

Vancouver Public Schools

Imagine what you can learn.

Volunteer Handbook

Make the most of making a difference



Our Mission

Excellence in Education

In partnership with home and community, Vancouver Public Schools provides an innovative learning environment that engages and empowers each student to develop the knowledge and essential skills to become a competent, responsible, and compassionate citizen.

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ABOUT VANCOUVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS:

Approximately 22,000 students attend Vancouver schools in kindergarten through grade 12. Vancouver offers a full range of services with 21 elementary schools, five middle schools, and six high schools including an alternative high school and an arts magnet school for grades 6-12. The district runs an early childhood education program and a regional center for students with severe emotional and behavioral problems. In addition, Family-Community Resource Centers located at Fruit Valley, Hough, Washington and King elementary schools provide academic enrichment opportunities, health and wellness programs and support services for families.

Currently approximately one-half of students in the Vancouver Public Schools qualify to receive assistance through the federal government's free and reduced price lunch program. Twenty of the district's 34 schools qualify as Title I schools because of their high levels of qualifying low-income students - this means that the school receives some additional funding to provide special programming and instruction for it's students. In Vancouver, 32 different languages are spoken by students and over 9% of our students are in the English Language Learner program.

Vancouver Public Schools has approximately 6,000 registered volunteers. With the combination of outstanding teaching and support staff, and community volunteers, we can meet the goals of our Mission Statement.

PATRON TOURS

Throughout the year our superintendent hosts Patron Tours showcasing some of our schools and programs. Come tour Vancouver schools, see what's new, meet our staff, and enjoy a gourmet lunch prepared by our culinary arts students. The tours are free; lunch is \$4. Individuals and groups are welcome. To sign up, call 313-4720.

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Thank you!

Vancouver Public Schools has a proud history built upon community involvement and support. Our school district is recognized as a pacesetter in education. In particular, our mentoring programs and partnerships are models for schools around the world.

In Vancouver schools, we strive to personalize learning for each student. Volunteers are key to our success; teachers cannot do it alone. Mentors and volunteers provide one-on-one and small group instruction that reinforces learning and allows each student to progress at her or his own pace.

Volunteers also are important role models for our youth. Your presence in our schools demonstrates to students that you care, that you want them to succeed, and that you are there to help. You help them build confidence and develop the motivation to learn.

The strength of our school district is due, in large part, to your work as a volunteer. In every act of giving, every tutoring session, and every word of encouragement, you help assure success for each student.

Thank you for your time, your talents, and your caring commitment to our children.

Dr. Steve Webb
Superintendent

Helpful facts to know

We want your volunteer experience in Vancouver Public Schools to be a positive one. Be sure to share with the volunteer coordinator at your school your reasons for volunteering, the choice of age group you would prefer to work with, dates and times you are available, any special skills you have in language, art and other subjects, and any additional area of expertise or relevant previous experience. The more clearly you can define your comfort level and abilities working with students, the more rewarding the experience will be for you.

Understanding school procedures, classroom policies, and expectations is a key element to a satisfying experience. Communication with your assigned teacher and other building staff members is important, too. Be sure to discuss any feelings about the ways in which you are working, an uncomfortable relationship with a student, how best to give staff your feedback on students, any possible changes to your assignment(s), or what your duties will be on days when there is a substitute teacher.

Below are some of the questions most frequently asked by volunteers. Be sure to talk with staff at your selected site about instructions specific to that building.

Where should I park my car?

Each school is different. Ask a staff member at the school where the best place would be for you to park.

What doors do I enter?

In most cases, the unlocked doors are in the very front of the building and closest to the office area.

Can I bring my four-year-old granddaughter with me occasionally?

Unfortunately, no. Everyone's focus needs to be on the students who are enrolled in the school and involved in learning activities.

Do I need to check in somewhere before going to the classroom where I'll be working?

Yes. The visitor check-in is located in the office in most buildings, but there may be a few exceptions. Inquire at your school office.

How should I dress?

