

Milford School Department Volunteer Handbook



Adopted: 5/17/18

MILFORD SCHOOL DEPARTMENT

13 School Street
Milford, ME 04461
207-827-2252

Welcome Milford School Department Volunteers!

We are thankful that you have chosen to volunteer your service to our students. The Milford School Committee encourages parents/ guardians and other members of the community to share their time, knowledge, and abilities with our students. Volunteers in our schools enrich the educational program and strengthen our schools' relationships with the greater Milford community. Your contribution is important to help meet the individual needs of each child.

The education of today's youth takes a whole community. Caring members of our community bring new energy, diverse perspectives, and needed 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 more.

The handbook is designed to provide you with practical information that will assist you in your volunteer placement. It is our goal to ensure that the time you spend with our students is worthwhile. If you have any questions that are not addressed in the handbook, please speak with the classroom teacher or school principal.

Once again, thank you for helping make a difference in the lives of students in Milford. The gift of your time is sincerely appreciated.

Definition of a Volunteer

A volunteer is a person who provides services, without compensation or benefits of any kind or amount, on an occasional or regular basis in the school or in school activities.

Volunteer Goals

The goal of the Milford School Department Volunteer Program is to encourage and enable citizens within our communities to participate in fostering academic success for all of our students. Our primary responsibility is to ensure that all volunteers are aware of the confidentiality guidelines enforced in schools required by the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) which regulates confidentiality of student records. Our goal will be accomplished by training, supporting and providing encouragement to volunteers to be effective participants within our schools. We recognize the immense value that volunteers bring to our learning environment.

Opportunities to Volunteer

Volunteer skills, interest, and time commitments vary. We hope that you will be able to find a volunteer opportunity that suits your interests and availability.

Classroom: Some teachers might like to have volunteers help in their classrooms or on field trips. Examples would be working with students in the classroom or in small groups, or preparing instructional material as needed.

School Wide: For those interested in helping on a school-wide level, the school library and the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) offer various opportunities to contribute. The PTO hosts events that require volunteers to help with coordination, set up, supervision, and communication.

Special School Projects: Periodically throughout the year, the school may require volunteer help with such projects as school newspaper, decorating, and specific theme related activities.

Getting Started

Before beginning your first volunteer task, all volunteers must complete the following process:

1. Complete and return the attached Volunteer Application and Volunteer Agreement Form.
2. Attend an orientation session on the responsibilities and expectations of volunteers.
3. Become familiar with school practices for signing in/ out, identifications, emergency drills, classroom policies, and rules.
4. Sign the Orientation Attendance Form and the Volunteer Acknowledgement of School Privacy Rights Form provided at orientation.

What You Should Know About Our Volunteer Program

The Milford School Department has a strong tradition of parental involvement. Because volunteers are such an integral part of our school, it is important to maintain high standards of security and professional behavior. All volunteers working with or overseeing children must do so in the presence of a staff member. Our school is an exciting and busy place, so it is extremely important for all volunteers to remember the following:

- Respect confidentiality. Students and staff have a right to privacy.
- Honor your commitments and be on time. Choose what is manageable and interesting to you.
- Be professional, prepared, responsible, and safe at all times.
- Communicate appropriately. Use appropriate tone of voice for the age of students. Be positive in discussions with students. Do not distract teachers while teaching.
- Strive to give each child the best effort you can.
- Respect each child as an individual.

Discipline

Allow teachers to discipline children. If there are incidents of misbehavior, it is the teacher's responsibility to handle the situation. As a volunteer, it is helpful to be specific about expectations with students. Keep limits and boundaries in place. Consistently and calmly work with students, taking a neutral stance, restating rules and expectations, and offering reasonable choices.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is a great concern while you are in the school. As a volunteer, you may become privy to information about students' personal or educational information, either formally or informally. The Milford School Department policy strictly forbids the unauthorized discussion and/or disclosure of any such information.

To make sure that students, staff, and families feel comfortable in our schools, it is essential that we respect each other's privacy. Volunteers must be especially careful to maintain confidentiality. Breaching confidentiality can be hurtful to children, families, and our staff. It can also harm the good reputation that our volunteer parents have earned over the years.

All volunteers must sign the Volunteer Acknowledgment of Student Privacy Rights Form during orientation.

When you see or hear something...

As a volunteer, you might see or hear things from staff or students that they would not want repeated outside of the school. No matter how innocent, cute, funny, or charming a classroom event may be, it is not appropriate to repeat stories about students under any circumstances.

When parents ask you questions...

Many parents are tempted to ask you about how their children behave in school. You are not at liberty to discuss. Politely let them know that they should speak with the classroom teacher.

