



“Climbing Towards College & Career Readiness”

Parent Volunteer Handbook

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Inspiring Collaboration, Innovation, & Empowerment

Parent Volunteer Handbook

Welcome to Ararat Charter School! We are thankful that you have chosen to volunteer your services to our students. With the support of volunteers such as yourself, the opportunity to meet the individual needs of each child is greatly increased.

The Ararat Charter School Staff encourages parents/guardians and other members of the community to share their time, and abilities with our students. Community volunteers in our school enrich the educational program and strengthen our school's relationship with homes, businesses, public agencies and private institutions.

The education of the youth of today takes a whole community. Caring members of our community bring new energies and resources into our schools. All over the country schools are drawing support from their communities through the efforts of volunteers who work in our schools, become career mentors, contribute goods and supplies, and those that support our schools financially through endowments and grants.

This handbook is designed to provide you with practical information that will assist you in your volunteer placement. It is our goal that the time you spend with our students is worthwhile for you as well as the students. If you have any questions that have not been addressed in this handbook, please feel free to call Ararat Charter School or seek out a member of our school staff.

Once again, thank you for helping make a difference in the lives of students at Ararat Charter School.

Sincerely,



Eddie Villela
Principal

REQUIREMENTS

- Obtain a TB test – with no exception
- Obtain a DOJ clearance – if asked by the school

SUGGESTIONS FOR STARTING YOUR VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

The following are suggestions that should prove helpful in developing a successful partnership with our students and teachers:

- 1. Meet with the teacher or staff member before you start**
 - a. Go over “Initial Checklist”
 - b. Ask questions of the teacher if you are unclear about something
 - c. Keep communication open

- 2. Get to know the school grounds**
 - a. Know the location and phone number of the school office
 - b. Know the location of important rooms such as the library, cafeteria, office, bathrooms, etc.
 - c. Find out where to park

- 3. If you are volunteering in a classroom, spend some time observing the class**
 - a. Become familiar with classroom procedures and routines
 - b. Identify the location of supplies in the classroom

- 4. Establish positive relationship with the students**
 - a. Be friendly; let them know you are glad to be there!
 - b. Be encouraging to students

When working with an individual student:

- a. Let the student know that you care about their thoughts and ideas
- b. Accept the student for who he or she is... don't try to make them into something they are not
- c. Be encouraging
- d. Recognize and praise effort as well as products

When working with groups of students (small or large groups):

- a. Find out specifically what the teacher wants you to work on
- b. Indicate to the children how you would like to be addressed. The teacher may have preferences in this area.
- c. Discuss with the teacher ahead of time what classroom management techniques you should be using (if there is a need for discipline, find out how the teacher wants to handle this)
- d. Encourage all the students you work with, not just the ones with the correct answer
- e. Give each student the opportunity to answer.... Don't allow other students to jump in and answer
- f. Let the children and yourself enjoy the time you spend together!

LEARNING STYLES

Not everyone learns in the same way. Your learning style is the way you learn best. Most people use all of/ most of their senses when learning, however, one sense generally dominates. Here are some descriptions and suggestions that may be helpful when working with students:

Auditory Learners

- a. They learn best through verbal demonstrations
- b. They prefer to talk about a situation and enjoy listening to themselves talk
- c. Read instructions aloud to these learners
- d. Have them repeat instructions to you
- e. If the student is having difficulty understanding, rephrase instructions

Visual Learners

- a. They learn best by observing
- b. They prefer to watch demonstrations
- c. They like to write, doodle, and study their environment
- d. Keep a copy of the written instructions, charts, etc. in front of these learners
- e. Use visual cues for references (maps, charts, pictures)
- f. Try having students draw or write problems on paper
- g. Encourage students to use a homework notebook to remember assignments

Tactile Learners

- a. They learn best by doing
- b. They remember best by what they did, not by what they saw or heard
- c. They need many breaks when studying and are easily distracted when they are not able to move
- d. Have students use manipulatives when possible, such as money or blocks with math problems

CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILDREN AGES 5-8 YEARS

Physical Characteristics

- a. Full of energy
- b. Tire easily
- c. Aware of physical limitations
- d. Increasing fine motor skills (using scissors, writing, etc.)
- e. Proud of accomplishments

Self-Image

- a. Self-image based mostly on what they think others think of them.
- b. Proud of their own accomplishments
- c. Eager to please adults they admire
- d. Becoming more independent of home and parents
- e. Thrive from positive reinforcement about specific things

Relationships with Others

- a. Try out new ways of getting along with others
- b. Imitate adults in attitudes and actions
- c. Sensitive about feelings, their own and others
- d. Aware of individual differences in physical appearance
- e. Still seek acceptance and encouragement from parents and teachers
- f. Beginning to develop a sense of right and wrong

Interest in Learning:

- a. Beginning to draw conclusions from practical experience
- b. Still have private worlds of fantasy and wonder
- c. Eager to learn
- d. May surprise adults at times with their insight
- e. Eager to try new activities but frustrated by attempting things beyond their capabilities

CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILDREN AGED 8-12 YEARS

Physical Development:

- a. Growing steadily; physically active
- b. Differ widely in physical maturity
- c. May be maturing sexually and having questions about their bodies
- d. Becoming increasingly interested in improving personal appearance

Self-Image:

- a. Becoming more independent of adults
- b. Often frustrated when they do not measure up to their own expectations or those of others
- c. Want to make their own decisions
- d. Often mention what they would like to be when they grow up
- e. Want tasks to perform; want to be useful

