

# Barnesville Elementary School

## Volunteer Handbook



2024-2025 School Year

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## Principal's Message

Dear Volunteer:

Thank you for your interest in volunteering at Barnesville Elementary School. Reaching the district's goal of increased academic achievement for ALL students requires a community-wide effort. In addition to the commitment of our administrators, teachers, and support staff, we must have strong community partnerships. School volunteers play a crucial role in this effort.

Our volunteers serve students in a variety of ways. Volunteers are true partners in our schools. We cannot be successful without you. Your dedication to our school helps us increase the quality and effectiveness of education our children deserve.

This handbook provides guidelines for you to follow. I hope these guidelines provide you with some direction so that you feel as if your time spent here has been worthwhile. ***Please read the entire contents of the handbook, sign the back page, and return the page to the staff member with whom you will be working.***

On behalf of the staff at Barnesville Elementary School, I commend you for your commitment to students, and we look forward to working closely with you as we unite to serve our children.

Sincerely,

Zack Powell

Elementary Principal

***Helping children is what teaching, parenting, and volunteering is all about.***

We are all part of a team:

**Volunteers** donate time to help students, teachers, and staff. They work under the direction of the principal and staff members. By inviting parents and community members to volunteer, as a team we can

- Relieve teachers of many non-teaching duties and tasks
- Assist teachers in providing more individual help and instruction to students
- Strengthen relationships and understanding between schools and the community

**School Staff Members** work cooperatively with school volunteers, inform volunteers of school policy and procedures, and strengthen the school-community relationship.

**Parent Groups** operate independently from, but within the context of the school. Parent groups work with the principal, teachers, and staff to organize, support, and fundraise for extracurricular and enrichment activities for students.

**School principals** have the final authority over what happens in the school building, including the volunteer program and parent group activities. Principals are responsible for setting guidelines for volunteers working in the school, developing a positive working relationship with volunteers, and encouraging staff members to utilize volunteer help.

## **How Do You Get Started?**

If you want to volunteer in the school or join a parent group, contact the classroom teacher, the president of the PTO/PTA, or the school directly. Let the school know you want to help and how much time you have available to volunteer. If you have any other questions, please contact the individual school.

**Choose the way you want to volunteer. Choose what is right for you.**

- ✓ Volunteering does not mean you have to come every day.
- ✓ Volunteering does not mean you have to stay at school all day long.
- ✓ Volunteering does not mean you have to volunteer all year.
- ✓ Volunteering does mean you care.
- ✓ Volunteering does mean you want to be involved in your child's school experience.
- ✓ Volunteering does mean you are committed to doing your part to make our school and community a better place to live and grow.

## **Volunteer Responsibilities**

### **Signing in and out**

Please sign in and out of the building when you volunteer. Ask the school secretary if you need help.

### **Identification**

In an effort to increase safety and security, all volunteers need to wear a school visitor's badge at all times when in the building. Adults not wearing proper identification will be directed to the school office.

All volunteers shall operate under the direction of a licensed staff member and shall be supervised while working with students. This applies to parents as well as non-parent volunteers and is for the safety of students, staff, and volunteers.

Volunteers who have or will have unsupervised access to children on a regular basis must have a recent criminal record check on file.

### **Confidentiality**

Volunteers must protect the teachers' and students' right to privacy. You may not disclose school information or personal matters which you may have overheard. Discuss student problems or concerns only with the teacher, staff member with whom you are working, or principal.

To help, here are some sample issues that can arise.

**“Wasn't it cute when John . . .”** No matter how innocent, cute, funny, or charming a classroom event may be, it is not okay to repeat stories about students. What happens in the classroom stays in the classroom.

**When parents ask you questions . . .** Many parents are tempted to ask you about how their children behave at school. This is especially likely if you are friends outside school. It is not okay to put volunteers in this awkward position. Don't ask! Don't tell! (If parents do have concerns, encourage them to talk to the class teacher.)

**When you see or overhear something . . .** As a volunteer, you might see or hear things from staff or students which they would not want to have repeated outside the school. What happens in the classroom (or the hall, or the gym) stays at school. (If you have concerns about something you see or hear, please talk to the class teacher or principal if appropriate.)