Wearing appropriate, practical and comfortable clothing when you volunteer is one way you can be a role model. If you have a question about appropriate dress, feel free to ask a staff member.

Do I need to wear a name tag?

Yes. While on any of our campuses, you are required to wear identification provided by the school. You will need to check with the office staff at your specific site to see where the badges are located.

Where do I put my purse and coat while I am at school?

Please check with the office at your specific site. They will tell you where the best place is for you to store your personal belongings while at school.

What restroom do I use?

Staff will show you where the adult restrooms are located at your specific site.

What about the phone use?

If you carry a cell phone, please turn it off while in the school. There is a phone you can use for outgoing calls. Staff will show you where it is located.

Can I receive phone calls while volunteering at school?

Unfortunately no, except, of course, in case of emergency.

What is the procedure if I am going to be absent or late?

We ask that you inform the school as soon as you know you will be absent or late on a given day. Your specific site will give you the procedure and phone number to call.

Is training offered for volunteers?

Before you begin your volunteer work you will be asked to attend a brief orientation session to acquaint you with the campus, building procedures, and guidelines for volunteers. You should also expect to receive specific training for your volunteer assignment. Periodically throughout the school year, additional trainings may be offered.

Can I stay and eat lunch with the children I tutor?

Yes, but please notify the kitchen staff early in the day if you know you will be staying. Check with the office staff for current lunch prices and menu.

Is it okay to give a child a hug or let a child sit on my lap?

Handshakes, "high fives", or an arm around the shoulder are the only safe and friendly way to touch a child when you are volunteering. For some children, or for some cultures, even these gestures may be unwelcome.

What if I am uncomfortable with the way a child hugs me?

Often, children will come running with outstretched arms to give you a hug. Turn your side to the child and gently guide him or her to your side with your hand placed around the child's shoulder.

Confidentiality is crucial

During your association with the school you may have access to confidential and sensitive information regarding a child, family or staff member. It is very important that this information not be shared with persons outside the school. A misspoken word could cause embarrassment and humiliation. This certainly does not mean you cannot share your own child's accomplishments.

It is important that you maintain confidentiality. Student information in our schools is governed by the "Family Education Rights and Privacy Act" which prohibits information about students being shared without parental consent. Students have the right to privacy and to expect that they can entrust you with private information. As a school volunteer, you are required by law to respect and maintain confidentiality in regard to all personal information obtained regarding the child and his/her family.

Child Abuse, neglect or endangerment

Physical or sexual abuse or child endangerment is a crime. Any volunteer who receives from any source or discovers information about abuse, neglect, sexual harassment, or illegal or dangerous activities should immediately report this information to a staff member.

If the child you work with shares anything of a suspicious nature that may indicate that he or she or another child is being abused or in danger, you must report the information to a staff member as soon as possible.

Suicide

Any information that indicates that a student is thinking about or has attempted suicide must be taken seriously. Confidentiality is not applicable when the student threatens himself, herself, or others. If a child shares information with you that may indicate that he or she may be thinking of attempting suicide, the information must be reported immediately to the building principal. If the information the child shares with you, or any visual evidence indicates that a suicide has been attempted, stay with the child. Such a child should never, in any circumstance, be left alone.

A legal primer

Public schools are governed by state and federal law and district policies. When volunteers work with students and staff in our schools, they also must abide by these directives.

- **Non-discrimination:** No student or staff person should ever be treated differently, spoken to disrespectfully, or denied services on the basis of race, sex, sexual orientation, religion, disability, age, national origin, or marital status. Each student and staff person is to be treated with respect and dignity.
- **Sexual harassment:** No student or staff person should ever be subjected to inappropriate or unwelcome sexual overtures that interfere with the individual's education or work. Examples of prohibited conduct are unwanted name-calling, jokes, touching, or compliments of a sexual nature.
- **Corporal punishment:** Physical, pain-causing punishment is not allowed in our schools. The teacher is responsible for all classroom activities and disciplinary steps.
- **Use of vehicles:** A Volunteer Driver form must be completed before transporting students in your vehicle. Parent volunteer drivers must meet all district policy and regulations regarding transportation to and from school-sponsored activities. This includes meeting all insurance requirements. Students must have written parental permission.
- **Child abuse:** Physical or sexual abuse of a child is a crime. Knowledge that gives rise to suspicion of child abuse must be immediately reported to the teacher or principal.
- **Religious activity:** Public schools must remain neutral in matters of religion. Promoting particular religious beliefs by comments, prayers, actions, or invitations to your place of worship are unconstitutional in a public school. Likewise, being hostile toward particular religious beliefs, or favoring either believers or non-believers is unconstitutional.

