



Nixa Public Schools

**V.I.P.S.
(Volunteers In Public Schools)
Handbook**

2015-2016

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V.I.P.S.

Nixa Volunteer Handbook 2015-2016

Superintendent's Message

Abraham Lincoln once said, "Upon the subject of education, I can say that I view it as the most important subject who we as a people can be engaged in." Certainly one of the most valuable ways is through volunteers who work directly in the schools with administrators, teachers, and students. Volunteers make invaluable contributions...becoming the salvation of our community and country.

-- Dr. Stephen Kleinsmith

Mission Statement

The mission of Nixa Public Schools, dedicated to our legacy of excellence, is to ensure all students achieve maximum potential and graduate with the knowledge, skills and character necessary to succeed as productive, informed, and engaged citizens in a diverse society by providing a quality, comprehensive, world-class education in a safe and secure learning environment.

Program Purpose

The purpose of this program is to provide various services to building principals and classroom teachers to allow them to devote their energies more fully to the professional skills for which they have been trained and to provide resource persons to enrich the experiences for all the students.

The Nixa V.I.P.S. (**V**olunteers **I**n **P**ublic **S**chools) are citizens who are sincerely interested in assisting children enrolled in the Nixa school system. Their willingness to

serve and commitment to education are greatly appreciated. The Nixa V.I.P.S. program operates under the approval of the Nixa School Board of Education and the school administration. All volunteers working on a regular basis need to adhere to the Nixa Board of Education Policies and Administrative Rules and Regulations.

Responsibilities of the Nixa V.I.P.S. Coordinator

The V.I.P.S. Coordinator will...

- Be available to counsel with any of the parties involved concerning the program.
- Assist in the recruitment, orientation, and training of school volunteers as needs arise.
- Process applications, initiate background check, check references, and assign volunteers to specific locations as well as notify principals/teachers of volunteer assignments.
- Maintain a file of active and inactive school volunteers.
- Maintain a file by schools of all school volunteers.
- Maintain a collection of resource materials for school volunteers.
- Make available to the school volunteer the statement of the basic philosophy of the school system.
- Provide identification tags for volunteers.
- Confer with building principals, classroom teachers, and school volunteers concerning suggestions for improvement of the program.
- Confer with appropriate administrators on any unresolved problems and make suggestions for improvement or changes in the program.
- Continually strive to update guidelines for the volunteer program.
- Collect and maintain attendance records of the volunteers.
- Provide District correspondence to volunteers.
- Coordinate appreciation activities.

Responsibilities of the Building Principal

The building principal will...

- Furnish the V.I.P.S. Coordinator with the names of those teachers desiring the services of a school volunteer and indicate the kind of assistance desired.
- Orient the school volunteer to his/her school- including providing building specific training.
- Encourage volunteers to utilize the HelpCounter system.
- See that the school volunteer program is carried out in accordance with the guidelines.
- Not assign volunteers to supervise areas such as the playground, cafeteria, office, and nurse's station unless certified personnel have also been assigned this duty.
- Confer with the V.I.P.S. Coordinator concerning any problems that may arise or concerning suggestions for the improvement of the program.
- Provide an appreciation event at the end of the school year.

Responsibilities of the Classroom Teacher

The classroom teacher will...

- Be the immediate supervisor with whom the volunteer works. Teachers must always be kept in a position to assume responsibility for what transpires in the classroom and will direct all activities performed by the school volunteer. Volunteers assist the teacher who has requested such assistance. Disciplinary problems are not the responsibility of the volunteer and should be referred to the teacher or principal. Any concerns should be shared with the V.I.P.S. Coordinator.
- Be the decision maker, analyze the needs of the students, and prescribe what will best meet those needs.
- Give careful, specific instructions when assigning any task to a volunteer and, if at all possible, provide a sample--especially in clerical or craft work.
- Explain what is expected of the pupils.

- Provide a time for the volunteer to discuss concerns or progress of the student.
- The relationship between the school volunteer and the school staff is a professional one of mutual respect and confidence. Volunteers will observe the confidential nature of this relationship. At no time will there be criticism or discussion of either the professional staff, the volunteers, or of the pupils with persons unassociated with the program.
- Remember that a volunteer needs reinforcement and suggestions in order to work effectively and may expect on-going feedback about the quality of work done as well as needing to feel like a valued member of the educational team.
- Plan the work and schedule of the school volunteer ahead of time.
- Notify the building principal if a volunteer is not needed at the regularly scheduled time so that arrangements can be made to utilize the volunteer elsewhere.
- Volunteers are never asked to serve as substitute teachers during the absence of teachers.

Responsibilities of the School Volunteer

The school volunteer will...

- Complete application and background check process.
- Participate in basic orientation. Volunteers should not serve prior to receiving orientation.
- Be prompt, dependable, regular in attendance, and in good health.
- Sign in and record all volunteer hours using the HelpCounter system.
- Notify the teacher as far in advance as possible when the volunteer finds it necessary to be absent or late.
- Maintain a high standard of work in a cooperative manner.
- Determine with teachers a mutually agreeable time for receiving assignments and specific student needs. Request a brief outline, written or oral, of work to be done each period. If you do not understand the assignment and goal, ask the teacher for clarification.

- Encourage the student to do his/her own thinking. Stay on task. Start work at a level where the student can succeed.
- Recognize the importance of thorough preparation.
- Not grade assignments or tests.
- Respect confidentiality expectations unless disclosure is required by law. The relationship between the school volunteer and the school staff is a professional one of mutual respect and confidence. Volunteers will observe the confidential nature of this relationship. At no time will there be criticism or discussion of either the professional staff, the volunteers, or of the pupils with persons unassociated with the program.
- Be responsible for learning and observing the regulations of the school where assigned, including wearing a designated nametag, observing the sign-in procedure, fire drill and accident reporting procedures, lunch and coffee privileges, and pupil restroom and drink privilege.
- Know the telephone numbers of the office of the school where assigned.
- Ascertain where supplies are kept.
- Avoid asking a student to do anything that might be physically dangerous, i.e., open or close a window, step on a chair to reach something.
- Not serve as substitute teachers during the absence of teachers.
- Feel free to discuss with the principal or the V.I.P.S. Coordinator any change that the volunteer would prefer in building assignment, grade, or activity.
- Make suggestions for improvement of the program to the V.I.P.S. Coordinator who will channel them for necessary action to the administrative staff. At all times, a conscientious effort shall be made to keep the line of communication open.
- Accept no gratuities or gifts of significance from teachers or pupils. Volunteers shall refrain from soliciting in the school.
- Not smoke on school grounds.
- Avoid situations where there could be a liability question. If in doubt, ask.
- Avoid any discussions with students regarding your personal beliefs (i.e., religious, political, etc.). All discussion with the student must be focused on the school district curriculum.