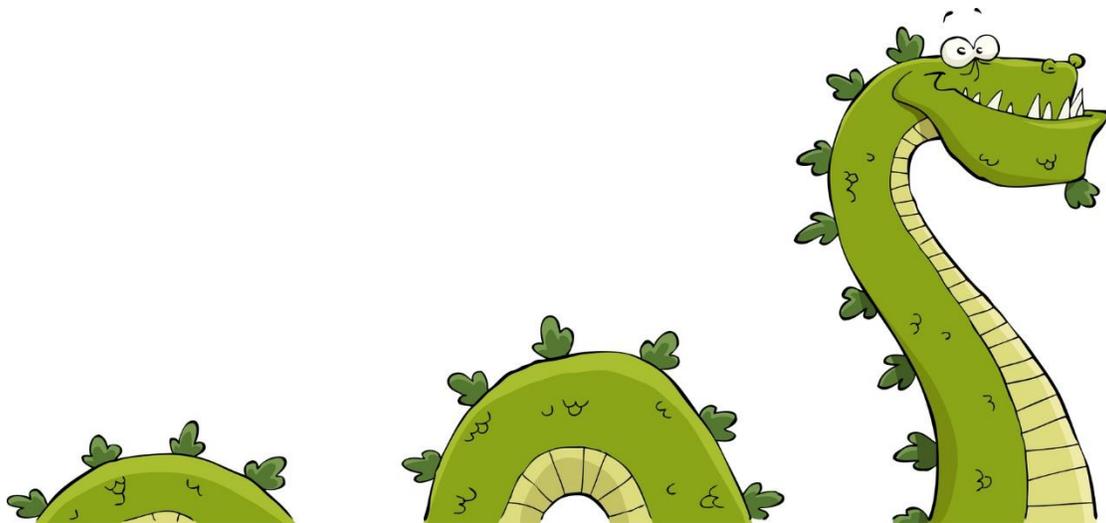


**Champlain Elementary**

**School**

**Volunteer Handbook**



**2015 - 2016**

# **A Handbook for Family and Community Volunteers**

Champlain Elementary School  
Burlington, Vermont

2015-2016 School Year

***Our mission is to provide opportunities for students to achieve their personal best, become responsible and productive citizens, and embrace lifelong learning.***

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## Welcome from the Principal

*“When parents are involved in their children's education at home, they do better in school. And when parents are involved in school, children go farther in school and the schools they go to are better.”* — Henderson and Berla in “A New Generation of Evidence: The Family Is Critical to Student Achievement” (1994)

Dear Champlain Elementary Community,

We encourage and welcome family volunteers. Thank you for sharing your time and talent with Champlain Elementary School.

More than 20 years of research shows family involvement in students' education leads to improved student achievement. Volunteers are vital to helping our school community meet our goal of building an inclusive school community where we work together to create a warm, robust, and welcoming environment. We care deeply about meeting the needs of our diverse student population and live by the motto ***“We all belong!”***

This Handbook was prepared to provide volunteers with basic information to help support your experience volunteering at Champlain Elementary School. I encourage you to read the Handbook and decide if you can commit your time and talents to our school. When school and community members collaborate, children are much more likely to reach their full potential.

If you have any concerns, questions, or suggestions you wish to discuss with me or any member of the staff please do not hesitate to call on us.

Thank you for your support as we strive to provide the best for all Champlain students. We value any time you can offer to volunteering and we treasure your collaboration with us.

Sincerely,

**Maria Horton**  
Interim Principal  
Champlain Elementary School

***Thank you for reading the following material prior to volunteering!***

## Introduction

On behalf of the entire school community, thank you for volunteering at Champlain Elementary. As a volunteer, you are not only helping students, faculty and staff, you are sending the following messages to your student: *“you are important to me”* and *“what goes on in your school is important to me.”*

A “volunteer” is someone who supports school goals and children’s learning and development in many ways, places, and times. The contributions of time, talent, and treasure by volunteers strengthen the school wide community!