It is always in a volunteer's best interest to be within hearing and sight of a district employee at all times.

Fire drills - Fire alarms - bomb threats

All schools are required to conduct fire drills for emergency preparedness.

In most cases:

1. A fire alarm will sound.
2. All students, employees and volunteers will follow the emergency evacuation plan, walking students out of the classroom to the emergency exit.
3. Everyone is to remain outside until notified to return to the building.

Intruder Alert/Lockdown

1. An announcement over the PA system will indicate an intruder alert or lock down. (Note: Lockdowns can last an indeterminate amount of time. Once the doors are locked no persons are allowed to enter or leave until the end of the lockdown.) Please note, there are different levels of lockdowns.
2. All students, employees, volunteers will follow the lockdown plan, usher students into classrooms and lock all doors and windows, pull curtains, close blinds and turn off lights.
3. No one, including volunteers, is to leave or enter the building until an "all clear" announcement is given.

Earthquake

1. If an actual earthquake occurs, no announcement will be made.
2. When you feel the earth shaking, everyone is to "drop, cover and hold."
3. When the shaking has subsided, wait for emergency instructions to leave the building in the regular evacuation route.

In case of emergency

Volunteers are not expected to perform any type of first aid, but occasionally, situations or unexpected medical emergencies happen while you are working with students. Below are a few universal precautions for dealing with illness and injuries at school.

Bleeding and body fluids

Whenever possible, avoid contact with body fluids. For example, have the student hold a cloth and apply pressure to his or her bloody nose or minor cut. In case of a serious injury, if a student cannot care for himself or herself, place a barrier between you and the body fluids. Use disposable gloves any time your hands could come in direct contact with blood, body fluids or body wastes. Call the school nurse or school secretary.

Always wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water immediately after helping an injured student.

Fractures and sprains

Keep the student warm and as comfortable as possible. Do not move him or her unless absolutely necessary. If it is necessary to move the student, give firm and gentle splinting support to the injured area. Call the school nurse or school secretary.

Back and neck injuries

Keep the student lying straight with head in line. Keep the student warm and quiet. **DO NOT MOVE THE STUDENT.** Call the school nurse or school secretary.

Methods for success

Learn names

A student's name is your first contact point. Be sure that you pronounce and spell it correctly. Make sure the student knows your name as well. (Refer to "Working with Cultural Diversity" pg. 20)

Set the climate

By being alert and listening, you will develop sensitivity to the needs of the student. By being friendly and caring, you will be approachable. Your working relationship with each individual student will be your best tutoring tool.

Begin each session with positive comments or questions about the student's family, friends, or activities. Use honest praise whenever possible. Always leave the student with a word of encouragement and praise.

Allow the students to be themselves

Every student is unique. Make each one feel that he or she is an important, special person. Avoid comparing students with others in the school or in their families.

Allow discovery

Allow students time to think about their answers. Guide them by asking questions that will lead to correct responses. Remind the student that everyone makes mistakes....even you. Making mistakes and learning how to correct them is an important part of learning.

Follow the teacher's lead

Keep the students headed in the direction set by the teacher. Hold them to the same class standards of behavior and work. Talk openly and often with the teacher to determine the expectations of your student and yourself as a volunteer.

Remember that the teacher has the final responsibility for all planning, activities and discipline that occurs in the classroom. Discuss specific student concerns with the teacher or principal, but keep all confidential information about students within the school.

