# Classroom Job Descriptions

This information sheet has been prepared to help volunteers work more effectively in our children’s classrooms, on field trips, and at other school related functions.

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

The teachers have emphasized the very positive contribution that parent volunteers bring to their children’s classrooms, as well as the tremendous sense of community that develops as a result of family involvement in their children’s education. Parents are always welcome in the classroom; however, some boundaries and guidelines are important to ensure effective parent participation and to maximize the learning environment for all children. These boundaries are particularly important at the younger grade levels. To assist your child in making the adjustment to school, please teach your child to make eye contact with you, smile, etc., when you enter the classroom, but not to jump up and run to you. Children may acknowledge your arrival, but they need to respect their time as students. You are welcome to join the class activity or circle time (with your child sitting on your lap at circle time for example). You are then both focused on learning. Adults need to respect classroom learning and model appropriate attention and behavior. An example that is apparent at all grade levels concerns visiting and chatting. Adult conversations in a classroom can be very disruptive for the students; however, visiting is encouraged outside the classrooms.

**LOCKWOOD POLICY FOR VOLUNTEERS ON CAMPUS**

It is Lockwood’s policy that anyone who is on the school grounds between 8:45a.m. and 4:15pm must sign in at the office and wear a badge. This includes the playground area and situations when you are just coming to drop off or pick up your student.

**PARENTS AS TEACHING PARTNERS**

The teachers use parents in the classroom to help them do the best job possible of teaching children. The phrase “assistant teacher” has been used to describe parent help. While teachers determine specific curriculum, parents become partners in setting up a classroom of learners. The exact tasks involved in this goal may vary from day to day or class to class, but several general principles apply. The teachers hope to develop a classroom of independent learners. There are several things parents can do, again especially in the younger grades where the children are more accustomed to dependence. One of the most helpful jobs with younger students is to kneel or sit near children with “off task” behavior, quietly helping them to refocus. Remember that you are not there for your own child, but for the class as a whole. Focus on all students equally. At all grade levels, don’t “help” children by giving them the answer. Ask questions that lead but allow the children to discover answers or solutions for themselves. This focus gains increasing importance at the intermediate level where the teachers and parents are guides for the students, with the kids doing as much as possible for themselves. Try to determine if a student is stuck or confused and lead them forward or toward a solution by posing questions, allowing the students the opportunity to learn by discovery.

**COMMUNICATE YOUR TALENTS AND INTERESTS TO YOUR CHILD’S TEACHER**

If you have a particular talent or interest, let your child’s teacher know. Some parents particularly like to be involved in reading conferences, or enjoy having children read to them, or want to work with students on math, or are artistic or musical and would prefer to be involved regularly in these activities. The teachers would like to give you an opportunity to work on tasks based on your interests and skills. Once a classroom routine is set, you’ll often have similar jobs or activities each week.

**THE “TO DO” LIST**

Most of the teachers have a clipboard with a list of jobs that need to be done. If you are unaware of or cannot locate a list of regular chores, ask the teacher to post one. The clipboards also contain a running list of daily tasks. The teacher will let you know if any of the tasks need to be accomplished immediately. Otherwise, work through the tasks with an eye on the students. If your assistance is needed, perhaps editing or listening to a student read, remember that the focus should be on student learning. The “To Do” list of tasks can be finished later.

**WHAT DO I DO IF THE “TO DO” LIST IS BLANK?**

Please do not interrupt the teacher’s time with students to ask what to do, unless absolutely necessary. See if any individual students need assistance. If you see nothing else, all of the classrooms need additional cleaning. The sink areas and the student’s desktops are usually in need of cleaning. Computer screens need to be wiped down and shelves dusted. The center rooms may well need cleaning or at least organizing. In addition, look for jobs such as sharpening pencils, refilling glue bottles, and refilling paint.

**CENTER ROOM USE**

If you work in the center room, please be certain to clean up when you are through. Leave the paper cutter area clean and free of scrap paper. Clean up the worktable and push in the chairs. Four classes share the center rooms, so we need to take particular care to keep them clean and tidy. At times, the center room may be scheduled. Please respect these schedules.

**WORKING WITH SMALL GROUPS OF CHILDREN**

These groups may focus on reading, or math, or may be working on a particular project. In any case, if you are working with a group of students, insist on respect from the students, both toward you and toward each other. Expect the students to remain on task and to do what is being asked of them. If you are having difficulty with a student or students, confer with the teacher about expectations and what steps you should follow if they are not met.

