

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF SOMERSET

Go Spartans!

VOLUNTEER



HANDBOOK

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL:

635 SUNRISE DRIVE
SOMERSET, WI 54025

MIDDLE SCHOOL:

625 SUNRISE DRIVE
SOMERSET, WI 54025

HIGH SCHOOL:

645 SUNRISE DRIVE
SOMERSET, WI 54025

THANK YOU FOR VOLUNTEERING!

TOGETHER

WE

ENGAGE

EDUCATE

&

EMPOWER

ALL

LEARNERS

CONTACT US

 715-247-4848

 info@somerset.k12.wi.us

SOMERSET SCHOOL DISTRICT

VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

The Board of Education supports community involvement as an integral part of the educational goals of the district. Therefore, the development of volunteer relationships is recommended and encouraged. Specifically, volunteers can:

- Enrich the school program by sharing their experiences and talents with students.
- Stimulate community interest, concern and support for education.
- Provide an opportunity for interested community members to become directly involved with education.
- Provide students with reinforcement of skills.
- Strengthen school-community partnerships through direct and positive participation within the schools.
- Improve student self-image and help make learning enjoyable.
- Enhance all aspects of the education process.

Duties may involve service to libraries/media centers and classes, at athletic events and music programs, on field trips, in youth tutoring/mentoring programs and similar

The safety and well-being of the students, staff and volunteers of the district is paramount. Therefore, the district shall conduct criminal background checks annually on all volunteers. Background checks shall be conducted prior to the first time the individual volunteers for the district. It is your responsibility to notify the school district if a circumstance occurs that could compromise your eligibility as a volunteer.

School volunteers shall be expected to abide by all applicable laws, district policies and administrative procedures when performing their assigned responsibilities. All district employees working directly with a volunteer are responsible for directing and supervising the activities of the volunteer with broad supervision provided by the building principal. Volunteers shall be covered under the district's liability policy while performing their authorized duties.

Volunteers shall be restricted from access to confidential student and employee record information except as otherwise specifically provided and consistent with law and district policies and procedures. Volunteers shall be responsible for maintaining confidentiality regarding information seen or heard while working as a volunteer.

It is the responsibility of district teachers and administrators to recognize the contributions of volunteers, with the advice and assistance of other employees.

THANK YOU for being part of the Volunteer Program at Somerset. We believe that schools, families, and the community must be partners in the education of children.

Volunteers are a vital link in the educational chain at Somerset. The time, talents, and skills you share with students and staff are valued and appreciated. All volunteers are role models for students.

This handbook has been prepared to help you become familiar with our school and the Volunteer Program. If you still have questions after reading this handbook, please call or ask at the office or contact our volunteer coordinators.

WELCOME TO SOMERSET! We look forward to a mutually rewarding and beneficial relationship as we build the future together.

SOMERSET SCHOOL DISTRICT'S VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

It is the intent of the Somerset School District to utilize volunteers and encourage community involvement to enhance our educational programs. To carry out this goal a volunteer partnership program has been established.

Volunteers work under the direction and guidance of school personnel and/or volunteer coordinators. Volunteers will not replace salaried staff, nor will their presence mean that fewer staff members will be needed.

A volunteer is many things: an extra pair of hands, an extra measure of personal warmth, a valuable resource for classroom enrichment, a bridge between the instructional program and the community. We cannot buy what volunteers give to our school!

The purpose of the School Volunteer Program is to enrich and enhance the student's curriculum and to strengthen school-community relations through direct and positive participation.

WHY VOLUNTEER?

There are many different reasons for volunteering. Understanding your goals for volunteering will allow you to use your talents most effectively. Some of the reasons for volunteering may be:

- To play an active role in educating children
- To experience the satisfaction of helping someone.
- To develop a network with other parents.
- To meet new people and make friends.
- To learn about your community and school system.
- To pursue a personal interest or hobby.
- To explore career options.
- To remain active and productive in the community after retirement.
- To document experience for future jobs or academic references.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Volunteers are always welcome (and needed) at Somerset Schools. As a volunteer, you are an important part of making our school a great place for children.

While working for the school district, it is expected that volunteers will maintain the high standard of professionalism and confidentiality expected of our staff. This means that what happens at school or at school events stays within the school or event. Discussing such issues outside the building is not appropriate and is in violation of a student's right to privacy.

If you have concerns regarding a student's behavior, ability, or performance, please discuss these with your assigned teacher/coach or the principal/program director.

Volunteers are restricted from access to confidential information on students and employee files

SIGNING IN PROCEDURE

All volunteers are asked to sign in and out each time they perform any volunteer task at Somerset (including chaperoning field trips). This will include engaging in the Raptor Building Entry System. The Volunteer Record Book is kept in each school office and the program director's office. Please enter the date, your name and arrival time, and where you will be working before you report for your volunteer service. Before you go home, be sure to remember to sign out.

For security reasons and in case of an emergency in your family, it is important for the school principal and office staff to know who is in the building and where they are working. *Sign in and out each time you volunteer. We know it takes a few extra minutes to follow this procedure but it is very important.*

In addition, a record of each volunteer's hours enables the school to evaluate its volunteer program. The hours spent volunteering is an example of the commitment to quality education in our school district.

VISITOR BADGES FOR VOLUNTEERS

School Visitor badges are available for all volunteers that work at Somerset Schools.

As a volunteer you are also a visitor to the school. When you sign into the office a badge will be provided for you to wear. Please return this when you sign out of the school, even if you are going to another building in the district.