Be a positive role model

Keep your commitment. Children will expect you and look forward to you coming. If you know you will be gone, tell them in advance. Keep all promises, and make none that you cannot keep. Children never forget! In case of unavoidable absence, a call in advance will allow the teacher to make other plans and to reassure students.

Students' learning styles

Every person has a tendency to acquire skills or learn in a certain way. Even within a family, one child might learn best by doing while another learns best by hearing. Tutors can be more effective if they are aware of a child's individual learning style. When a student does not understand a concept through one learning style, another can be used.

For example, if a student struggles to understand material written on the board or in a book, then oral presentation may be more effective. Development of many learning styles gives students a better chance to learn.

Research shows that approximately 30% of elementary school-age children learn best through seeing, 25% learn best by hearing, and 15% learn best by touching and doing. The remaining 30% learn equally well by each method. It is estimated that 80% of material presented to school-age children is visual.

Visual Learners

Visual learners learn best by seeing information. Directions and assignments should be written. Presenting material through graphs, charts, outlines, and notes is most effective for these students. Any oral instructions should be presented in short, clear sentences. Recall, for these students, is strengthened through the practice of writing and outlining the subject material.

Auditory learners

Auditory learners learn best by hearing the information. Questions and directions should be given orally. Discussing material works best with these students. The more they hear the material, the more recall is possible. Tapes, CDs and lectures greatly benefit auditory learners.

Tactile learners

Tactile learners learn best through hands-on-activities. Task cards, computers, and math manipulatives provide effective methods.

Kinesthetic learners

Kinesthetic learners learn best by experiencing information. Methods of presentation include acting, building, interviewing, role-playing, and observing.

Tips for understanding elementary-age students

Children entering elementary school have different levels of social and intellectual development. Students at the elementary level need adult approval and encouragement in all of their efforts. Because some students have had fewer opportunities to develop language skills and relationships with adults, their needs for conversation and interaction are significant. Social skills are still developing and guidelines for appropriate behaviors are important skills they need to practice.

Adults working with children can be an important part of their learning simply by modeling appropriate behavior. Patience and reassurance are important qualities to display for our youngest learners.

Five-year-olds:

- Show increased willingness to cooperate and prefer cooperative play
- Are increasingly social and talkative
- Are developing a sense of fairness
- Are learning to respect the property of friends
- Usually have a strong desire to please parents and other adults
- Are eager to make friends and may pick a "best" friend

Six-year-olds:

- Are becoming more socially independent and choose their own friends
- Are egocentric but becoming interested in group activities
- May still have a hard time waiting and taking turns
- Tattle often to check sense of right and wrong
- Are full of energy and ready for new challenges
- Want all of everything, so making choices may be difficult

Seven-year-olds:

- Want and need approval of adults and peers
- Can be very conscientious and strive to please adults
- Can be sensitive and get feelings hurt by criticism
- Like to spend time alone or watching in the background
- May sometimes feel that everyone is against them

Eight-year-olds:

- Show spirit; are generally willing to try just about anything
- May turn to tears and self-criticism upon failure but usually recover quickly
- Usually get along well with others
- Choose companions of the same sex and age
- Are very sensitive to what others think
- Want to look like and act like peers
- Choose a "best" friend, but may change friends often
- Enjoy group activities in organizations and in own secret clubs

Nine-year-olds:

- Worry and complain a lot
- Have definite likes and dislikes
- Begin a new drive for independence and resent being "bossed" by parents
- Know right from wrong. They will accept blame when necessary but may offer excuses
- Show increased interest in friends and decreased interest in family
- Are interested in group activities and concerns

Ten-year-olds:

- Generally like people and are liked by others
- Like to accept responsibility and try to do things well
- Like to praise and offer encouragement
- Still have a strong group spirit, but it may start to diminish
- May begin to show more loyalty to a best friend than to a group; this is especially true of girls
- May enjoy being part of a team

"At Risk" students – students needing additional support
Research shows that many students who are going to have problems in school can be identified when they are in second, third, or fourth grade. They are generally behind the other students in math, reading, or science. Many have trouble dealing with interpersonal relationships. Tutors can provide the one-to-one support and caring which is needed to help these students succeed.

