

**STEVENSON RANCH
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**



**VOLUNTEER
HANDBOOK**

Principal Mrs. Stenroos

Stevenson Ranch Elementary School

Dear Volunteer:

Welcome to Stevenson Ranch Elementary School! We are thankful that you have chosen to volunteer your services to our students. With the support of volunteers such as you, the opportunity to meet the individual needs of each child is greatly increased.

The Stevenson Ranch staff encourages parents/guardians and other members of the community to share their time and abilities with our students. Community volunteers in our school enrich the educational program and strengthen our school's relationship with homes, businesses, public agencies and private institutions.

The education of youth takes a whole community. Caring members of our community bring new energies and resources into our schools. All over the country schools are drawing support from their communities through the efforts of volunteers who work in our schools, become career mentors, contribute goods and supplies, and support our schools financially through donations, endowments and grants.

This handbook is designed to provide practical information that will assist you in your volunteer experience. It is our goal that the time you spend with our students be worthwhile for you as well as the students. If you have any questions that have not been addressed in this handbook, please feel free to call Stevenson Ranch School at 661-291-4070 or seek out a member of our incredible school community.

Once again, thank you for helping make a difference in the lives of students at Stevenson Ranch Elementary School.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Stenroos & Mrs. Zamperin
Principal Asst. Principal

Goals for Volunteers

- To provide individualized educational assistance to students
- To enrich children's experiences through activities, resources, and the gift of your time
- To assist teachers, thus 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

Volunteer Opportunities at Stevenson Ranch Elementary School

- Working in the classrooms
- Tutoring individual students
- Literacy programs
- Clerical support
- Classroom presentations
- Library Media Center
- After School Enrichment Program

Classroom and school program volunteers are always welcome. If you are a parent who would like to share in a special project, or be a regular face in a classroom, please speak to your teacher to see if you can schedule time.

There are other opportunities for serving the Stevenson Ranch School community. Our wonderful Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) is always looking for volunteers to help plan and/or run programs. There is a wide range of involvement with PTO with something for everyone. Check the school calendar for meeting times.

Our School Site Council is a leadership group that is comprised of elected parents and school staff. The council serves an advisory capacity, assisting with the planning and assessing of school programs and budgetary decisions. Our SSC meetings are open to the public. Check the school calendar for meeting times.

Suggestions for Starting Your Volunteer Experience

The following suggestions should prove helpful in developing a successful partnership with our students and teachers:

1. Meet with the teacher or staff member before you start
 - a. Review the Initial Volunteer Checklist found below.
 - 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
3. If you are volunteering in a classroom, 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! Be encouraging to students.

Initial Volunteer Checklist

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

- Signing in and out of the building through the office and wearing a visitor badge
- Your schedule
- School-wide rules and which rules apply to adults as well as 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/staff member regarding a change in your schedule, etc. Parent Square or email are great options
- Alternate plans for days when the teacher is absent and a substitute is in charge of the class
- How the students will refer to you (Ms., Dr., Mrs., Mr., etc.)
- Procedures for taking students out of the classroom for individual work, if applicable
- Your special interests, talents, and skills
- Confirm scheduled school holidays and identify any pre-planned field trips that fall on your scheduled day(s)

Confidentiality

You will be serving in a unique capacity with our students. Sometimes students share things with a volunteer that they have not shared with anyone else. This information may be about private family matters, or information about themselves that they are entrusting to you. It is very important to the integrity of your work with students that you do not share this information with others. If you feel it is important that another person have this information, please talk to the teacher or a site administrator.

There may also be a time when a student shares something with you that causes you some concern, such as concern about their personal safety. If this should be the case, please immediately contact the **classroom teacher or a site administrator**. That person will know the proper procedure to deal with this situation.

Most parents do not want anyone saying anything about their child to others at the school or in the community. Please respect student and parent rights. If anything happens in the classroom, it is the teacher's responsibility to contact the parent.

Confidentiality also applies to pictures. Pictures can not be taken with your phone and then used personally. Taking photos for the yearbook is permitted. Again, this is a confidential matter for students!

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.

Expectations of Volunteers

- Please dress appropriately for working with children.
- Volunteers may not “discipline” another parent's student.
 - If a situation occurs between two children while at home, please talk with the parent or child while at home. Rules for adults are quite different when on school grounds.
 - 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 and parent notification when necessary.

- All volunteering should be pre-arranged with the teacher. Please do not “drop in” to offer help unless the teacher says this is okay. Lesson plans are commonly written around volunteer’s availability. Teachers will not have time to put together work for you to do with 25 or 30 children in the classroom.
- If you cannot serve at your scheduled time, please let the teacher know as soon as possible so lesson plans can be changed.
- Volunteers should not offer rides to a student unless they have made prior arrangements with that student’s parents and the parent of the child has notified the school.
- Cell phones should be off while you are working with children, except in case of emergencies. If you must take or make a call, please do so outside of the classroom. Talking on the phone is very distracting to the students. It can also give them the impression that what they are doing is not as important as the conversation.
- **Volunteers should make other arrangements for siblings and/or other children while volunteering in the classroom. Younger children and older siblings are distracting to the educational environment and are not allowed on campus during your volunteer session.**

Acquaint Yourself with our School Policies

School Workroom

Please help us stay within our supply budget by practicing economy and eliminating waste with materials available in the classroom and workroom. All materials are charged to our school budget. For example, whenever possible, please try to use butcher paper instead of the more costly construction paper. When using the die cut machine, please use construction paper scraps when possible.

Let us all work together by leaving the workroom neat and tidy after each use.

For liability reasons, only the staff operates laminating machines.

Please remember, children are not allowed in the workroom at any time for safety reasons.

