MARIPOSA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK
2025-2026



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Welcome

Welcome to Mariposa Elementary School! We appreciate your time and effort in helping to make our school the best educational environment for all students. In this handbook, you will find important information that will make your volunteer service successful and rewarding.

Whether you are new or a former volunteer returning to Mariposa, feel free to ask for help concerning anything you do not understand. Your assistance is valued!

Why Volunteer?

By volunteering, you...

- enrich and enhance students' learning.
- support teachers in offering more individual attention to their students.
- provide individuals an opportunity to participate in a variety of activities within the school.
- promote and strengthen the partnership among families, community and the school.

Volunteering is an opportunity for you to show children . . .

- your interest in their school life.
- your commitment to the community.
- your belief that education is a partnership between family and school.
- your belief that learning is a lifelong process.

OVERVIEW

A volunteer is a parent, community member, or other adult who assists at a school site or program on a regular or semi-regular basis before, during, or after school hours. Student observers who are required to complete classroom observation hours at a school site fall under the classification of volunteers.

Standard of Conduct:
By volunteering at Mariposa, you have a responsibility to the school, district and to your fellow volunteers to adhere to certain rules of behavior and conduct. The purpose of these rules is not to restrict your rights, but rather to be certain that the learning environment is not compromised. When a person is aware that he/she can fully depend upon others to follow the rules of conduct, then our organization is a better place to work for everyone. Volunteers should become familiar with the specific rules at the site(s) at which they volunteer. Generally speaking, we expect each volunteer to act in a mature and responsible manner at all times. District standards of conduct and personnel policies include, but are not limited to:

Observing safety rules at all times and using common sense in operating any equipment.
Treating fellow volunteers, teachers, students, parents, and administrators with respect and kindness.
No possession of any type of firearm, weapon, or explosive, on District premises.
The maintenance of a drug-free workplace. Employees and volunteers are prohibited from being intoxicated or under the influence of controlled substances while volunteering; use, possession, or sale of a controlled substance in any quantity while on District premises (except medications prescribed by a physician which do not impair volunteer performance) will result in immediate dismissal from volunteer service.
This is a tobacco free District. Tobacco products, including vaping devices, shall not be used on District premises.
No soliciting or selling of products, services, etc. on District property without the prior written approval of the Superintendent or designee.
Refraining from proselytizing in regard to religion or politics on District property.
Maintaining the confidentiality of all personal and privileged information.

What should I do daily to keep the workplace safe?

WELLNESS CHECK: If you are feeling under the weather we ask that you please stay home until you are feeling better. The Brea-Olinda Unified School District is asking that all volunteers self-monitor for COVID symptoms prior to arriving at Mariposa or any district sponsored event. We appreciate your cooperation.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES THAT ALL VOLUNTEERS SHOULD KNOW

Check-in and Check-out:
Stop by the office immediately upon entering school. Volunteers and all school visitors are asked to check-in each time they visit the school. For security reasons, and in case of an emergency, it is important for the principal to know who is in the school and why. This procedure also helps us keep track of volunteer numbers and hours. Check-in procedures should be explained to you prior to or on your first day as a volunteer. School office staff can answer any questions you have about the check-in/check-out procedures. Please return back to the office to check out at the end of your designated volunteer time.

Identification:
Mariposa volunteers are required to wear a printed identification badge when on school campus. When you check in at the school office, you will be provided with a volunteer badge to wear, each time you volunteer.

If You Must Cancel:
Volunteers are asked to commit to specific time(s) and day(s), as teachers need to know they can count on you. If you are unable to volunteer on a given day, or if you will arrive late, please contact your site immediately.

Interaction with Students and Staff:
The success of Mariposa's volunteer program depends upon the quality of the relationship between the District volunteers, teachers, students and parents, and the general public. Regardless if you are a volunteer or a paid staff member, you are an ambassador for Mariposa Elementary School.

Volunteers should not telephone, email or “friend” (i.e., on a social networking site) students, visit them at their homes, or meet students off school grounds without permission from the parents. In addition, when working with students, whether individually or in small groups, we recommend you work in a highly visible area. This is not only for the protection of students but volunteers as well.

- No exchange of gifts without permission from school staff and the parent/legal guardian.
- Volunteers should not post or share pictures of students on social media sites.
- Volunteers should not diagnose student needs, make final evaluations on student achievement, counsel students, or discuss student progress with parents.
- It is not always in the best interest of a child to have parents, grandparents, guardians, etc, volunteer in their children’s classrooms. Therefore, volunteers may be utilized in classrooms other than those in which their children are enrolled.
- *Please note that, at the discretion of the building principal, failure to follow this procedure could result in removal as a school volunteer.*

Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect:
Volunteers should report to the school administrator if they have any reason to believe a student has been abused or neglected.

