

Uxbridge Public Schools



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Volunteer Guidelines and Procedures

Welcome to the Uxbridge Public Schools! If you are new to the district, we invite you to become a volunteer in our schools. If you are a returning volunteer, we would like to thank you for your past commitment, and we look forward to working with you again this year. Volunteering is an excellent way to meet other parents and staff, as well as a good way to be a part of your child's education.

Please look at this handbook and see how you can become an effective volunteer in your school. If you want more information on the available volunteer opportunities, please contact your child's school administration directly.

Specific Steps Volunteers Must Take

1. Read the volunteer guidebook and handbook and become acquainted with expectations.
2. Complete all forms found at the back of this guide to volunteers.
3. Ensure that a background check is completed with the central office administration.
4. Ensure that school administration is (a) aware and (b) in approval of the volunteer activity that is going to take place. For example, simply emailing a 10th-grade history teacher to indicate that you wish to share your expertise as an attorney is not enough. The volunteer must have approval first from the teacher and then from school administration.
 - a. **Volunteering will not occur in any capacity without administrator approval.**
5. Follow all procedures outlined for the school (i.e., sign-in/sign-out, visitor passes, confidentiality, images, etc.).

The Volunteer Program

The Uxbridge Public Schools will utilize volunteers to enhance our educational programs.

As a volunteer, you assist the staff in their day-to-day endeavor to provide the best possible educational experiences for each child in the school. Please note that volunteers work under the direction and guidance of school personnel. They will not replace our professional staff, nor will their presence mean that fewer staff members are needed to execute the daily operations and responsibilities of the school.

A volunteer is many things: an extra pair of hands, an extra measure of personal connection, a valuable special resource for classroom enrichment, and a bridge between the instructional program and the community.

The building principal must approve all volunteers who enter the building for all purposes, whether classroom, co-curricular, or athletic. Specific procedures for approval are below.

Why Volunteer?

There are as many different reasons for volunteering as there are volunteers. Understanding your goals for volunteering will allow you to use your talents most effectively. Some of these reasons are to:

- **Experience** the satisfaction of helping someone
- **Have** an opportunity for personal growth
- **Develop** new skills

- **Document** experience for future jobs or academic references
- **Meet** new people and make new friends
- **Learn** about your community
- **Explore** career options
- **Use** time in a meaningful way
- **Remain** active and productive in the community
- **Pursue** a personal interest or hobby in retirement
- **Create** a closer tie with your child's classroom

Working with Students

1. Be warm and friendly — learn the student names and show interest in what they are doing and telling — you are very important as a listener.
2. If working with children, encourage them to do their own thinking — give them plenty of time to answer; silence often means they are thinking and organizing what they want to say or write.
3. If you don't know an answer or are unsure of what to do, admit it to the children and work it out together — feel free to ask the student's teacher for help when you need it.
4. Use tact and positive comments — encourage children — give compliments, especially when children are having difficulties.
5. Accept each child as he/she is — you do not need to feel responsible for judging a child's abilities, progress or behavior unless you suspect abuse or neglect. Suspicions of abuse or neglect should be referred immediately to a staff member.
6. Respect a child's privacy — if a child reveals personal information, please report this information to a staff member immediately.
7. Maintaining a sense of humor is very important - as is maintaining confidentiality.
8. Be consistent with the teacher's rules for classroom behavior, schedule and atmosphere.
9. Wear comfortable clothes and get down to a child's level.
10. Keep your commitment; the 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.

For safety reasons, please observe the following when working with students:

- Avoid being totally isolated with a child such as a room with a closed door. Work only in areas of the school building which are in continual, direct supervision by district professional staff.
- Use the staff/adult restroom facilities rather than student facilities.
- Do not give students gifts, rewards, or food items of any kind. Anything being handed out to students in the execution of volunteerism should be cleared in advance through the individual teacher and, if necessary, school administration.
- All interactions between you and the students must take place only at scheduled times and on school property.
- Photos and videos of students should never be taken by any volunteer. In some instances, administration or designee may capture images of events.

Staff Responsibilities

Volunteers are an important part of the educational team. The suggestions and opinions of volunteers are always welcome. It is the professional staff, however, that is held responsible by law for the decisions that

are made regarding the instruction of students and school management. For this reason, volunteers always work under the supervision of the professional staff.

Is there anything volunteers shouldn't do? YES! The professional staff at your school is responsible for everything that goes on in your building including student instruction, safety and discipline. A volunteer is never considered a substitute for a member of the school staff. Volunteers supplement and support the program, but may not:

- Discipline students
- Have access to materials in students' permanent record files
- Diagnose student needs
- Use classroom interactions as a pulpit for personal agendas
- Evaluate achievement or curriculum documents
- Counsel students
- Discuss student progress with parents
- Take photographs or videos of students or school personnel
- Post images of school experiences on social media

Confidentiality

Most of the data school employees know or create about students is private data and includes academic, personal, attendance, medical, disability, special education, and disciplinary information. Logically, it is in these areas where breaches of data privacy occur. A good rule of thumb is to remember that almost all information on a student kept by school employees in any form is subject to federal and state data privacy laws. School district employees are bound by data privacy laws regarding student records at all times including at the employee's work site, other district sites, and in the community.

