

Volunteer Handbook



Forestville Elementary School

Volunteer Goal and Mission

To provide support for students, school programs, and school staff. Strive to keep the focus of our endeavors in the best interest of the students' academic and personal growth.

You have made a very worthwhile choice to volunteer for our school. We know your involvement with the students will be a rewarding one both from a personal standpoint and from the knowledge that you are making a major difference in a young person's life. Thank you for your commitment.

Your Responsibilities as a Volunteer

COOPERATION...Promote a spirit of cooperation among our students. Model a cooperative spirit in your interactions with school personnel and other volunteer parents.

DEPENDABILITY...Be on time, and call the school office, your teacher, or chairperson if you must miss a day. Realize how important your presence is and how much students and teachers depend on you.

TEAMWORK...Ask about things you do not understand, and speak up when you have frustrations and concerns. Take complaints directly to the teacher, the principal or the Chairperson. As a valuable member of the educational team, work hard to keep lines of communication open.

And most importantly...

CONFIDENTIALITY...Respect the confidential nature of school records and relationships among staff members and students. The importance of a student's right to privacy is stressed by the fact that student's records can only be viewed by school officials. Please use the utmost discretion concerning personal information about our students.

What You Should Expect In Return

As a valuable member of the educational team, you should expect some things from the school.

AN INTRODUCTION...to class rules and routines, to students, and to related staff by the classroom teacher.

SPECIFIC GUIDANCE...and clear instructions on volunteer assignments.

ORIENTATION...to the program and training as needed.

DISCIPLINE...problems handled by the teacher or administrator.

MEANINGFUL TASKS...which promote student learning and put to use your interests and talents.

RESPECT...as a busy adult making important contributions.

Volunteer Procedures

GENERAL

Sign-in/Sign-out

When you enter the school, please sign in on the Volunteer Sign-In log located in the main office. Include your name, time in and the location of where you will be working. Additionally, when you leave, be sure to enter the time you left. By doing this, you notify the school that you are in the building in case of an emergency and assist in supplying statistics for the Annual Volunteer Report. Please write your name on the vibrant green visitor sticker and affix it in a prominent place. It is important that all visitors to the school properly sign-in and are recognized by your visible sticker to the staff.

Accident Procedures

If you are injured while volunteering at school, report the accident as quickly as possible to the Main Office. FCPS does provide accident insurance for authorized volunteers. You can contact the Risk Management Section of FCPS at 703-246-6740 with any questions.

Volunteer Watch

As a volunteer, constantly be on the lookout for strangers in areas around the school (like parking lots and playgrounds) and inside the school building. Refer or escort strangers in the building to the Main Office. Report suspicious activities to the Main Office ASAP. Help keep our children safe and secure.

ADVERTISING YOUR EVENT

PTA Meetings

All committee chairs and volunteers are encouraged to attend PTA meetings. If you have an item that you would like to discuss at the meeting, contact the secretary, Una Higgins (703-404-2631, una@cox.net) a week prior to the meeting to be included on the agenda.

FLASH

The FLASH, Forestville's weekly newsletter, can be used to inform parents about pertinent activities. Send entries to Marie Cecil (571-434-7561, mrcecil@mindspring.com) by 7pm Wednesdays. Keep in mind that the FLASH is not published on the last Tuesday of every month. See Appendix A for FLASH guidelines.

Forestvision (morning announcements)

To use Forestvision to inform students about relevant activities/events, contact Ms. Byland (703-404-6012, Margie.Bylund@fcps.edu) in the library.

Flyers

Flyers can be distributed for a major event/activity in the Tuesday folders. The recommendation is to keep flyers at a minimum (one per event) and use the FLASH as a way to remind parents. Any correspondence/flyers sent to parents/teachers must be approved by Mr. Harris (Matt.Harris@fcps.edu) through or cc: to Ms. Colie (703-404-6004, Hollis.Colie@fcps.edu) with 72 hours to review/approve the material. Please submit the flyer for approval on Tuesday for distribution the following Tuesday. Once your flyer has

been approved, please email it to Jose Rodriguez, Webmaster, at novadad@cox.net for posting on the website.