Relationship with Others:

- a. May be aware of the opposite gender but unsure of relationship; teasing often denotes attraction to opposite sex
- b. Have increased concern about right/wrong (example: lying, cheating)
- c. Developing more responsibility for forming and keeping friendships
- d. Interested and informed about people around the world

- e. Values of peer group generally accepted over those of adults

Interest in Learning:

- a. Developing longer attention span
- b. Interested in current events
- c. Increased skills in reading and expressing ideas in writing
- d. Learning to think abstractly
- e. Often try to be perfectionists which can result in frustration

CONFIDENTIALITY

You will be serving in a unique capacity with our students. Sometimes students share things with a volunteer that they have not shared with anyone else. This information may be about private family matters, or information about themselves that they are entrusting to you. It is very important to the integrity of your work with students that you do not share this information with others. If you feel it is important that another person have this information, please talk to the teacher or the principal.

There may also be a time when a student shares something with you that causes you some concern, such as concern about their personal safety. If this should be the case, please immediately contact the classroom teacher or principal. That person will know the proper procedure to deal with this situation.

Most people do not want anyone saying anything about their child. Please respect student and parent rights. If anything happens in the classroom, it is the teacher's responsibility to contact the parent.

Please remember that volunteering to work in the classroom is a privilege – not a right. Violations of confidentiality may cause school authorities to suspend that privilege.

EXPECTATIONS OF PARENT VOLUNTEERS

1. Please dress appropriately for working with children.
2. Volunteers may not “discipline” another parent’s student.
 - a. If a situation occurs between two children while at home, please talk with the parent or child while at home. Rules for adults are quite different when on school grounds.
 - b. If a situation between two children occurs at school – whether it involves your child or other children, please notify the teacher and let the school officials take care of the discipline.
3. If you cannot make the pre-arranged time, please let the teacher know as soon as possible so lesson plans can be changed.
4. Please do not just drop in to offer help unless the teacher says this is okay. All volunteering should be pre-arranged with the teacher. Lesson plans are commonly written around volunteer’s availability. Teachers will not have time to put together work for you to do with 25 or 30 children in the classroom.
5. Parents should not offer rides to students unless they have prior arrangements with that student’s parents and the parent/guardian of the child has notified the school.
6. Cell phones should be off while you are working with children, except in case of emergencies. If you must take or make a call, please do so outside of the classroom. Talking on the phone is very distracting to the students. It can also give them the impression that what they are doing is not as important as the conversation.
7. Parent Volunteers should make other arrangements for siblings and/or other children while volunteering in the classroom. Younger children and older siblings are distracting to the educational environment.

INITIAL VOLUNTEER CHECKLIST

When you begin your volunteer experience, please discuss the following with the teacher:

- Signing in and out of the building and wearing a volunteer badge
- Your schedule
- School-wide rules and which ones apply to adults as well as students
- The teacher's classroom policies, procedures and rules, as well as his/her management system, methods of reinforcing students, and emergency procedures
- What your specific duties will be, materials you should use, and strategies to use when working with students
- How and when to contact the teacher/staff member regarding a change in your schedule, etc.
Consider exchanging phone numbers
- Alternate plans for days when the teacher is absent and a substitute is in charge of the class
- How the students will refer to you (first name, Ms., Dr., Mrs., Mr., etc.)
- Procedures for taking students out of the classroom for individual work, if applicable
- Your special interests, talents, and skills
- Confirm scheduled school holidays and identify any pre-planned field trips that fall on your scheduled day(s)

ACQUAINT YOURSELF WITH OUR SCHOOL POLICIES

School Workroom

Please help us stay within our supply budget by practicing economy and eliminating waste with materials available in the classroom and workroom. All materials come out of our school budget. For example, whenever possible, please try to use butcher paper instead of the more costly construction paper. When using the die cut machine, please use the construction paper scraps when possible.

Let us all work together by leaving the workroom neat and tidy after each use.
Please remember, children are not allowed in the workroom for safety reasons.

Restrooms

Restrooms for volunteers are available in the office (ACS 1) or on the playground (ACS 2). For security reasons adults are asked not to use student restrooms.

PIC FLIERS/CORRESPONDENCE TO GO HOME WITH STUDENTS

When sending any type of correspondence home to the parents, please follow these three very important rules:

1. The principal must approve all correspondence, no matter how small. Please keep this in mind when you have a deadline. Give yourself enough time to have it approved. There may be changes or corrections needed, and it may take a couple of days before it can be reviewed.
2. Please deliver fliers to the office staff who will distribute them. It would be helpful if you would count and label them for every class. Be sure to provide enough copies for each teacher and student.
3. Fliers should not be taken to individual classrooms.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES IN ARARAT CHARTER SCHOOL

- Working in the classrooms
- Tutoring individual students
- Computer/ Technology Lab
- Literacy Programs
- Clerical Support
- Serving on a district or school committee
- Classroom presentations

There are many opportunities for parents to be involved in the Ararat Charter School Community. Our wonderful Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) and classroom teachers are always looking for volunteers to help plan and/or run programs. There is a wide range of involvement with PIC with something for everyone.

Classroom volunteers are always welcome. If you would like to share in a special project, or be a regular face in the classroom, please ask to schedule time with your classroom teacher. Whenever anyone volunteers on campus, they need to sign in at the front desk and wear a volunteer badge. Please remember to silence all cell phones.

I have read and understand Ararat Charter School's Volunteer Policy.

Parent Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____