

# Spears Elementary Volunteer Handbook 2015-16



August 2015

Dear School Volunteer,

WELCOME and thank you for volunteering to serve our school. Volunteers are a critical element in ensuring the success of every child and school. It speaks volumes that you willingly give from the heart by giving of your time. Please know that the Spears Administration along with our PTA board are here to support you as you support our campus.

The Spears Elementary Volunteer Handbook is designed to provide you with information and guidelines to help you perform your volunteer services as effectively as possible. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask. Once you have passed the online background check, [www.friscoisd.org](http://www.friscoisd.org), you are ready to volunteer!

The teachers, administrators, and students are extremely grateful for your willingness to assist our school. Thank you for sharing your time and talents with us. We hope that you find your volunteer experience both meaningful and rewarding.

Sincerely,

**Becca Bustillos**

Principal

**Christine Tropp**

PTA President

## **Introduction**

Volunteers have an important and valuable role at Spears Elementary, whether volunteering for the school or for the PTA. It does not matter if you volunteer for one hour or one hundred hours over the course of the school year; any help you give is essential in enhancing the education of our students. Some volunteers may assist the teachers with instructional or clerical tasks. Others may help shelve books in the library, serve as a PAL (Parent At Lunch), or work with the PTA on projects and fundraisers. Besides supporting the school, your volunteer efforts teach our children the obligation we all have to give some of our precious time to worthwhile causes. We hope you find your volunteer experience to be a rewarding one.

To get the most from your volunteer experience, it is important to be informed. This handbook contains important information about your work at Spears Elementary; please take time to read through it. Additional information may be found in the *Elementary Student Handbook* under the “Parents and Students” tab at [www.friscoisd.org](http://www.friscoisd.org).

If you have questions about volunteering, please contact the PTA or the school.

## **How to Be a Successful Volunteer**

No matter what kind of volunteer work you do, or who you do it for, there are some common qualities that will help you be a successful volunteer at Spears Elementary.

### ***Have an interest in our students***

- ✓ Believe that each child can learn and succeed.
- ✓ Accept children of all ages, abilities, backgrounds and personalities.
- ✓ Encourage children to do their best and offer genuine praise.
- ✓ Be friendly--learn students’ names and be a good listener.

### ***Support the staff***

- ✓ Be respectful of the teachers.
- ✓ Do not publicly question or criticize the teacher or the methods used.
- ✓ Ensure that your interpretation of rules and expectations matches that of the school or classroom.
- ✓ Involve appropriate school personnel when students disobey school or classroom rules; don’t take corrective measures into your own hands.

### ***Be committed and dependable***

- ✓ Limit use of cell phones while volunteering.
- ✓ Make sure you have the time to serve.
- ✓ Be prompt and reliable; people are counting on you to be there!
- ✓ Set an example for the students by dressing appropriately and demonstrating good citizenship.
- ✓ Let people know if schedule changes prevent you from keeping a commitment.

### ***Maintain confidentiality***

- ✓ Ensure that children’s work and behavior are held in confidence.
- ✓ Discuss matters relating to a student’s behavior and performance only with appropriate school staff members.

### ***Communicate***

- ✓ Ask if you are unsure about how equipment works or how your job is supposed to get done—there are no dumb questions!
- ✓ Don't let small problems turn into big ones.
- ✓ Provide feedback to the appropriate person about volunteer experiences.

## **SPEARS ELEMENTARY VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK (in alphabetical order)**

### **Attendance/Absences**

If you are unable to volunteer at your assigned time, please arrange for a substitute volunteer, call the staff member with which you are scheduled to work, or contact the school office, 469-633-2900.

### **Background Check**

Each school year, all adult volunteers must complete DPS background checks through Fisd and be approved before being allowed to volunteer one-on-one with students or attend field trips. To submit your information for volunteering, please do so online, [www.friscoisd.org](http://www.friscoisd.org).

### **Classroom Parties**

1. Three parties are allowed each year: Before Winter Break, Valentine's, and End of the Year-Celebration of Learning.
2. Room Parents responsible for planning parties should meet and reach consensus about snacks, crafts, and games.
3. Team Leaders need to approve party plans for each grade level. Room Parents need to communicate plans to each classroom teacher.
4. Communication from Room Parents needs approval from the principal and PTA president. To communicate with parents, use the pre-approved letters.
5. The Winter Holiday party will be Dec. 18, 2015 and the Valentine's Day party will be Feb. 12, 2016 for Kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade. Times to be determined.
6. When planning for Winter Holiday parties, please be mindful that every family has its own religious beliefs.
7. End of the Year parties will be held on Thursday, June 2, 2016 for grades K-4. The 5<sup>th</sup> grade party will be scheduled during the last week of school on a date to be determined.
8. No parties may be held during the lunch hours due to cafeteria guidelines, i.e., no pizza parties, hot dog lunches, etc. Foods that are restricted during the school day include:
  - a. Foods that must be kept at a warm or hot temperature (such as meats, pizzas, etc.) Hot foods must be provided through the school cafeteria.
  - b. Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value (for more information go to [www.squaremeals.com](http://www.squaremeals.com) ).
9. Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value (FMNV) may be served at the three parties only. These three days are the only exceptions approved by the state of Texas.

10. Respect confidentiality! If you have questions, talk to the classroom teacher.
11. Please remember that classroom parties are for school-aged children. If possible, other arrangements should be made for younger siblings. If younger children need to attend with their parents, please bring a snack for them as party snacks are provided for the classroom students only. Remember that teachers need to concentrate on the discipline of their own students, and it is the parents' responsibility to be sure that younger siblings are behaving appropriately during parties.

