

Atlantis Charter School (ACS) Parent Volunteer Handbook 2017-2018



~Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they have the heart~

WELCOME TO OUR VOLUNTEERS

The staff and students of Atlantis Charter School welcome active and visible parent involvement in the life of the school. Volunteerism enriches the learning environment of our children and the lives of those donating their time. We look forward to your continued interest, support and involvement in our school community.

This handbook outlines the guidelines and expectations that volunteers must follow to create a safe and successful experience for students, staff, and volunteers. We hope you enjoy your time with us and do not hesitate to share your insights, questions and concerns. We rely on your feedback for the continued improvement of our volunteer program.

About the Handbook

The handbook is designed to introduce you to Atlantis Charter Schools and to provide a basic overview of the policies and procedures that provide all of us guidance and direction. As a volunteer, you are provided with a safe place to work, supervision and recognition. If you have any questions or clarification of anything in this handbook please contact the FCRC Director.

ATLANTIS CHARTER SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Atlantis Charter School is to provide an education second to none yielding academic excellence and life-long learning skills. ACS is an independent public school that provides an educational choice to the families of Greater Fall River by offering a solid academic foundation to our students on which to build a successful future. We expect an equal partnership among parents, community, faculty, staff and students to create a safe, caring, innovative and progressive learning environment. Atlantis incorporates the best methods in our curriculum to meet the needs of our student population. It is our mission to become the model of educational excellence.

PHILOSOPHY / GOAL

Research indicates that parent volunteerism in schools enhances student self-esteem, increases academic achievement, cognitive development, and improves student behavior and attendance. With the choice to become a volunteer, parents are empowered to make a positive impact, not only in the lives of their own children but in the lives of the entire Atlantis community.

Teachers come to see parents as valued partners in extending and enriching the educational program. In addition, parents come to know they make a difference through contributions of time and talent. Parent/adult involvement allows staff to draw upon supplemental and often unique adult resources and expertise.

Chain of Command

Executive Director- Robert Beatty

Associate Executive Director- Mike Lauro

K-12 District Leader- Gabriela Birmingham

Site Leaders, K-6 - Corrie Marchand & Jen Paik

K-6 – Dean of Students: Courtney DeStafano

Site Leaders, 7-12- Allison Scanlon & Daniel Yates-Berg

Dean of Students- Mary-Beth Souza

Dean of Students 7-12 Mary-Beth Souza

Director of Athletics and Recreation- Chad Gormly

FCRC Coordinator- Donalda Silva

School Adjustment Counselors, Lower Site- Kyla Falcon & Summer Riker

Middle School- Jessica Boucher & Tayla Dunn

High School- Nikie Ywanczuk

RESPONSIBILITIES

Administration is committed to:

- Facilitating
- Monitoring
- Evaluating
- Providing continuity for the success of the volunteer program

Staff are committed to:

- Welcoming volunteers
- Informing them about their tasks
- Providing materials
- Encouraging their initiatives and celebrating their efforts

Volunteers are committed to:

- Respecting school rules and procedures
- Performing assigned tasks to the best of their ability
- Working cooperatively with all staff and seeking clarification when necessary

VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES / PROGRAMS

The following are areas for volunteer opportunities:

- **Classroom help upon teacher's request**
 - Supporting art projects
 - Teaching an area of skill (art, music, speech, etc.)
 - Computer lab support
 - Decorating bulletin boards
 - Read stories
 - Assist with hobby experience
 - Work with a group
 - Help a group move from one place to another
 - Play and/or teach games in classroom and play yard
 - Other:

- **Supervision**
 - Chaperoning dances/parties
 - Accompany group on field trips
 - Chaperoning FCRC Events
 - Other

- **Working in Volunteer Room**
 - Clerical Tasks
 - Type as needed
 - File materials
 - Mailing/postage
 - Copy materials
 - Gather materials for projects
 - Other
 - Work on projects left for parents or take home
 - teaching aides such as games and flashcards
 - prepare materials such as cutting paper with the paper cutter
 - maintain art supplies by washing paint brushes
 - correct papers
 - trim laminated papers

- **FCRC / Uniform Swap/Closet**
 - Sorting Uniforms
 - Labeling
 - Hanging

- **Parent Group Opportunities**
 - Events
 - Manning booths
 - Interact/engage with families
 - Other
 - **Fundraising**
 - Making telephone calls
 - Helping assemble/disassemble parties
 - Helping in preparing materials for events
 - Helping selling tickets
 - Other
- **Trainings**
 - **Mandatory** Initial Volunteer Training
 - 1 hour training to discuss handbook and question/answer session
 - Continuous Volunteer Trainings
 - As required

**** NOTE-** All parent volunteers report to the parent liaison with any questions regarding their duties or general concerns. The parent liaison will then inform the FCRC director if needed.

