



# Welcome to Whispering Hills Primary School

The staff and students of Whispering Hills Primary School (WHPS) welcome active and visible family and volunteer involvement in our school. Volunteerism enriches the learning environment of our children and the lives of those doing the volunteering making it a win-win for all parties (Habit 4).

We look forward to the continued support of our volunteers - your interest, support and involvement at WHPS is very much needed. As volunteers, you are valued partners in extending and enriching our educational program.

Enjoy your time with us and don't hesitate to share your insights, questions or concerns. We rely on your feedback for the continual improvement of our volunteer program.

Thank you for taking the time to review the information in this handbook. This is a starting point for creating the positive and supportive environment that is so important to the educational success of our students.

## Volunteer Program Overview

Structured programs in schools provide the optimum learning experience for students, teachers and family/volunteers. Research indicates that family volunteerism in schools enhances student self-esteem, increases academic achievement and cognitive development and improves student behaviour and attendance.

Teacher morale and job satisfaction improve through consistent support and cooperation with families. In addition, families come to know they make a difference in the school through contributions of time and talent.

The volunteer program serves as an outlet to utilize skills and develop more positive attitudes about oneself and as a resource to acquire new knowledge about the education process and child development.

Staff at Whispering Hills Primary School recognizes volunteers as friends and partners in developing a quality learning environment. Teachers and administration have the right to invite volunteers to become a part of the school team or not. Respect for individual teacher comfort level is critical. A list of volunteer activities has been developed and is included in this information package.

Our volunteer program has seen tremendous growth and success. All volunteers must take part in an orientation to the roles and responsibilities that volunteering at Whispering Hills Primary School entails. **All volunteers must receive an orientation prior to volunteering.**

## Volunteer Code of Ethics

### **Confidentiality:**

A volunteer who works with students at WHPS operates in a position of trust. Personal information pertaining to students must be kept confidential. Children's actions, responses, progress or problems at school are not for sharing in the community. Conversations between parents, teachers, service providers and students in the school are confidential. **Refrain from discussing these outside the school. Conversations about personal issues involving children and / or their families are also inappropriate conversations to be held in the school.** Refer any concerns you may have to the principal.



Why is it important to maintain confidentiality while volunteering at WHPS?

1. Confidentiality protects embarrassing personal information from disclosure.

2. Confidentiality prevents the improper dissemination of information about children and families that might increase the likelihood of discrimination against them - confidentiality prevents community gossip.
3. Protecting confidential information can be necessary to protect personal security issues such as domestic violence situations.
4. Children and families want to avoid prejudice or differential treatment by people such as teachers, principals, service providers and people within the community.
5. Confidentiality provisions also may be necessary to encourage individuals to make use of services designed to help them. Children may avoid seeking services such as counselling if they believe that their personal information will get back to their teachers, parents, peers or the community in general.

#### **Communication:**

Parents of children who a volunteer works with might want to consult the volunteer regarding their child's progress. Always direct parent concerns to the classroom teacher. It is the school's responsibility to inform parents of children's progress, not the volunteer's.

If you see problems in communication arising in the school, speak with the teacher you are volunteering with, and/or speak with the principal.

Volunteerism in the school must not be used as an opportunity for parent-teacher conferences. Teachers need recess and lunch breaks; arrange appointments for other times.

#### **Dependability:**

The school relies on your support. Follow through on tasks by attending to scheduled times. Please give notice of absence whenever possible.

#### **Respect for Others:**

Children learn from watching you. Practicing patience and understanding towards the children and staff helps learners value and apply these qualities.

Volunteers deserve to be treated with respect by staff and students. If student behaviour / language is inappropriate and a request for change ignored, seek the assistance of a teacher or the principal. Administering discipline at school is a teacher's or principal's responsibility.

While volunteering in school, respect your own child's independence. Children may feel restricted if additional attention is given by volunteering parents.

#### **Responsibilities:**

The principal is accountable for facilitating, monitoring, evaluating and providing continuity for the success of the volunteer program.

WHPS staff is committed to welcoming volunteers, informing them about their tasks, providing material, encouraging their initiatives and celebrating their efforts.

WHPS volunteers are committed to respecting school rules, procedures and the Volunteer Code of Ethics; performing assigned tasks to the best of their ability; working cooperatively with all staff; and seeking clarification when necessary.



All volunteers will need to produce a Criminal Record Check. This can be done free of charge Monday to Friday at the Athabasca RCMP Detachment.

As per Administrative Procedure 180, all volunteers will need to sign a Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy form so that their photos may be used for non-profit educational purposes within the school. Their photos may also be used in conjunction with media releases. A FOIP form has been attached to this document.

### Occupational Health and Safety

#### **First Aid:**

Volunteers need to be aware of Aspen View's Administrative Procedures for "Health and Safety of Students and Staff" (AP 161; page 100-34) and "Universal Precautions" (AP 161; page 100-36) and "Infectious Diseases" (AP 162; page 100-37). These procedures have been attached to this document.

#### **Treatment of Individuals:**

Abuse, harassment, or bullying of students, Aspen View employees, volunteers or anyone else will not be tolerated on Aspen View School's property or at Aspen View School's endorsed activities.

#### **Disaster Response:**

Volunteers are expected to familiarize themselves with Whispering Hills Primary School's disaster plan, including class fire drills and lock down procedures. These procedures have been attached. If a volunteer is working with children away from their classrooms, lead them out of the building by the nearest exit.

*Please sign and return the volunteer agreement to the office.*



## Volunteer Agreement

I agree to volunteer my time and talents in service to the children of Whispering Hills Primary School.

I will uphold the expectations to the role of volunteer by observing the guidelines outlined in the Volunteer Information Package and by being committed to my duties.

I promise to respect the confidentiality of each child and the professional role and judgment of staff members.

I understand that my photo may be used for non-profit educational purposes within the school and in conjunction with media releases.

I understand that only volunteers who adhere to the guidelines outlined in the Volunteer Information Package will be asked to work with the children and staff at Whispering Hills Primary School.

Volunteer Signature

Date