Forestville Website

We have a new website that is informative and is regularly updated. This is a great way to disseminate information. Our Web Master is Jose Rodriguez (novadad@cox.net). See Appendix B for submission guidelines.

CORRESPONDENCE

Copying

The copier in Forestville's front office can be used for PTA copying. Jobs for the school and FLASH copying will take a precedent over PTA copying. Paper in the copy room is for school use only. PTA representatives need to bring paper with them. The cost of your paper will be reimbursed to you after you submit a reimbursement request to the PTA Treasurer with the receipt attached (see below regarding reimbursement forms). A list of classes with recommended copy amounts is posted by the copier. Generally, you send a copy to the oldest or only child in each family plus one for the teacher. For easier copying, use two volunteers. One to set the machine to copy the required amount for a class and the second to indicate the class name, amount info and instructions on the materials and put in the teacher mailbox. An FYI copy can be left in administration mailboxes. The materials should be in mailboxes by 11 a.m. Monday to insure inclusion in the Tuesday folder. For weeks where there is no school on Monday, materials need to be in the teacher's mailboxes by the previous Friday at 11 a.m. Additional copies can be left on the lobby table. Some copying may be done at Office Depot, Reston, where we receive a school discount. Again, you will be reimbursed for this cost.

Communication/Correspondence

Along with the teacher mailboxes in the School office, there is also a file that contains folders for PTA president, treasurer, events, forms and other. You can leave correspondence for PTA representatives in their folders and pick up/return relevant forms here. You can also set up a folder for your event so members of the committee can communicate by leaving and picking up correspondence in that folder.

Responses from Parents

If you are expecting responses/checks from parents, you can set up an event envelope in the front office with Ms. Kahn (703-404-6001, Salma.Kahn@fcps.edu).

FINANCES

Purchases

The PTA tax ID 54-1251402 can be used to make tax-free purchases for a PTA event. The tax-exempt forms are available from the Treasurer, Ruthie Robinson (703-318-8506, joerobbie2@aol.com).

Reimbursement

If you make a purchase on behalf of the PTA, you will be reimbursed. Leave completed reimbursement forms, with receipts attached, in the Treasurer Folder located in the PTA mailboxes in the Main Office. All reimbursement forms will need to be signed by the Committee Chair. Blank reimbursement forms are located in the Treasurer folder.

Collecting Money/Checks

For incoming checks, leave a check summary with the checks in a sealed envelope with Ms. Colie in the office so they can be locked in the safe. Inform the Treasurer, Ruthie Robinson, that you have placed checks with Ms. Colie. Please do not hold checks. The check summary should include a list of names from whom the check was received, the amount, the check number and the fund that should be credited.

Providing Teachers with Collection Envelopes

If you are going to be collecting checks from families through backpacks for your event (ie., Sockhop, Thanksgiving lunch, Bingo, etc.) please provide a manila envelope for every teacher to collect the money. Please make sure that your event is clearly labeled on the envelope. This will eliminate the possibility of checks being lost in the classrooms.

Contracts

All agreements and contracts entered into by the PTA for services, performances, etc. require the signature of an officer of the PTA. Committee chairs cannot obligate the PTA as our insurance carrier will not honor claims presented under arrangements not agreed to by an officer. If you need to have an agreement or contract signed, please contact your Vice President or Amy Thompson (703-406-9126 or amy.b.thompson@comcast.net).

FACILITIES

Room Reservation

Ms. Smith (703-404-6002, Gloria.Smith@fcps.edu) in the office is the facilities contact with whom you can coordinate use of meeting rooms, custodial, and other such needs.