Attendance and Absenteeism

When you become a volunteer, we depend on you to complete your scheduled shifts. We do understand that, from time to time, certain situations may arise that may prevent you from doing so. Please make every effort to alert the school of any scheduled absences as far in advance as possible so that an appropriate substitute may be found. In an event of an unscheduled absence or emergency, please alert the school as soon as possible, preferably 24 hours before your schedule begins.

****Note:** It is important that as a volunteer you are realistic about the amount of time that you can offer the school and what you are unable to handle. Being at ACS should be a positive experience; however this may not be possible if your commitments outweigh the amount of time or energy that you have available

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Protecting our Children

At Atlantis Charter School we have always done our very best to ensure that each child in our care is protected from possible danger. Our volunteers have been a key part of this effort.

The Atlantis Charter School Board of Trustees has decided to take an additional step to ensure the safety of our young people: **criminal history checks (CORI)**. The growth of our community, our volunteer program, and our mentoring and tutoring efforts -- and a realistic look at today's society -- has led us to institute this additional level of security. We will get to know most of you well, and know that this is probably a step beyond what is absolutely necessary, but we also know you will not be offended because you understand our reasoning -- to ensure that our children are safe and secure in our schools.

Thank you for your understanding and support. All volunteers must have a criminal history records check form on file before volunteering with ACS students. Please refer to page 8 for more information. This does not mean that you cannot volunteer if you do not have a valid/current CORI. In the event that your CORI is not valid, you can consider volunteering from home or attend the workshops/parent meetings that will be held at the school. These events will count towards your volunteer hours.

Accident or Injury

- All student accidents or injuries must be reported to the parent/guardian. The volunteer should report to the teacher or administrator giving details of how accident occurred and filling out an accident report form.
- Do not leave an injured child to seek assistance, send a child or another adult to report you need assistance.

Medication Procedures:

- The administration of medications at school is allowed upon written request of the parent and a physician. Only the school nurse has the ability to administer such medication.
- Medication may NEVER be dispensed by a volunteer at any time and must be directed by a school nurse.
- A volunteer may NEVER administer any over the counter medications to a student.

Schools Emergency Plan: (Please follow site procedures)

In the event that the emergency fire alarm system is activated, all volunteers are to evacuate the building by following the procedures below: (**Due to change upon move to new campus**)

- **Fire Drill (Lower Site)** - All volunteers should exit the building by way of the nearest exit.

Summit Door Classes- 1A, 1B, 1D, 2A, Art Class, 4A, 4C- Exit down Summit Street.
Courtyard/Library Door Classes- 2B, 1E, 3A, 3B, 3C, K2- Exit to South Main Street.
Main Door Classes- K1, Music Class- Exit to South Main Street.
Back Door- K3, K4, K5, 1C, 2C, 2D, 3D, 4B, 4D- Exit to Blacktop

- **Fire Drill (Middle School)** – All Volunteers should exit the building by way of the nearest exit. If you have a child with you, you must meet up with that child’s teacher.
5th-7th Grade- Meet on the steps of Saint Anne’s Church.
8th grade- Students meet on Forest Street.
- **Fire Drill (High School)** – All classes meet up at the base of Pearl Street. During inclement weather all students and staff will meet at the Cultural Center gym on South Main Street.
- **Intruder or lock down (All buildings)**
CODE YELLOW LOCKDOWN – A threat or potential threat is OUTSIDE of the building. Security is increased at the main entrance of the building and all exterior doors/windows are locked. Site Emergency Team (SET) will clear halls and direct students/staff/volunteers to classroom/workspaces. Classroom instruction continues and normal bell schedule will remain. If you are outside, if it is safe to do so, get inside the building. If access to building is compromised seek nearest shelter.
- **CODE RED LOCKDOWN** – A threat is INSIDE the building. Lock all exterior doors/windows and all interior doors/windows; no access allowed into the building. No one is allowed access into or out of classroom/workspaces. Site Emergency Team (SET) will clear halls and direct students/staff/volunteers to classroom/workspaces. Stay out of site away from windows and doors. Be silent, remain calm and wait for further directions. If you are outside, wait for directions to relocate. If access to building is compromised seek nearest shelter.
- **CODE GREEN- ALL CLEAR**- Resume normal classroom/work.

