

CLASSROOM VOLUNTEERS

The TEAM program emphasizes parental involvement, teacher continuity and the goals of independence and life-long learning. The parents, teachers and students form a learning team.

Parents are asked to expand the learning time by providing a minimum of two hours of volunteer time per week, or its equivalent, over the course of the school year. Volunteer sign-ups occur during the Fall Potluck each year. Then, any changes are facilitated by the Volunteer Coordinator or by Classroom Coordinators.

Part of the parent responsibility when joining the TEAM program is to allow and trust the teacher to accomplish educational goals in styles that are most suitable to the individual teacher and group of children. This style may vary depending on the activity with which the child is involved.

Welcome to the TEAM community of learners!

- 1] To respect the student's right to privacy and keep confidential all personal information, a Confidentiality Form must be signed by all parents and volunteers. The form is retained for one-year. New forms are signed each fall by returning families and new families.
- 2] Volunteers are asked to be committed to the times/days they will be at school, or to.....
 - a] arrange for a substitute and/or.....
 - b] notify the classroom teacher. Changes in schedule need to be discussed with Room Coordinator, as well.
- 3] Getting acquainted with the children and establishing rapport are important to your success as volunteers.
- 4] Consistency in discipline and approach are important. It is also important to know when to refer a situation to a teacher.
- 5] Modeling self-acceptance is very important. The TEAM community of learners reflects all learning levels and includes children at different stages of social-emotional growth. Children grow and change; the challenging child of today may well be the shining star of tomorrow.
- 6] Accept and encourage each child as he/she is.
- 7] Receive training for your part in academic support.
- 8] Respect teachers' planning, instructional and personal time by conferencing only at pre-arranged times.

Communication Skills / Problem Solving

I-Messages are statements of the speaker's feelings in response to a situation or the behavior of others. The statement should not convey judgment or be a "put-down."

You may need to remind students to give **I-Messages**, and you may need to stand by while an **I-Message** is given and while the recipient responds.

I feel _____ (Name the feeling)
when _____ (Describe the situation/behavior)
Finish by stating what action you want to be taken in the future.

Example: David, I feel upset right now. I feel like I am not being treated respectfully when I'm shouted at. I would respond better if I was spoken to in a regular voice. Next time, I would like you to talk to respectfully.

When there is a problem....

- 1] Talk to the student aside from his/her peers, if possible.
- 2] State clearly what you are concerned about; what choice(s) he/she made that were inappropriate, and respectfully state what you want the student to do instead.
- 3] If you feel there is any disrespect, label that feeling by giving an I-Message.
- 4] Tell the student what his/her options are or ask him/her to tell you what options he/she feels are available to resolve the problem.
- 5] A **time-out** may be given or a "Take-5" standing by you or standing/sitting nearby.
- 6] Remember to **separate the deed from the doer**. We all make mistakes and poor choices at times.
- 7] If you don't feel the situation has been remedied, ask for assistance from a TEAM staff member.
- 8] Be sure the child knows you like him/her but do not approve of the behavior.

Getting Started with a small group - classroom or fieldtrip....

- 1] State your expectations and let the children know you will expect I-Messages and respectful problem-solving. Remind them that you are the "umpire" or "referee" and that you will respond in what you believe to be the best manner for each situation that arises.
- 2] Define any signals you will be using with the children to indicate....quiet....I've had enough.....disapproval....it's time for you to listen and for me to speak.
- 3] Remind the children they are to always be with their designated buddies and within your sight.

Avoid being alone with a child....Always be within sight of others or in an open area when talking alone to a student.

Pointers....

- !]) Avoid power struggles....allow for “think” or “cool down” time.
- 2]) Humor often works well to ease the tension of the moment or to help a child see the ridiculousness of a course of action he/she is about to take.

Words and Phrases....

Is that the *choice* you really want to make?

That's not an *option*.

Are you choosing to *be a part of the solution* or do you want to continue with this problem?

Water power (tears) won't help here.

You may *choose* to _____ or to _____.

Is this your *personal best*?

That's not *appropriate*.

You need to be *on-task*.

TEAM Goals

I am respectful.

I am responsible for my choices.

I am cooperative.

I am doing my personal best.

I am prepared to learn.

I am part of the solution.

Care for yourself ... Care for others ... Care for this place

A mistake is another opportunity to learn.