It is REQUIRED to remember that private educational data can only be shared with staff members who have a "professional need to know." Violations of data privacy laws may result in criminal penalties, civil penalties, and/or disciplinary action related to employment. In short, do not discuss any particular information about students with anyone except the classroom teacher of the room in which you are volunteering.

Sign-In Procedure

Volunteers are asked to sign in and out in the front office and put on a name badge (see Volunteer Name Badges below), each time they work at the school. For security reasons, and in case of an emergency, it is important for staff to know who is in the school and why. The Raptor program is used for this purpose.

PLEASE DON'T FORGET! Sign in and out each time you volunteer. We know it takes a few extra minutes to follow this procedure, but it is very important!

If you must cancel:

If illness or any emergency arises, please call the office of the school where you volunteer. Ask the secretary to inform the teacher you will not be there or send a message to the teacher directly. The plans of at least one teacher and the learning of several children may be interrupted if volunteers are not where you're expected at the scheduled time.

Visitor Name Badges

By wearing a name badge designated for volunteers, you will be immediately recognized as a person whose specific purpose is helping staff and students. Your name badge will enable staff and students to recognize you as a registered volunteer and an important part of the school's educational team.

Tips for Volunteers

Assignment: If the assignment does not prove to be what you expected or you feel you cannot handle it, please contact the person or teacher who assigned you.

Cell Phones: In order to provide an optimum environment for learning, cell phones must be turned off while in or near classrooms or the media center.

Confidentiality: Respect the confidential nature of anything you see or hear. Share any concerns you may have only with those in authority at the school. If parents and friends ask about your work, tell them you enjoy working with the children and discuss the activities you do rather than specific information about the child, the teacher or the school. You must sign the Volunteer Confidentiality Statement which can be found on our district website.

Harassment and Violence Policy: The purpose of this policy is to maintain a learning and working environment that is free from harassment and violence on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, familial status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation or disability. The school district prohibits any form of harassment and violence and asks that you report such behavior to building administration immediately. If a student (or adult) comes to you to report or you personally witness harassment or violence, please document the details immediately.

Suspected Child Abuse: As you build trust with students, you may become aware of abuse in their lives. State law requires that education professionals and volunteers report any suspected abuse or neglect. If a student gives you information that you suspect may be considered abuse or neglect, report it immediately to a staff member.

Your comments: There is always room for improvement. If you have a creative solution or constructive criticism...tell us! We welcome your comments and encourage your ideas.

Enjoy yourself: Your enthusiasm will be conveyed to the students who are eager to learn about new topics and ideas.

Chaperone Responsibilities

- Chaperones must ride the bus or walk with students to and from the field trip destination and pay bus and admittance fees that are required. Only designated chaperones who accompany the class to and from school will be allowed with the group on the field trip.
- Chaperones helping with a class field trip or outing must read and follow all directions pertinent to the particular site you are visiting as well as follow teacher instructions.

- Take responsibility for your entire group of assigned students for the duration of the field trip and always know where the children in your group are. Keep your group together and do not let them run ahead of you. Take a headcount often to be sure you have everyone with you who was assigned.
- Children need to behave in a respectful way at all times. Any students who have difficulty following your directives should be taken to a teacher.
- Remember that field trips are meant to be fun, but their primary purpose is to provide educational experiences that we cannot provide at school. Chaperones are brought along so that the class can be broken up into smaller groups thus allowing students to gain the most from the experience.
- Follow the schedule and rules given to you and meet the teacher at designated spots on time.
- Field trips provide an opportunity for you to see other parents, but please keep in mind your responsibility is to the children in your group. Please do not neglect them for the sake of conversing with other chaperones. Always set a good example.
- Cell phones should only be used for emergencies. Your focus needs to be the students you are assigned. Providing a cell number to the individual coordinating the field trip is recommended for those who have a phone on them.
- Do not purchase food or gift shop items for your child and/or the members of your group unless approved by the teacher for all students. Generally students and chaperones have a packed lunch eliminating the need for purchasing food.

Criminal Background Process

The Uxbridge Public Schools will conduct a criminal history background check on all individuals who are offered employment in the district, any type III bus drivers, and on all individuals who come in contact with our students, regardless of whether they receive compensation from the school district.

