



# Classroom Volunteer Handbook 2015-2016

VALLEY CHRISTIAN PRESCHOOL  
A ministry of Valley Community Presbyterian  
Church  
8060 SW Brentwood Street  
Portland, OR 97225  
[www.valleychristianpreschool.com](http://www.valleychristianpreschool.com)



Dear Parent(s),

Thank you for volunteering in your child's classroom. Classroom volunteers play a vital role in our preschool program and we appreciate your willingness to share your time and talents with us.

This handbook is designed to assist you during your classroom experience. Please refer to it often, and do not hesitate to ask questions.

Preschool is a wonderful time in your and your child's lives. The children's excitement is contagious. May you catch this excitement and have fun in the process.

Have a joyous, rewarding, and a wonder-filled year.



# WHO VOLUNTEERS?

Valley Christian Preschool encourages parents and grandparents to volunteer in their child's classroom, but does not require it. If another adult seeks a volunteer role, s/he must be enrolled in the Central Background Registry as required by the Oregon Rules for Certified Child Care Centers, and must attend an orientation with the preschool director.

# WHAT IS MY ROLE IN THE CLASSROOM?

It is important when you volunteer, especially the first time, to observe the happenings in the classroom. This is a time for you to notice how the classroom runs. What are the usual procedures? What is the daily routine? How does the teacher interact with the children? How do the children respond to the teacher? As the children play, what are they learning? This is the perfect time to gain as much knowledge as possible by watching the teachers at work.

Observing gives you a chance to learn names and routines, as well as a rare and unique opportunity to see your child learning at a time when they are so excited about it.



You may also be given some responsibilities during class time. This may include prep work, bulletin board creations, or attending to a particular center or project. Please be open with your child's teacher about which tasks you are most comfortable with, and remember that all happenings within the classroom are important. The little things make the class run smoothly and contribute to a child's positive learning experience.

## **WHAT TIME SHOULD I ARRIVE?**

It is best to arrive approximately 5 minutes before the beginning of class so that the teacher may brief you on any items of importance.

## **HOW DO I HANDLE DISCIPLINE IN THE CLASSROOM?**

It is the teacher and assistant's responsibility to guide behavior in the classroom. It is always appropriate for you to ask for help or to let the teacher intervene. When this is not possible, the following should be used as a guideline.

### ***Philosophy***

The Core Purpose of Valley Christian Preschool is to embrace childhood in partnership with families and God. We seek to model and teach Christian faith principles such as love, patience, kindness, compassion,



goodness, self control, gentleness, forgiveness, faithfulness and humility. To do this effectively, we are close with children in school and seek to learn their interests, to foster their friendships and support their social and emotional growth.

Our ultimate goal is to foster greater self-esteem and respect for others. Behavior management (also commonly referred to as discipline), is designed to promote the development of self-direction, self-control and socially acceptable behavior. During any intervention we must be very certain that the child is perceiving a positive, rather than a negative picture of him/herself as an acceptable person, and that only his or her actions are deemed inappropriate. Children must always be given an immediate alternative to the inappropriate behavior in order to empower them to control their own behavior. Remember: It is important to always reexamine the issues at hand and back down from a power struggle whenever it becomes your issue as opposed to intervention for an inappropriate behavior. Parent participants and staff members must keep personal biases in check at all times.

### *Time Outs*

Valley Christian Preschool does not condone the use of traditional "time out" within any of its environments or for any age group. Children must be given alternatives to their behavior. Logical consequences must be explained and followed through. For instance, if a child



throws juice or food, a "time out" would not be appropriate. Giving them a towel and allowing them to assist with clean up would provide an alternative behavior. At times, it may be necessary to remove a child from a situation because of the distress it causes. This should be done only if it is a logical consequence. At these times, the child can make a choice to return to the activity when he/she has calmed down. Children may need time to relax, but this is not to be used as a punishment. Corporal punishment, spanking and physical restraint is never to take place.

### *Helping Children to Problem-solve*

Examine each situation with fairness. Do not choose sides or insinuate guilt. Attempt to have each child tell the other child what happened from their viewpoint. Concentrate on feelings and encourage empathy. Acknowledge anger and hurt. Allow children to make suggestions to solve conflict. Make your own suggestions only if children cannot verbalize or are not able to come up with alternatives which are appropriate. If two children reach agreement which is appropriate but may not be what you would have suggested, do NOT interfere. Children learn by doing. When we "do" for them, the teachable moment is lost. Acknowledge their agreement and allow them to move on. Do not drag issues on and on. Children will forget what they are discussing. Do support the children when they follow through on their agreement.



