

Gateway Regional School District

Volunteer Handbook

2017-2018 Volunteer Handbook Gateway Regional School District

“It is the policy of the school committee to encourage volunteer efforts in the schools. Parents, business representatives, senior citizens, and other community volunteers are recognized as important sources of support and expertise to enhance the instructional program and vital communication links with the community. The volunteer program will be coordinated in cooperation with building administrators.”

The Gateway Regional School District (GRSD) welcomes the many contributions made by our volunteers. By offering their valuable time to our students and programs, they contribute to our shared goal of improving student achievement. Working with individual students, helping in classrooms, organizing fundraisers, chaperoning field trips, or serving on a committee or council: the contributions of volunteers to our district are invaluable.

The Volunteer Handbook and Code of Conduct provides clear guidelines for volunteers working in the Gateway schools. The Superintendent of Schools is the only person who can authorize an exception to these protocols.

By definition, a volunteer is anyone who performs a task at the direction of, and on behalf of, the Gateway Regional School District, without compensation or expectation of reimbursement. All volunteers serve at the sole discretion of the Gateway Regional School District, which also reserves the right to terminate a volunteer’s service to the district at any time and for any reason.

Prior to becoming a volunteer, you will be asked to read and sign this handbook. The following criteria require your careful consideration before you become a Gateway volunteer:

Confidentiality: Volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of any information—pertaining to students, staff, schools, or other volunteers—that they are exposed to while serving. This confidentiality extends outside of the school building or the school day. It is a volunteer’s responsibility to share any concerns about student welfare or safety with their supervisor—usually a teacher or school principal.

Volunteers must report any incident of bullying or harassment that they observe to the school principal. Volunteers are also expected to be sensitive to and respect all members of the Gateway community.

School Safety: Volunteers must recognize that students look up to them. As such, it is important that volunteers adhere to all school rules and laws pertaining to public schools. This includes policies that prohibit the following: smoking or alcoholic beverages on school grounds (or field trips), wearing hats indoors, inappropriate dress and speech, and exceeding the posted speed limits on school property. It is also important that you review and understand the school's emergency procedures, and know what to do in the event of a fire, lockdown, or evacuation. These procedures are outlined on the back of your visitor badge.

Screening/Reference Check: By signing this document, each volunteer agrees in writing to have a CORI check (a formal check of criminal offenses) completed.

Representing GRSD: Volunteers are asked not to contact organizations or individuals on behalf of the district or its schools, unless given written directions to do so by the Superintendent or his/her designee. Volunteers should also seek approval for public statements to the press, coalition or lobbying efforts with other organizations, or any agreements involving contractual or other financial obligations.

School Keys: School keys or building access badges may be temporarily lent to volunteers, with the understanding that these will only be used for the particular location of the volunteer's assignment. Keys are loaned upon the direction of the principal; volunteers do not have the authority to loan their keys to other volunteers.

Communications and Correspondence: Occasionally, volunteers will need to contact other volunteers and parents to complete their volunteer assignment. Other than e-mail addresses, our schools cannot release any contact information about a volunteer without the express consent of all involved. Volunteers must complete an Acceptable Use Policy to be granted on-line access within the district. We encourage volunteers to use common sense when communicating with others on-line: do not reveal anything about yourself that you would not want known to a stranger on the street. If at any time you receive—because of your volunteer role with GRSD—any communication that you feel is inappropriate, please contact the school principal or superintendent with your concerns.

Volunteer Schedule, Assignments, and Dismissal: Volunteers are free to select roles and responsibilities that fit with their availability, interests, and talents. Assignments vary in duration and level of responsibility; whether working on large-scale projects or small tasks, all volunteers make valuable contributions. You are free to leave your volunteer role at the completion of an assignment, or by notifying the principal or staff member with whom you are working.

Volunteers who do not adhere to the rules and procedures of the district, or who do not satisfactorily perform their assignments, are subject to dismissal. No volunteer will be terminated until the volunteer has had an opportunity to discuss the reasons for possible dismissal with supervisory staff. Possible grounds for dismissal may include, but are not limited to, the following: gross misconduct or insubordination; theft of property or misuse of district materials; abuse or mistreatment of students, staff, or other volunteers; failure to abide by district policies and procedures; and failure to satisfactorily perform assigned duties.

