



Rooftop's Volunteer Guide

A Volunteer's Parable

One day an elephant saw a hummingbird lying on its back with its tiny feet up in the air. "What are you doing?" asked the elephant. The hummingbird replied, "I heard that the sky might fall today, and so I am ready to help hold it up, should it fall." The elephant laughed cruelly. "Do you really think," he said, "that those tiny feet could help hold up the sky?" The hummingbird kept his feet up in the air, intent on his purpose, as he replied, "Not alone. But each must do what he can. And this is what I can do."

--Chinese Parable

Our Collective Responsibility

The Rooftop Community is our schools greatest asset. Through our shared values and goals, we collectively determine the kind of teaching and learning culture that best serves our children's academic and social needs. As a parent or guardian, you play a major role in helping ensure that the school and classroom climate is student centered and that it fosters respect for all including our children, their families, their teachers, and the school staff.

Rooftop's Commitment to Volunteers

Parent volunteers are highly valued and appreciated, as they have played an essential role in the daily operation of the school by supporting classroom teachers in organizing and managing instructional tasks, assisting administrators in their roles, fund-raising to support supplemental and essential academic programs, and much more. With an understanding of the key role that our volunteers play, the Rooftop School promises the following to our parent/guardian volunteers:

- Our **expressed respect and appreciation**;
- **Clear expectations**, meaning that you will have an assigned task or position that best matches what you can do and enjoy doing;
- **Clear guidelines** (as outlined in this handbook) about the limits of your role as a volunteer;
- Our **active support** throughout your volunteer experience;
- **Transparency** about the volunteer program by offering opportunities to evaluate and share success with and concerns about your experience so that we can progressively improve the program.

The Volunteer's Commitment to Rooftop

Our mission at Rooftop School is to use the arts to empower all students to become effective problem solvers. Our goal is to nurture students to become academically engaged and socially responsible members of the community who face challenges with optimism and confidence. We believe that when the arts are thoughtfully integrated into the academic program, students' opportunities to think critically and problem-solve creatively increase significantly. As a school volunteer, your role is to help us succeed in our mission, more specifically to help our students achieve their academic and social goals. By agreeing to volunteer in the school and in classrooms you are committing to the following:

- Enrich the school academic and social programs by sharing your experiences and expertise that align with our mission and goals;
- Become an classroom ambassador to the greater Rooftop school by projecting a positive attitude about your experience as a classroom volunteer;
- Strength the school-community partnership through positive and constructive participation as a member of our school community;

- Enhance student learning by reinforcing the curriculum-based knowledge and skills that are the focus of student instruction;
- Offer constructive feedback to improve the quality of the school experience of children at Rooptop;
- Help nurture students in developing a strong self-concept by being a compassionate and attentive role model who regularly celebrates individual student achievements and accomplishments;
- Agree to follow school and classroom rules and policies;
- Sign in/ out on volunteer roster in classroom.

Volunteer Program Goals

- To provide individualized educational support to students;
- To enrich student's learning experiences through activities and resources that you bring to the school and classroom;
- To assist teachers with classroom management, thereby providing more time for instruction;
- To contribute to a more informed community which actively supports the school program;
- To model the importance of school and education for your child and all children.

Code of Conduct

- (1) **Reliability, responsibility, and role modeling are key volunteer traits.**
 - a. The teachers, staff, and students depend on you and make their daily plans with the understanding that you will be present at the designated place and time. We expect our volunteers to arrive on time, preferably before the beginning of class.
 - b. The atmosphere of the classroom is heavily influenced by how the adults model the behavior that students must follow. Showing compassion, care, dedication, organization, and professionalism will positively influence the behavior of students. Remember to always conduct yourself with dignity, courtesy, and consideration for everyone.
 - c. **Do not drop-in without prior arrangement with teacher.** Please do not just drop in to offer help unless the teacher says this is okay. Doing so can be disruptive and can cause serious classroom management issues. You must prearrange with the teacher who will make his/her lesson plan based on volunteer availability. Teachers usually do not have time to put together work for you while also having to manage a full classroom of children.
- (2) **Address concerns promptly and productively by using appropriate school and district channels.**
 - a. If there is an issue that arises with another adult (e.g., teacher, staff, or parent), it is important that you make every effort to directly discuss this issue with the adult in private. Remember that our goal is to diffuse a brewing conflict and not to escalate; if you need time to reflect on the issue before approaching the adult, please do so. If you are uncomfortable speaking with the person, please take the matter to the teacher or principal. It is absolutely important that you show respect for the other person by avoiding discussion with other school or community members.
- (3) **Volunteers may not "discipline" students**
 - a. As a volunteer, you are allowed to model appropriate behavior to students either by demonstrating correct behavior or through oral prompts. However, not every student will correct his/her behavior based on what you model. Whereby, in order to ensure the safety of children, it may be necessary to attempt to obstruct a child's movement, you are not allowed to physically restrain a child, use other physical