We realize that it takes time to get to know the students well and to feel comfortable disciplining them; however, we are doing them a disservice if we do not all expect respect and focused attention. Please hold the students to these high standards whether you’re working with a small group or you observe inappropriate behavior at any time in the classroom, on a field trip, or at a school function.

**QUESTIONS FOR THE TEACHER**

If you have a question for your child’s teacher, when do you ask it? Unless your question involves an immediate classroom concern, please approach the teacher when they are not busy with students. Email, notes, and voice mail are effective ways to initiate a conversation. Different teachers have different preferences, so please use what works best with your child’s teacher. Some teachers prefer setting up a chat before or after school, or during a teacher’s prep time. Remember, as much as we all enjoy talking with the teachers, they are there for our children. Please don’t interfere with the teacher’s time with their students. Our goal is to support every child’s learning.

**LOCKWOOD POLICY FOR CARPOOLS AND AFTER SCHOOL PICKUP**

If you carpool or pick up your child at the end of the day, Lockwood policy requires that children be signed out at the office or have a prior written arrangement. Children are to be picked up in the office or in the carpool pickup area at the front of the school.

To ensure that students are safe, and traffic moves, please follow the Lockwood parking lot “loop” pattern, posted signs, and volunteers who are directing traffic. Use the crosswalks. Do not park in the staff parking lot. The speed limit in the parking lot is 5mph. See the Lockwood newsletter for current information on policies, rules, and dates the parking lot could be busy.

**PACE ACTIVITES ON CAMPUS**

We are fortunate to be a part of Lockwood Elementary. It is important to be respectful participants and to honor all school rules. When we use the school facilities for events, rooms are to be reserved for PACE activities by the committee leader with the signature of the President as the contact person. Lockwood school procedures need to be followed in the event of an emergency. For example, if a fire alarm is set off during an event, it is important for the following to happen:

* + - * 1. Students need to be evacuated just as in regular fire drills. They need to be directed to the baseball area and to form lines. In the event of heavy rain/severe weather, the covered basketball area may be used if it is deemed safe/secure given the emergency. Please be aware of electrical wires in the covered area.
        2. One adult needs to check the bathrooms to ensure all occupants are evacuated.
        3. A designated spokesperson, usually the person whose name is on the facilities request or the event organizer, needs to communicate with the attendees, fire department, custodians, and any officials who arrive.
        4. If possible, rosters of attendance need to be verified (i.e. the childcare check-in sheets). For this and other reasons, events that are “drop-off” need to have student check-in sheets. For events where families attend there is generally no roster. In this case, the parents are responsible for accounting for their children to the spokesperson.
        5. The building needs to be cleared by the Fire Department before allowing reentry. A family wishing to depart before the building is accessible needs to sign out before leaving the baseball area.

**PACE ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM**

Many PACE activities take place either outside of the classroom (e.g., outdoor education, Family Camping, and/or in mixed age groups (like Mini-Units or the Halloween party). These activities greatly enrich our children’s school experience and reinforce a strong PACE community. However, they pose particular challenges because parent volunteers may not know all of the students and may not be certain what is expected of them. In all of these activities, please reinforce the teachers’ directions (to sit down, listen quietly, etc.). Even if specific instructions are not given, parent volunteers can help the students focus their enthusiasm and attention on the activity. In addition, please enforce appropriate behavior (quiet listening, for example). Please stay and help clean up after parties, Mini-Units, class gatherings, and other activities. Parents are reminded that they are to be in control and charge of their own kids after school hours. Teachers are not responsible for students after school hours.

**CONFIDENTIALITY**

Through your involvement in the classroom working with individual students, you may become privy to information about a child that is confidential. Please be respectful of every child’s confidentiality. If a child does not understand something, go directly to the teacher with that information. Please treat every child the way you would want your own child treated and do not gossip about the students or parents. Remember that this is only the beginning of a student’s life. Some students may have difficulty sitting still, talking out, and so on. We don’t know these kids’ futures and we do not want to label them. The privilege of working in our children’s school means that our behavior as adults must be professional.

Likewise, conversations overheard in the school office workroom or on the Lockwood Campus should be treated with confidentiality. Please do your part to minimize gossip (hurtful or not) and model respect.

Within the PACE community it is important to respect shared information. A roster of full membership contact information may be shared to ease communication and build community. *This information is entrusted to members and should not be forwarded outside of the community, used to promote a business, sold, nor generally misused or abused.*

We hope that everyone enjoys volunteering in PACE classrooms and at PACE functions and that you feel that your time is well spent and valued. If you have any questions or concerns about working in the classroom or with students, please contact a teacher, Room Rep, or Board member.

*Revised January 2018*