How to impact secondary students

Middle school students

Children undergo more rapid and profound personal changes between ages 10 and 15 than any other time in their lives. These developmental processes often pose challenges for the adults responsible for guiding and educating the middle school youngster. However, we must be cautious not to make generalizations about all middle school students. No two develop socially, emotionally, intellectually or physically at the same rate. Physical growth becomes most evident during these years, but development in the other areas is dramatic as well, shifting from concrete thinking to abstract, increased emphasis on personal grooming, strong desire for peer acceptance, and the search for personal identity. The adults in these children's lives must act as mentors who recognize each stage of development and help them make wise decisions.

11-to-13-year-olds

- Are less self-centered
- May express great enthusiasm
- May show more tact, especially with friends
- Can be patient and friendly with smaller children
- May become moody or may show signs of emotional turmoil if puberty has begun
- Have a strong desire to conform to peers' ways of dressing and behaving

High school students

The transition to high school can be very difficult for some students. At this stage, the game changes considerably. Grades, credits earned, and test scores all become part of a student's permanent record. Students begin making decisions regarding careers and post-secondary education. For some, high school can be a very stressful time. High school students find a great deal more independence, but with it come more responsibility for choices and decisions. They still need guidance and mentoring to help them make wise decisions. Adults can still play significant roles in their development. For some, academic achievement is extremely difficult and requires lots of extended learning opportunities. For others, academic achievement is not nearly as difficult, but they need lots of advice and guidance surrounding peer acceptance, counseling, and post-secondary education plans. It is critical that adults recognize these needs.

14-to 18-year-olds

- Strive to establish a sense of personal identity
- May become preoccupied with self-doubt
- May feel lonely or isolated
- May have dramatic mood swings
- May seek to assert independence and autonomy while fighting feelings of insecurity
- May judge self according to perceived opinions of others
- Seek independence from parents; some conflict may result, but overall relationship with parents is likely to be positive.
- Seek emotional support which may come from parents or peers
- May show tendency to conform to peers in early teen years but later may be able to resist peer pressure
- Learn to interact with an increasing number of people from home, school, and community
- Are capable of forming close relationships with peers of either sex

Words of encouragement for students of all ages

1. I knew you could do it.
2. You've just about got it.
3. You did it that time.
4. You're doing fine.
5. I'm very proud of you.
6. You're learning fast.
7. You are one outstanding worker!
8. Clever
9. You're working hard today.
10. You figured that out fast.
11. It's a pleasure to teach you.
12. You did a lot of work.
13. I think you've got it.
14. You are learning a lot.
15. That's the way to do it.
16. You make it look easy.
17. That's better than ever.
18. Good remembering.
19. You've been practicing.
20. Now you've got it.
21. I've never seen it done better.
22. Be proud of your good work.
23. I couldn't have done it better.
24. Good for you.
25. Much better.
26. That's the way.
27. That's it!
28. Keep trying.
29. Way to go!
30. Tremendous!
31. Perfect!
32. Nice going.
33. Good work!
34. I like that.
35. Marvelous!
36. Good going.
37. Fine job.
38. Keep it up.
39. Fantastic!
40. Very good!

Working with culturally diverse students

As a volunteer in Vancouver Public Schools, it is important to develop a respect and an appreciation of the diverse cultures and backgrounds of the students. Some strategies for making instruction responsive to the ethnic/cultural backgrounds of students include:

- Use correct pronunciation of students' names. If you are not sure of the pronunciation say "would you pronounce your name for me?" Avoid comments which label the name as "strange" or "funny." Don't shorten a student's name or give him or her a nickname.
- Be aware that you may represent a different culture and authority and that may be threatening to some students. Avoid judgments and let the students know that you value them.
- Be aware and respect that cultural differences may affect student behavior, attendance, health, and acceptance of tutor assistance.
- Respect every student and speak respectfully of all racial, ethnic, cultural, and religious groups.
- Use correct ethnicity or racial identity. If you are not sure, ask "What is your heritage?" Do not guess or assume. We want to develop each student's pride in his or her racial or ethnic heritage and promote acceptance and understanding of all.

