



# Volunteer Handbook

## Introduction

Sycamore Ridge School supports and encourages the active participation of parents and members of the community in providing and extending educational opportunities for children. The involvement of parents, volunteers, and others in the community who can serve as a resource to schools is a fundamentally important component of our successful school programs.

Thank you for making the commitment to be a volunteer. This year you will have the opportunity to help our students in a myriad of ways. Please know there is such appreciation for you for giving the valuable gift of your time. May this year be one filled with treasured memories of hours spent helping our students in this special way.

## School Volunteers

In order to promote the goals of the volunteer program and ensure the safety of students, staff, and volunteers, the following guidelines have been established:

- Sign in and out through the school office.
- Wear an identification badge provided by the school while on campus.
- Work only under the direction and supervision of the teacher or another school employee.
- Respect the authority of teachers, staff members, and school administrators.
- Understand that recording grades, working with student records, and disciplining students are the responsibility of the teacher.
- Dress appropriately and in accordance with the school dress code.
- Speak appropriately, remembering we are setting an example for the students.
- Remember that at all times, young ears and eyes are on you. Please model and reinforce the 6 character traits: respect, trustworthiness, caring, responsibility, fairness, and citizenship.
- Be responsible for showing up at the scheduled time and notify the responsible party if not able to meet this obligation.
- Treat all information regarding students and personnel as confidential.
- Seek help from the teacher or supervising staff members when additional information/instruction is needed.
- Refrain from cell phone use while on campus, particularly in the office and in or around classrooms. Please set cell phones to vibrate.
- Please schedule a separate time to conference with the teacher.

**An additional word on confidentiality**  
*GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOL PERSONNEL*

1. Do not voluntarily discuss personal information about students except with other professional staff who need to know the information to help students.
2. Do not repeat rumors or gossip that you hear regarding the personal lives of students, their families, or faculty.
3. If a student is having problems, let school professionals know you are concerned about a student and offer your assistance, but do not ask for specific information. The professional will tell you what you need to know.
4. Do not discuss personal situations regarding students in public areas.
5. Never give any type of information regarding students to non-school parties. Refer those requesting information to the administrative offices.
6. Always consider that people outside the school may see what you have written or hear what you have said about students.
7. Whenever possible when you need to know information about a situation, make attempts to talk directly to persons involved to determine the source of statements and to verify the truth.
8. Always assume statements made in confidence or made within the site will be repeated.

**Badges**

The Del Mar Union School District requires that all employees, volunteers, and adults must sign-in and sign-out when entering or leaving this campus. All visitors are required to wear a badge signifying this process was completed. In protection of all of our students, please send anyone to the office immediately if you do not see them wearing a badge.

## **What is a Room Parent?**

A room parent is a dependable, positive, and efficient mom, dad, grandparent, etc. who has volunteered to assist a classroom teacher with organizing special activities inside and outside the classroom setting, help recruit volunteers, and aide in communication of special events.

### **The responsibilities of the room parent(s) typically include:**

1. Meeting with the teacher on a regular basis to discuss his/her needs for upcoming activities.
2. Organizing & overseeing volunteers for class events.
3. Coordinating the purchase and/or making of class gifts and collection of fund for events.
4. Communicating with Parents.
5. Participating in Staff Appreciation week.
6. Aide the classroom teacher as needed.

Each of these responsibilities is explained further in the following pages.

### **Meeting with the Classroom Teacher:**

At the beginning of the school year, you will need to schedule a time to meet with your child's teacher to discuss ways you can support him or her. This is a great time to get to know each other and for you to get an understanding of what special activities are envisioned for the year and what your role in them will be.

Items to discuss may include:

1. Protocols for class celebrations (including holidays and birthdays).
2. Special projects that may need additional volunteer help.
3. Field trips and if you'll need to recruit/call chaperones.
4. Discuss how you, as the room parent, plan to communicate with other parents in the class.

If there are multiple room parents for one class, you may want to pick one person to serve as liaison to the teacher. Teachers have suggested selecting one person simplifies communication. All room parents, however, should attend the initial meeting with the classroom teacher.

Following the initial meeting, continue to touch base regularly with the classroom teacher, especially prior to each event to confirm details and make sure all supplies (including labor) are covered.

### **Organizing and Overseeing Volunteers for Class Events:**

You will work closely with the classroom teacher to plan classroom events (including, but not limited to, parties and special events). Expectations that include length of the event, which day and time the event will occur, and equity among classrooms across the grade level need to all be clarified well in advance of the event. Please do not exceed 5 parties in a year. If an end of the year party is planned, it will happen on the within the last 2 days of school. It is critical that these expectations are strictly adhered to, as teachers plan their academic programs to include these events in the most seamless way possible.

In most cases, it is the room parent's responsibility to handle the details, communicate with parents, and help to make sure that all goes as planned (i.e. supplies arrive in time, enough parent helpers there, the event runs smoothly, clean-up occurs, etc.).

Experienced room parents and teachers recommend involving as many parents as possible. This allows all parents the opportunity to help out as well as enjoy the fun along with their child. Appropriate ways to communicate include phone calls, notes home (with teacher approval), and emails (please c.c. teacher)

You may want/need to ask parents to send supplies or money a couple of days prior to the event (with the expectation of perishable food items). Make sure to provide a window of time to make reminder calls in case anyone has forgotten. Additionally, it is helpful to check in with the classroom teacher the morning of the event to check on materials and catch any last minute details that may need to be sorted out.

### **A word about food items...**

Be sensitive to food allergies that may be present in the classroom and provide alternatives. Limit options on food choice (for example, one flavor of popsicle or cupcake). All portions of food need to be ready to serve. For example, cupcakes should be served instead of sending a cake that needs to be sliced.

Please make special arrangements for any cold items you may need prior to the event. The refrigerators in the Staff Lounge are not a resource during these events as they already are full and cannot house the perishable items of all the classrooms on the campus.

**Coordinating the purchase and/or making of class gifts and collection of fund for events:**

Please be respectful when collecting funds for a class fund. Contribution to this fund is optional. Please do not exceed \$25.00 per child per classroom.

**Communicating with Parents:**

Communication with parents may happen in a variety of ways including phone calls, emails, and flyers home. Please note all flyers or letters sent home with a child must have prior administrative approval. Allow a minimum of 24 hours for flyers to go through the approval process. Please send a copy of all emails to the classroom teacher and administrator.

**Participating in Staff Appreciation week:**

Staff Appreciation week is a nationally celebrated week when students and parents express their appreciation for the contributions made by classroom teachers, staff, and administration. It is usually scheduled for some time in May. The P.T.A. has a committee that plans and coordinates the week's theme and events for the staff as a group (i.e. a formal luncheon, breakfast/snack foods in the lounge, theme-related treats, individual or group gift, etc.). The committee may ask room parents to help with some events during the week with advance notice (i.e. coordinating the class signing a card or taking a class photo).

**Aide the classroom teacher as needed:**

There may be additional adjunct duties you will be asked to help with by either your child's teacher or a P.T.A. representative. These may include helping in the classroom or with a school wide event. All of these duties will be with advance notice and will be communicated to you as the need arises.

**In case of emergency:**

Please evacuate to the field and report in to our site commander by highlighting your name in the volunteer binder. Please do not remove your student from the campus without signing the student out from the parent communication station **AFTER** clearance has been given to do so.