

# **Cedar Lane Elementary School**

## **Parent Volunteer Handbook 2011-2012**

### **Principal's Welcome**

It is a pleasure to welcome you as an educational partner as volunteer at our school. The partnership between school and home is a cornerstone of Cedar Lane Elementary School's Strategic Plan as well as a common philosophy of how we educate our students at Cedar Lane.

The staff could not offer the rich educational program we have in place if parents and other community members did not assist us in so many ways. Whether chaperoning a field trip, working in the classroom or the library, or participating in one of our many school functions, your presence and energy are appreciated and needed to provide our students with varied, engaging learning opportunities.

Please take the time to read this guide. It offers sage advice and will enable you to better serve our students and teachers.

Feel free to contact your child's teacher, the teacher you work with, or us if you have any questions or concerns regarding any aspect of this guide. Welcome to a rewarding and fulfilling volunteer role at CLE!

***Thank you for making the commitment to work with the children and teachers of Cedar Lane.***

Donna Kolakowski and Rebecca Feathers

Volunteering your time and talents in the classroom benefits your child, the school and you – it's challenging, personally rewarding, and fun. Volunteering creates a natural bridge between home and school. Children love to see their parents in their classrooms. Your presence demonstrates that education is important to you and promotes a positive attitude towards learning. No previous experience is required: enthusiasm, dedication and a desire to learn are the most important job qualifications. A sense of humor is at times helpful, too.

## **What can you do as a volunteer?**

### **Help in the classroom by:**

- helping with activity preparations (for example -- cutting, tracing, collating...)
- reading with small groups or individual students
- working with a child on a special project
- assisting children with homework
- publishing (putting together) student books
- helping with special art projects or center activities
- assisting with a bulletin board and/or hanging of student art/class work
- presenting a special area of interest to the class

### **Help in the teacher workroom by:**

- copying for teachers, secretaries, and administration
- laminating posters and other items for teachers
- miscellaneous tasks that may be needed

**Workroom Volunteer Hours: 9:00-10:55 and 1:40-3:30**

### **Help in the library by:**

- helping to shelve books
- helping to check books in/out

### **Help an individual student by mentoring by:**

- Speaking with Mrs. Baker, our Guidance Counselor.

## **Join the PTA**

## **On Your Workday**

When you arrive to volunteer please sign in on the computer in the school office. Please print and wear a volunteer badge. Please sign out when you leave. It is also imperative that the office knows who is on campus in case of a school-wide emergency. If for some reason you are unable to meet your volunteer commitment, please notify the classroom teacher. The children and teachers rely on the dedication and commitment of parent volunteers; a volunteer's absence is always strongly felt. Please alert your teacher to any schedule change by calling the school office at 378-5045.

## **Becoming a Member of a Professional Team (Confidentiality)**

When you assume the responsibility of volunteering in the classroom, you must agree to adhere to the code of ethics that binds together professionals working in the field of education. Volunteers must use a professional level of discretion, which prevents discussion of students, teachers or internal school affairs outside the classroom. Sensitive issues should always be referred to the teacher first or to the principal, if they cannot be addressed at the classroom level. We all respect the need for confidentiality of students, staff, parents and families. If at any time you are aware of a situation that could result in the endangerment of a child or children, please inform the classroom teacher immediately, and/or the school counselor, Mrs. Baker, or Mrs. Feathers or myself.

If you have a child in the classroom where you volunteer, prepare your child for your time there. While you may enjoy working with our own children when you volunteer, parent volunteer duties involve all students in the class or group. Make sure your child understands that you are not there to spend time with him/her alone.

## In the Classroom

**CLE** School teachers are experienced in working with volunteers of varied backgrounds and interests, and they value both the assistance and the enrichment that the parent talent pool brings to the classroom. Our job is to help students succeed. To help us succeed as volunteers the following guidelines have been developed to provide a foundation for positive adult/student interactions.

### 1. Listen Actively and Expect Active Listeners

Our teachers use attention-focusing techniques such as having the children raise their hands until the whole class is silent. Make sure you have everyone's attention before proceeding. A child needing assistance should be helped one-on-one; try to get down to the student's eye level when communicating.

### 2. State Directions Using Positive Language and Convey Expectations Clearly

Statements such as, "Today we're going to..." and, "I'd like to see..." are effective. Instead of telling learners, "Don't do it that way," try illustrating what you don't want by asking them,

"Is this the way?" and respond to the chorus of "No's" with another positive statement: "That's right!" Don't be afraid to let students take risks and make mistakes.

### 3. Praise Effort and Acknowledge Success

- |                                    |                          |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 👉 I can see you are really trying! | 👉 Good effort            |
| 👉 You've done really well.         | 👉 That's great           |
| 👉 I like the way you're working    | 👉 Good for you           |
| 👉 Keep up the good work            | 👉 I like your attitude   |
| 👉 That's right                     | 👉 You should be proud    |
| 👉 What neat work                   | 👉 I appreciate your help |

👉 Very creative

👉 How clever

👉 Very interesting

👉 I like your idea

👉 That's a good observation

👉 You've made a good point

These are a few examples confidence-building phrases. Be sure to take the time to express interest in a student's completed work before starting another activity.

#### 4. Avoid direct comparisons of students' work

Children will sometimes compare work on their own. Try to re-direct student competition to avoid a win/lose scenario: "Yes, Chris has done a really good job. I like the way you have done such-and-such." A simple, non-judgmental reminder, "We don't use put-downs," can help, too.

#### 5. Try to end the session on a successful note

6. Emphasize the successes of the lesson or project: "I can see how much you enjoyed...I like the way everyone tried..."

#### 7. Trouble-Shooting

A proverbial ounce of prevention, used to head off a developing problem, is worth a pound of cure spent trying to salvage a meltdown situation. Serious problems should be referred back to the teachers. Not only have they seen it all before, they have at their disposal all the effective tools of their trade. Not the least of these tools is a sense of confidence about the job, and in time, volunteers acquire that, too.

## **In the School**

### **Safety Procedures**

Anytime the school has an emergency evacuation for any reason, drill or real, you **MUST** evacuate the building.

For all other emergencies, please speak to the person in charge of the area where you are volunteering. They will direct you accordingly.

**Dress Code:** Although we do not have a formal dress code, the expectation is that all adults in the building will dress appropriately and with some sense of decorum. Please dress comfortably and maintain a professional attitude.

### **Reminders:**

- Please let the teachers handle any discipline concerns
- Please schedule your time with the person you are helping prior to coming in
- Younger or older siblings/children are not permitted to come with you when you volunteer
- Teachers must supervise classrooms

## **Thank You Again!**

By bringing your individual energy and abilities to Cedar Lane you are enriching the educational experience of all students in the classroom. Your time, dedication and support are invaluable to teachers, parents, and children. Thank you!