IF YOU MUST CANCEL

If an illness or emergency arises, please contact one of the volunteer coordinators, the teacher, or the school office, as soon as possible. **This is very important, especially if a classroom teacher or an event manager is counting on your assistance.**

VOLUNTEERS AND ILL/INJURED CHILDREN

If a child becomes ill or injured while in your care, notify the office immediately about the incident and also let them know you are a volunteer. In this age of numerous infectious diseases, it is prudent not to touch any bodily fluids.

TIPS FOR VOLUNTEERS

TIME:

Report on time to the staff person who will supervise your job and remain for the period of time for which you are committed. If this person is not available or work is not set out for you, please contact the school office. We value your services.

APPEARANCE:

Your appearance should be appropriate for the task and/or setting. You are a role model and your image is important.

ACCEPT DIRECTION:

Accept direction and supervision, recognizing that you are an important leader while offering supplementary assistance and enrichment with your personal skill and competence. If you have questions or concerns regarding a staff member's directions, please consult with him/her **privately** and not in the presence of students.

ASSIGNMENT:

If the assignment does not prove to be what you expected or you feel uncomfortable and are hesitant to discuss it with the staff member, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator, principal, or program director. There are many ways to volunteer at Somerset and we want people to feel comfortable and enjoy their service.

ASK:

Become familiar with emergency procedures in case of a fire or severe weather. If you are assigned to a specific classroom, learn classroom procedures and rules for both regular and emergency situations.

SHARE:

Share your ideas and observations with staff members. We can learn new things from one another. Also, be prepared to hear feedback on those ideas from the staff.

TELEPHONE:

Each classroom at Somerset Schools is equipped with a phone. If you need to make a local call while in the building, press “8” for an outside line and then enter the number you are calling.

WORKROOM:

Some schools have a workroom area for use by staff and volunteers. Please feel free to use this area when it is needed.

MEALS:

Volunteers are welcome to eat lunch at Somerset Schools. Adult lunches can be purchased. Please pay in the lunch line.

EFFECTIVE WAYS TO WORK WITH STUDENTS

- **MAINTAIN A SENSE OF HUMOR!**
- Be warm and friendly – learn the children’s names-show interest in what they are doing and telling you. You are a very important listener.
- When working with children, encourage them to do their own thinking. Give them plenty of time to answer. Silence often means they are thinking and organizing what they want to say or write.
- If you don’t know an answer or are unsure of what to do, admit it to the children and work it out together. Feel free to ask the student’s teacher/coach for help when you need it.
- Use tact and positive comments. Encourage children. Seek something worthy of a compliment, especially when children are having difficulties.
- Accept children as they are. You do not need to feel responsible for judging a child’s abilities, progress, or behavior.
- Respect a child’s privacy. If a child or teacher reveals personal information, regard it as confidential.
- Be consistent with teachers’ rules for classroom behavior, schedule, and atmosphere.
- Wear comfortable clothes and don’t hesitate to “get to the child’s level.”
- If parents and friends ask about your work, tell them you enjoy working with children and discuss the activities you do rather than specific information about a child or teacher; confidentiality is very important.
- Keep your commitment; the children will expect you and look forward to your coming. If you know you will be gone, tell them in advance: Keep all promises and make none you can’t keep. Children never forget!

STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

Volunteers are an important part of the educational team. The suggestions and opinions of the volunteers are always welcome. It is the professional staff, however, that is held responsible by law for the decisions that are made regarding the instructions of students and school management. For this reason, volunteers work under the supervision of the school staff.

IS THERE ANYTHING VOLUNTEERS SHOULDN'T DO?

YES! The professional staff is responsible for everything that goes on in the school including student instruction, safety, and discipline. Volunteers supplement and support the program, but do not:

- Leave your designated, approved volunteer assignment/area (i.e. wandering the building, following your child from space to space).
- Discipline students. Expect students to follow school rules. They should at all times be safe, respectful and responsible. If you witness a problem or situation that warrants immediate attention, notify a staff member.
- Have access to students' permanent records.
- Work with a student in a secluded area or out of sight of a supervising teacher.
- Evaluate achievement or diagnose student needs.
- Counsel students.
- Discuss student progress with parents.

TAX DEDUCTIONS

Volunteers can deduct some expenses incurred in volunteer work performed for schools or other tax exempt organizations.

“Charitable contributions” may be deducted only if volunteers regularly itemize their tax deductions on Form 1040, Schedule A. In that case, volunteers can deduct the following transportation expenses on the line for “gifts of charity”. Unfortunately, you cannot deduct the value of your time or child care costs.

Transportation. You can deduct out-of-pocket expenses for gas, oil, parking fees, and tolls for your car, taxi, or bus fares, provided they are directly related to your volunteer work. (Instead of keeping track of actual costs for travel, you can write off a standard rate, plus parking fees.) This rate may vary from year to year so be sure to check current 1040 instructions.

DON'T FORGET!!

- 1. Sign in each time you volunteer at Somerset Schools.**
- 2. Wear your visitor badge.**
- 3. Take advantage of training sessions and ask for more if you need them.**
- 4. Ask questions! No question is inappropriate if you don't know the answer.**
- 5. If you have constructive criticism or suggestions...tell us! We welcome your comments.**
- 6. If you are unhappy with your assignment or are having problems concerning it...tell us.**
- 7. If you are happy with the Volunteer Program at Somerset Schools...tell us and tell others!**
- 8. ENJOY YOURSELF WHILE AT SOMERSET SCHOOL!**