Because of the important role in which volunteers serve, all volunteers – those with regular responsibilities and those who help with occasional tasks and events – must complete and return Appendix B from this Handbook. Only volunteers who have regular or ongoing responsibilities, or who may be with a student(s) without faculty or staff supervision, need to complete and return Appendix A from this Handbook. Class parents, field trip chaperones, and volunteers at PTO sponsored events do not need to complete the Appendix A. Or, for example, you come in periodically to shelve books in the library, under staff supervision, you will not need to complete Appendix A.

## Volunteer Opportunities

We understand that interests, skills, and time commitments vary greatly and hope you will be able to find a volunteer opportunity that you’ll enjoy doing. There are many different types of volunteer opportunities at Champlain.

### **A. Classroom-specific volunteer opportunities may include:**

- o Reading with individual students
- o Parent “expert” to present on special theme
- o Field trip volunteers
- o Special projects
- o Parent(s) help plan and organize classroom events
- o Art room volunteers
- o Physical Education volunteers
- o

Note: Classrooms vary. Teachers have different curricula, class room set ups and support staff. Not every classroom can and will offer the same volunteer opportunities. If you are interested in getting involved in the classroom, please speak with your classroom teacher first. If there are no classroom specific opportunities at that point, you can still volunteer in another capacity (see the following lists of school wide opportunities and PTO sponsored opportunities). Please speak to either the principal, a PTO representative, or attend PTO meetings to gauge the range of volunteer opportunities available.

## **B. School wide volunteer opportunities:**

- o Afterschool Program - organizing and coordinating trips in the community.
- o Learning Center Volunteers - shelving books, processing books, helping with inventory.
- o Class Parents - Duties include contacting other families about events and activities, organizing other volunteers, supporting organization of events and activities, and checking in regularly with classroom teachers. This is a great opportunity to get involved in your student's education and build strong classroom communities that reach beyond school boundaries.
- o UNIFIED Sports Program - UNIFIED is a program that offers sports opportunities and the chance to be part of a competitive sports team to children with disabilities and other students who may not have previously taken part in competitive sports.
- o Spelling Bee Coach
- o Green up Day volunteering
- o School concerts or other performances
- o Contributing to teacher appreciation lunch/events
- o ELL reading support
- o Lunchroom & Recess helpers

## **C. Volunteer opportunities for PTO sponsored family events and projects:**

The PTO (Parent Teacher Organization) helps to enrich the school community through events, activities and projects that promote learning, build community, improve the quality of life for students and staff, and advocate for Champlain within the school district and the broader community. The PTO promotes constructive interaction between parents, teachers, students and the school administration. All Champlain families are automatically PTO members and are welcome, and encouraged, to attend the monthly PTO meetings. The Champlain Elementary School PTO welcomes all families.

### ***The PTO meets the first Thursday of every month at 7:30am in the Teacher's Lounge.***

Evening meetings can also be scheduled if necessary. Meeting reminders will be included in the weekly school newsletter.

Some PTO-sponsored activities planned for the 2015-2016 school year are listed below. Volunteer opportunities exist coordinating and supporting the production of these family events and activities. Additional fundraising volunteer opportunities also exist. If you are interested in Volunteering for any of these events/activities please contact our PTO Volunteer Coordinator - Kerrie Mathes at [kerrie@burlingtontelecom.net](mailto:kerrie@burlingtontelecom.net). A full calendar of events specific to each school year is distributed at the start of the year.

- First Day of School Breakfast (August)
- Harvestfest (September)
- Scholastic Book Fairs (October & March)
- School Play (April)
- Teacher Appreciation Lunch (May)
- Fun Run (June)

### ***Volunteer opportunities at lunch and recess***

We often have volunteers in the classroom, the learning center, the art room and out on field trips. We recognize the value of these volunteers and how much our students' experiences are enhanced by their presence. We would like to build on this success and encourage families to volunteer at lunch and recess. The presence of adults can help facilitate friendly conversations, assist kids in opening packages, and encourage healthy eating. Join us for lunch at Champlain Elementary School on a weekly, monthly or quarterly basis and enjoy lunchtime with your student while sampling Burlington Food Service's award winning lunches. Then, stay for recess to help supervise playtime, tie a few shoe laces and help strengthen the community fabric of our school. Champlain Elementary School will be happy to see you!