When students tell you about their personal lives...

As students become comfortable working with you, they might decide to share something personal. You need to keep this information private, even if you know the child and their family outside of school.

When you have a concern...

If you hear or observe something that troubles you, tell the classroom teacher. The teacher is usually in the best position to deal with the issue appropriately. If you feel the classroom teacher cannot address the concern appropriately, discuss it with the school Principal.

A volunteer is expected to...

- Never share personal information about a student or student's family with other people.
- Never share specific information with a parent about their child based on the volunteer's classroom experience, whether positive or negative.
- Never make comments harmful to the reputation of any pupil, professional, or other volunteer.
- Never share opinions about the behavior and/ or academic program of students.

If You Need Help

If you have questions, concerns, or want to talk about your volunteer assignment, please talk with the staff member with whom you are working or the Principal.

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VOLUNTEER APPLICATION

You can make a difference: Be a school volunteer!

(Please PRINT clearly)

First Name: _____ Middle Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Maiden Name: _____ Previous Name(s): _____

Date of Birth: ____/____/____ Driver's License/ State ID #: _____

Home Address: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

<u>Name(s) of Child/ Children</u>	<u>School</u>	<u>Grade</u>
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

List any education/ training/ experiences you have that would help us in meeting the need of our students:

In which area(s) would you prefer to serve? (Please see Principal for a complete list of volunteer opportunities.)

1. _____ 4. _____

2. _____ 5. _____

3. _____ 6. _____

Day(s) Available (please check)

- _____ Monday
- _____ Tuesday
- _____ Wednesday
- _____ Thursday
- _____ Friday

Time(s) Available

In case of emergency contact: _____ Phone: _____

References:

Please list three persons who can comment on your character and abilities that we may contact.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>Relationship</u>
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Background:

The Milford School Department asks the following information of all individuals who volunteer to work with our students to help ensure safety.

1. Have you ever been charged with or investigated for sexual abuse or harassment of another person? Yes ____ No ____
2. Have you ever been convicted of a crime (other than a minor traffic offense)? Yes ____ No ____
3. Have you ever entered a plea of guilty or "no contest" to any crime? Yes ____ No ____
4. Has any court ever deferred, filed or dismissed proceedings without a finding of guilty and require that you pay a fine, penalty or court costs, and/or imposed a requirement as to your behavior or conduct for a period of time in connection with any crime? Yes ____ No ____

If you answered "yes" to any of the previous questions, provide full details below. Please include information with respect to court actions, the date, the offense in question, and the address of the court involved. (Attach additional page(s) if necessary.) _____

If you have lived outside of Maine, please identify the location and dates: _____

Refusal to provide authorization for reference and/ or criminal record checks and/ or providing false or misleading information on this application shall constitute sufficient reason to deny approval to serve as a volunteer for the Milford School Department.

I understand that the Milford School Department performs reference and criminal record checks on all volunteers and I authorize persons and entities contacted by the Milford School Department in connection with this application to provide information about me. I expressly waive, in connection with any request for, or provision of such information, any claims, including without limitation, defamation, emotional distress, invasion of privacy, or interference with contractual relations that I might otherwise have against the School Department, its agents and officials or against any provider of such information. I further understand that if I am approved as a volunteer, that I will be required to sign a Volunteer Agreement and attend a Volunteer Orientation.

_____	_____
Applicant's Signature	Date

Printed Name

OFFICE USE ONLY:

- _____ Applications reviewed for completeness
- _____ Reference checked (attach documentation)
- _____ Criminal Record checked (attach documentation)

Application Approved: _____

Application Denied: _____

Administrator or Authorized Official: _____ Date: _____

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VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT FORM

I have read the Milford School Department Volunteer Handbook , have attended volunteer training, and understand my responsibilities as a school volunteer.

I understand that as a volunteer in the Milford School Department I must keep ALL student and staff information confidential. I agree not to access, review, disclose, or use confidential student or staff information without specific authorization from a school administrator. I also understand that even when I am no longer a volunteer in the school, any confidential information I may have learned must continue to be kept confidential. I understand that any breach of confidentiality requirements will result in my immediate termination as a volunteer and may result in legal actions against me.

I understand that I must comply with all Milford School Department policies and school rules applicable to school staff as well as all directions from school administrators and staff while serving as a volunteer. I further understand that my authorization to serve as a volunteer may be terminated at the discretion of the Superintendent and/ or School Principal at any time if they determine that such action is in the best interest of the Milford School Department.

Signature of Volunteer

Date

Printed Name

Signature of Principal/ Trainer

Date

Printed Name