PTA Closet

The PTA closet is located in the girl's bathroom at the back of the gym. You can contact Ms. Colie in the office to use the key. Items in the closet can be used for various events. Please keep the closet clean and organized.

Bulletin Board

The PTA bulletin board in the lobby, strips on the inside wall of the cafeteria entrance, and easel in the lobby can be used to promote PTA messages, events and activities. You should contact Ellen Guglielmo (703-406-4494, NckGuglielmo@aol.com) to schedule bulletin board use. You can make schedule changes by contacting event chairpersons on the schedule and switch times with them. Each committee is responsible for putting up and removing their materials.

Fire/Safety Code

New safety code and audits are in effect this year. See Appendix C for guidelines.

Appendix A – FLASH GUIDELINES

Marie Cecil (571-434-7561, mrcecil@mindspring.com)

The following are guidelines to consider when submitting an item for the FLASH:

- Only events or activities sponsored by the school, school organizations (e.g., the PTA), community coalitions or government agencies can be published in the FLASH, per FCPS regulations. Nonschool-related organizations or individuals can publicize their activities through fliers sent home in the Tuesday folders the 3rd weeks in September and May, fliers handed out at Back-to-School Nights and/or posting notices in the lobby, as approved in advance by our principal. Please contact the school office for more details on flier distribution procedures.
- General acknowledgment of committee efforts, successes, etc. can be made before or after an event, but individual accolades should be made through more personal means.
- Dates will be carried through each issue (under “Save the Date”) for events directly related to our PTA or Forestville, but not for other FCPS related events (e.g., seminars, meetings, etc.). Other event notices may only show in one or two issues, as appropriate; it is up to interested individuals to keep track of these activities.
- Every effort will be made to include notices as given, but may be modified due to space and timing considerations.
- Inputs are needed by close of Wednesday for inclusion in the following Tuesday FLASH to allow adequate time for review, approval, copy and distribution.

Appendix B – WEBSITE SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Jose Rodriguez (novadad@cox.net)

1. When you have an event:
 - a. Email me the flier source file.
 - i. Microsoft Word is my preferred document format. If you use a different word processor, I'll work with you to see if I can import it or if there is maybe an export option that works better with my setup.
 - ii. I will convert the flier to Acrobat PDF format and post it in the events table with the event.
 - iii. If you give me a hard copy, I will have to scan it and it won't be as readable or customizable
 - b. If there is no flier for the event, email me just the information and be sure to include:
 - i. Date and Time.
 - ii. Location (e.g. cafeteria, media center, etc.)
 - iii. Description (what is going on, who can or should attend, cost, etc.)
 - iv. Contact for questions (email for sure, phone number if you're that brave).
 - c. Please indicate to me if you want your event listed in just the events table or if you want a blurb in the Headlines section of the home page as well.
 - d. Don't forget that I will be sending out emails to those who have signed up for event reminders on the PTA Mailing List reminder service and will include a link to the PDF in the email as well.
2. Fliers
 - a. When you make your fliers, don't be afraid to use color! You can usually get your printer to ignore the color for B&W printing and the color will look great on the web site!
 - b. Multiple page fliers are fine. For some events you'll want the flier itself and maybe an order form or RSVP slip.
3. Pictures
 - a. Please email pictures in jpeg format. If they are large or you have several, you can also burn a CD and leave it in the Web Master folder in the front office.
 - b. Provide a caption for each picture if you want (captions make the pictures more fun) and be sure to match up the caption with each picture's file name.
 - c. Do not use last names to identify any students in pictures (FCPS rule).
4. Other Submissions
 - a. If you have any other materials you would like to include such as a handbook, contest rules, etc. just follow the general guideline for flier submission.
 - b. Also let me know if there are any links related to your event or committee that would make sense to include.
 - c. If in doubt, send it! It is my feeling that a parent should be able to go to the web site and print out any flier or form they need so that their child/family can participate in any Forestville activity.

