

# **Waters Landing Elementary School**

## **PTA Volunteer Guide 2008-2009**

Helping to ensure that school volunteers throughout WLES are confident, competent and comfortable as they help serve the educational needs of children in our community!

For more information, contact the  
Waters Landing Volunteer Coordinator at [volunteer@waterslandingpta.com](mailto:volunteer@waterslandingpta.com) or  
visit our website at [www.waterslandingpta.com](http://www.waterslandingpta.com)

## **Welcome!**

Waters Landing Elementary School (WLES) PTA welcomes you as a partner in the education of our young people. It is a big job, and an important one for all of us in this community. We are thrilled and thankful that you have chosen to join us. As a volunteer, you are special. The time you offer is a gift to our students and our staff. You are the extra hand offering a high five of congratulations when a new skill is mastered, the extra smile that welcomes the “new kid” into the morning reading circle, the extra voice that speaks out on behalf of our students and teachers and the important work they do. You bring unique talents, skills and energies into our school. Our students will learn a lot from you! Helping you become a successful volunteer is one of the goals of the volunteer coordinator. Please let us know how we can make your time in our school more pleasant, productive and personally satisfying. Again, thank you for your efforts on behalf of all of our children.

## **Becoming a Volunteer:**

All volunteers are required to register with the volunteer coordinator and sign and return a volunteer commitment form. Familiarization with the policies outlined in this guide is required. The volunteer coordinator maintains a volunteer database and shares the information with those needing volunteers. Signing up for the WLES News Group (listserv) via our website at [www.waterslandingpta.com](http://www.waterslandingpta.com) is a great way to be alerted to volunteering opportunities.

## **Volunteer Policies:**

Regardless of the specific tasks you perform during your volunteer experience, there are certain rules, policies, regulations and procedures that will govern your service. The following sections of this guide will help familiarize you with them. If you have any questions or concerns about any of them, please contact the volunteer coordinator for assistance.

## **Orientation and Training:**

This guide will give you a good deal of the information you need to successfully provide service to students in our school. However, a facility tour and orientation meeting may be very helpful to you. The volunteer coordinator usually does this, although it is acceptable if another PTA representative or staff member provides the orientation. Just make sure that you feel comfortable and confident about your place in the school before you begin volunteering.

## **Attendance:**

Once you have agreed to a volunteer opportunity, you become an even more important part of the team. Please arrive at the scheduled time. If you cannot make it, please contact the person you were scheduled to volunteer with or the person who recruited you to volunteer, so that other arrangements can be made for the work you were scheduled to do.

## **Signing In and Out:**

Our volunteer sign-in book is located on the volunteer table just inside the main office. It is critical that you stop at the office and sign in so that a record of your hours is maintained. We are required to report volunteer hours to Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS). Additionally, for school security purposes we need to know who is in the buildings at all times. When you sign in, make sure to put on your name badge so that you are recognized as a volunteer. In the event you do not have your badge, visitor stickers are available in the main office. Don't forget to sign-out in the main office when you leave. In the event of an emergency situation or evacuation, WLES staff must be able to account for everyone signed into the building.

## **Appropriate Conduct:**

As a volunteer member of the team, it is important to play by the same rules as others on your team. All employees and students at WLES are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that promotes respect for self and others, responsibility for student achievement, and the creation of a positive and safe learning environment. You can do this by abiding by rules and laws that forbid the transport of weapons, drugs or alcohol onto school property, including

athletic fields, school parking lots, and sponsored events off campus; by abstaining from smoking during your volunteer service; by dressing in a manner that is comfortable and appropriate when you come to school; and by committing yourself to considerate behaviors, respectful language and appropriate touch. Appropriate touches generally occur on the shoulders, upper back, arms, and hands. Your supervising teacher or volunteer coordinator can answer questions you might have in this regard.

## **Confidentiality:**

As a volunteer, you may become aware of personal information regarding a child's academic performance, social interactions with peers, private family situations, etc. The child may share the information with you, a teacher may choose to share it with you in order to enhance your ability to appropriately serve a student's needs, or another student may do so. Regardless of how personal information about a particular child comes to you, note that the information must be held in your strictest confidence. It is never to be shared with other volunteers, acquaintances from the community, or certainly other students. Should you be concerned that the information needs to be addressed by a classroom teacher or counselor, report it to him or her immediately (in private). As employees, they are required by law to immediately report any suspicions regarding abuse, neglect, endangerment or exploitation. Additionally, they need to know if any students are involved in dangerous or illegal activities so that they may intervene as soon as possible and keep the school community safe.

