

Canastota Central Schools
Pre-K-3 Volunteer Handbook

Peterboro Street & South Side Elementary Schools



"The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others."
~ Mahatma Gandhi

Dear PSES & SSES Parents/Caregivers,

Thank you for your interest in volunteering to be a member of our school community. This handbook is a guide for volunteers at both Peterboro Street and South Side Elementary School. In this handbook, you will find important information and requirements for our volunteers as well as a required application that should be completed and returned to the respective building principal. We appreciate you offering your time and talents to our students and our dedicated teaching staff.

The most important thing for a volunteer to keep in mind is confidentiality. You will hear things and observe things about students during your time at school. It is important that these things stay within the confines of the building and that you do not discuss or refer to them on social media, with family/friends, or in the context of a community setting. Specific information that should be kept confidential includes behaviors, academics, conversations with children, and student/staff names, phone numbers, and addresses.

Volunteers should treat all children's information as confidential and utilize such information in a professional manner at all times. A basic right of all children and their families is the right to privacy. All personally identifiable data, information and records are considered confidential information. As a result, we are not allowed to give parents information on other children or their families, unless parental consent has been given.

If a teacher discusses a child with you, that information should remain confidential and is not to leave the classroom. In addition, any situation that occurs while in the classroom that involves specific children is considered confidential and should remain within the school setting.

Volunteers are expected to uphold professional integrity. It is your duty to report all relevant observations and concerns to a teacher or principal. If you hear or see something about a student that a teacher or principal should know, especially if it involves the safety and well-being of a child, by all means, report it immediately in order to help the student and keep him/her safe.

As a reminder, please keep this handbook for yourself and return the two pages of completed forms in the back. Once the forms have been reviewed, the building principal will reach out to you to set up a required screening interview.

Sincerely,

Jennie Carnahan & Vanessa McClowry

Jennie Carnahan & Vanessa McClowry
PSES Principal & SSES Principal









REQUIREMENTS FOR THE SCHOOL VOLUNTEER

1. You will need to leave your photo ID in the office in exchange for your visitor badge when you sign in to the main office.
2. Your commitment is fundamental and valuable to us. If you cannot make your scheduled time, please let the teacher or staff member know as soon as possible. Teachers frequently make plans that include you and the children look forward to your visit and assistance. You may also leave a message with the secretary in the respective building you are volunteering in. (PSES Office: 697-2027 and SSES Office: 697-6372.)
3. Schedules are tight, even in our elementary schools! Please arrive promptly and leave at your scheduled time. Please do not use this time to touch base with a teacher about your own child.
4. Please dress appropriately while volunteering (e.g. no hats, short shorts, tank tops, halter tops, spaghetti straps).
5. Please leave your coffee and other beverages at home when you come to volunteer. We would also appreciate it if you would silence your cell phones or leave them in your vehicle.
6. It is imperative to model appropriate behavior at all times.
7. Treat the position with the utmost confidentiality.
8. Notify the classroom teacher of any information a student shares that may sound alarming or of concern to you (e.g. if a student says he/she is getting hurt, was injured at home, or had nothing to eat for dinner the night before).
9. Do not touch any student who is sick, bleeding, or injured in any way (i.e. nosebleeds, cuts, vomiting). Notify a teacher or the school nurse immediately. Many diseases are carried through bodily fluids and trained personnel wearing gloves should assist in these incidences.

THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND WHEN WORKING WITH CHILDREN

- A low, calm voice will help you make the best connection with children. Be careful not to raise your voice, unless you need to address a serious safety issue.
- Stay at the child's eye level when you talk to him/her; squat or sit on a low chair. Speak directly to the child; do not call across the classroom. It can be intimidating if an adult towers over a child or yells from afar.
- Please try to learn each child's name and practice saying them several times. This will help you to remember names. Tell them what your name is and remind them politely if they forget.
- Respond in a friendly manner to direct questions or requests of children.
- Show an interest in the student's activities and make occasional encouraging comments when it seems natural to do so ("You worked hard on that puzzle."). Praise children specifically so they know exactly which action or behavior you like.
- Avoid asking personal questions as it may make children uncomfortable.
- Encourage independence. If a child asks you to do something for him/her, say "Let me see you try first, but I'll be here to help," or "You can do it. Give it a try with me right here to help." (Check with the classroom teacher if you're not sure how much assistance you should provide.)
- Step into a conflict promptly, but only if there is the danger of a child being hurt. It is usually better to wait and allow the children a chance to solve their own difficulties if they seem to be in the process of doing so.
- Listen as much as possible to the teacher's directions so that there is a consistent pattern of approach to the students. Again, remember to word things positively. Ask students to repeat adult directions in their own words to help them remember.
- If you ever have any questions or are unsure of something, do not hesitate to ask the teacher with whom you are working.
- If a child is having a behavior difficulty, the teacher should handle the situation as he/she has the background information, strategies and training. Inform the teacher immediately if you notice something he/she does not. Safety and supervision are of the utmost importance.
- Encourage children to be kind and respectful and model this behavior yourself. In our elementary schools, we remind children to uphold our PBIS expectations of: Be Safe, Be Respectful & Be Responsible.