BASIC HOW-TO FOR VOLUNTEERS

You must have a Volunteer Disclosure document on file and be on the approved volunteer list before you may volunteer at school or for field trips.

1] **Please park in the front lot.**

2] Arrive a few minutes early to allow time to **check-in near the Office**. The clipboard is found near the Volunteer Board, on a small desk/table. Volunteer badges are on the board or in the file box; put your badge in the sleeves provided. Please do not sign out until you leave. If there is no badge, then you probably do not have a Disclosure form on file and you will need to fill one out and turn it into the Office counter; you will need to ask to copy your license. You can possibly wear a Guest Badge for the day....or you may be asked to come back when your paperwork is approved. Your paperwork is good for two years; it may have expired.

3] Each classroom has a Volunteer “drop spot” for information, notes and supplies that you will need to become familiar with; you may have a special training session for a given classroom or a written reference booklet or packet.

4] If you have questions about a specific project or task, try to ask for clarification at a time when students are working independently; move to the next item on the “To Do” list while waiting. **Check to see if there are specific times when projects are to be set aside to work with students.**

5] A special and discreet greeting signal for your child often works well. The key is not to disrupt the learning activity to say hello to your child; the same applies to your departure.

6] Expect respect from the children and politely but firmly let them know your expectations or when you feel they are crossing the line as to appropriateness. **I-Messages** should be given to children as needed. Ask for teacher assistance, when necessary, and don't hesitate to return the child to the classroom or to his/her table group.

7] The workroom is located down the hallway in back of the Office counter. Silver Ridge / TEAM staff have priority on machines, sometimes requiring you to step aside for a few minutes to accommodate a staff member trying to take care of something before planning time, lunch break, etc. are over.

8] When multiple volunteers are working together, visiting should be kept to a minimum please. When adults chat, children frequently do, too.

9] If your child makes some behavioral choices that embarrass you a little, please know that you aren't alone. Sometimes he/she is testing limits, is curious to see your reaction, or may be nervous about your presence “I might make a mistake.” This usually improves over time. Sometimes it may be better to volunteer in another classroom or outside the classroom until your child is comfortable with having a parent in his/her classroom.

10] Leave notes for the classroom teacher about what you completed, the children you worked with, any frustrations, etc.

11] **Check out at the Volunteer area** before leaving. When there are evacuation drills, the clipboards are cross-checked with the information staff turn in about who is currently in their classroom....students and volunteers. If a phone call comes in for a volunteer, the clipboard is used to locate the volunteer and to see if he/she is still in the building.

Cell Phone Guidelines

Cell phones can be an important communication tool in an emergency or when there is a critical question or concern. Your volunteer time with students in the classroom or as a chaperone or driver on a field trip takes priority over personal calls.

- If you bring a cell phone into the classroom or on a field trip please silence the ring.
- Please avoid the use of your phone while volunteering in the classroom.
- If you receive an important call or text, please step out of the room to respond.
- If it is imperative to make a call or text, please step out of the room.
- When driving on a field trip, a cell phone may be used only on a hands-free basis and should be used only to contact the lead driver if there is a problem or important question.
- When working with your chaperone group, please do not make personal calls. If you must make a call, please ask another chaperone to take your group so you can step away.



Social Media

Taking pictures with your cell phone or camera of your child or a group of children at TEAM events and fieldtrips gives your family lasting memories to enjoy. Sharing those pictures with TEAM staff for use in school is appreciated. Sharing pictures with others should be based on mutual agreement. Giving a copy of a picture to a child's parent is thoughtful, but placing pictures of children other than your own on Face Book or other forms of social media should not be done to respect the privacy of families and the safety of the children.

Problem-Solving Tips

Your child may bring home concerns. How do you assist your child? TEAM works with children to develop their problem-solving skills here at school.

If your child is hesitant to speak up about the problem or concern or to let a teacher know he/she needs assistance in resolving a concern, the teacher may have no idea anything is bothering your child.

If your child has a concern relative to the running of the classroom or something an adult has said or not said, please encourage him/her to talk with the teacher or please alert the teacher to the concern so he/she can help your child resolve it.

1-Listen to your child but remember he/she may not be sharing all the details or may not see his/her role in the problem.

2-Help your child brainstorm possible ways to resolve a concern.

