

Greystone Centennial Middle School 2024-2025 Volunteer Handbook



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Welcome from the Principal

Welcome to Greystone Centennial Middle School!

We are thrilled to have you join our community and deeply appreciate your willingness to contribute your time and energy. Volunteers like you play a vital role in enriching the educational experience of our students and supporting our staff in countless meaningful ways. Your involvement not only strengthens the connection between the school and the wider community but also helps create a positive, supportive environment where every child can thrive. Please, remember to sign in at the front office upon arrival, and thank you for choosing to be part of our school family—your presence and support truly make a difference.

Mr. Scott Jaspers-Fayer

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Introduction

Welcome to the growing ranks of school volunteers! We hope to encourage increased participation and partnership in our local school community. For the children of Greystone Centennial Middle School to reach their full educational, physical, emotional and social potential requires the commitment and involvement of all the members of the community: students, teachers, parents, guardians, community organizations and school administrators.

Greystone recognizes the importance of community involvement and volunteerism and many employees contribute endless hours of volunteer time. The purpose of volunteers is not to replace the work of the employee, but rather to assist the administration and staff in improving the quality of the school environment.

Volunteers make a difference!

Volunteer participation will be an opportunity for you to share with others in the enrichment of education for our students. You will discover the rewards of helping students achieve their personal best and at the same time gain useful experience yourself. We hope that the experience of volunteering in our school will offer you a greater awareness of the variety of challenges and opportunities confronting our education system.

What do Volunteers do?

Volunteers perform many different tasks in Greystone Centennial Middle School. **The most up to date information regarding volunteer opportunities is located in the weekly Inferno News email sent on Fridays and/or posted on our social media sites (facebook & instagram). Please pay close attention to this communication if you are interested in specific events.**

The tasks may include but not be limited to the following:

- **Food Programs:** Through the President's Choice Grant, Rotary Lunch program as well as the PSD food scarcity program, GCMS are able to offer multiple ways to feed kids throughout the day. We are always looking for volunteers to help ensure our teaching staff can focus on student growth and learning.
 - **Breakfast Program:** Runs every morning from October until the end of June. Primarily students have access to toast in the green pod every morning, with a variety of toppings; with special breakfast options on Fridays. **New this year**, we are looking to add a toast station in the blue pod. We are looking for adult volunteers to coordinate this station alongside some grade 9 student volunteers. Please reach out to Assistant Principal Mrs. McCulloch (lindsay.mcculloch@psd.ca) if you can help out in any way.

- **Rotary Lunch:** At GCMS we deconstruct the lunches two times a week (Mondays & Wednesdays after deliveries) to prevent unnecessary waste. We are looking for parent volunteers who can help with this process throughout the school year.
- **Snack Fridge:** GCMS has one main snack fridge and a pantry room that need to be restocked regularly (following deliveries). This process is coordinated through our front office staff (Mrs. Evans & Mrs. Robinson). If you can help out with this process please reach out to greystone@psd.ca. New this year, we are hoping to set up a system where non-perishable items are located in classrooms. This will require some additional organization and distribution throughout the week.
- **School Council & Friends or Greystone Fundraising Society (FOGS):** Meetings are usually held the 3rd Wednesday of every month excluding December and June. All parents are welcome to attend and participate in discussions connected to how these groups support the school each year. There are additional volunteer opportunities connected to these groups throughout the school year as well - some are outlined below:
 - **Council/FOGS Executive Members** - Annual General Meeting occurs in September every year; new executive members are decided and planning begins for the current school year.
 - **Hot Lunch Program** - We require volunteers to help organize the classroom bins every Friday that hot lunch is delivered. This requires arrival in time for the delivery (usually around 11 AM), and, if possible, remain until the end of GCMS scheduled end of lunch around 1:45 PM
 - **Canteen/Concessions** - Throughout the year, FOGS puts on concessions at school-wide events, including but not limited to Fall/Spring Dances & Track Days. Calls for volunteers for these events are usually posted to social media & indicated in Inferno News
 - **Pop-Up Lunches** - FOGS puts on Pop-Up lunch sales throughout the school year as a fundraiser. The dates for these are determined through coordination with the GCMS Administration Team, and calls for volunteers are posted on Social Media as well as in Inferno News
 - **Fundraising** - GCMS runs a few fundraisers throughout the year, with the bulk of the work running through the FOGS executive team. There is always a need to help in organizing/executing fundraisers, from placing orders, to organization and distribution.
- **Staff Teaching Materials Support:** Our teachers appreciate help with photocopying, stapling, laminating and other such projects throughout the school year. This can include creating new bulletin boards throughout the school year, helping to prep for a new program. or getting supplies ready for a new unit. If you are interested in helping out in this way, please contact the office through gresytone@psd.ca. As jobs come up, communication will be sent out to those on the list with a timeline for completion. If you can support you will reply to the email and arrangements will be made for the execution of the project.
- **Small Group Classroom Support:** Certain classrooms utilize community members as small group support throughout the school year, typically connected to either Literacy or

