Appendix G

Classroom Volunteer Handbook

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

Coweta Charter Academy encourages volunteer participation in our school's programs and activities. There are many opportunities to volunteer and to actively participate in the educational program. Research indicates many positive outcomes for children when parents and community members volunteer and actively participate in their children's school. We welcome you to Coweta Charter Academy and thank you for your willingness to partner with us in providing an excellent educational program.

Your service as a volunteer will add significantly to the programs offered at Coweta Charter Academy. Your involvement helps build a school community that emphasizes academic excellence, community responsibility, basic skill development, individual strengths, technology integration, and a lifelong love of learning. As a volunteer, you provide enrichment opportunities that enhance the educational experience for students while supporting teachers and staff. You also encourage building a strong foundation for students as they select a career path or post-secondary education.

Your participation helps us to fulfill our mission of creating a safe, positive, innovative and educational environment for all children. As you enhance and support our school, it is important to help students be excited about learning. By modeling for students the kinds of behaviors and attitudes they need in order to succeed, you help them to develop into productive citizens of the school and community.

This handbook is designed to provide you with practical information that will assist you in your volunteer placement. It is our goal that the time you spend with our students is 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 the number listed below.

Once again, thank you for helping make a difference in the lives of students at Coweta Charter Academy.

Sincerely,

Gene Dunn
Principal

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Volunteering at Coweta Charter Academy is as easy as 1, 2, 3…

1. Read the Volunteer Handbook so that you are familiar with the school's guidelines and procedures.
2. Sign the Volunteer Handbook acknowledgment form.
3. Return a completed Volunteer and Room Parent Questionnaire Form & Application to the school office.
4. Sign a Volunteer Confidentiality Agreement and return it to the school Office.
5. Complete MANDATORY Reporter Training (see page 16)

Your Role as a Volunteer

"Volunteers don't interfere." If you volunteer in a classroom, you should make prior arrangements with the teacher with whom you will work. When working with students, individually or in small groups, be sure to follow instructions from the teacher very carefully. While parents' involvement in their children's education is very beneficial, students and teachers need to focus on their work. We ask that volunteers come and go quietly in order to avoid interrupting instructions.

Identification and Sign-In

Student safety is a high priority at our school. Therefore, you must always report to the office before you begin your volunteer activity. Volunteer badges will be provided to individuals who have completed their paperwork, and submitted it to be kept on file in the office. Volunteers must wear their name badges while in the building and during the duration of the activity. This will ensure that students and staff can easily identify you. Any adult without a badge will be sent to the office to sign in. Safety is vital to all of us, and will give our students the best possible school environment. We appreciate your cooperation!

Suggestions for Starting Your Volunteer Experience

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

1) Meet with the teacher/staff member before you start.

- Go over "Initial Checklist." (see attachment)
- Ask questions of your teacher (or other staff member) if you are unclear about something
- Keep communication open.

2) Get to know the school grounds.

- Know the location and phone number of the school office
- Know the location of important rooms such as the multipurpose room, office, bathrooms, specials classes.
- Determine where to park

3) If you are volunteering in a classroom, spend some time observing the class.

- Become familiar with classroom routines.
- Identify the location of supplies within the classroom.

4) Establish positive relationships with the students

- Be friendly; let them know you are glad to be there!
- Be encouraging to students.

General Guidelines

Attire:

Your appearance should be neat and consistent with the dress code of the school. This would apply to field trips as well as indoor and/or outdoor activities. In the event that attire is deemed to be inappropriate; t-shirt slogans, advertisements for tobacco or alcohol products, attire displaying weapons, etc., the building principal may ask a volunteer to leave the school.

Timeliness:

Please remember to be on time. When you are late or do not come in for your volunteer session, it can upset the routine of the classroom and students. Reliability is expected from volunteers because teachers and staff plan for your assistance. If you will be absent or have changes in your schedule, please call the school.

Drugs (prescription and over-the-counter)

Our school is a drug free workplace. Drugs of any kind are not permitted to be in the presence of children. Please be aware of what you have in your pocketbooks or backpacks. Volunteers are not permitted to give over-the-counter medication to students.

Tobacco:

Tobacco use of any kind is never permitted in the school or on school grounds (including the parking lot); this includes evening and weekend times.

Emergency Procedures:

To be prepared for emergencies, learn the correct procedures for responding to emergencies and for following the rules for fire and tornado drills. Please see the classroom teacher or front office for instructions.