NEW FIRE CODE:

Classrooms:

Nothing may be hung from the ceiling or within two feet of the ceiling.

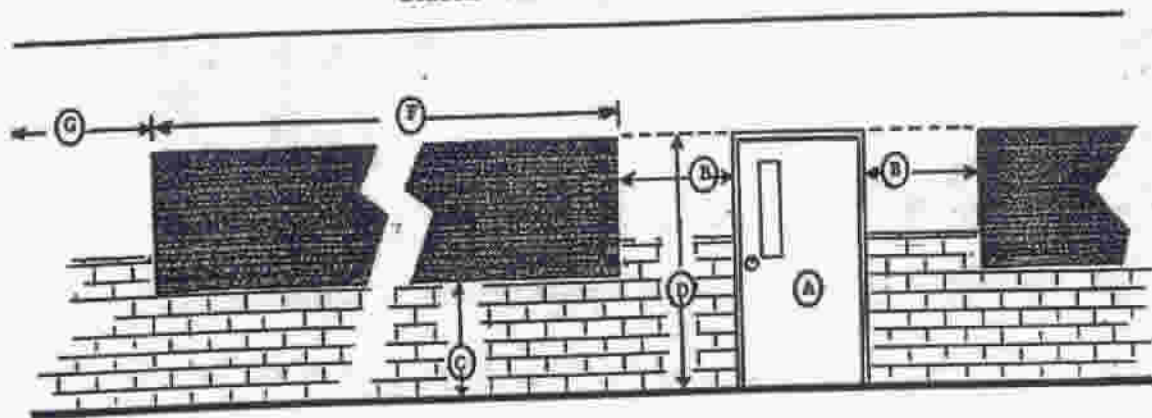
Halls:

No combustible material may be placed within three feet of classroom, office or exterior door.

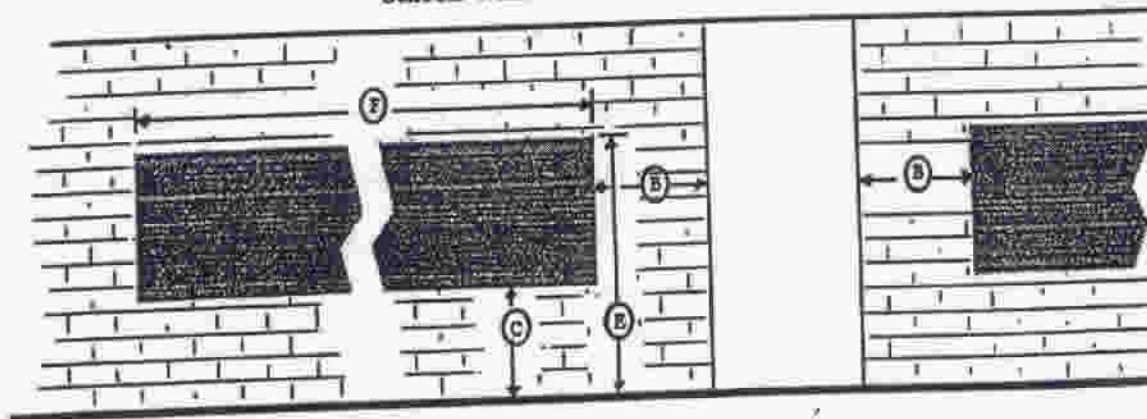
No combustible materials may be higher than the door frame or within two feet of the ceiling or seven feet from the floor. Displays have a 25 foot maximum length. There should be a ten-foot separation between displays.

GUIDELINES FOR DISPLAYS AND DECORATIONS IN SCHOOLS

Schools With Classroom Doors



Schools Without Classroom Doors



- A. No combustible material on either side of doors.
- B. Three foot minimum.
- C. Three foot minimum.
- D. No higher than adjacent door frames.
- E. Seven foot maximum.
- F. 25 foot maximum.
- G. Ten foot minimum separation.

No lights

No material on windows/glass doors.