Restrooms

Adult restrooms for volunteers are available in the primary and upper grade hallways or in the office. For security reasons adults are asked not to use student restrooms.

Fliers/Correspondence to Go Home with Students

Stevenson Ranch may send correspondence home with students, over email, and/or post information online. When sending any type of correspondence home to the parents, please follow these three very important rules:

- The principal must approve all correspondence, no matter how small. Please keep this in mind when you have a deadline. Give yourself enough time to have it approved. There may be changes or corrections needed, and it may take a couple of days before it can be reviewed.
- Fliers to send home should be delivered to the office staff who will distribute them. It would be helpful if you would count and label them for every class. Be sure to provide enough copies for each teacher and student.
- Fliers should not be taken to individual classrooms.

Working with an Individual Student

- Let the student know that you care about his/her thoughts and ideas
- Accept the student for who he or she is... don’t try to make them into something they are not

- Be encouraging
- Recognize and praise effort as well as products

Working with Groups of Students (small or large groups)

- Find out specifically what the teacher wants you to work on
- Indicate to the children how you would like to be addressed. The teacher may have preferences in this area.
- Discuss with the teacher ahead of time what classroom management techniques you should be using (if there is a need for discipline, find out how the teacher wants to handle this)
- Encourage all the students you work with, not just the ones with the correct answer
- Give each student the opportunity to answer.... Don't allow other students to jump in and answer

Learning Styles

Not everyone learns in the same way. Your learning style is the way you learn best. Most people use all of/ most of their senses when learning, however, one sense is generally dominant. Here are some descriptions and suggestions that may be helpful when working with students:

Auditory Learners

- They learn best through verbal demonstrations
- They prefer to talk about a situation and enjoy listening to themselves talk
- So,
 - Read instructions aloud to these learners
 - Have them repeat instructions to you
 - If the student is having difficulty understanding, rephrase instructions

Visual Learners

- They learn best by observing
- They prefer to watch demonstrations
- They like to write, doodle, and study their environment
- So,
 - Keep a copy of the written instructions, charts, etc. in front of these learners
 - Use visual cues for references (maps, charts, pictures)
 - Try having students draw or write problems on paper
 - Encourage students to use a homework notebook to remember assignments

Tactile Learners

- They learn best by doing
- They remember best by what they did, not by what they saw or heard
- They need many breaks when studying and are easily distracted when they are not able to move
- So,
 - Have students use manipulatives when possible, such as money or blocks with math problems

Characteristics of Children Ages 5-8 Years

Physical Characteristics

- Full of energy
- Tire easily
- Aware of physical limitations

- Increasing fine motor skills (using scissors, writing, etc.)
- Proud of accomplishments

Self-Image

- Self image based mostly on what they think others think of them
- Proud of their own accomplishments
- Eager to please adults they admire
- Becoming more independent of home and parents
- Thrive from positive reinforcement about specific things

Relationships with Others

- Try out new ways of getting along with others
- Imitate adults in attitudes and actions
- Sensitive about feelings, their own and others
- Aware of individual differences in physical appearance
- Still seek acceptance and encouragement from parents and teachers
- Beginning to develop a sense of right and wrong

Interest in Learning

- Beginning to draw conclusions from practical experience
- Still have private worlds of fantasy and wonder
- Eager to learn
- May surprise adults at times with their insight
- Eager to try new activities but frustrated by attempting things beyond their capabilities

Characteristics of Children Aged 8-12 Years

Physical Development

- Growing steadily; physically active
- Differ widely in physical maturity
- May be maturing sexually and having questions about their bodies
- Becoming increasingly interested in improving personal appearance

Self-Image

- Becoming more independent of adults
- Often frustrated when they do not measure up to their own expectations or those of others
- Want to make their own decisions
- Often mention what they would like to be when they grow up
- Want tasks to perform; want to be useful

Relationship with Others

- May be aware of the opposite gender but unsure of relationship; teasing often denotes attraction to opposite sex
- Have increased concern about right/wrong (example: lying, cheating)
- Developing more responsibility for forming and keeping friendships
- Interested and informed about people around the world
- Values of peer group generally accepted over those of adults

Interest in Learning

- Developing longer attention span
- Interested in current events
- Increased skills in reading and expressing ideas in writing
- Learning to think abstractly
- Often try to be perfectionists which can result in frustration

Volunteer Clearance Form

Stevenson Ranch Elementary School

Dear School Volunteer:

Thank you for your interest in volunteering in our school. The Newhall School District provides the following guidelines for all who wish to volunteer their time at our schools.

Volunteers may have direct contact with students and serve in classrooms, on field trips, in the office area, in the library, or on the play fields.

The District expects all volunteers to follow the following guidelines:

- 1) Volunteers check in at the office and wear a school-issued badge or sticker, every day, before providing service.
- 2) Volunteers are expected to
 - a. Arrive on time, with enough time to check in and be in position as expected
 - b. Turn off cell phones / place on silent mode while on campus
 - c. Dress appropriately
- 3) Volunteers may not bring non-school age children to school while serving on campus.
- 4) Volunteers may not take pictures of students for personal use.
- 5) Volunteers use adult restrooms only.
- 6) Volunteers must maintain confidentiality regarding information obtained during volunteer time.
- 7) Volunteers must respect the privacy of everyone in the room/school/playground/office.
- 8) Volunteers must address student behavior by asking politely, then informing the teacher or staff member if assistance is necessary.

The School/District reserves the right to revoke volunteer privileges at any time for infractions of the guidelines or other reasonable concerns that arise from the volunteer's behavior and/or actions on the school site or in the community.

By signing this form I represent that I have read and understand the Volunteer Handbook and the guidelines above.

Name (print): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Student Name: _____

Student's Teacher: _____