Family Members:

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. Younger and/or older siblings are not permitted to accompany volunteers in the school.

Guidelines for Working with Students

Whether you are working in the classroom or another part of the school, you should maintain close contact with the supervising teacher(s) about lessons being covered, activities being planned, and the needs of individual students.

Know the school's expectations. If you are not sure of something, please ask. Be aware of the limits of your duties. You should expect the teacher to provide you with specific ways in which you can be most helpful.

Remember, when something happens, you are not to intervene, but report it to the teacher or office. Some students need to be guided toward acceptable behaviors. You can help by being a good role model who is kind, fair, and courteous. Inappropriate behavior is often a way to gain attention. If you observe this kind of behavior, please bring it to the teacher's attention.

Information that students tell you about their personal lives is private and confidential. If you hear something that may be a threat to students, report the matter immediately to the teacher. Such information should never be repeated to other individuals (refer to the Confidentiality Agreement).

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Students may want to share many interesting things about school, peers, and family. While this shows the student is comfortable with you, please remember that the task at hand is most important. Explain that the discussion can be revisited after the work is complete.

Smile! Be happy, encouraging, and interested. When working with students, try to maintain eye contact and face them as directly as possible. When working with individuals or with a group, explain the work to the group. Work with each student to check for understanding for the lesson. Give praise whenever a small part of the total work is complete. Share time with students equally. You will gain students' confidence as you and the students get to know each other. Don't be afraid to show true feelings. If you feel nervous, tell the students. With their help, you will become more at ease in your role as a volunteer.

When Working with an Individual Student:

- Let the student know that you care about their thoughts and ideas.
- Accept the student for who he/she is…don't try and make them into something they are not. You are here to help, not change them.
- Be encouraging.
- Recognize effort as well as products.
- If you don't know an answer to something, admit it and work it out together…nobody knows everything!
- Let the child know that you enjoy your time with him/her…and enjoy yourself!!

When Working with Groups of Students (small or large groups)

- Find out what the teacher wants you to work on…get specifics.
- Indicate to the children how you would like to be addressed – the teacher may have preferences in this area
- You may want to have the children wear nametags so that you can address them personally.
- Discuss with the teacher ahead of time what classroom management techniques you should be using, in the event of the need for discipline…or if the teacher wants to handle this.
- Encourage all the students, not just the ones with the correct answer.
- Give each student time to answer…don't allow other students to jump in and answer for him/her.
- Let the children know that you enjoy your time with them…and enjoy yourself!!

Learning Styles

Not everyone learns in the same way. Your learning style is simply the way in which you learn best. Most people use all of their senses as they process information; one sense generally dominates. Here are some descriptions and suggestions that may be helpful in understanding the students with whom you work:

Auditory Learners

- They learn best through verbal demonstrations.
- They prefer talking about a situation and enjoy listening to themselves talk.
- Read instructions aloud

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- Have them repeat instructions to you
- If the student is having difficulty understanding, rephrase instructions

Visual Learners

- They learn best by observing.
- They prefer watching demonstrations and have intense concentration and ability to visualize information.
- Students who are visual learners like to write, doodle, and study their environment.
- Keep a copy of the written instructions, charts, etc. in front of them
- Use visual aids for reference (maps, charts, pictures, etc.)
- Try having students write or draw problems on paper
- Encourage the use of a homework notebook to remember assignments

Tactile (Kinesthetic) Learners

- They learn best by doing.
- They remember best by what they did, not what was seen or heard.
- They need frequent breaks when studying and are easily distracted when they are not able to move.
- Have students use manipulatives, such as money or blocks with a math problem
- Learning aids, such as a globe, for geography
- Have students use their bodies to act out fiction or non-fiction stories.

Characteristics of Children Aged 5-8 Years

Physical Characteristics

- Full of energy, may find it difficult to sit still
- Tire easily
- Aware of physical limitations
- Increasing fine motor skills (e.g., using scissors, writing).
- Proud of their accomplishments
- Prefer to participate rather than observe

Self-image

- Self-image is based primarily on what they think others think of them.
- Proud of their own accomplishments; want to be treated as individuals
- Eager to please adults they admire
- Becoming more independent of home and parents
- Flourish from positive reinforcement about specific things
- Sometimes adamant about their likes and dislikes

Relationship with Others:

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

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 (girls likely to mature earlier than boys)
- 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

Having you in the school is a great treat for your own children and for all students. Let students know your name; you might even write it for them. Ask students their names and make notes in order to remember them. After meeting the students, you may start your tasks right away. As you get to know each student better, you will learn more about their interests and needs. You will get positive results by using a friendly and calm manner with the students.