Here are some ways you could be helpful in the cafeteria:

- Help children remain focused on eating
- Encourage an appropriate voice-level (inside voices)
- Foster conversations
- Support children in cleaning up their area (and themselves) when finished

Likewise, as students finish lunch and head out to recess, we believe it will be helpful if extra adults are outside interacting with them. Sometimes children need help figuring out what they want to do when they are outside, initiating cooperative play with others, or enjoying the outdoors. If you decide to volunteer for this opportunity you would be supporting the para-educators who supervise the lunch room and playground:

When you are outside you could again be a tremendous help as follows:

- Supervise 4 square, kickball, hopscotch, tag, or basketball
- Create a game of your own and show the children how to play
- Take laps around the field with students to increase their aerobic levels
- If we get a subzero weather day and you need to stay inside the cafeteria for the full lunch period it would be fine to bring cards, crayons, or other activities to share with the students.

## How to Start Volunteering

To create a safe and rewarding volunteer experience for the entire school community, there are things you need to do, and of which to be aware, prior to beginning your volunteer work:

### TO DO:

- ✓ Complete and return appropriate volunteer forms (Appendices A & B to Handbook);
- ✓ Complete and return Driver Information Form (Appendix C to Handbook) - if applicable.

### CAREFULLY READ THE HANDBOOK AND MAKE NOTE OF THE INFORMATION IN FOLLOWING SECTIONS:

- ✓ Volunteer Expectations (pages 5-6 of Handbook);
- ✓ School Wide Policies, Procedures and Rules (page 7 of Handbook).

## Volunteer Expectations

### Confidentiality

To ensure that students, staff, and families feel comfortable and safe at Champlain, we need to respect each other's privacy. Speaking to your family and friends about conversations overheard at school or during a volunteer experience might seem harmless to you, yet be very hurtful to others, and could be a violation of federal law, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Students and families are protected under FERPA by restricting disclosure of information from student records. Information about a student can only be shared by a need-to-know basis. No discussion of information about a student should be casually shared with anyone who does not have a direct need to know. The teachers' lounge, local grocery store, or neighborhood is not the place to discuss an incident that occurred at school. We expect all volunteers and employees to strictly adhere to FERPA laws and guidelines. If you have a concern about something you see or hear please talk to the teacher or principal.

The following examples can help you determine what situations might involve confidential information:

*"Wasn't it cute when John . . ."* No matter how innocent, cute, funny or charming a classroom event may be, it is not okay to repeat stories about students. What happens in the classroom stays in the classroom.

*When parents ask you questions . . .* Many parents are tempted to ask you about how their children behave at school. This is especially likely if you are friends outside school. It is not okay to put volunteers in this awkward position. Don't ask! Don't tell! If parents do have concerns, encourage them to talk to the class teacher.

*When you see or overhear something . . .* As a volunteer, you might see or hear things from staff or students which they would not want to have repeated outside the school. What happens in the classroom (or the hall, or the gym) stays at school. Examples of confidential information include test scores, discipline and classroom behavior, student's character traits, and scholastic and health records. If you have concerns about something you see or hear, please talk to the class teacher or principal if appropriate.

*When students tell you about their family, pet, vacation, etc. . . .* As students become comfortable working with you, they might decide to share something personal. You need to keep this information private, even if you know the child and their family outside of school.

*When you have a concern . . .* If a student tells you something that causes you concern, tell the classroom teacher. If you observe something that troubles you, tell the classroom teacher. The teacher is in the best position to deal with the issue appropriately.

Source: "Maria Hastings Elementary School Volunteer Handbook."

<http://hastings.lexingtonma.org>.