disciplinary action, or use verbal reprimand to discipline a child. Only a teacher and school staff is authorized to implement discipline protocol.

- b. If a situation occurs between two student while they are at home (off school grounds), parents and/or students involved should first try to resolve this issue while off school grounds;
- c. If a situation between two children occurs at school – whether it involves your child or other children, please notify the teacher and let the school officials take care of the discipline. You are not allowed to discipline your own child while on school grounds.

(4) Volunteers are here for all of the classroom’s children

Remember that you volunteering for all children, not just your child. Volunteers help ensure that the classroom and school as a whole develops and maintain a healthy social and academic learning environment.

(5) Familiarize yourself with the SFUSD Student and Family Handbook

The handbook is a 148-page document of guiding principles for academic excellence, and the rights and responsibilities of students and their families.

(6) You are not allowed to share confidential information about a student or staff member with others, including other parents, and the student or their family. All inquiries about a child’s progress or problems must be directed to the classroom teacher. *Please remember that volunteering to work in the classroom is a privilege – not a right. Violations of confidentiality may cause school authorities to suspend that privilege.*

- a. As a volunteer, you will become privy to information about students and their families that is confidential. Sometimes, but not always, this information is intentionally shared with you so that you are best able to support our students. Sources for information information can include written documents (i.e., students academic records, classroom or achievement tests results, awards and honors, attendance record, family financial information, conference reports), overheard conversations (e.g., student-to-teacher, student-to-student, or inter-personnel conversations), your personal observation of students in the classroom or school grounds (i.e., social or behavioral action). All of these are confidential and you have a legal and moral obligation to never discuss them with other non-school staff or other individuals who do not have a legitimate need to know the information.
- b. It is important to emphasize that both the students and school staff have the right that expect that incidences involving them are not shared with individuals outside of the school community without being passed through the right legal channels. Only school staff members (i.e., teachers, administrators, and school staff members) are authorized to receive written or oral information about students and their families.
- c. **Most people do not want anyone saying anything about their child. Please respect student and parent rights.** Parents, friends or community members may, in good faith, ask you questions about the progress or problems of a student enrolled in the classroom where you volunteer. Discussions about individual students, teachers or staff, their actions and/or their abilities is considered a breach of professional conduct and may be grounds for exclusion from our volunteer program.

Volunteer Checklist

When you begin your volunteer experience, please discuss the following with the teacher:

- Signing in and out of the building;
- Your schedule;
- School-wide rules for adults and students;

- The teacher’s classroom policies, procedures and rules, as well as his/her management system, methods of reinforcing students, and emergency procedures;
- What your specific duties will be, materials you should use, and strategies to use when working with students;
- How and when to contact the teacher about your volunteer schedule;
- Alternate plans for days when the teacher is absent and a substitute is in charge of the class;
- Procedures for taking students out of the classroom for individual work;
- Your special interests, talents, and skills.

Suggestions for starting a volunteer experience

- (1) Meet with the teacher or staff member before you start**
 - a. Go over “Initial Checklist”
 - b. Ask questions of the teacher if you are unclear about something
 - c. Keep communication open
- (2) Get to know the school grounds**
 - a. Know the location and phone number of the school office
 - b. Know the location of important rooms such as the library, cafeteria, office, bathrooms, etc.
 - c. Find out where to park (do not park in neighbors driveways)
- (3) Classroom volunteers should spend some time observing the class**
 - a. Become familiar with classroom procedures and routines;
 - b. Identify the location of supplies in the classroom
- (4) Establish positive relationship with the students.**
 - a. Be friendly; let them know you are glad to be there!
 - b. Be encouraging to students.