Numeracy programming. This is NOT intervention programming support, but rather working alongside a small group of students who require assistance to follow a set procedure or work through a specific task on a regular basis. This group may change throughout the school year. If you are interested in helping in this way, please reach out to our Assistant Principal (lindsay.mcculloch@psd.ca), and she will look at connecting you with a teacher in need of this kind of support. We typically encourage parents/guardians to help in a classroom that is not the same as their children for this kind of work.

- **Field Trip/Chaperone Support:** Individual Learning Community Teams (Grade level teams) require different levels of support for their scheduled field trips throughout the school year. Many of our extra-curricular programs require additional adult support as well. Letters will go home with students indicating when these types of volunteers are needed. Simply complete and return the form to be considered for this type of support.
- **Extra-curricular Support:** GCMS is fortunate to have many extracurricular programs running throughout the school year including, but not limited to, sports teams, clubs, & music/drama programs.
 - **Coaching** - We run a number of sports teams throughout the school year. If you are interested in participating as part of the coaching staff please contact our athletic director (lonnie.granley@psd.ca)
 - **Choir** - Mrs. Putt runs three separate choirs, year-round along with a travel choir that includes participants from our Junior High Choir. She is always looking for people to help out. Please contact Mrs Putt (genna.putt@psd.ca) for more information.
 - **Library Clubs** - Throughout the year, there are a number of clubs that take place out of our library/learning commons area. These typically occur over the lunch hour, but we are open to other possibilities. If you are interested in helping support our clubs, please reach out to our School Librarian, Mrs. Huisman (shannon.huisman@psd.ca), & Assistant Principal, Mrs. McCulloch (lindsay.mcculloch@psd.ca) for more details.
- **Special Events/Guest Speakers:** GCMS runs a variety of events throughout the year, some of which we encourage volunteer participation, including: Junior High Career Fair (usually in late January); Indigenous Celebration Day (on or as close to June 21); Track Day (May/June); among others. Information regarding when we require volunteers will usually come out in the weekly Inferno News.
- **Library Support:** Mrs. Huisman can always use support in the library. This can be set as a regular occurrence or as needed. GCMS usually has 2 book fairs a year, and additional support during that time is appreciated. In addition to that we have students who help self books, decorate the library and set up for important events. We would love to have community volunteers also support our library. Is you are interested in helping out please contact Mrs. Huisman (shannon.huisman@psd.ca)

What should a School Volunteer expect?

A school volunteer should:

- Be made to feel that the assistance given is worthwhile and contributes to the overall value of the program in which they are participating;
- Be treated with respect and consideration by all students and staff;
- Be given a suitable assignment in line with their areas of interest, skills, and, if possible, convenience of location;
- Be given clear instructions and any training necessary for particular volunteer assignments;
- Be given proper orientation to the school with introductions to key personnel and information provided as to parking, storage of personal items, washroom and coffee/lunch facilities;
- Have an effective mechanism for two-way communication with staff (i.e. discussion time or regular memo exchange for ongoing direction and feedback);
- Be provided with direct support from staff if difficulties arise.

What is expected of a School Volunteer

A school volunteer has the following responsibilities:

- To remember that the Principal has ultimate responsibility for all personnel, policies and programs in his/her school, including volunteers;
- To follow the policies of Greystone Centennial Middle School (i.e. signing-in procedures where requested, [Code of Conduct](#));
- To be reliable. Accepting a school volunteer assignment means a regular commitment to be there - promptly and on schedule. Also, notifying the school in advance if you do have to be absent;
- To assist under the direction of qualified staff following their instruction closely. Work only with those staff members in your assigned school who request your help and work only with students referred to by these Teachers;
- To remember that volunteers are in the school to assist and supplement - not replace the role of paid staff;
- To remember you are a role model for students and the school community. Please maintain the highest standards of confidentiality and ethics.