3-Redirect your child to his/her teacher to ask for assistance.

4-Calling the parent of the child involved in the concern does not allow your child to learn how to problem-solve; you may not have all the facts; the call could escalate the problem or destroy a friendship.

5-If your child does not want to talk with his/her teacher; please alert the teacher there is a concern so she can help your child with problem-solving.

**If YOU have a concern and plan to talk to the teacher,
remember these proactive steps:**

- Do not let concerns fester.
- Do not talk with other parents. Their experiences are unique to them and reflect how they chose to communicate concerns, the difficulties their child was having, and their perceptions.
- How you choose to handle a concern becomes a model for your child. He/she needs to see proactive rather than reactive communication.
- Make an appointment to meet with the teacher.
- Begin with positives then share your concern and your child's perceptions.
- If you are not comfortable with the outcome of the meeting, speak with the principal and ask his/her assistance during a second meeting with the teacher.

FIELD TRIP CHAPERONES

Field trips enhance the learning provided in school. Funds raised by the TEAM parents (TAC) supplement the cost of these trips. **Permission slips are required for all field trips and must be returned by the due date stated. If a student does not return a permission slip, he/she will be supervised by another teacher at school.** If YOUR child does not return his/her permission slip, you are still needed as a chaperone.

Usually a note and email will go out asking for volunteers interested in volunteering. You will have an e-mail "window" and chaperones will generally be picked on a first-come, first-served basis unless you have chaperoned a lot and there is someone who has not had an opportunity. We try to make sure all interested volunteers have opportunities to be chaperones over the course of the year.

Chaperones will supervise a group of approximately four (4) students. Prior to the trip, an informational packet is usually sent home to chaperones, explaining the day's events, when and where to report the morning of the trip and, possibly, who the children in your group will be. Groups usually have a mixture of students from two or all four classrooms. Chaperones are usually given an evaluation sheet that needs to be filled out and turned in at the conclusion of the field trip.

Sometimes it is difficult to separate family relationships with chaperone responsibilities. TEAM has established a policy of placing chaperones with a group that will not include their child. Chaperones may not bring siblings or other children with them on the trips.

Successful trips depend on a chaperone for each group. If you are scheduled to chaperone and find you can not attend, it is your responsibility to contact a TEAM teacher immediately. If possible, please contact another parent to take your place.

A TEAM Family Phone List is distributed in the fall.

***Please also note that chaperones for the 4th, 5th, and 6th grade camp experience at Nature Bridge are selected the previous spring. Interested 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade parents are welcome to apply and selections are made using a point system. To view the application and selection criteria, please visit the TEAM Moodle Site, or ask a classroom teacher.**

BASIC FIELD TRIP GUIDELINES

- 1] Emails and/or hardcopy notes requesting chaperones usually come home with students prior to a field trip to request interested volunteers. Our Room Coordinators may facilitate calling or you may have a call-in option.
- 2] Chaperones must be on the approved volunteer list (disclosure paperwork approved) prior to the day of the fieldtrip. It can take up to 10 days for this paperwork work to be processed. A new disclosure form must be submitted every two years, along with a photocopy of your driver's license. It is best to make sure this form is submitted in September or to verify your paperwork is still current.
- 3] The specifics of the trip will be listed on the volunteer request.
- 4] In most cases, chaperones are not asked to pay any admission, ferry or parking fees. These expenses are usually covered by TAC or calculated into the total field trip expenses before determining the price each student pays.
- 5] Children other than TEAM students may not attend field trips. Also... **if the child of a chaperone fails to return the permission slip by the due date, that child does not go on the trip, staying, instead, at school with another Silver Ridge staff member for the period of the trip.** Although it is hard to go on a trip and leave your child behind, we encourage you to consider that option rather than replace yourself...so your child realizes that scheduled events still happen, even if he/she did not act responsibly when returning the permission slip. **We always remind children a day or two before a return deadline.**
- 6] An informational packet is prepared for chaperones and is either sent home prior to the trip or given to chaperones when they arrive for Chaperone Orientation the day of the trip. A list of students in your, or all groups, will be included, along with any necessary information and, usually, a sheet for writing down comments about the children in your assigned group. These constructive comments are shared with students, by staff, as a part of bringing closure to the trip.
- 7] A master chart of student/chaperone groups is usually posted in Fire Pod, along with the rooms chaperones are to report to before departure. Chaperones are usually requested to arrive 20 - 30 minutes prior to departure for a briefing....and to be sure everyone is ready to depart on time. **Please remember to sign-in on the Volunteer clipboard near the office. Field Trip time-lines are timed very carefully, late departures affect that timeline.**
- 8] Children should return to classrooms upon returning to school. Your responsibility ends once the classroom teacher takes over; **turn in your packet and check out at the school office before leaving.**
- 9] Your comments and suggestions are always read by staff. Please give us feedback on each child. Comments are read...or paraphrased...to the children so they can self-evaluate their field trip behavior.

