



Kaleidoscope Charter School  
District #4118

Handbook for Volunteers

*Our Mission*

Kaleidoscope Charter School provides an innovative service-learning, project-based education in which students, families, staff, and the larger community contribute to an environment of dynamic learning and achievement for children and youth.

## **Volunteers in Education Position Statement Adopted by the State Board of Education**

A critical issue in today's schools is the proper utilization of services of volunteers. If the service of volunteers is to be effectively and efficiently utilized, then relevant decisions must be made by the professional who is being assisted. Volunteers serve in a supportive role to extend educational opportunities so more can be done within time and budget without displacing paid personnel.

Within the school organization, each person has a role to play.

- A. The responsibility of the volunteer is to assist the teacher or other professional staff by performing tasks, which are assigned and/or directed by the staff person. These tasks cannot infringe upon the professional responsibilities reserved for teachers and other professionals, but volunteers may assist the staff in meeting these responsibilities. Volunteers should be regarded as a flexible resource, specifically requested by, directed by, and evaluated by the professional staff and building administrator.
- B. The volunteer should understand that the teacher is responsible for all professional functions such as:
  - 1. The organization and management of the classroom.
  - 2. The planning of teaching strategies.
  - 3. The direction of learning experiences of all assigned students.
  - 4. Requesting volunteer services to meet the needs of his/her class and/or individual students within the classroom.
  - 5. Providing adequate supervision of volunteers and assigning duties within the limits of the volunteer's competence.
  - 6. Safeguarding privacy rights of students.
- C. Other staff members, such as the secretary, may also work with volunteers. While the exact responsibilities of persons in such fields will differ somewhat from those of the teaching staff, the relationship between the professional and the volunteer should be governed by the same guidelines as those cited for teachers and volunteers.

## **Kaleidoscope Charter School Volunteers**

Kaleidoscope Charter School, KCS, welcomes volunteers and appreciates the valuable role they play in our school. The skills, talents, and expertise of volunteers provide wonderful support services for teachers, students and other staff.

There are many different types of volunteer opportunities available in our school including the following:

- Providing support services in the classroom.
- Assisting individuals or small groups of students.
- Providing support services in the cafeteria and other areas.
- Assisting in the library or computer lab.
- Assisting in the office.

Volunteers work at KCS at the request of teachers or staff to supplement the educational program. Guidelines cover the interaction of volunteers with students while in the school building or on school grounds.

## **Scheduling**

In order to effectively utilize volunteers, schools have procedures for scheduling volunteers for classrooms and other needs. The school and/or teacher needs to know when to expect the volunteer's help. Whether volunteering is occasional or on a regular basis, it is important to coordinate a volunteer's schedule with the school or teacher.

It takes time to plan for the effective use of volunteers. Random volunteering may not be effective if it frequently interferes with the instructional plan for students. A volunteer may be disappointed if he/she expects to spontaneously volunteer services and finds that assistance is not needed. **In order to make volunteer time a meaningful experience, it is best for a volunteer to call ahead and schedule time.**

## **Volunteer Responsibilities**

Volunteers are an important part of the total educational program. The responsibilities of a volunteer are to:

- Support teachers and other staff.
- Assist in maintaining a safe, orderly environment.
- Be aware of and follow building and district procedures.
- Inform/report incidents that affect the health, safety, or welfare of students, teachers, other staff or self.

It is important to remember that children are growing, developing people who explore and experiment with behaviors. Children need guidance and understanding; they need help to feel good, positive, and successful in making decisions and choices. Younger students may need boundaries set for them. Encouragement, praise, and reinforcement of positive choices will help to enhance self-esteem and self-management.

Following are some guidelines for helping students reach their maximum potential:

- The volunteer should be friendly and enthusiastic – it's contagious!
- The volunteer needs to accept students as they are.
- Techniques used by the teacher should be observed and modeled.
- The volunteer needs to be caring and patient in allowing the students to think and form their answers while, at the same time, keeping them on task.
- Students need to be encouraged and affirmed. The volunteer should use positive comments that will allow the students to feel good about themselves.
- Students should be called by name at each opportunity.
- Students should be addressed in a quiet, controlled, and non-condescending manner.
- The volunteer needs to keep a sense of humor and remember that they are working with young people.

## **Encountering Student Behavior Issues**

When working with students, volunteers may encounter student behavior issues which create a need to act, react, or report. The following suggestions pertain to student behavior and are both "common sense" in nature as well as founded in legal intent.

- Volunteers are to refer all discipline problems to the teacher or staff person in charge. The responsibility for discipline rests with the professional staff of the school.

- Volunteers need to be familiar with the discipline plan for the school and the individual classroom where service is being provided.
- Safety is of prime importance. Contact needs to be made with a professional staff member immediately if physical control is necessary to restrain a child from hurting herself/himself, others, or property.
- Corporal punishment is illegal. Students can be and need to be reinforced and redirected without physical contact.

### **Interacting With Students**

Volunteers will meet many delightful students and will enjoy working with them. However, volunteers should not telephone students, visit them at their homes, or meet students off school grounds without permission from the parents, and/or the teacher. In addition, KCS recommends that when working with students individually or in small groups, volunteers must work in a highly visible area.

### **“In Loco Parentis”**

Teachers are by law considered “in loco parentis” – in place of the parent—while working with students. This gives teachers some decision-making latitude in what is best for children. Teachers are held accountable for their students – whether those students are with a volunteer out of the classroom or not. Volunteers always work under the direct supervision of teachers and administrators.

### **KCS’s Responsibility**

There may be times when, for the good of the volunteer as well as for the good of the students, a volunteer may be asked not to work in classrooms with students. KCS has the right and responsibility to refuse volunteer services if those services are or could be a cause of disruption in the educational process.

### **Liability**

Volunteers in the schools are not covered by KCS’s insurance. It is the professional staff who is held responsible by law for the decisions that are made regarding the instruction and management of students. For this reason, volunteers must always work under the direct supervision of teachers and administrators.

### **Working with the Volunteer’s Own Child(ren)**

Volunteers who are also parents of children at KCS will not necessarily be assigned to work with their own child(ren). If a volunteer does work with his/her own child(ren), it is important that the child understands the difference between the volunteer’s role at school and the parental role at home.

### **Building Resources**

Volunteers are responsible for the care of building materials and resources during programs. Resources should be treated with respect. Rooms and materials should be returned to their proper order.

### **Signing-In**

The volunteer needs to sign-in in the front office each time work is done at the school. For student safety and liability reasons, office staff needs to know who is in the building and where to locate volunteers in case of an emergency. The school provides volunteer identification badges and it is necessary for the volunteer to wear the provided identification and return it to the front office when finished.

### **Being Dependable**

The volunteer needs to be prompt and reliable. When a volunteer is unable to provide services for a scheduled time, the volunteer needs to call the school office as far in advance as possible. Remember, the teacher plans for and expects volunteers at the scheduled time... and so do the students!

**Being Discrete**

A major tenet of all school volunteer programs is confidentiality. The Data Privacy Act covers all students and means that volunteers must not share information about a child with other people. Being around students, and perhaps becoming privy to student data or information, creates a greater need to respect the Data Privacy Act and to not talk about or discuss specific students with other adults or students – that's the law.

**Dress**

We ask that all volunteers dress in a professional - casual manner.

**Kaleidoscope Charter School  
appreciates the time, skills, and talents  
offered by volunteers.**



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