Guidelines for Volunteers

- A school volunteer is not a Teacher or an Educational Assistant, not a therapist or a counselor, but first of all a person who accepts the students as they are. The volunteer can convey by his/her interest, attitude and sincerity that the student is a worthwhile person. Only when people feel good about themselves are they able to learn.
- Ask questions freely about programs, policies and equipment at a time appropriate both for the staff member and for yourself. Follow the staff member's established procedures. Talk to the Teacher about any difficulties at appropriate times, not in front of students or parents.
- Share your experiences and talents. Let the Teacher know in what area you excel (telling stories, singing, playing instruments, handcrafts, computer use, photography, etc.).
- Try to learn the names of students.
- Help students to tackle their work but do not do their work for them. If they get off-track, help them get back on in a tactful manner.
- Work at the student's level; sit or stand with him/her. Show your interest and involvement.
- Speak in a positive way to students – point out the things they have done right, the things they do well. Rushing them or nagging causes more problems than it solves. Belittling a person or making comparisons is harmful.
- Remind students of appropriate behavior if they are disruptive or break rules. Show by example a calm, responsible attitude for dealing with problems. Remember, though, that corrective disciplines the responsibility of the Principal and the Teaching staff.

Volunteers as Mentor/Helpers "A Position of Trust"

Volunteers who work in a one-to-one relationship with students have a unique opportunity to help these students build feelings of competence and self-esteem, thus creating an environment for enhanced achievement. But with opportunity comes responsibility. As a student begins to realize that there is someone who does care, who takes a personal interest in the individual, that student may show increasing trust in the volunteer. It is essential that nothing happens to damage that trust.

This means that the volunteer must:

- Be a role model for the student;
- Accept the student as an individual;
- Follow through on all promised commitments.

Disclosure of Possible Abuse

In Alberta, it is a legal obligation to report any suspected case of child abuse. If a child indicates to a volunteer that he/she has been or is the victim of abuse, or if a volunteer has strong suspicions that a student may be an abuse victim, the volunteer must inform either the supervising Teacher or the Principal.

One of the most difficult things to handle may be when the student asks the person in whom they have confided to “promise not to tell”. A volunteer cannot make such a promise and should be clear about that to the child. Don’t try to “counsel” the child. Remain merely an empathetic “listening ear” without being judgmental or trying to offer solutions. Assistance and counseling should come from those professionals with the responsibility and experience to provide it.

Confidentiality

Perhaps one of the greatest obstacles in the path of effective use of volunteers, especially parent volunteers, is the worry on the part of Teachers and Principals regarding the possible misuse of privileged information. Once anyone begins to work in a school setting, they become privy to knowledge about children’s behavior patterns, academic ability, emotional maturity, relationships with others, etc. In some cases, information of this nature is imparted in order that the volunteer might work more effectively with the child. In other cases, it is simply acquired in the course of frequent contact in the school.

In addition, volunteers are in a position to learn more about staff members than would normally be learned from their “public image.” One also forms personal opinions about the professional competency of individual Teachers, Support Staff, and Principals.

There is nothing wrong with the volunteer possessing such knowledge and arriving at personal conclusions. This knowledge or these opinions, however, should never be shared in the community or with anyone who has no legitimate need to know. Similarly, care must be taken not to make comments harmful to the reputation of any pupil, professional or other volunteer.

If problems develop, the line of communication regarding a situation in the school is always first with the staff member concerned and then, if necessary, with the Principal.

A volunteer has every right to expect that their participation will be treated with the same confidentiality and respect.

Becoming a Volunteer in Parkland School Division

As part of Parkland School Division [Administrative Procedure 316](#), all volunteers are required to:

1. Complete a [Volunteer Registration Form](#)
2. Provide a Criminal Records Check
3. Provide a Vulnerable Sector Check
4. Sign a Confidentiality Agreement (2nd last page of form linked above)

When your service is likely to exceed ten hours of volunteer activity over the course of the current school year, volunteers are required to provide the school with a current Criminal Record Check. The record will be kept on file at each school you volunteer in throughout the school year. If you anticipate spending time in more than one school, please indicate "Parkland School Division" as the agency on the Criminal Record Check form.

A letter to waive the fee for a Criminal Record Check is part of the Volunteer Registration form and just needs to be signed by the Principal before you submit your paperwork to the nearest police station.

Recognition

Volunteering is the giving of time, energy, and concern. It is an honorable and cherished responsibility of our society. Greystone Centennial Middle School wishes to thank each and every volunteer for their participation and dedication to the students of this school.

Please consider attending our volunteer recognition event in the Spring (usually June). Together we can make each child's years in Greystone a solid foundation upon which to build a lifetime of successful achievement.