WORKING WITH STUDENTS

Ways to Work with Students:

Relax and be yourself
Be friendly toward all students
Be pleasant and interested in the students' activities
Encourage students to try and do activities to the best of their ability
Praise individual students for a job well done
Encourage positive behavior by making note of students who are doing things correctly
Remember that a student often responds better to suggestions, rather than commands
Proceed at the student's own rate of speed
Don't do for a student what he/she can do for him/herself
Call the students by name at each opportunity
Be flexible
Be patient

Words of Encouragement Samples:

- *I can tell you worked really hard on that!*
- *You are getting so much better each time!*
- *I appreciate what you did*
- *You did a great job of handling that situation*
- *I see*
- *Tell me more*
- *How about that?*
- *I like the way you are working*
- *Good thinking. Very creative. How impressive!*
- *Now you've got the hang of it!*
- *That's a great observation*

OTHER POLICIES

Discipline:
Classroom teachers and school administrators are responsible for student discipline. Rules and procedures related to student discipline have been established by the school and individual classroom teachers. These guidelines are maintained for the safety and welfare of all students. Fairness, consistency, and follow-through are essential to maintaining classroom learning environments. Your volunteering with the District assumes an obligation to maintain this confidentiality. It is essential that you not share any information about students, even with your own family, friends, or acquaintances. Because of its seriousness, disclosure of confidential information could lead to dismissal.

Dress Code and Appearance:
Take your lead from the professional staff and dress appropriately for the job you are doing. Casual clothing is fine, but we ask that your attire be clean, neat, and conservative. T-shirts with logos depicting tobacco, alcohol, or firearms are prohibited for volunteers as well as students. As a general guideline, if a shirt shows your stomach when you raise your hands over your head, it is too short; and skirts, dresses, or shorts should extend below your fingers when your arms are held at your side.

If you know that you will be doing a lot of walking or outdoor work during your service, please remember to bring sufficient shoes and a jacket, as the school will not have extras to provide.

Office Machines:
The staff appreciates volunteers helping teachers prepare classroom materials. Volunteers should be trained on the correct usage of all office equipment. It is also very helpful if volunteers are willing to step aside and allow teachers or office staff to interrupt them and use machines during recess or on occasions when staff members need immediate access to machines or equipment at school. District equipment is only to be used for educational/school purposes. They are not for personal use. Parent volunteers may use technology (i.e. laptops, iPads, etc.) that are located in classrooms as directed by the teacher. Volunteer flexibility and cooperation in this area is greatly appreciated. All volunteers shall adhere to the provisions of the federal copyright law and maintain the highest ethical standards in using copyright materials. The District shall provide no legal support to any volunteer who violates copyright laws.

Parking Lot:
Great care must be taken and drivers must watch closely for students and others at all times when driving near schools and or in school parking lots. The front parking lot at Mariposa is for staff only;volunteers should utilize neighborhood streets.

Personal Phone Calls:
Cell phones are to be placed on vibrate or silent mode during your volunteer time. Personal phone calls should be made off campus to avoid disruptions. Volunteers must not photograph or video students unless you have permission from site personnel.

Staff Lounge Guidelines:
The staff lounge should not be used as a “workroom”. Cutting, pasting, collating, etc. should be done in the classrooms, teacher workrooms, MPR, or the core workrooms if availble. Teachers should not send volunteers to work in the lounge.

Theft:
No item purchased or supplied by the District should ever be removed from school sites without the express authorization of your site administrator. It is highly recommended that volunteers not bring excessive amounts of money or valuables on campus. If you carry a purse, ask to place it in a secure location. Mariposa is not responsible for personal items lost or stolen.

Areas of Caution:
Some actions, even without improper motive, are common trouble areas.

- Do not ask a single student to come early to set up for a class or activity.
- Do not give a gift to a student at school.
- Do not invite students for social activities outside of school.

May I hug a student?:
Some students, particularly younger children, may express affection toward you. Children should never sit on your lap. Use “high fives” or handshakes. Remember to be aware of cultural perspectives regarding boundaries.

Student Injury:
Student safety and wellbeing are our top priorities. If a student is injured or requires medical attention, please immediately report to a staff member. Please do not attempt to move the student, lift the student, or to provide the student with medical treatment.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS FOR VOLUNTEERS AND STAFF

Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying Prevention:
Bullying, harassment, intimidation, or hazing, by students, staff, or third parties, is strictly prohibited and shall not be tolerated. This includes bullying, harassment, or intimidation via electronic communication devices ("cyberbullying").

For insurance reasons and so that you can best focus on your volunteer responsibilities, children who are not enrolled in school may not accompany volunteers to school for their assignment.

Confidentiality is a legal requirement:
Students in the Brea-Olinda Unified School District have the right to expect that information about them will be kept confidential by all volunteers, student interns, practicum students and student job shadow observers. Additionally, the U.S. Congress has addressed the privacy-related concerns of educators, parents, and students by enacting the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (known more commonly as "FERPA").
Each student with whom you work has the right to expect that nothing that happens to or about him or her will be repeated to anyone other than authorized school department employees, as designated by the school administrator. Even when discussing a student with those who are directly involved in a student's education, such as a teacher, principal, or guidance counselor, you may not share otherwise confidential information with them unless it is relevant to the student's educational growth, safety, or well being.
You may not share information about a student even with others who are genuinely interested in the student's welfare, such as social workers, scout leaders, clergy, or nurses/physicians (a grave medical emergency, in which confidential information may be necessary for a student's care, is the only exception). Thus, you must refer all such questions to the school employees so authorized and indicated to you, typically the student's teacher or principal.
Parents, friends, or community members may in good faith ask you questions about a student's problems or progress. Again, you must refer all such questions to the authorized school employees. You may not share information about a student even with members of your own family or the student's family.