Code of Conduct

Volunteers agree to:

1. Always serve as a positive role model by using appropriate language; discussing age-appropriate topics; refrain from inappropriately touching students; refrain from disciplining students (behaviors requiring discipline should be directed to the appropriate teacher or staff member); and refrain from giving students gifts, rewards, or food items of any kind without the teacher's permission.
2. Be on time for your scheduled volunteer activities.
3. Call the school if you are unable to participate in, or will be late to, your volunteer activity.
4. Sign in immediately upon arrival (at the main office or other designated sign-in area) and proceed to your assigned location or stated destination.
5. Wear appropriate identification (visitor's badge or volunteer ID).
6. Use only adult bathroom facilities.
7. Maintain confidentiality outside of school
8. Share concerns about student welfare or safety with teachers or school administrators.
9. Act in the best personal and educational interest of every child encountered.
10. Be aware of the individual school practices for promoting a calm and quiet learning environment.
11. Respectfully listen during all school announcements.

12. Work under the direction of professional staff members to meet the needs of students, staff, and the school.
13. Report any injuries to the school office.
14. Contact the principal about any problems, concerns, or suggestions.
15. Reward effort and give positive reinforcement.
16. Dress appropriately at all times.

Volunteers agree not to:

1. Contact students outside of school hours without parental permission.
2. Exchange telephone numbers, home addresses, e-mail addresses, or any other home directory information with students for any purpose unless required as part of your role as volunteer, and then only with parental and administrative approval.
3. Transport students without the written permission of parents or guardians or without the expressed permission of the school or district.
4. Use or give out student photographs or personal information about students, self, or others or befriend current students on Facebook, or other social networking sites.

Field Trip Chaperone Expectations

1. The purpose of having chaperones on a trip is to help us insure the well-being and safety of our students. As a chaperone, you will be assigned a small group of children to supervise. These students must remain with you (elementary) or under your supervision (middle/high school) throughout the entire duration of the field trip.
2. All field trips are an educational extension of our school curriculum. Therefore, all students are expected to follow our school and classroom rules on any trip. It is imperative that we, the adults, be the role models for these children.

We need to remember that young people look to us and at us for role models. The way we look, talk and act are a reflection of what WE expect for our children.

3. Also, because a chaperone's job is supervision, we cannot allow any siblings to attend field trips.
4. Anyone helping in the school or on field trips must have a valid CORI (Criminal Offender Record Information) prior to attending. **Submitting a CORI includes presenting your form AND driver's license in person at a school office.** It takes **UP TO** a month to process the form and get official notification. Please allow yourself enough time. CORI forms are available in the **student handbooks, on the district volunteer website,** in school offices or at the district's central office.
5. The **No Smoking** rule for Massachusetts school grounds is extended to our field trips as well.
6. Overnight field trips will encompass an expanded set of expectations for both chaperones and students and will be explained by the supervising staff member(s) in advance of the trip.

VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT
(please sign and return annually)

I want to support student achievement in the Gateway Regional School District! I have received a copy of the Gateway Volunteer Handbook and agree to follow the Volunteer Code of Conduct in all school volunteer efforts.

(Printed name)

(Signature)

(Principal Signature)

GRSD CORI Form
already on file

(Date)

Volunteer Tips

Take a Moment to Reflect: Try to remember what it was like to be a student and think about how it felt not to understand something at that stage of your life.

Set an Example: Your enthusiasm, love of learning and organizational skills will be a model for a student.

Give Praise: Let the student know that progress is being made. Praise and encouragement will also increase the student's confidence in his or her ability to master the material.

Practice Patience: Work for gradual progress, not "F" to "A." Review, Review, Review: Do not assume that a student will remember what he or she understood in the last session.

Be Positive: Remember that everyone has strengths. Reward effort and give positive reinforcement.

Try and Keep the Agreed Upon Schedule: Consistency helps students learn commitment and responsibility. If your schedule changes due to a vacation or exam period, be sure to inform student(s) and teacher(s).

Remember, Your Impact Can Go Far Beyond Test Scores: Your work can provide important results such as improving motivation and self-esteem. You may also develop a student's appreciation for the value of community service.

Volunteers are valuable, appreciated and help to strengthen the home-school connection.

Thank you for your willingness to help make a difference in student achievement for the Gateway Regional Schools.