2006. 15 may, 2010 <http://hastings.lexingtonma.org/handbook/VolunteerHandbk.pdf>

## Volunteer Dos and Don'ts

The Dos	The Don'ts
DO be on time, dependable and safe.	DON'T forget to sign in and out of the office every time you're in the building.
DO choose events and activities that are manageable and interesting to you.	DON'T scold when pointing out errors. Use a positive approach.
DO keep all student information strictly confidential.	DON'T become annoyed when students don't understand something the first time.
DO be willing and able to follow directions from teachers and staff.	DON'T distract teachers while they are teaching
DO ask for help when needed - you are not alone!	DON'T be afraid to laugh at yourself.
DO be adaptable and flexible when working with children.	DON'T lose your temper.
DO have a cooperative attitude in working with school personnel.	DON'T do a student's work for them.
DO be imaginative, creative and optimistic.	DON'T discuss student's work with anyone but the teacher.
DO take a personal interest in helping and working with teachers, staff and students.	DON'T ask teachers or others for personal information about students.
DO have a sense of humor as well as patience and understanding.	DON'T intervene or contradict a teacher once a problem has been handled.
DO accept each child for who they are.	DON'T forget to contact the teacher or school if you can't fulfill your commitment.
DO let the teacher be responsible for discipline.	DON'T forget to turn off your cell phone.
DO share the benefits of volunteering with others and encourage new volunteers.	DON'T wear heavy perfume due to student's potential allergies or respiratory issues

DO learn teachers and students names as quickly as possible.	DON'T wear inappropriate clothing while volunteering (e.g. low-cut or suggestive clothing,)
DO handle school property in a careful and respectful manner with the utmost care.	DON'T feel bad to say "No" to additional volunteer requests when you have reached your limit.
DO report malfunctioning equipment	DON'T offer students your food due to potential allergies or sensitivities.
DO model appropriate language, behavior and attire.	DON'T touch students.
DO follow staff lead through emergency drills.	DON'T bring student's siblings and/or pets on field trips.
	DON'T take pictures of children other than your own without permission.
	DON'T touch blood or other bodily fluids; get staff help immediately.

*(In part adapted from "Mifflin County School District: Parent Volunteer Manual." [www.mcscdk12.org](http://www.mcscdk12.org). 2009.10 May, 2010 <  
[https://www.mcscdk12.org/pdf/parent\\_volunteer\\_manual.pdf](https://www.mcscdk12.org/pdf/parent_volunteer_manual.pdf)>)*

*Remember that warmth, authenticity and friendliness foster good volunteer-student-staff relationships!*

### **School wide Policies, Procedures and Rules**

- A. Sign-In/Out Procedure
- B. School Rules
- C. School Wide Discipline Protocol
- D. Anti-harassment and Anti-bullying Expectations and Procedures
- E. Safety Procedure
- F. Liability Issues
- G. Family Educational Rights to Privacy Act (FERPA)
- H. Mandatory Reporting

**A. Sign –In/Out Procedure** - All visitors and volunteers are required to report to the office to sign in and take a visitor's/volunteer pass, and to sign out at the end of the visit.

**B. School Rules\_-** At CES we have developed four basic rules that we expect everyone to follow:

- ❖ Be Safe
- ❖ Be Respectful
- ❖ Be Responsible
- ❖ Be a Champ

If a student is not following the rules, provide a reminder/redirection and seek out staff help if necessary. In addition, smoking or tobacco use, the use of alcoholic beverages and narcotics, or being under the influence of either on school property or at school sponsored events (such as field trips) is strictly prohibited.

- C. School Wide Discipline Protocol\_-** The School Wide Discipline protocol provides an operational framework that supports student learning as well as social, emotional and behavioral development. For information please find a copy in our CES Family Handbook. We recommend that volunteers are aware of our Discipline policy, but that only trained school staff will be using the discipline support steps.
- D. Anti-harassment and Anti-bullying Expectations and Procedures -** For full information please find a copy in our CES Family Handbook. If you observe an incident or have any concerns, please speak to either Karen Prouty, School Counselor or Maria Horton, Interim Principal.
- E. Safety Procedures\_-** For information on Evacuation procedures, please review the CES Family Handbook
- F. Family Educational Rights to Privacy Act (FERPA) -** The FERPA Act protects student privacy by restricting disclosure of information from student records. An Educational Record is any and all information, maintained by an educational agency, directly related to a student or former student. Generally information about a student can only be shared on a need to know basis. This means no discussion of information about a student should be casually shared with anyone who does not have a direct need to know. The teachers' lounge, local grocery store or neighborhood is not the place to discuss an incident that occurred at school, using identifiable information about the students involved. We expect all volunteers as well as employees to strictly adhere to the FERPA laws and guidelines.
- G. Mandatory Reporting -** Burlington School District is a mandatory reporting agent. This means that all District employees and volunteers who suspect abuse or neglect of children or students are required by law to report those suspicions to state authorities and law enforcement. Reports should be brought to the attention of our Principal, School Counselor or School Nurse.

