

# VOLUNTEER TIPS & INFORMATION

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*A partnership between Berkeley Public Schools Fund & Berkeley Unified School District*

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# VOLUNTEER & TEACHER FIRST MEETING CHECKLIST

When meeting with your supervising teacher, please discuss the following:

## INTRODUCTIONS

- Share your goals for volunteering as well as interests and skills as a classroom resource.
- Compare your schedules for compatibility. Please contact BSV if your schedules are not compatible.

## RULES & EXPECTATIONS

- Discuss school rules, emergency procedures, & ask for a copy of the bell schedule.
- Review classroom rules and policies.
- Review the BUSD Volunteer Contract for expectations for volunteers & teachers. A copy is provided here & available at [berkeleypublicschools.org/volunteer/volunteer-contract](http://berkeleypublicschools.org/volunteer/volunteer-contract).

## LOGISTICS

- Locate adult bathrooms & a safe place for personal belongings.
- What do you wish students to call you? What identification do you plan to wear while volunteering?
- Review sign-in and sign-out procedures at school site (may differ by time and day).
- Discuss procedures to follow if you are late, absent, or need to discontinue volunteering.
- Exchange contact information & emergency numbers. Is it okay to text?
- Discuss a plan of action when a substitute teacher is needed.
- How will volunteers be notified about school events, assemblies, news? Sign up for school e-tree?

## WORKING WITH STUDENTS

- Discuss proactive tasks & review classroom routines.
- How can volunteers help support a positive learning environment and student behavior?
- What accommodations exist for students with learning challenges or special needs?
- What are typical classroom activities?
- Discuss procedures for taking students out of the classroom for individual work.
- Set up your volunteer schedule with your supervising teacher!

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY

**BUSD VOLUNTEER CONTRACT 2015 – 2016**  
for *Berkeley Public Schools Volunteers (BSV)*

**Section I: Qualifications and Screening**

To be authorized to volunteer in BUSD, you must:

- Provide required documentation in the form of government-issued photo ID
- Be cleared, including a *Department of Justice National Sex Offender* background check and, for identified placements, an FBI/DOJ background check (i.e. Live Scan, fingerprinting)
- Be at least age 16 by first day of volunteering, and submit a signed Minor Permission Form, if under age 18.
- Able to volunteer 2 or more hours a week for one semester (or by previous arrangement with school staff)
- Have received a current BSV volunteer name badge

**Section II: Code of Conduct**

Prior to volunteering, please have an initial discussion with your **teacher/supervisor** to discuss applicable items from the ***Volunteer & Teacher 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting Checklist*** document provided to all supervising staff and volunteers before placement.

**Volunteers should refrain from:**

- Being late or absent without contacting the teacher in advance; walking around campus without BSV name badge.
- Volunteering while ill or with knowledge of positive testing for contagious disease (i.e. Tuberculosis, aka TB.)
- Being under the influence of alcohol or illegal substances, or smelling like tobacco or prohibited substances.
- Using electronic devices such as cell phones, music players, etc. while working with students.
- Transporting students in a vehicle (unless BUSD approved and supervised, as on a school field trip.)
- Photographing and/or posting pictures of students without written parent and school staff permission.
- Engaging in any political or religious instruction, activities or conduct, (i.e. flyering or redirecting discussions).
- Removing students from the direct supervision of your BUSD supervisor and/or from the school campus.
- Physically disciplining students; using hands to redirect a student. Immediately refer issues to BUSD staff.
- Initiating physical contact with students that is not required and approved by your supervising teacher.
- Non-BUSD supervised contact with students, including texting, phoning, emailing, social media contact or meeting off-campus (unless approved/supervised by parents as non-school related contact, such as private tutoring.)
- Sexual Harassment: any suggestive or inappropriate comment, joke, or physical or remote contact with a student, staff or campus visitor/parent. No warning or investigating period required for volunteers.

**Section III: Policies and Commitments**

I agree to notify BSV and my BUSD supervisor if I...

- cannot continue with my volunteer commitment—or change supervising teachers.
- continue volunteering into the next semester or wish to return the next school year.

I understand and agree...

- to volunteer only under the direct supervision of my assigned BUSD supervisor at all times.
- I am not an employee of the BSV or BUSD and I volunteer my services in an "at will" capacity.
- BUSD has the right to revoke my volunteer privileges at any time without prior notification or warning, conforming to district liability and safety policies (i.e. safety/comfort of staff, students and parents is paramount in BUSD.)
- any breach of the above commitments may result in my dismissal from any and all BUSD schools.
- to regard information I learn as a volunteer as confidential and will only share with appropriate school staff.
- to confidentially pass-on knowledge or suspicion of child abuse to my BUSD supervisor or designated staff.
- to confidentially communicate with school staff regarding challenges or concerns for student's success or welfare, including referrals for mental, physical health, counseling, tutoring or testing (2020 Vision Mission)

I understand the above restrictions, meet the listed qualifications, and will contact BSV if anything changes with my volunteer placement, my health in relation to communicable diseases, or my legal status related to prior felony convictions. I accept the appointment of School Volunteer in a BUSD school for the 2015 - 2016 school year.

**Signature of Volunteer:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

# BERKELEY SCHOOLS VOLUNTEERS

## VOLUNTEER TIPS

### ADJUSTING TO THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

*Prepare yourself to make a positive impact on your school by keeping these tips in mind.*

Have an **open mind** and a sense of respect for all students.

**Embrace diversity** in the student body. Students come from cultures with different values, behaviors, and expectations. Many speak different languages at home, and many come from low-income families. Some are struggling to learn at grade level. All of these influence how students respond to you and learn.