## **Emergency Response:**

During orientation, you will be alerted to fire drill and other emergency signals (code red/code blue). As you may be in the building during a crisis or fire drill, it is important that, just like our students and staff, you know how to evacuate the building or respond to an emergency. There are staff members trained in first aid and emergency assistance. As a volunteer, you are to call on these individuals to administer first aid – do not attempt to do so yourself, unless you have the appropriate training and certification or the situation is critical. The only persons authorized to administer medications are health room staff, so never provide a student any ointment, tablet, capsule or spray that could enter the bloodstream. Some of our students have severe food allergies. Do not give any student something to eat without school nursing staff approval. Only store bought foods with ingredient labels may be served to the children.

## **Supervision:**

WLES PTA has a designated volunteer coordinator who will orient you to the school site, introduce you to your designated teacher or committee chair and monitor your participation. However, the coordinator is not at school at all times, so you may look to the classroom teacher or office staff to whom you're assigned to provide direction and support of your volunteering. It is important to recognize that our staff are well-trained professionals who can offer many insights, tips, and strategies to help your volunteering time be as productive as possible. If you have questions regarding a teacher's management of students or discipline, do not hesitate to ask (in private). Often a teacher may have a specific plan in mind that will be helpful for you to know. Additionally, the school counselor can be consulted for assistance. On occasion, you may arrange to have some of your volunteer service completed at home. This arrangement is fine, however, no students should be involved in the arrangement.

## **Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Rules:**

WLES is committed to providing students with a positive and safe learning environment and we follow federal and state guidelines to ensure that we do not tolerate discriminatory or harassing behaviors in our school. Harassment is defined as any act based on race, creed, religion, disability, national origin, gender or sex, age, or sexual orientation that substantially interferes with an individual's educational or work performance. It is illegal. It can occur between an adult and a child, between two adults, and between two children. When these incidents occur, we must make every effort to stop the behavior and see that it does not occur again. If you become aware of a behavior that might constitute harassment, report it immediately to office staff or administration so that it will be investigated and addressed. Make sure to examine your own behaviors and word choices closely too.

## Personal Safety:

We want to ensure that you are safe and secure in our school facilities. Although we have a volunteer room, your personal belongings are best left at home. Please make sure that you are thoroughly trained on all equipment you are expected to operate and leave the machine in good operational order. Assistance can be provided by the volunteer coordinators, other volunteers or staff members (if available). In terms of exposures to infectious organisms borne in the blood or other body fluids, remember that the risk of infection due to such exposures is very low. However, this is a school full of children, and illness and disease may be present (from lice to chicken pox). If direct skin contact with blood and/or body fluids occurs, scrub hands and other affected skin areas thoroughly with soap and running water as soon as feasible. If direct mucous membrane contact with blood and/or body fluids occurs, flush affected mucous membranes thoroughly with copious amounts of running water as soon as feasible. In the event of a human bite or puncture wound, encourage back bleeding by applying pressure and milking the wound as with snakebite, then wash the area thoroughly with soap and warm running water. Make sure to keep cuts and open wounds covered with clean bandages at all times.

## A Final Word:

People volunteer for a variety of reasons. Some are seeking skill development – the potential to access certain training. Some are seeking social connection – the opportunity to become a part of a community and make new friends. Some are seeking influence – the chance to make a difference in an area of interest or concern. Moreover, some are seeking to affirm the value of their life experiences – what they've learned, what they can share – through giving back to others around them. Whatever the reason you've chosen to volunteer, we're grateful that you've chosen to be a part of our community. We look forward to tapping the talents and energy you bring to our children. Please enjoy your volunteering time with us – and let us know what we can do to ensure that you are . . . **confident, comfortable**, and much, much more than **content** during each and every moment in Waters Landing Elementary School!

If you know someone who has not yet signed up to be a volunteer, or if you have any questions, please contact the Waters Landing Volunteer Coordinator at [volunteer@waterslandingpta.com](mailto:volunteer@waterslandingpta.com)

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"Volunteer are not paid because they are worthless,  
but because they are priceless"

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Thank you for being a volunteer.