Please familiarize yourself with our PBIS Behavior Matrix on the next page.

	Classroom/ Specials 	Hallways 	Cafeteria 	Bathrooms 	Playground 	Bus 	Special Events 
Be Safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walk • Hands & feet to yourself • Use materials appropriately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face forward • Stay to the right 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wait in line for your turn 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walk • Keep water and soap in sink 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use good body control • Use materials appropriately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walk to and from bus • Stay seated • Hands & feet to yourself 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hands & feet to yourself • Sit appropriately
Be Respectful	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use kind words and actions • Listen while others are speaking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voice level 0 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use manners • Keep food in your plate or in your mouth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect each other's privacy • Voice level 0 or 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play fairly and take turns • Use kind words and actions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use kind words & actions • Voice level 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eyes and ears focused on speaker • Voice level 0
Be Responsible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow directions • Do your best • Be prepared 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow the person in front of you • Hands & feet to yourself 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eat only from your lunch • Clean up after yourself 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flush the toilet • Wash your hands • Put paper towels in trash 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dress for the weather • Voice level 0 when returning inside 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep the bus clean • Be ready for your stop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen for directions from adult • Enter and leave using voice level 0

Emergency Fire & Evacuation Procedures

- Upon fire alarm activation, all students, staff, and visitors will silently evacuate the building according to planned evacuation routes. Everyone will meet at the designated area on the posted evacuation plan. Close all doors as you exit the area. Maps are located in all classrooms outlining areas specific classrooms should evacuate to. Note there are primary and secondary evacuation routes.
- Teachers should bring their red Emergency Folders with student roster documents to accurately identify students in attendance for that session.
- At the designated meeting area, teachers will take attendance and note any students who are missing or additional students secured during the evacuation. Teachers need to be prepared to report attendance to the Command and Communication area.
- Keep all students together in your meeting area and await further instruction.
- Be aware of all responding emergency vehicles.
- Ensure adequate provisions for students with disabilities.

During any drills or emergency situations, please model calmness and follow the lead of the adult with whom you are working.

Canastota Central School District
Canastota, NY 13032
VOLUNTEER CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT
Please sign and return

Information About Students is Protected by State and Federal Law

The State Education Law and the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) requires the District to ensure that personally identifiable information about students is not disclosed to anyone except a person with a legitimate educational interest in that information. This includes information found in paper records and information found in computer records. It includes photographs, videos and sound recordings that may identify a particular student. It includes academic, personal, attendance, medical, disability, special education, and disciplinary information.

If you serve our school community in a volunteer capacity, you will learn things about students that must be kept confidential, which means that it cannot be shared with anyone other than a school staff member who has a "professional need to know." You may not discuss a particular student with any other student, with parents/caregivers other than those of the student or with your family and friends when talking about your volunteer work. Violations of data privacy laws may result in criminal penalties, civil penalties, and/or disciplinary action related to employment. To indicate that you have read and understand this important obligation, please sign below.

Confidentiality Statement

I hereby agree to regard all information received in the performance of my volunteer work for the Canastota Central Schools as confidential, meaning that I will not disclose that information to anyone other than a school staff member with a "need to know."

I understand that the Canastota Central School District respects its students, staff and volunteer's rights with regard to the privacy of information and I agree to respect these rights in the performance of my volunteer duties and to keep "professional" confidentiality in all my statements outside the school district.

Volunteer Signature

Date

Administrator Signature

Date