



Volunteer Handbook



2014 Edition

Volunteers are the cornerstone of UCS!

Volunteer Information

Helping children is what teaching, parenting, and volunteering is all about – a shared venture, a cooperative undertaking, and a labor of love. As a volunteer, you are an important part of the United Community School team!

Volunteers Help in Many Ways

- Giving general assistance in the classroom or school office.
- Reading stories to children or listening to them read.
- Tutoring small groups of children.
- Sharing special knowledge through lectures and demonstrations.
- Helping teachers with duplicating materials, laminating, sorting, etc.

Your Responsibility as a Volunteer

As a volunteer, you are responsible for maintaining a professional attitude of mutual respect and confidence. Your cooperative attitude, expressed in the willingness to provide needed services, is deeply valued. You should:

- Identify yourself by signing in as soon as you enter the building. Sign out when you are ready to leave the building.
- Wear your Volunteer Name Tag at all times while volunteering at school.
- Adhere to our code of confidentiality by not discussing teachers, students, or school affairs.
- Become familiar with and adhere to school and classroom policies and practices.
- Be capable of adjusting to each teacher's individual style and following his/her directions.
- Be punctual and reliable.
- Follow the teacher's directions.
- Set a good example of appearance and behavior for students. Dress appropriately while in the classroom.
- Notify the school in case you need to be absent or late.
- We ask that you volunteer without younger siblings with you so you can make the most of your volunteer experience and give your attention to students.
- Report any student behavior you feel is inappropriate to the classroom teacher immediately.
- Volunteers should use adult bathrooms. Group bathrooms are for children's use only.

Accent the Positive

What makes a difference for children is positive people in their life. You may be the person a child connects with! Focus, notice, listen, care and show genuine honor and respect for the students you are working with.

Ways volunteers at UCS can help students:

- Learn the children's names.
- Let them know they are important.
- Praise children for success.
- Always be sincere and honest.
- Listen carefully to what the children tell you.
- Show the children a genuine interest.
- Accept the children as individuals.
- Be respectful of confidential information.

The Four Most Important Volunteering Qualities

- **PUNCTUALITY**

Always arrive on time for any volunteer activity. The school day and class periods are set for specific times and if you are 10-20 minutes late, the activity may be over when you arrive.

- **DEPENDABILITY**

Teachers and staff members rely on the services performed by volunteers. If you are unable to volunteer on your scheduled day, it is essential that you contact the school so other arrangements can be made.

- **FOCUS**

Be sure to focus on the task the teacher has asked you to accomplish. When you are volunteering, it is not an appropriate time to talk with the teacher about your own child or talk with other staff members or volunteers in the classroom. Staff members and volunteers should focus on students.

- **CONFIDENTIALITY**

As a matter of professional ethics, volunteers do not discuss teacher, student, or school affairs with unauthorized persons. It is extremely important that confidentiality is maintained at all times.

Safety Procedures When Working with Children

Volunteers working at UCS assist with a variety of tasks that may include contact with children. When students are involved, general standards have been established to reduce the risk of inappropriate conduct:

When volunteers work with students, they should do so in a public setting:

- In classrooms with teachers and others
- In hallways where people frequently pass
- In an “open door” and visible manner

Contact with an individual student outside of school time should occur only with parental permission.

Only a United Community School Director can approve any deviations from these procedures.

All volunteers at United Community School must attend a volunteer training session before they can work with students.



WHAT TO EXPECT OF YOUNGER ELEMENTARY STUDENTS



Of course, there are exceptions, but generally,

Elementary Students:

- Are egocentric
- Act on impulse
- Have little concept of time
- Have little ability to think abstractly
- Will tell you anything

What does this mean to you?

- Keep examples concrete, where possible, and relate to self, family, home or school.
- Use positive phrases such as "Pull the plug, not the cord" rather than "Don't pull the cord."
- Use materials that students can see and touch.
- Be a good listener, but be prepared for extraneous comments. Keep the students focused.

BUILDING A RELATIONSHIP



1. Introducing yourself to your student:
 - Explain your role as a tutor.
 - You are a tutor at the school and are not part of the school staff.
 - You are there to help them.
2. Explore your student's interests. What similar interests do you both have?
3. Plan for what you might do at future meetings. Accept your student where he/she is.
4. Don't expect your student to be very verbal.
5. Students want to know what you're going to do for them.
6. Don't ask personal questions you wouldn't want your student to ask you.
7. Expect that your student will test limits with you. All children do.
8. Don't make assumptions.
9. Don't permit inappropriate behavior. Use this as a time to model appropriate behavior. If it's not permitted in the classroom, it's not permitted when the students are with you!
10. Don't be afraid to express your concerns to your student
11. Allow for listening.
12. Keep commitments. The student will expect you and look forward to your coming. If you know you will not be able to come for a session, tell students in advance. Do not make promises that you cannot keep. Students don't forget!

TUTORING TIPS



1. Be warm and friendly. Give the student your full attention.
2. Maintain a sense of humor.
3. Give clear and specific instructions. Give the student your full attention. You are very important as a listener.
4. Build the student's self-confidence. Let him/her know you expect him/her to try.
5. Give the student your full attention. Listen to what he/she has to say.
6. Speak in a positive way to the student. Point out the things he/she has right and the things he/she does well.
7. Do not tell the student, "This is easy," because he/she will feel defeated if he/she fails in the task.
8. If the student doesn't answer quickly, make sure he/she has plenty of time to think and to respond. Silence may mean he/she is thinking and organizing what he/she wants to say or write.
 - Then rephrase the question gradually adding clues until the student can answer correctly.
 - Finally, give the answer before he/she feels uncomfortable.
9. Keep the lesson moving. When you notice the student losing interest, change activities.
10. Warn the student ahead of time of a change in activities ("in five minutes...")
11. Look for ways to motivate your student by involving him/her in the activities and by being creative and imaginative in your tutoring methods.
12. Help the student work on projects and/or reports, but don't do the project or report for him/her.
13. If the student is assigned to read and study for understanding, then answer questions on the material, you are not expected to know the material and answers. To help the student, model how to read for understanding. First, discuss with the student the questions he/she is expected to answer. Then read together, discussing the selection and possible answers as you read.
14. Be tactful and encouraging. Compliment the student when she/he does well.



Volunteer Consent Form

Name _____

Address _____

Home Phone Number _____ Work Phone _____

Driver's License# _____ State _____

Date of Birth _____ County _____

Previous Address _____

(If not at current residence at least 2 years)

<u>Child Safety Information</u> (Circle One)	
1. Have you ever been convicted of a sex-related crime?	Yes No
2. Have you ever been convicted of a crime involving violence or threat of violence?	Yes No
3. Have you ever been convicted of a crime involving criminal activity in drugs or alcoholic beverages?	Yes No
4. Have you ever been convicted of any other crime except a minor traffic violation?(Includes Traffic Crimes)	Yes No
5. Have you been arrested within the last three years for a crime for which there has not yet been an acquittal or dismissal?	Yes No
6. Is there any circumstance or pattern in your life, which would make it inappropriate for you to serve with minors or would compromise the integrity of United Community School?	Yes No
7. Do you give permission for approved UCS Parent Volunteers to check sexual offender databases for your name?	Yes No
8. Do you give permission for UCS to perform, at its discretion, a criminal background check using the information you have provided?	Yes No

I, _____, have reviewed and understand my role and responsibilities as described at the volunteer training session and volunteer information handout. I understand that providing false information or failing to adhere to UCS rules and guidelines will result in the immediate suspension of my volunteer privileges.

Signature _____ Date _____