

Kake City School District

Volunteer Handbook



2015-2016

Table of Contents

1. Welcome letter
2. Mission statement
3. Planning
 - a. State your preference
 - b. Plan ahead
 - c. Consistency
 - d. Observing classes
4. The law
 - a. Confidentiality
 - b. Background checks
 - c. Special education
5. Behavior guidelines
 - a. School rules
 - b. Classroom rules
 - c. Dress and grooming
 - d. Cell phones, etc
6. Working successfully with kids
 - a. De-escalation of conflict
 - b. Reporting concerns
 - c. Asking for help
 - d. Offering choices
7. You make a difference!

Kake City School District

*P.O. Box 450
Kake, Alaska 99830
(907) 785-3741*

July 8, 2015

Dear Prospective Volunteers,

The administration, teachers and support staff of Kake City Schools are grateful for your willingness to perform this very important job. Our goal is to have every day our students spend at school be an opportunity to learn in a structured, compassionate environment. Your participation will help make that possible.

We sincerely hope that this handbook will help make volunteering a rewarding experience for you. If you think of any ways in which we can improve this book, or make volunteering a more positive experience, please let us know.

Sincerely,

The Staff and Students of Kake City Schools

Vision Statement

The Kake City School District, in partnership with staff parents and the community, will provide an educational environment that prepares students to be successful, respectful, confident skilled learners and responsible contributing citizens within the local culture and universal society.

I. Planning

- a. **The importance of planning ahead.** It is very difficult for a teacher to stop in mid-lesson and find something for an unexpected volunteer to do. By the time this has been accomplished, the students will probably be way off task, and valuable instructional time will be lost. So please, speak with your child's teacher ahead of time and make a plan for when you will come to help out and what your task will be.
- b. **State your preference.** Would you rather work with a small group of kids? Put up a bulletin board? Help grade papers? Please tell the teacher what you would like to do. And please, if you say "whatever you need," be prepared to do just that!
- c. **Consistency.** Few things are more frustrating for a teacher than to have an activity planned with the students that involves another adult, and have that adult not show up. So please, if you make a commitment to be there, please follow through. If you find that you are unable to attend at the planned time, please speak directly to the teacher as soon as possible. Remember that if you are not reliable, the teachers will lose interest in working with you!

II. The law

- a. **Confidentiality.** Student and family privacy is one of our most important responsibilities, and often one of the most difficult to maintain in a small community. The federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) puts a student's academic, behavior, health, and other school issues on a need-to-know-basis. If you learn something about a student through volunteering, please do not discuss it with others. If you see something regarding a particular child that concerns you, please inform the teacher or principal. If you feel that you must inform the parent of your concerns, please do so in a general way, and ask the parent to contact the school about the issue.

- b. **Background checks.** If you wish to volunteer on a regular basis, we will ask to conduct a background check on you. Please do not take this personally! We have to do whatever we can to make sure the adults who work with our kids are good role models.

- c. **Special education.** Some children may seem to be getting special treatment. This is most likely because the child has been shown to have a special need in some area of his or her life. If you see something that makes you wonder, please ask for clarification. Do not gossip! And remember, we may not be able to give you much specific information (see Part A above).

III. Adult behavior guidelines

- a. **School rules.** At Kake City Schools, we ask all adults to treat others as they would like to be treated. Please be respectful and positive at all times. We are asking students to remove hats, hoods, and sunglasses while in the building, so please follow this rule as well.

- b. Classroom rules.** Individual teachers are likely to have their own set of expectations posted in their classrooms. Please plan to follow these rules as well.
- c. Dress and grooming.** We expect our students to come to school in clean clothes that are in good repair. We also expect them to have traditionally private parts of the body covered, including chest and buttocks. Please set a good example for them.
- d. Cell phones, etc.** We are allowing secondary students to use their cell phones (and other personal electronic devices) **before school starts, at lunch time, and after school in the locker bay only.** Otherwise, cellphones are to be out of sight and silent. Please follow this procedure yourself. Young people are keenly aware when something isn't fair!

IV. Working successfully with kids

- a. De-escalation of conflict.** If a conflict arises between students, voices are likely to get louder, students will become physically tense, and they may show some aggressive body language. If this happens, please do the opposite! Lower your voice, relax your body, and step back a step.
- b. Offering choices.** Sometimes, a student who is upset will respond better to an offering of choices than to an ultimatum. When it's clean-up time, you might say, "Would you like to pick up paper scraps, or help me clean the sink?"
- c. Asking for help.** If disciplinary issues arise, you should ask the teacher to take over. As a volunteer, you want to be a friend and helper, not a disciplinarian.

- V. Observing.** You are of course welcome to observe your child's class at any time. You must check in at the office before going into a classroom, and enter the classroom quietly with a positive attitude.

- VI. Reporting concerns.** If you are concerned about a particular issue, we will ask you to meet with the teacher outside of class time to discuss it. Remember that we all want the best for our kids, and often the best way to clear up a misunderstanding is to discuss it face to face. Please talk to the teacher first, and come to the principal only if you are not satisfied with the results of the conversation.

- VII. You make a difference.** Yes, you do! Kake City School District provides an excellent learning environment. Staff, students, community members and parents share a common goal of helping our students succeed. Volunteers help make our students' experiences and outcomes that much richer. Thank you for all that you do.