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# *Lakeridge Elementary School Volunteer Handbook*

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## **Mercer Island School District Mission Statement**

MISD, in partnership with the community, commits to providing that all students will:

- Be prepared to thrive in life;
- Progress academically, intellectually and personally;
- Graduate prepared to complete and succeed in post-secondary education and work; and
- Be inspired to contribute to society.

## **Lakeridge Elementary Mission Statement**

EXPLORING TODAY, PREPARING FOR TOMORROW

Our mission is to give all students at Lakeridge the opportunity to gain knowledge, grow in wisdom, develop confidence and become creative, compassionate and critical thinkers, and to ensure that all children, regardless of level of ability or individual needs, will have the opportunity to reach for, achieve and extend their potential in a changing world.

## **Lakeridge PTA Mission Statement**

The Lakeridge PTA strives to support and enrich our children's academic and social education experience.

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## **Be a Volunteer!**

Volunteering is the giving of time, energy, and concern. It is an honorable and cherished responsibility of our society. We thank all volunteers for their participation and dedication to the students of Lakeridge Elementary School. Together we can make each child's years in the Mercer Island School District a solid foundation upon which to build a lifetime of successful achievement.

## **Ways That Parents Can Volunteer**

There are many ways parents and/or caregivers are invited to volunteer, some of which include,

- PTA Events/Activities and Volunteer positions
- Helping children in the classroom (e.g. reading, math, art, science, computer lab)
- Field Trip Chaperones
- Parent Editors
- Correcting papers
- Tutoring
- Copying and preparing materials
- Computer tasks/web sites
- Assisting with career talks

For a listing of PTA Volunteer opportunities, please go to the Lakeridge PTA website at <http://www.misd.k12.wa.us/schools/lr/lrpta/pages/volunteers.html>. For classroom focused volunteer opportunities, speak directly with your child's teacher.

## **Volunteer Program Benefits**

Volunteers have always been an important resource in our school district. A strong volunteer program benefits teachers, students, parents and the community at large. Some of the positive effects of a strong volunteer program include:

### **Teachers**

- Increased time to teach and plan
- Increased opportunity to enrich the curriculum
- Reduction in discipline problems

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Volunteer hours contribute favorably towards many grant applications.

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## **Volunteer Program Benefits Continued...**

### **Students**

- Increased individual attention
- Increased motivation
- Increased ability to relate to adults
- Increased respect for adults

### **Parents**

- Increased understanding of the education process
- Increased understanding of your child's learning process
- Increased familiarity with the staff and community
- Opportunity to practice and build skills
- Opportunity to share expertise and talents

### **Community**

- Increased knowledge and appreciation of the education process

## **Volunteer Training (mandatory)**

To comply with the MISD's Board Governance Rules, Lakeridge requires all volunteers attend a 45-minute Volunteer Training program prior to helping in the classroom. Attendance is mandatory *prior to assisting in the classroom*.

The sessions are held during new student orientation in August, the first two weeks of school and as needed throughout the year for new families. When you have completed the orientation/training session, you will be issued a volunteer badge that is worn while at school.

## **Background Check**

The state has approved legislation requiring school districts to have volunteers complete Background Check forms if they are working with students. All volunteers are required to complete a Background Check information form. This form can be attained on-line or from Lakeridge's front desk.

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## **Sign In & Sign Out**

All volunteers must sign in and out at the main office. As a safety measure, it allows the school to know who is or who has been in the building. (Our insurance requires the school to know who is in the building at all times.) Signing in also helps the school to find you if there is an emergency. Lastly, signing “in” and “out” enables us to collect and tabulate volunteer hours necessary for many grant applications.

**Also, when signing in, please wear your volunteer badge or a visitor’s tag each and every time you visit.** This will help everyone, including students, to get to know you more quickly and allows the school to know that you have a reason to be there.

## **Volunteer Role**

A volunteer provides support not only to the students, but also to the teacher, the nature of which is based on the discretion of the teacher for whom you are volunteering. As a parent, you have a unique perspective and ability to understand students. However, as a volunteer, you must act in that capacity first and foremost.

Volunteers must not lend money to students, and shall not indulge the children with gifts, food, or presents.

## **Professionalism**

Although the job is voluntary, the commitment is professional. Besides maintaining an attitude of mutual respect and confidence, you should become familiar with school and classroom policies and practices. Working with the teaching staff requires *flexibility* and a willingness to follow directions.

Please be on time! Volunteers’ timeliness affects a teacher’s ability to execute their daily plan. *(Please note: Arrive early for field trips and siblings are not allowed on field trips).*

Remember, too, that teacher’s desks are private! Please do not go through their papers or files.

## **Dependability**

Students, teachers and staff members rely on the services performed by volunteers. If you are unable to volunteer on your scheduled day, please make every effort to find a substitute. If you cannot find a substitute, notify the teacher or staff member within 24 hours of your scheduled shift. Room parents may be helpful in identifying substitutes.

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## **Confidentiality**

Volunteers must protect the teachers' and students' right to privacy.