**When students tell you about their family, pet, vacation, etc. . . .** As students become comfortable working with you, they might decide to share something personal. You need to keep this information private, even if you know the child and their family outside of school.

**When you have a concern . . .** If a student tells you something that causes you concern, tell the classroom teacher. If you observe something that troubles you, tell the classroom teacher. The teacher is in the best position to deal with the issue appropriately.

Do be respectful of teachers' personal workspaces and the confidentiality of the materials in their classrooms.

### **Professionalism**

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

If working in your child's classroom, try not to single him/her out for attention.

Don't distract teachers while they are teaching. If you have questions, wait until there is an appropriate moment.

### **Dependability & Punctuality**

Students, teachers, and staff members rely on the services performed by volunteers. We ask that you contact the school if you are unable to volunteer on your scheduled day. Arrive ahead of time for your volunteer service.

*As a courtesy to the learning process, please turn off or set to vibrate your cell phone while in the school building.*

### **Parking**

Volunteers may park in the small lot on Church Street or in the gravel lot on Broadway.

### **Liability Coverage**

Barnesville Exempted School District volunteers are covered by the District's liability insurance while performing approved, school volunteer service. Workers compensation is not provided. Your own health insurance should be considered your primary coverage should an injury occur.

Should an accident occur, the volunteer should report the accident to the principal as soon as possible. An accident report will be filled out.

## **Teacher/Staff – Volunteer Checklist**

**When a teacher or staff member and volunteer initially meet, they should discuss the following:**

1. Confidentiality
2. Days and times the volunteer will work.
3. Procedures he/she will use to keep in touch (i.e. informal meetings, e-mail or telephone).
4. Alternate plans for days when the teacher is absent and a substitute is in charge of the class.
5. Procedure to follow if volunteer will be absent.
6. How the teacher will communicate the assignments to the volunteer (folder, note, or other means).
7. Where room materials are kept and the location of a convenient workplace.
8. The teacher's own classroom policies, procedures, and rules such as management system, reinforcement techniques, and where the volunteer can leave personal belongings.
9. Volunteers should follow teacher and staff instruction during fire and earthquake drills as well as lockdown procedures.
10. Volunteers should intervene if the safety of a child is in question; however, volunteers should not discipline students. Refer any disciplinary concerns to the classroom teacher.
11. The location of the closest restroom.

**If you will be working in academic areas with a student or students, the teacher and the volunteer should also discuss the following:**

12. Pertinent background information about the student(s).
13. Special needs and strengths of the student(s) and skills that need to be developed.
14. Tips for working with the student(s), such as learning style and reinforcement techniques.
15. Alternate plans if student(s) is absent.



## **Working with Students**

As you observe and work in the classroom, you will notice that instruction is delivered in many ways. Changes in technology, new jobs, and career requirements have changed the way teachers teach and students learn.

### **Children learn by**

- Doing, not observing
- Asking questions and searching for answers
- Discovering, experimenting, and repeating experiences which build confidence
- Using all of their senses whenever possible

### **Volunteers can help students by**

- A relaxed, friendly attitude creates the best atmosphere for learning. ***Smile!***
- Learning their names and using them often.
- Listening carefully to the students.
- Accepting students as individuals.
- Being patient. Refer disciplinary problems to the teacher or an administrator when necessary.

### 36 Ways to Say "Good Job"

Wow!!	Good for you
Super	That's right.
Excellent	That's amazing.
Good job	Great!
Terrific	Good thinking
Beautiful	Way to go
Marvelous	Congratulations!
Nice going	That looks great
Fantastic	Now you've got it!!
Very good	That's really nice.
Much better	Keep it up.

Thank you very much.

I'm so proud of you!

You're working hard.

That's a good point.

That was first class work.

Keep up the good work.

That's the right answer.

You're on the right track.

You're really working hard today.

Now you've got the hang of it.

I knew you could do it!

I appreciate the way you are trying.

## **Volunteer Acknowledgement Form**

I have read the volunteer handbook and understand my responsibilities as a school volunteer.

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Signature

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Date

**Please return the completed form to the staff member with whom you will be working.**