



## **Playground Volunteer Do's and Don'ts**

### **Reliability**

- Arrive on time or call ahead to the main office if you will be late or absent. Try to find a substitute if you cannot be here for your assigned time. We count on you!

### **Respecting Children/Confidentiality**

- Avoid thinking of children with social challenges as “bad” kids. All children in public schools have a right to be educated in the “least restrictive environment.”
- NEVER discuss children or their behavior with anyone other than to report a situation to the staff member with whom you are supervising. Discussions about a child’s social interactions with friends/neighbors can cause anxiety and is a violation of boundaries. Leave these discussions to the child’s teacher.
- Any information pertaining to students and staff must remain confidential at all times.
- If you have ongoing questions or concerns, speak to the principal or counselor.

### **Supervision/Focus:**

- Spread out on the playground to supervise all zones & continuously move around your assigned area.
- Watch for warning signs of potential problems, such as loud voices, clusters of children in a circle, crying/sad faces, etc. Go over to see what is happening.
- Actively talk with children, encourage others to include those who are alone, ask them how they can solve the problem, etc.
- Do NOT use your cell phone or chat with other adults.

### **Safety:**

- Approach any adult who is not a staff member or assigned volunteer with a badge and ask how you can help them. No one except staff and assigned volunteers may be on the playground while the children are outside.
- All students must be dismissed from the office. Parents may not pick up their children from the cafeteria or recess in order to ensure that everyone knows where children are.

- Ensure that children ask before going inside to the bathroom or nurse and check in when they return.
- Immediately stop any unsafe behavior in a calm way .
- Retrieve balls that go out of bounds. Do NOT allow children to retrieve them.
- Immediately report all physical altercations or students going to the nurse for accidents or altercations.

### **Bullyproof the Playground:**

- Listen and follow up on each child's complaint. Say "tell me about it" and "what have you tried to work it out?" Do NOT ignore complaints.
- Actively watch for children who may be excluded, alone, etc. Ask for help from children who may be willing to reach out. Reiterate the school rule that everyone must be included.
- Understand that popular seemingly "nice" children can bully and unpopular children with challenges are often bullied.
- Report ALL bullying to staff member immediately. Bullying = intentionally trying to harm, being aware of the implications of the behavior AND uneven power.

### **Teach and Positively Direct:**

- Encourage children by telling them what they are doing right (e.g. taking turns, including one another, standing quietly in line).
- Do NOT allow students to have hands on one another, pick one another up, tackle, grab, push or "play fight" even if all kids say they are just having fun. This leads to misunderstanding and is one of the primary causes of real fights. (say "where do our hands belong?")
- Give direction on what they SHOULD do in a calm, firm voice. (say "walk please" if children are running, "hands and feet to self" if physical contact). Avoid telling them what NOT to do (e.g. "Stop running.")
- Ask students if they are following school rules & core values. Ask what the rule is.
- Teach the children the difference between tattling and getting help.
- Speak with children privately when only one or two are misbehaving when possible.



## **Group Management 101**

### Helpful Phrases & Actions for the Cafeteria and Playground

- Gain student attention by clapping rhythmically and have them repeat it. Then stand silently until they are listening.
- Use a loud, firm, yet friendly voice when you need attention in a large group.
- Move near students breaking rule and wait until they comply. Then compliment them.
- Give eye contact and shake your head “no” silently for a minor infraction.
- Ask, “What is the school rule about that?”
- Compliment, “Thank you to those of you who are....” (walking/ keeping your hands to yourselves/etc.). Tell them how what they are doing helps others.
- Give positive forced choices:
  - “You can do what I’ve asked you now or you can visit with Mrs. Moffat to talk about it.” What do you choose?”
  - “We could line up quietly and get out in a minute, or we can wait until everyone is ready, but that may take several minutes of your recess. What do you choose?”
  - “Can you solve the problem on your own or shall we go talk to Mrs. Moffat about it?”

**BELIEVE** that children will respect you, expect them to do so, and take positive actions.

Get back up from staff when you feel frustrated or don’t know what to do.