

Coventry Public Schools

Volunteer Handbook



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Coventry Public Schools

Working Together to Improve Our Schools

Dear Coventry Public School Volunteer,

Volunteers are special people in Coventry. They are an integral part of school planning and improvement. They add so much to the educational and enrichment experiences of our students, and we appreciate their efforts. Whether volunteers work inside or outside the home, there are many opportunities for involvement:

- In the classroom
- School-wide
- Hour, day or weekly/ongoing
- Special projects
- Supporting teachers and staff
- Fundraising
- School-based PTA membership

This handbook was developed to help Coventry volunteers be successful in whatever role they choose to take and is a guideline to build confidence and give some direction to help ensure that a volunteer's time is worthwhile. Whether an hour a year or several hours a week, volunteer time is essential to the continued success and positive momentum of Coventry Public Schools. We thank all volunteers for their continued support. Should questions arise, please contact the school's Principal or PTA President.

Sincerely,

Coventry Public Schools Principals & PTA Leadership

SECTION I

Introduction

- When you volunteer in Coventry, you help...
 - Your student
 - Other students
 - Teachers
 - Administrators
 - The community

- We provide different levels of training for our volunteers, and your school principal will notify you of any necessary training.

- Coventry has a strong tradition of parent involvement. Because parent volunteers are an integral part of school and district goals, it is important to keep our expectations high. It is important for all volunteers to remember the following:
 - Be responsible and safe—always put students first.
 - Respect confidentiality. Students and staff have a right to privacy
 - Be professional.
 - Communicate appropriately.
 - When things come up and you can't fulfill a promise, let someone know.
 - Ask for help—someone will always be there for you.
 - Share your experiences with others and encourage new volunteers.
 - Try to replace yourself when you move on and help train the new person.

COMMITMENT- Once you become a volunteer, others depend on you!

- Try to pick what is manageable and interesting to you.
- Be prepared. Communicate with teachers and administrators ahead of time.
- Be on time. If you can't make it, let someone know. If necessary, try to find a substitute.

SECTION II

Getting Started

Before starting your first volunteer task, we ask that all volunteers be aware of the following points:

SAFETY- Act as a good role model for children!

- Always sign in and out of the school office and wear a "Visitor's" badge.
 - It is important for staff to know that you are in the building and it makes it easier to locate you in an emergency.

- As a courtesy to others, please turn off cell phones while in the school building (or at least turn to vibrate).

- Always follow the correct fire safety procedures:
 - There is no talking during fire drills.
 - When in a classroom, follow the teacher out of the building and stay with the class.
 - When not in a classroom, quietly exit the building and remain at a safe distance until notified that it is safe to return.

SECTION III Confidentiality

To make sure that all Coventry students, staff, and families feel comfortable, we all need to respect each other's privacy. Volunteers must be especially careful to honor confidentiality. Breaching that confidentiality and trust can be hurtful to students, their families, and the staff. It can also hurt the good reputation of the Coventry Public Schools and the families who are proud to volunteer here. *All volunteers may be required to sign a confidentiality contract.*

To help, here are some rules of thumb...

- No matter how innocent, cute, or funny a comment about a student may seem it is never okay to repeat stories about students. What happens in the classroom stays in the classroom.
- When parents ask you questions, you may be tempted to tell them, especially if it involves their student's behavior. Don't ask, don't tell!
- If other parents have questions or concerns, kindly encourage them to ask the classroom teacher or school administrator.
- When you see or overhear something, especially something that staff or students would not want repeated outside the school, please talk to the classroom teacher or school administrator and refrain from repeating things outside school.
- Understand that information may not be shared with volunteers for the sake of confidentiality.
- When students talk about their families, vacations, and home life, and these personal stories cause you concern, you need to keep this information private. If you find yourself concerned over the safety and well being of a student, you should discuss the matter with the school administrator immediately.

SECTION IV Approach

The best advice we can give is: **BE PROFESSIONAL AND POSITIVE!**

- Strive to give each student the best you can and know that other Coventry volunteers do the same thing when working with your child.
- Respect each student as an individual.
- Respect all school employees.
- If working in your child's classroom, try not to single him or her out for attention.