Once a volunteer begins to work in a school setting, s/he becomes privy to knowledge about children's behavior patterns, academic ability, emotional maturity, relationships with others, etc. In some cases, information of this nature is imparted so that the volunteer can work more effectively with the child. In other cases, it is simply acquired in the course of frequent contact in the school.

In addition, volunteers are in a position to learn more about staff members than would normally be learned from their public image. One also forms personal opinions about the professional competency of individual teachers and staff.

**Regardless of how a volunteer comes by this type of information and/or develops personal opinions, it is considered privileged and, must be kept personal and private.**

A volunteer is expected to,

1. Never share opinions about behavior and/or academic program of students.
2. Never share personal information about the student or student's family with other people.
3. Never share specific information with a parent about their child based on your classroom experience, whether positive or negative.
4. Never share knowledge and/or opinions about the professional competency of individual teachers and staff in the community or with anyone who has no legitimate need to know.
5. Never make comments harmful to the reputation of any pupil, professional or other volunteer.

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.

If problems develop, the line of communication regarding a situation in the school is always first with the staff member concerned and then, if necessary, with the principal.

## **Schedule Teacher Conference Time**

Important conversations deserve preparation and dedicated time. If you need to speak with a teacher about your child, schedule a mutually agreeable time outside of class-time.

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## **Respectful Behavior**

Volunteers are expected to exhibit behavior that is respectful and assumes equality toward members of the same and opposite sex, and all ethnic/racial and religious groups. Volunteers shall not make any comments that can be construed as racist, sexist, or bigoted. Volunteers shall respect cultural differences and attempt to broaden their knowledge and understanding of human relations.

Volunteers shall avoid promoting any commercial products, religious doctrines or beliefs, as well as any political candidates (this includes political buttons) or parties.

## **Discipline**

Allow the teachers to discipline children. If there are incidents of misbehavior, it is the teacher's job to deal with them. As a volunteer, it is helpful to be specific about rules and expectations with students. Keep limits and boundaries in place. Consistently and calmly work with students taking a neutral stance, restating rules and expectations and offering reasonable choices.

## **Parking**

Be sure to park in the lower parking lot near the southern play fields. The lot behind the multi-purpose room is reserved for staff. Never leave your car, even for a minute, in the loading zone or bus area.

## **Refrain from Hallway Chatter**

Chatting in the hallway is disruptive to teachers and students. If you need to talk with another parent, it is best to do this quietly near the office. The PTA office is also available for use if not scheduled for a meeting.

## **Preschoolers/Siblings**

Please do not bring preschoolers or siblings when you volunteer. Exceptions may be made for classroom parties. Check with your teacher.

## **Coats/Purses**

Don't bring anything of value to school. Coats, purses, umbrellas, etc. may be kept in the classroom where you are working.

## **Coffee**

There are no coffee facilities for volunteers. Feel free to bring your own *if it will not interfere with your volunteer duties.*

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## **Smoking**

There is no smoking on school property.

## **Dogs**

No dogs allowed on campus. Thank you for being respectful of those with allergies, and for helping to keep our play areas clean. (It's also the law: MI ordinance 7.04.110 on lawful conduct.)

## **Telephone/Cellular Phones**

There are phones in the PTA office and the workroom for emergency and school-related calls. You may ask your teacher if you can use her/his phone when necessary. Please turn off cell phones or place on silent mode. You may leave the school office number in case of emergencies.

## **Lost and Found**

The lost and found is located in the hallway by the chess trophy case.

## **Workroom**

The workroom contains the copy machine, die cutter, laminator, and paper supplies. Training will be offered in the use of this equipment. If you need help finding something, please ask someone in the front office.

Sometimes there can be a lot of demand for the copy machine. Priority is given first to teachers, then to paraprofessionals, and finally to volunteers. If you are using the machine and a teacher needs it, please make it available to her/him. If you are copying for a teacher please let others in the workroom know.

Be sure to clean up the workroom after you use it. If you leave it messy, the teachers have to clean it.

## **Restrooms**

Please use the adult restrooms located near the teachers lounge and workroom. An adult restroom is also located in the west wing of the school.

## **Faculty Lounge/Meeting Rooms**

The faculty lounge is for staff use only. It is important that staff have a place to go where they can speak privately with each other. If you need a place to work for a few minutes, you are welcome to use the PTA office. If you need to reserve a room for a meeting, check with Peggy in the front office to see what is available and complete a facilities use form.

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## **Emergency Procedures**

If there is a fire, earthquake, “Lock-In”, “Lock-Out” drill or emergency exercise of any kind, please follow your class and do as the teacher instructs the students.

## **Field Trip Specifics**

Fieldtrips can be especially challenging. Teachers recommend that volunteers,

- Act as an authority figure.
- Realize your 1<sup>st</sup> responsibility is to help, NOT socialize.
- Impart NO special favors.
- Abide and enforce the parameters set forth by the teacher.

## **If You Need Help**

If you have questions, concerns, or just want to talk about your volunteer assignment, please talk with your child’s teacher, the staff member you are working with, or one of the PTA Executive Committee members.

*This handbook produced with Lakeridge PTA funds.*