Reporting Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect

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Any volunteer who has reason to believe that a child has been subject to abuse or maltreatment must report it to the teacher, student services coordinator, or the principal. School personnel will proceed by contacting the appropriate authorities. As a volunteer, by Georgia law, you are a mandated reporter. Mandated Reporter training and guidance will be provided.

Student Discipline

Volunteers may not touch a student in an aggressive, disciplinary, or sexual manner. It is the teacher's responsibility to discipline children. Any concerns that you have about individual children and how to manage their behaviors should be brought to the teacher.

Speaking to the children in a calm, focused way will go far in getting their attention and cooperation. Telling them directly what you expect of them and what the standards are for the activities will give them a framework on which to focus their efforts.

Remember…it is necessary to approach volunteer work with a sense of commitment, open-mindedness, resourcefulness, and initiative. By doing so, volunteering will be a rewarding experience for you, the teacher, and the students.

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

It is extremely important that you do not talk with other parents about any of the children in the classroom observed while you were volunteering. Most people do not want anyone saying anything about their child. Please respect student's and parent's rights. If anything happens in the classroom, it is the teacher's responsibility to contact the parent.

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.

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Initial Volunteer Checklist

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

- Signing in and out of the building and wearing a volunteer badge.
- Your schedule.
- School-wide rules and which ones 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 implement when working with students.
- How and when to contact your teacher/staff member regarding a change in your schedule, etc. Consider exchanging phone numbers.
- 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 (first name, Ms., Dr., Mrs., Mr., etc.).
- Procedures for taking student(s) 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 volunteer day(s).

Volunteer and Room Parent Questionnaire Form & Application

Name: _____

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Phone:_____

Address: _____

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E-Mail Address: _____

Child's Name _____Grade _____

Child's Name_____ Grade_____

Child's Name _____ Grade _____

When are you available to volunteer? (please specify **days**, **hours** or **other considerations**):
_____

_____

_____

Do you have a particular grade level where you would like to volunteer? (please circle all that apply) K 1 2 3 4 5 6 Any Grade Level

Please check the activities where you would like to volunteer. (Note: we will make every effort to match you to the activity you choose. Volunteers will be placed where needed.)
_____ Student Tutoring (pair reading, math fact practice, assist with writing assignments)
_____ Student Mentor (work directly with a struggling student by assisting them and providing a positive role model.)
_____ Classroom Helper (preparing instructional materials, assisting with special projects, etc.)
_____ Other Ideas: _____

VOLUNTEER CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

Coweta Charter Academy

There are federal and state laws that protect the privacy rights of students and families. In a school situation, there are many instances in which confidential information is discussed in order to better understand students and how we can help them. When working in the schools as a volunteer, there may be times when this information is heard. Our staff will make every effort to prevent this from happening; however, as a volunteer you must agree that if you do hear information about a student or family you will not repeat this outside of the school. This will ensure the protection of our students' interest and their families, thus creating a better environment for all.

Additionally, specific laws govern special education confidentiality, FERPA (Family Education Rights and Privacy Act), and IDEIA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act). All three bodies of regulations indicate that confidentiality must be maintained relative to special education students. Therefore, any written or verbal communication with anyone who does not have a right to know is in violation of the laws. A volunteer should not discuss a child's disability with any individual outside of the classroom instructor, building principals, or staff member. The volunteer should not use any written or verbal statements outside of the school that would divulge the child's disability; this includes notes, email, text messages, and/or social media sites. In essence, only those who work directly with the student are considered as those with a "need to know." If at any time these terms of confidentiality are violated by a volunteer, termination of volunteer services may occur.

As a volunteer:

I realize that I am subject to a code of ethics similar to that which binds the professionals in the field in which I work

I will keep confidential matters private.

I understand that volunteering at Coweta Charter Academy is a privilege and not a right. The school's administration reserves the right to deny or remove any volunteer violating confidentiality or any Coweta/CSUSA policy.

