of the teacher's time. Avoid discussing your child's progress or other personal topics when volunteering.
- During a classroom discussion, you may be tempted to throw in an additional comment or clarification—please don't! Let the teacher lead discussions.
- Please refrain from having side conversations with other volunteers while in the classroom. Step outside if you and another volunteer need to have a discussion.

- Dress appropriately—jeans and casual clothing are acceptable for volunteers but shorts, tank tops and any other revealing clothing are inappropriate for a school setting.

### ***Classroom Party Guidelines***

As a classroom volunteer, you may be involved in planning or providing snacks for classroom parties. New guidelines are in place for serving healthier options during all school functions. Please note the following:

- Milk or 100% juice should be the primary beverages served during school events. Soft drinks / soda are not permitted.
- Healthy snacks such as fruit / veggie / cheese trays and whole-grain crackers should make up the majority of the food served (75%). While treats such as cookies, cupcakes, ice cream and candy are permitted, they shouldn't total more than 25% of the food served.

# Shelton Volunteer Confidentiality Statement

***Thank you for your willingness to share your talents and time with children!***

As a volunteer assisting at Shelton Elementary, you have been authorized by the principal to act as a school official subject to the direction and control of the school's administrators and teachers. As a school official, you may under limited circumstances have access to student education records in connection with your authorized duties. Student education records include:

- All records w/ students' names
- Files w/ students' names
- Documents w/ students' names
- Other materials w/ students' names

All information regarding students, families, and staff is strictly confidential. Volunteers will also respect the confidential nature of any verbal or written communication received regarding staff, students, or families.

All volunteers are expected to practice discretion in any verbal communication by not discussing children, staff, or families in front of others.

By signing below, you agree to maintain the confidentiality of all student education records. This means that you agree not to disclose student education records or personally identifiable student information.

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I understand and agree that failure to maintain confidentiality may disqualify me from further service as a Shelton volunteer.

Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