Students with special needs

The English Language Learner

The English Language Learner is a student who is learning English in addition to his or her native language. Tutors of English Language Learners help students acquire English skills while studying specific subject areas.

When teaching the English language, you will be given materials developed for the appropriate level of the individual student. Remember that you are working in the student's second language. When helping the student in any subject matter, use the following guidelines:

- Speak clearly and naturally
- Avoid talking too quickly
- Focus on communication, not on grammar
- Use gestures, facial expressions, and a variety of visual aids
- Avoid the use of idioms and slang
- Be patient and help the student to be patient

Special education

Special education is a service or set of services, not a place. It is defined in the federal regulations as "specially designed instruction." This specially designed instruction must be provided in the environment which meets the individual needs of the student.

In order to receive special education services, students are referred to a Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) within the school for evaluation. After the evaluation is completed, the MDT then determines whether the student should receive special education services. The special education program serves students between birth and 21 years of age.

Since the abilities of children vary considerably, special education students may spend as little as 30 minutes per week in specially designed instruction or be referred to a more specialized program. The names and scope of work with special education students, as with all students you may work with, is confidential.

Education jargon translated

"Educationese" seems to be a language all to its own, foreign to those who don't speak it every day. This list is intended to help you translate the jargon you're likely to hear as you volunteer in our schools.

Building Blocks of Reading - Research from the National Reading Report has identified five areas as a focus of reading instruction. These areas are Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Fluency, Vocabulary, and Comprehension.

EALR - Essential Academic Learning Requirements. The broad, qualitative statements describing the most important and fundamental skills, knowledge and processes that students in the state of Washington will learn through mastery of Grade Level Expectations.

ELL - English Language Learner, a formal way of describing students whose primary home language is not English.

ESD - Educational Service District, one of nine regional offices of the OSPI that provide services to school districts. Our regional office is ESD 112.

ESEA - Elementary & Secondary Education Act. This is the No Child Left Behind legislation which ties student progress to school funding.

Harcourt Trophies - A comprehensive research-based reading curriculum that is used in grades two through five in three of our district elementary schools that received Reading First funding.

Houghton Mifflin Reading 2005 - A comprehensive research-based reading curriculum used grades two through five.

GLE - Grade Level Expectations are the specific description of the level of expected learning for each grade in each area of the curriculum.

IEP - The Individual Education Program, required by federal law, is a written plan of instruction for each child receiving special education services.

LAP - Learning Assistance Program, a state-funded program to help students who need additional assistance in math and reading.

Learning Support - Academic classes that provide academic support for students with an IEP.

Life Skills - Classes to serve students with significant development delays within a self-contained environment.

Math Central - The mathematics program adopted by Vancouver Public Schools for elementary students.

MAP - Measures of Academic Progress is a nationally norm-referenced assessment in areas of mathematics and reading given to all students in grades 4 through 9. This assessment is a good indicator of growth in learning over time.

OSPI - Washington State's Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, usually called the State Department of Education in other states. The state superintendent of schools (often called the SPI), a statewide elected position, oversees this state agency which administers laws, rules and regulations concerning K-12 public education. For more information on OSPI see their web site at www.k12.wa.us.

Personalized Learning - Focused instruction to meet student needs in individual, small group, and whole group settings based on results of regular assessments for learning.

RCW - Revised Code of Washington, the state laws which govern education.

Read Well - A research-based reading curriculum for grades K & 1.

Schoolwide - When a school has at least 50 percent of children on free or reduced priced lunch, it is eligible for Schoolwide Title I funding. Instead of federal Title I money being earmarked only for children with demonstrated needs in reading or math, it can be used to serve all students in the identified school.

SDI - Specially Designed Instruction, for special education students with an IEP.