## Ways families can support their children's education

- A. Nurturing** - Provide a safe and nurturing home for your children and supporting their developmental needs. Asking for help if needed. Sharing information with your children's teachers (or appropriate school staff) about your family and children that will help the school support their education. Many of our schools host workshops throughout the year for families to learn more about children's growth and development.
- B. Communicating** - Staying informed about your children's learning goals and progress in school. Reading information that is sent home (check that backpack!) and talking to your children about their goals and what they are learning in school. Attending open house, curriculum nights and conferences. Reviewing report cards, assessments, and feedback from teachers. Connect with and respond to your children's teachers and let them know if you (or your student(s)) have questions or concerns. Review our School Handbook for more information.
- C. Volunteering** - Attend student performances and events. If you are available, considering helping out at school events and activities, chaperoning, or volunteering in the school. Review this volunteer handbook for opportunities. Getting involved with our PTO.
- D. Supporting Learning at Home** - Supporting your children with their homework. Connecting with your children about their skills and interests. Reading with your children. Encouraging, listening, praising, guiding, and discussing schoolwork with their children.
- E. Participating in Decision-Making** - Reviewing and giving input on the school improvement plan (available on the school website). Consider participating in school or district advisory groups and sharing your suggestions with administrators or the school board. Getting involved with our PTO.

### Roadmap to creating activities and events at Champlain Elementary

Champlain Elementary welcomes ideas for school related activities and events from the community. If you have an idea, we encourage you to contact the PTO Board Members to add your idea to the next PTO meeting agenda, or contact the principal to discuss it. At PTO meetings you will always find the principal and/or teacher representatives who will report items from the PTO agenda back to the larger teacher staff for feedback and information. At the meeting you will have the chance to present your idea and receive feedback from the PTO Board Members about feasibility, implementation and support for your idea. The entire Champlain Community benefits from and appreciates your ideas and commitment for school wide collaborations, communications and community building!

### School community resources for volunteers

Volunteers are welcome to use the teacher staff room between 8:00-9:00 am for school related project planning without prior reservation. Additionally, the Art Room has some availability for community gatherings like Class Parent meetings, etc. Please check the signup on the Art Room door and/or check in with Art teacher Sonny Sammut (ssammut@bsdvt.org). PTO funds may be available for school related activities. Please check in with the PTO Board. The PTO has developed a fund request process for school year 2014-2015; implementing two deadlines for fund request submissions.

### **Important contacts**

**School Administration:** Maria Horton, Interim Principal: 864-8489 or [mhorton@bsdvt.org](mailto:mhorton@bsdvt.org);  
Janet Breen, Administrative Assistant: 864-8477 or [jbreen@bsdvt.org](mailto:jbreen@bsdvt.org);  
<http://champlain.bsdvt.org/>

**PTO Board:** PTO Officers for 2015/2016 are:

- Blake Ewoldsen – President ([ewoldsen@mac.com](mailto:ewoldsen@mac.com))
- Mike Fisher & Kath Laing – Co Vice-Presidents ([mikthefish@hotmail.com](mailto:mikthefish@hotmail.com) & [kblaing@gmail.com](mailto:kblaing@gmail.com))
- Christopher Hood – Treasurer ([chood@cvuhs.org](mailto:chood@cvuhs.org))
- Skye Ellicock – Secretary ([skye.ellicock@gmail.com](mailto:skye.ellicock@gmail.com))
- Kerrie Mathes – Volunteer Coordinator ([kerrie@burlingtontelecom.net](mailto:kerrie@burlingtontelecom.net))
- Heather Fitzgerald - Member ([heather.fitzgerald@uvm.edu](mailto:heather.fitzgerald@uvm.edu))