### **Confidential Information**

Information learned about students while volunteering is considered confidential and is not to be shared. Volunteers who have a concern about a student should talk with the teachers, Principal, Assistant Principal, or Counselor.

### **Copying and Laminating Procedures**

**All copying and laminating jobs will be picked up, completed, and left in the main workroom next to the gym.**

- ✓ An organizational system (crate, file, tray, etc.) will be set up in the workroom for each grade level.
- ✓ There will be a designated team of laminating volunteers. **Volunteers must be trained before using the laminator.**
- ✓ Teachers will leave all materials to be copied and/or laminated in the area assigned to each grade level.
- ✓ Specific instructions will be provided with each job.
- ✓ Volunteers will need to know the teacher's code to use the Xerox machine, and the code will be provided by the teacher. This code is only to be used for copies made for the classroom or teacher. Large copy jobs need to be sent to the FISS Copy Center at CTE.
- ✓ Volunteers will collect materials from the grade level area in the workroom, make copies/laminate, and return completed copies to the grade level area in the workroom.
- ✓ Teachers will pick up completed copies and laminating from the workroom.

### **Dress Code for Volunteers and Adult Visitors**

Elementary-aged students are very impressionable, especially those nearing adolescence. It is important for all adults in the school setting to serve as positive role models by following school rules including the dress code.

Volunteers and visitors must sign in at the school office, receive a visitor's sticker, and meet the standards of the school dress code as follows:

1. Shorts, dresses or skirts must be loose fitting and approximately fingertip length including tennis skirts and/or workout clothes.
2. Inappropriate or revealing clothing will not be permitted:
  - No strapless or spaghetti strap tops/dresses
  - No halter tops

- No bare midriffs (shirts ending above the waistline)
  - No see-through clothing.
3. Clothing with offensive pictures or slogans will not be allowed including clothing with liquor or tobacco advertising.
  4. Shoes must be worn at all times.

### **PALs (Parents at Lunch)**

Parents who volunteer at lunch should familiarize themselves with the Spears Café procedures and expectations below so as to support the teachers in the enforcement of cafeteria rules:

## **Spears Cafeteria Expectations**

### **Students will follow these guidelines...**

- ✓ L – Low Voices
- ✓ U – Use Your Manners
- ✓ N – No Sharing Food
- ✓ C – Clean Up after Yourself
- ✓ H - Hand Raised for Permission to Get Out of Seat

Each PAL will wear an apron with pockets full of extra items such as plasticware, napkins, ketchup, etc. Students are to eat the lunch that they purchase or bring from home. **For the safety of all students parent volunteers should not purchase lunches for students other than their own child(ren).** Students may have restrictions on their lunch accounts set by their own parents, or students may have food allergies. If there is a problem with a student's lunch, the teacher and/or café staff needs to be alerted.

If the noise level gets too loud, a teacher on duty will use the microphone to ask the student to lower their voices. Five minutes before the end of lunch, a teacher will use the microphone to signal for voices off. The teacher will call for students to throw away trash and dump their trays in the nearby trash cans before walking their trays to the kitchen window. Students will then proceed to the designated area for their class and wait quietly for their teachers.

### **Relationships with Teachers**

- ✓ Volunteer time is valuable and very much appreciated! Be sure the teacher knows in advance when you are coming, so that he/she can plan ahead and be prepared with the necessary materials and supplies.
- ✓ Save private conversations with the teacher for times when students are not present. Do not interrupt classrooms when teachers are teaching. It is easy to lose the momentum of an activity when students are distracted or forced to wait while adults carry on conversations.

- ✓ Please do not use your volunteer time to speak to your child's teachers or other staff members about your child. Schedule an appointment with your child's teachers or school staff to address any questions or concerns related to your child.
- ✓ Leave discipline matters to the teacher. The teacher is responsible for maintaining classroom order, even when other adults are working with students in the room. If you have a discipline problem with a student that cannot be resolved by gentle prompting or a few positive words, speak with the teacher.
- ✓ Respect the confidentiality of all information and activities related to school staff, faculty, students, and their families. Stay enthusiastic and positive!

### **Sign-In Procedures**

All volunteers must sign in/out at the front office and wear a badge/sticker. A valid drivers' license must be scanned on the initial visit to the school.

### **Study Trips (Field Trips)**

Students who participate in school-sponsored trips shall be required to ride in transportation provided by the school to and from the event. Exceptions may be made if the student's parent or guardian personally requests that the student be allowed to ride with the parent, or presents to the principal the day before the scheduled trip a request in writing allowing the student to ride with an adult designated by the parent. The district shall not be liable for any injuries that occur to students riding in vehicles that are not provided by the school. *FISD Policy FMG (Local)*

Parents/guardians attending study trips are required to complete and pass background check online through [www.friscoisd.org](http://www.friscoisd.org) . If a parent or guardian is attending the study trip as a chaperone and is assigned the duty of supervision of students, he/she will not be allowed to bring siblings. If the parent or guardian is going on the trip as a parent and is not chaperoning, then siblings are allowed to go if the study trip is age-appropriate and if the presence of the sibling does not interfere with the study trip's activities. Parents will be responsible for paying their own entry fees as well as those of siblings that may attend. No parent is permitted to ride the school bus. *FISD Student Handbook*

All parents traveling in their cars along with the buses need to stay behind the buses. It is very dangerous for the buses conveying to have cars traveling in between them. *FISD Department of Transportation Guidelines for Field Trips*

### **Suspected Child Abuse**

Child abuse is defined as any mistreatment or neglect of a child by an adult resulting in serious injury or harm to a child. Any adult who suspects child abuse should notify the school counselor.