Students are highly sensitive to appearance & odor. **Use a breath mint!**

**Be honest** with students when you don't know something; use it as a "teaching moment."

### SUPPORTING ACADEMIC SUCCESS

*Your role is to encourage and support student success.*

**Learn about your students!** Chat about your interests; play an icebreaker to get to one each other; make connections between students' passions & assignments.

Approach situations with **patience** & a **sense of humor**. Have an enthusiastic and encouraging attitude.

**Be present and sincerely listen** to how students are doing. Model how to acknowledge life's distractions and help redirect focus to the assignment.

**Build self-confidence** by praising students honestly and frequently; use your student's name to build trust & self-esteem.

Focus on the **positive**. Remind students that making mistakes is part of learning. Frame your directives in the positive: instead of "don't do that," say what action you want the student to do.

Give **explicit instructions** and include each step needed for success. Break larger tasks into chunks if necessary.

**Hold your students to high expectations!** Outline your goals at the beginning & end of each session to stay on track.

**Encourage independence.** Instead of feeding answers, give students time to reason the problem out on their own.

### WORKING WITH DIFFERENT LEARNERS

*Different students may require different tutoring styles. Here are some strategies to help you adjust your learning approach.*

#### Working with shy students:

Circulate the room to **get to know everyone**. A student may not be vocal about needing help; feel free to offer help to every student in a positive way.

Establish trust by **sharing about yourself**. Discover similarities.

**Ask open-ended questions** to get conversations going.

#### Working with uncooperative students:

**Articulate** the issues & a potential solution. Ex: "I'm noticing it takes you a while to settle down. Why don't we spend a minute talking about something else then get back to work?"

Set **ground rules** to create structure and focus. Ex: 1) We'll use our time for learning, and 2) We'll respect each other.

**Get help** from a teacher if a student is not responding to your attempts, especially if the behavior is interfering with learning.

#### Overcoming learning roadblocks:

Explain the material in a **different way**. Use visual tools. Or draw on relevant examples from students' interests.

**Be patient!** And ask for help from another tutor, teacher, or fellow student if needed.

**Move on.** Staying on one point for too long creates anxiety for students. Revisit the problem once you've both had time to think about something else.

#### Working with younger students:

If your student is losing focus, **redirect** them by drawing attention to something they have already accomplished.

**Keep respectful boundaries.** Young children can become emotionally attached; it is important to remember your role as more a teacher than a friend.

#### Working with older students:

Speak to students at their level. **Never talk down to them!**

Older students often feel enormous social pressure, which can lead to risky choices. As a mentor, **listen, remain supportive,** and direct the student to a counselor or teacher if appropriate.

Adolescents feel conflicting emotions about requiring a tutor. It is critical that you **immediately establish your confidence in them.**

You are not expected to solve all of your student's problems. Your role is to help students **focus** on their own learning while **encouraging** them to feel good about their work & worth.

### DEVELOPING YOUR SKILLS

*Volunteering is an active learning process for you & students.*

**Observe** the teacher so you're on the same page as students. Follow the teacher's method & curriculum.

**Ask for feedback** from your teacher.

**Take initiative!** Make the most of your volunteering!

# WHAT TO DO IN THOSE STICKY SITUATIONS

WHEN	YOU CAN TRY	IF THIS DOESN'T WORK
A child is acting out to get attention.	Catching a child behaving appropriately and giving a quick positive comment or thumbs up.	Let the teacher know (if s/he is unaware) of the problematic behavior.
A child you're working with one-on-one is constantly distracted.	Limiting distractions around you. Try limiting the field of information: cover up the page to only reveal a small piece of information at a time.	Ask the teacher if you can work with the child in a quiet corner of the classroom or if the teacher can provide materials to create a visual screen.
A child seems unable to understand what the teacher is asking him or her to do.	Consider the student's learning style. Does the child need visual, aural, or kinesthetic reinforcement?	Ask the teacher if s/he has additional information about how the student learns best.
A child is goofing off in a cooperative learning situation.	Redirecting the child's focus back onto the task at hand. Challenge the group to complete work in an allotted time: "I bet you can finish this in the next 5 minutes if you all focus" Speak quietly to the child goofing off: "I think you can find the answer if you look back at chapter 2. Do you need some help?"	Let the teacher know about the group dynamic.
A child is hitting another child.	Increasing proximity by moving toward the action. Do NOT put yourself between kids. Call out to one of the kids to come to you. Notify the teacher or yard supervisor immediately.	Notify the teacher of the inappropriate behavior.
A child is exhibiting unfair play or poor sportsmanship.	Calling out, "Hey, I've never played this game using those rules!" Ask them to explain it to you. We've never met a kid who didn't want to explain what & why they were doing something to an interested adult.	If this is a constant issue with a particular child, let the teacher know.
You observe unsafe play.	Redirect with words. Ex: "That's not safe," or "throw the ball in the other direction."	If this is a constant issue with a particular child, let the teacher know.
You see a child marking up materials or school property.	Act clueless and say in a neutral manner, "Hey, what are you kids doing?" Most children will stop when they know they're caught.	Refer the matter to the yard supervisor/teacher.
A child is teasing or chasing others.	Distract by calling out kindly and firmly, "Hey, what game are you playing?" Children usually stop when they know they are doing something wrong. Be prepared to be entertained by the story they'll try to tell you!	If this is a constant issue with a particular child, let the teacher know.
You observe running or shouting in the hallways.	Giving an overly dramatic shocked look can sometimes be enough. Make eye contact and express with your face & body your disapproval. Do not single-out students in front of their peers; speak to them individually. Be wary of confronting students you don't know. Remember: you will never out-shout students—especially a whole class of them!	Refer habitual issues from your class to the teacher. If from another class, report to that teacher or your teacher. Conditions that disturb student learning are everyone's business.