Recognizing our responsibility to ensure the safety and security of our students and everyone connected with the Uxbridge Public Schools, we require a criminal history background check for school volunteers and chaperones. Any volunteer or chaperone supervising students or responsible for them will be required to have a federal background check, in addition to the CORI conducted. **The cost of this background check is \$35 and is paid by the person requesting to volunteer in the District.**

Potential volunteers/chaperones need to fill out a **Background Check Form** which is available through each school's office. A copy of the volunteer's license or identification will be taken as well.

FORMS AND REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

Please note that all forms and documents that appear on the following pages must be completed before a volunteer may begin supporting any classroom, co-curricular, or extracurricular activities.

UXBRIDGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

300 Quaker Highway · Uxbridge, Massachusetts 01569

Phone 508-278-8633



Release of Liability

My participation as a volunteer for the Uxbridge Public Schools is wholly and completely gratuitous and free from compulsion by the Uxbridge Public Schools. As a volunteer for the Uxbridge Public Schools I agree for myself and on behalf of my heirs, assigns, personal representatives and next of kin, to release, indemnify and hold harmless, the Uxbridge Public Schools and the Town of Uxbridge, and their officers, directors, employees or agents, as well as students within the Uxbridge Public Schools, with respect to any and all personal injury, illness or property loss, and any claims stemming therefrom, that I may sustain in connection with or as a result of my volunteer service.

Name: (please print): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

UXBRIDGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

300 Quaker Highway · Uxbridge, Massachusetts 01569

Phone 508-278-8633



Confidentiality Agreement

I understand that, in providing my services as a volunteer with Uxbridge Public Schools, I must respect the confidential nature of the knowledge I will gain concerning the academic performance, student records, behavior, disabilities, immigration status and/or other personal matters of the students with whom I work. I will not share this information with anyone outside of the school, including through the use of social media, nor will I discuss this information with third parties. If a student tells me something or I notice something that may indicate his/her safety is at risk or he/she is in emotional distress, I will report that information to my supervising teacher or a support staff member (adjustment counselor, psychologist, nurse). I also agree to not initiate contact with the students with whom I work or their families outside of the school or program setting to which I have been assigned.

Name: (please print): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

UXBRIDGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

300 Quaker Highway · Uxbridge, Massachusetts 01569

Phone 508-278-8633



Volunteer Agreement

I have read and understand the standards and procedures for Uxbridge Public School Volunteers and agree to comply with these procedures:

1. For the safety and security of all students, every volunteer must complete a CORI (Criminal Offender Record Information) and fingerprint background check. It must be approved before volunteering in schools can begin. A CORI may be submitted through the main office of any Uxbridge Public School. CORIs for our volunteers are valid for 3 years with any Uxbridge Public Schools.
2. Volunteers must sign in at the school's main office prior to every session, wear a Visitor tag while in the school, sign out, and return tag to the main office at the end of each session. A picture ID will need to be provided on your first visit.
3. Volunteers working directly with students may become aware of confidential information about specific students. This information may include students' academic performance, student records, behavior, disabilities, immigration status or other personal matters. Volunteers will not disclose such confidential information except to school employees who have a need to know.
4. Volunteers should not photograph students unless authorized by the building principal or designated staff. Volunteers should not share photographs of students. Volunteers should not use social media, "friend" or text with students.
5. Volunteers should never assume responsibility for the supervision of a class in the absence of a certified teacher.
6. Volunteers should never assume responsibility for the discipline of a student.
7. Volunteers are not authorized to transport students while serving in the capacity of volunteer.
8. Volunteers should use adult restrooms only.
9. Ensure positive closure. If you plan on ending your volunteer involvement before the end of the school year, please notify your teacher and the tutor coordinator. It is especially important that the student is aware of your final tutoring session. The student needs to be left with the clear message that you have enjoyed working with him/her.
10. Follow "safe touch" suggestions. Volunteers do not initiate touching a student (pats on arm or back, or for younger children, hand-holding, hugs, or lap-sitting), but may respond to the student's

initiation of appropriate touch.

11. Gifts for students are inappropriate. Don't bring gifts or food treats for individual students, and policy indicates that snacks should not be brought for an entire class.
12. Maintain contact only in a school setting. Do not initiate contact with the students with whom you work or their families outside of the school or program setting.
13. Conflict of Interest Law. Massachusetts requires that all state, county and/or municipal agency employees complete periodic training regarding the Conflict of Interest laws. The definition of "employee" is very broad and generally includes unpaid volunteers. This link will be provided to all volunteers to complete.
14. Release of Liability: The Uxbridge Public Schools and the Town of Uxbridge require all volunteers to review and sign a separate release of liability prior to beginning volunteer services.
15. Uxbridge Public Schools requests that volunteers complete an opt out form if they do not wish UPS to publish, print or post to its website your photograph as part of your volunteer activities.

Volunteers make a difference! We appreciate your commitment to our students.

Name: (please print): _____

Signature:_____

Date: _____