- Don't distract teachers while they are teaching. If you have questions, please wait until there is an appropriate moment.
- Follow each teacher's classroom management strategies and each school's discipline procedures.
- Praise students (and yourself) for jobs well done.
- Honor your commitments and be on time.
- Find ways to be positive and notice things that are working well.
- Try to make any criticism constructive.
- Some specific ways to assist a teacher:
 - Prepare assignments (tracing, cutting, etc.)
 - Read stories.
 - Make copies
 - Arrange bulletin boards and assist with classroom displays
 - Assist with field trips
 - Organizing/monitoring book rooms
 - Level and shelve books in the classroom and library
 - Play and monitor games with students
 - Review flash cards
 - Monitor students as they work in the library/computer labs
 - Inventory and put together science kits
 - Operate supplemental equipment.
 - Be a guest speaker
 - Conduct mock interviews
 - Share a hobby or talent.
 - Help with celebrations, and special days
 - Help with "Extracurricular instruction"
- Remember that your time and energy is helping to make Coventry Schools a great place to learn!

SECTION V

Opportunities

Now that you have the basics, it's time to put your time and interests to good use. Here are some opportunities to volunteer in Coventry Schools.

- Classroom Opportunities:
 - Some teachers may like to have volunteers help in their classroom and on field trips. If you are interested in getting involved, a great idea is to send your teacher a note.
- School-wide Opportunities:
 - Each of the Coventry schools has many programs geared at enriching student experience outside the classroom. Volunteers might help in the office, in the library, with art projects, etc. Be sure to check out the range of opportunities, so you can find the perfect match for you!

- Hour, Day or Weekly/Ongoing
 - Short time commitments for special one-time events. Helping at special celebrations or day-long events.
 - Weekly/Ongoing opportunities are covering duties on a regular basis. Membership on the School Improvement Team (SIT) or PBIS Team are ongoing commitments.

- Special Projects
 - Special Projects often need volunteers to help with coordination and follow-through for a certain length of time, including assisting with curricular/unit projects, and planning/prep for special outside of school events.

- Supporting Teachers and Staff:
 - Sometimes all that is needed to show your school pride and support is to support and back-up your child's classroom teacher; not talking negatively about your child's teacher around your child, assisting your child with homework and other assignments, attending school academic and social events, and making sure that your child attends school each day and on time. Communication and positive relationships between home and school make a real difference for families, students, and staff.

- Fundraising:
 - From time to time, most schools will ask for financial support. This support may directly benefit the school, but may also benefit various non-profit "good deeds" organizations.
 - PTA fundraisers are also important to the school community. These more formal fundraising opportunities help raise funds for more extensive school projects.

- School-based PTA membership
 - Each school in Coventry has an active PTA membership committed to working with school administration towards common goals and vision. Meetings are held monthly and volunteers are always needed to coordinate and/or assist with many social events including dances, family dinners, fundraisers, etc. Family membership is inexpensive and all members are able to vote in key elections and on the PTA budget.

*** PLEASE SEE YOUR PRINCIPAL/PTA LEADERSHIP FOR A SPECIFIC LIST OF SCHOOL-BASED OPPORTUNITIES**

Coventry Public Schools

Volunteer Statement of Confidentiality and Volunteer Liability and Indemnification

I understand that in the course of my association with Coventry Public Schools, I share the responsibility for maintaining the confidentiality of any employee or student information that I may have available to me.

As a volunteer, I will strive for the highest standards, and be committed to the idea that my work will benefit students.

I understand that in the performance of my duties, I am not to discuss academic or other confidential information regarding students or employees with anyone except as required by law. Any breach of confidentiality will be carefully reviewed and, if substantiated, could result in termination of volunteer involvement with Coventry Public Schools, and may result in legal action against me.

As a volunteer I shall at all times indemnify and hold harmless Coventry Public Schools and its officers, agents and employees from any and all claims, damages and expenses arising out of injuries to persons or damage to property which resulted from any intentional acts, omissions or negligent acts by me as a volunteer to the extent that the school District's policy of insurance does not cover the acts and omissions of the volunteer.

I acknowledge that I have read and understand the volunteer confidentiality policy and the volunteer liability and indemnification policy and that by signing this form I am agreeing to adhere to these policies. I further acknowledge that I have read the Coventry Public Schools Volunteer Handbook and agree to abide by its contents.

Volunteer Signature

Date

School Principal Signature

Date