More Specific Chaperones Guidelines...

- Stay with assigned group at all times; should you need to leave your group for a few minutes, another chaperone or a staff member must cover for you during that time.
- Smoking and gum chewing are prohibited at all times during field trips.
- Chaperones sit or stand with their groups on the bus, on the ferry and during presentations.
- “Spending Money” is usually not permitted for students for food, beverages, souvenirs, etc. Chaperones are asked to alert staff if students have money. Chaperones are also asked not to “treat” the children in their group.
- Students are expected to make appropriate and respectful choices. Staff should be consulted if chaperones have any concerns. Our behavior management system is always in effect.
- Students always travel with a “Buddy.” This means...at all times.
- When riding the ferry to/from destinations, students sit together. They do not wander. We ask that chaperone groups avoid outside deck areas. Children must be directly supervised during their ferry ride.
- Sack lunches and backpacks are usually taken on field trips. Chaperones will also need snacks and lunches; a daypack is a nice option to consider. Your child needs to take care of his/her own backpack and gear.
- If you find that you have a great deal of difficulty with a student, let staff know They can suggest ways to work with that student...give you a break...talk to the student ...facilitate a consequence.
- You may, at times, notice some behaviors in your own child(ren) that cause you to feel uncomfortable. Staff and your child’s chaperone will handle concerns. Often a child’s poor choice today will be a good opportunity to learn a new expectation, concept, or to do some reflecting for future field trips. It can become quite stressful for children if they feel parents are watching with a critical eye.
- Count “noses” frequently to be sure children have not wandered off. Children should be in front of you or right with you, not walking behind you. They should never be more than a few steps from you.

One last area...When you applied for a TEAM placement for your child(ren), you signed a **Confidentiality Form**. Parents of returning students sign new forms each fall. **You need to have a form on file before chaperoning**. **There is also a Volunteer Disclosure statement that needs to be signed and turned in for processing.**

Also....

Your signature on that form signifies that YOU will not talk about incidents, other families, or the possible inappropriate choices a child or other chaperone may have made. TEAM children and staff work very hard to approach problems respectfully and to resolve problems with consequences that are related ... reasonable ... respectful. Once a problem has been handled, it is over and everything returns to normal. It is important to avoid any embarrassment for children or their families as a result of a breach in confidentiality.

Not all students handle the excitement of field trips, the change in their learning environment, or other adult supervisors with their most mature behavior or best choices 100% of the time.

FIELD TRIP TRANSPORTATION GUIDELINES

The TEAM program usually schedules 2 or 3 field trips each year. When there were funds in the District's yearly budget for field trips, the amount normally could fund only one trip per class each year. In budget cuts over the past several years, those funds were cut entirely. TAC assists with field trip funding, and some field trip transportation is facilitated by volunteer drivers transporting small groups within private vehicles.

The safety of students is of the utmost importance, so some guidelines have been developed (spring of 1993):

- 1] A **District developed form** must be completed prior to driving on **field trips**. This form includes insurance coverage information. **This form is filled out in the fall for the entire school year.** TAC also requires a photo copy of your driver's license and proof of insurance.
- 2] You must have a copy of a TEAM **Confidentiality Form** on file for the year.
- 3] Your vehicle must be in good running order, and the **fuel tank** should be topped off before arriving at school to transport students.
- 4] The vehicle must have approved **seat belts** for all students being transported, and must be worn by all riding in the vehicle. We place students in back seats. Some children will have car seats.
- 5] TEAM has a **no smoking** policy during field trips.
- 6] Please **do not drink beverages while driving**.
- 7] Although it is TEAM's policy to have your child with a chaperone other than yourself, your child will travel to the field trip in your vehicle.