## *Choices*

Never imply a choice if the children do not have one. Do not ask children to do something if, in the end, they are going to have to do it anyway. If recess is over and you need everyone to put their bikes away, do not ask if they would like to put their bike away. Instead, offer a choice like: "You can put your bike away by yourself or I can help you." Always be clear about the reasoning behind your requests such as: "I need you to come with me so I can make sure you are safe" or "I can't keep you safe if you are not where I can see you." Give choices when they are available and part of a solution. Create choices whenever possible.

## *Tone of Voice*

Only soft, low voice tone is to be used in our classrooms. Never yell at or in front of a child. If you feel frustrated, ask another staff member to help. When setting limits, be close and at the child's eye level while using a firm, not harsh, voice. If there is an emergency you may need to raise your voice; however, this is the only exception.

## **WHAT ARE OUR SAFETY GUIDELINES?**

All visitors and classroom aides must sign in. This is an important part of monitoring those who come in contact with the children, and also required for





emergency management. Confirm with the teacher where to properly sign yourself in.

Children should always be released from class by the teacher. It is her responsibility to make sure the appropriate person is picking up the child. There may be circumstances you are not aware of, so always allow the teacher to excuse children from school.

You should never be alone with a child. This is for his/her protection as well as your own. If a child is needs help at the toilet, leave the door ajar.



## WHAT ARE OUR HEALTH POLICIES?

Do not come to school if you are ill, exhibit symptoms listed in our hand book or have been in contact with a contagious disease. We want to keep our classrooms as healthy as possible, and we want you to feel your best when you are around the children.

Email or call the director at 503.292.3537x146 as soon as you know you will not be able to attend class. This will allow time for a substitute to be found if necessary.

In order to keep our classrooms as germ free as possible, it is important to wash hands frequently. You should wash your hands before class begins, before serving the snack, after wiping noses, after using the toilet or assisting a child at the toilet. Remind children to wash hands often, too.

## WHAT ABOUT CONFIDENTIALITY?

Confidentiality must be respected at all times. Please refrain from discussing any incident which occurs in the classroom in a negative light. It is the teacher's responsibility to discuss behavior with each child's parent and outside conversations can have a detrimental effect on the teacher's ability to effectively handle a situation.



Preschool children have a different perspective of the world than adults. They may integrate many events over a time period into a single happening. This can mislead adults. Parents and adult volunteers should consult the teacher if any concerns are raised.

For these reasons, and for the protection of the children, you should refrain from mentioning names and/or incidents outside of the classroom.

## **WHAT PHRASES ARE COMMONLY USED IN THE CLASSROOM?**

- "Use your words."
- "Hands are for hugging. We don't hurt with our hands."

### ***Positive reinforcement***

- "Keep the sand in the touch table." instead of "Don't throw sand on the floor."

### ***Objective descriptions***

- "I see John is using the blue paint. Susie is building with square blocks."

### ***Language and cognitive development***

- "What would happen if . . . ?" or
- "What do you think about . . . ?"



# WHAT IMPACT MIGHT MY PRESENCE HAVE ON BEHAVIOR?

Generally children are enormously proud to have their parent in the classroom. Thus, the child may act differently when you are present than he/she would otherwise. Some children may become “clingy” or not want to “share” their parent. Other children may become uncooperative or act out. Whatever reaction they may have—it is normal. Acknowledge your child’s feelings and allow him/her to sit with you and reassure him/her that they have your attention. These behaviors usually pass after two to three visits in the classroom and the benefits to being there will soon outweigh any previous challenges. Please discuss any concerns with your child’s teacher.

As a parent, there may be a tendency to compare your child to others. Child development is a process of two steps forward and one step back, rather than a smooth uphill climb. One child may be advanced in language but unable to string beads, while another child may be language delayed but quite adept at stringing beads. Their *individual* growth and strengths are at the heart of our curriculum and are honored at all times.



Thank you again for being a part of the classroom experience. Enjoy!

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