By signing this agreement, I am stating that I will not divulge information about any student or family to any person outside the school setting

____

Volunteer/Room Parent Name (please print)

____

Volunteer/Room Parent Signature & Date

Expectations of Parent Volunteers:

1. Please dress appropriately for working with children! Low cut blouses, see through clothing, tight fitting clothing, or short shorts are not appropriate!

2. Parents/ volunteers may not "discipline" another parent's student.
    a. 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.
    b. 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.
3. If you cannot make the pre-arranged time, please let the teacher know as soon as possible so lesson plans can be changed.
4. Please do not just drop in to offer help unless the teacher says this is okay. All volunteering should be pre-arranged with the teacher. Lesson plans are commonly written around a volunteer's availability. Teachers will not have time to put together work for you to do while attending to the children in the classroom.
5. Parents should not offer rides to students unless they have prior arrangements with that student's parent(s) and the parent(s)/ guardian(s) of the child has/have notified (in writing) the school.
6. 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 impression that what they are doing is not as important as the conversation.
7. Parent Volunteers should make other arrangements for siblings and/or other children in their care while volunteering in the classroom. Younger children and older siblings are distracting to the educational environment.

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Parent Volunteer Handbook Agreement Form Coweta Charter Academy

Welcome to Coweta Charter Academy. You are about to join a very important part of this school's educational team-our school volunteers. It takes an exceptional person to give his or her time and energy to help make our school stronger. Your caring enables us to work better and more productively, and your involvement brings to our students extra time and personal contact that are vital to academic success. You are sending students the powerful message that people care about them. As a role model, it is important to follow the:

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Coweta Volunteer Code of Ethics

RESPECT FOR AUTHORITY: A volunteer should respect the authority of the school and the school administration.

CONFIDENTIALITY: A volunteer shall not discuss school matters or information concerning students outside the classroom with anyone but the designated school staff.

IMPARTIALITY: A volunteer shall favor no one side or party more than another in all school situations.

OBJECTIVITY: A volunteer shall not let his/her personal feelings enter his/her work as a volunteer.

APPEARANCE: A volunteer shall dress appropriately, always remembering that he/she is setting an example for the students.

There are a few things you need to know about volunteering in our school as well.

- Bring your driver's license each time you come to volunteer.
- Remember to fill out and drop off your volunteer slip, in the front office, before leaving.
- Wear your name tag at all times.
- Report to the front office if you are injured on school grounds.
- Recognize that instructing, supervising, grading, and disciplining students are the responsibility of the school staff.

I have read and understand the expectations and confidentiality of being a school volunteer, including completing the Mandatory Reporter training for reporting of child abuse. I understand that if confidentiality or expectations are violated, I may not be able to continue to offer my time as a classroom volunteer.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Student Name: _____

Student's Teacher: _____

Good Afternoon CCAS family!

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I'm writing to share with information regarding volunteering at CCAS. The state of Georgia requires that ALL volunteers must complete mandated reporter training. This is important as it is a level of protection for our young learners. Sometimes our children go home to challenging and sometimes unspeakable environments. Their comments and/or behavior can be an indicator that they need help. This training ensures all volunteers understand that they can report anything they observe anonymously and without consequence.

To ensure our school is in compliance with the state of Georgia, we are offering several opportunities to receive this training. CCAS will offer this training during our Meet and Greet event in August. However, the easiest and most efficient way to receive this training is online. Completing the online training takes about 20 minutes. To complete the training online, follow the directions below:

8. Click on the link: https://www.prosolutionstraining.com/store/product/product.cfm?tProductVersion_id=1096
9. You should see an order button for "Child Abuse and Neglect: Mandated Reporting Requirements for Employees, Volunteers, and Contractors of Georgia Public Schools"
10. The cost is $0.00
11. Click "Purchase Now"
12. On the right hand of screen, create your own account linked to your personal email address.
13. When creating your account, select "Community Professionals/Volunteers" and for title, select "School/Classroom Volunteer/Field Trip Chaperone"
14. Enter _____ under "State Registry ID".
15. Click "Create Your ProSolutions Training Account"
16. Once you have created your account, it should bring up your account summary of items purchased. Click "Complete Order".
17. Click "My Training Account" (Green button)
18. Click "Start Course"
19. Once you have completed the course, you should be able to go back to your shopping cart and print the completed certificate. **This certificate must be turned into the front office before you are able to volunteer and to verify you have completed the course.**

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