Six-Trait Writing - a method of both teaching and assessing writing which breaks the writing process into six traits: ideas and development, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, and conventions (grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization and paragraphing).

SLC - Structured Learning Center, a special education program that serves students with serious behavioral disabilities.

SIP - School Improvement Plan. As part of Washington's education reform efforts, schools are encouraged to create school improvement plans for raising student achievement. These improvement plans use assessment data to identify strengths and weaknesses, helping schools set goals and priorities. The plans are updated yearly by administrators and teachers with community input.

Title I - A federal program that targets students who need additional assistance in reading or math.

Title III - A federal grant funding the program for second language learners.

HSPE (High School Proficiency Exam) and MSP (Measure of Student Progress) grades 3-8, are new tests developed under Washington's school improvement effort. The tests measure students' progress on state standards in reading, writing, listening, mathematics and science. High school students must pass the reading and writing HSPE in order to graduate.

VOLUNTEER EXPECTATION AGREEMENT

Thank you for your interest in volunteering in Vancouver Public Schools. This information is provided for your safety as well as for the protection of the children with whom you will be working. Please review it carefully and ask any questions that may arise. We want the time you spend volunteering in a Vancouver school to be a positive experience for all.

Relationships For the protection of all, the relationship between you and all students you with whom volunteer must be kept appropriate at all times. Continuing your volunteer relationship through out-of-school contact, such as phone calls, home visits, or invitations to your home, social events, office, vehicle, or activities is not permitted without a specific directive from a teacher and/or prior written parental permission. This prohibition, of course, would not restrict out-of-school contact with students who are family friends or known to you through other community contacts.

Appropriate touching Handshakes, "high five's", an arm or hug around a shoulder are the only safe and friendly ways to touch a child when you are volunteering. For some children, or for some cultures, even these gestures may be unwelcome. No child should be subject to unwelcome touching no matter how well intended. If a child ever inappropriately touches you, please inform a staff member right away.

Communication You are a role model. Your conversations with students and staff should demonstrate respect for others and avoid language that may be perceived as discriminatory, profane, sexist, or offensive. No student or staff person should ever be treated differently, spoken to disrespectfully or denied services on the basis of race, religion, disability, age, national origin, or marital status. In addition, school personnel or volunteers cannot encourage or promote religious beliefs by class activities, comments or invitations to their place of worship.

Confidentiality As a volunteer, you must respect and maintain confidentiality in regard to personal information obtained regarding a child or his/her family with certain exceptions. Reasonable suspicion of abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, illegal or dangerous activities should be shared with staff. Be assured they will follow up on the information.

Discipline Any discipline of a student should be left up to a staff member. Physical punishment is never permitted.

School safety plan In the event of an emergency while you are on site (fire, earthquake etc.) you need to be familiar with the Safety Plan of the building in which you volunteer. Each school will provide their Safety Plan to volunteers at orientation and training sessions.

Check in/out All visitors, including volunteers, are required to sign in at the main office in the school and wear an identification badge while on campus.

Volunteer orientation & training All volunteers will receive orientation to general building procedures, including an understanding of school policies, rules, and expectations; a tour of the campus; and instructions on what to do in the event of an emergency while you are on site. Specific training for the program you will be working in and instructions on how you will communicate with the assigned staff member should also be provided.

One hundred years from now,
It will not matter what kind of car I
drove,
What kind of house I lived in,
How much money I had in my bank
account,
Nor what my clothes looked like.
But the world may be a little better
Because I was important in the life of
a child.

For easy reference

School _____

Principal _____

Office Phone _____

Volunteer Coordinator

Coordinator's phone _____

Day(s) and time(s) I volunteer

Monday _____ Teacher _____ Rm _____

Tuesday _____ Teacher _____ Rm _____

Wednesday _____ Teacher _____ Rm _____

Thursday _____ Teacher _____ Rm _____

Friday _____ Teacher _____ Rm _____

For further information, contact the
Communications Office
Vancouver Public Schools
360.313.4720