**Appendix A:**

*Only regular volunteers with potential of unsupervised time with students need to complete this.*

**BURLINGTON SCHOOL DISTRICT - VOLUNTEER APPLICATION**

**Volunteer Background Information**

1. Have you ever resigned from a prior position after a complaint had been received against you or your conduct was under investigation or review? Y / N
2. Have you ever been disciplined, discharged, or asked to resign from a prior position? Y / N
3. Have you ever been charged with, or are you currently being investigated for sexual abuse, misconduct or harassment of another person? Y / N
4. Have you ever been convicted of a felony or misdemeanor (other than a minor traffic offense)? Y / N
5. Have you ever entered a plea of guilty or “no contest” (nolo contendere) to any crime (other than a minor traffic violation)? Y / N
6. Have you ever served time in prison? Y / N

If you have answered “yes” to any question, please explain:

I certify that the information contained in this form and any attachments are true and correct to the best of my knowledge. I understand that false or incorrect information in this form is grounds for disqualification for further consideration, should I be granted a volunteer position.

The Burlington School District will consider all volunteer applications received in accordance with Burlington School District policy. It is the District’s policy not to discriminate on the basis of age, race, color, creed, sex, national origin, place of birth, ancestry, sexual orientation or handicap under the provisions of Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) and Fair Employment Practices 21 VSA Chapter 5 & 6 and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

**Confidentiality:** I have reviewed the District’s policies and practices governing confidentiality of student records, information or files and agree to abide by those policies and practices and agree to be held accountable for ensuring compliance with those policies and practices.

**Review of Records:** I understand that the Burlington School District may conduct a review of existing state and federal criminal records of convictions for crimes and other records from Vermont protection agencies as allowed by law. I give permission to have my personal and professional references researched and hold the district and any individuals providing the district with information harmless. I agree to abide by the District’s Volunteer Code of Conduct.

Name of applicant: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of witness: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*(Witness to verify applicant by photo Identification)*

**Appendix B:** To be completed and returned by every volunteer BURLINGTON SCHOOL DISTRICT

**VOLUNTEER (NON-EMPLOYEE) SIGNATURE FORM**

Volunteer Name: \_\_\_\_\_ SCHOOL: Champlain Elementary

Family of (student name): \_\_\_\_\_

**The continued safety of the students, faculty and staff of the Burlington School District (the “District”) is of utmost importance to the Board of School Commissioners (the “Board”) and the District. To ensure that all persons working within the District are aware of, and intend to comply with, the policies of the Board, this signature form is required to be completed by all non-employees, interns, or volunteers working within the District.**

**It is expected that all persons working within the District will comply with, and when necessary, enforce the policies and procedures of the Board. This expectation includes, but is not limited to, all policies addressing harassment; discrimination; confidentiality; narcotics; alcohol; tobacco products; communicable diseases; and access to and use of electronic resources. All District policies are available in the main office of each education building as well as online at <http://bsdweb.bsdt.org/Board/BoardPolicy.php>**

**It is expected that all person working within the District will comply with all Federal and State applicable laws and regulations. I agree to comply with all policies, procedures, applicable laws and regulations. Failure to comply will result in the appropriate action necessary in keeping with the guaranteed safety and privacy of the students, faculty and staff of the District.**

**CONFIDENTIALITY SUMMARY FOR SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS**

We feel it is important to inform all volunteers in the Burlington School District about the laws regarding confidentiality in the schools. Students and families are protected under the Family Educational Rights to Privacy Act (FERPA). Burlington School District maintains a policy to ensure this protection. The FERPA Act is to protect student privacy by restricting disclosure of information from student records. An Educational Record is any and all information, maintained by an educational agency, which is directly related to a student or former student. Generally information about a student can only be shared on a need to know basis. This means no discussion of information about a student should be casually shared with anyone who does not have a direct need to know. The teachers’ lounge, local grocery store or neighborhood is not the place to discuss an incident that occurred at school, using identifiable information about the students involved. We expect all volunteers as well as employees to strictly adhere to the FERPA laws and guidelines.

Signature of volunteer: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of witness: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_