VOLUNTEER PROCEDURES

Parking

Parking for all sites can be difficult. Be sure to lock your vehicle. You may wish to leave valuables, such as a purse and or cell phone locked in your vehicle’s trunk, as we have no place in the school to secure them

Entrance (Please call if unable to come when expected)

- Sign in with receptionist
- Pick up name tag and wear at all times on campus or with field trip
- Sign out and return name tag when leaving

Work routine: (Explained by the school staff and on-the-job-training provided)

- Familiarize yourself with the rules and routines of the school and classroom, especially the fire drill and lockdown procedures. Please ask questions if unsure about a direction or routine.
- Respect the teaching learning process by not using your volunteer time for an informal parent-teacher conference or conversation.
- Be aware that the staff room is often a workroom for teachers and children are not allowed in this area.
- When volunteering in classrooms/building or on field trips make other arrangements for siblings.
- Be open and honest in your communication to the staff and administration. If you feel a problem exists, help to identify the problem and communicate your concern directly to a staff member or the FCRC director.
- As a volunteer you are **NOT** expected to be responsible for the actions of the children or for administering discipline. If a student is disruptive seek assistance from the teacher or administrator.
- Cell phones should be turned on airplane mode while working with teachers/students.
- Once assigned to a specific area, all volunteers must remain in that area unless directed otherwise. Volunteers should never be wandering the building due to confidentiality.

Confidentiality (Very Important)

In the course of your volunteer work at our school, you may learn confidential information about students, parents or teachers. Volunteers are expected and required to keep all “student information” that they obtain while working as a volunteer for the district confidential, just as you would wish your own privacy rights to be respected. Federal law strictly prohibits school districts and district volunteers from releasing any student information without parent/guardian permission. Disclosure of student information by a volunteer is a violation of the **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA)**. Violating this act may subject

the volunteer and district to civil liability. Information that is prohibited includes but is not limited to the following: all academic information and medical and personal information.

- Volunteers cannot take photos in the building during their volunteering activities unless directed to by a site leader/teacher or administrator. Pictures should never be posted publicly without authorization from the school.
- The only person who should be told about student's work or behavior is their teacher.
- If parents ask about their student progress and/or behavior, kindly refer them to the student's teacher.
- Once assigned to a specific area, all volunteers must remain in that area unless directed otherwise. Volunteers should never be wandering the building due to confidentiality.
- There are times when student confidences cannot be kept. If a student confides a desire to commit suicide, hurt themselves or someone else to a volunteer, that confidence must be reported to a teacher/administrator. **The guideline to follow is:** *Any information which, if shared with parent and/or administrators, may save someone from harm, must be shared.*

Disciplinary Actions

At no time does the school want to have to discipline any volunteer, however, there may come a time when disciplinary actions are needed and behaviors/concerns must be addressed in a respectful manner. Here at Atlantis Charter School we believe in a progressive discipline policy. The purpose of this policy is to administer equitable and consistent discipline for unsatisfactory conduct or job performance. Most often, volunteer conduct that warrants discipline results from unacceptable behavior, poor performance, or a violation of Atlantis' policies, practices, or procedures.

If it ever becomes necessary to discipline a volunteer, Atlantis will take into consideration a number of factors, including but not limited to, the nature and seriousness of the offense, the volunteers past record, the impact on the organization and an mitigating or aggravating circumstances. It is essential that all volunteers accept personal responsibility for maintaining high standards of conduct and job performance, including observance of the Atlantis Charter School's rules and policies.

In general, Atlantis will normally adhere to the following progressive disciplinary steps as appropriate:

1. Verbal Warning
2. Written Warning
3. Final Written Warning and/or Suspension

VOLUNTEER CODE OF ETHICS

Communication

Always direct other parents' concerns to the classroom teacher. It is the school's responsibility to inform parents of student progress. If problems or concerns arise, first discuss them with the appropriate staff member, and if necessary, the Administrative team.

Dependability

The school relies on your support. Follow through on tasks by attending to scheduled times and please give notice of absence whenever possible.

Respect for Others

Children learn from watching you. Practice patience and understanding toward the children and staff which helps learners value and apply these qualities. If you are experiencing difficulty with a student/teacher please call the FCRC Director. Always respect the school policy and procedures.

Dress Code

Although there is not a uniform policy for staff and volunteers, all volunteers who are working in the school are expected to dress in a manner that represents ACS in an appropriate way. Volunteers are expected to meet or exceed student dress code.

Role

At all times a volunteer is there to support the needs of the teachers, students, or program. Observations of staff must never be evaluative in nature, and tasks should be carried out according to the teacher's request.

Confidentiality

A volunteer operates in a position of trust. Personal information pertaining to students must be kept confidential, as well as conversations between parents, teachers and students. This is very important and ACS staff and administration take this very seriously.

Guideline and Schedule for CORI Applications

Family members who would like to volunteer in the school or on field trips will need to have an approved CORI on file at Atlantis. CORI's are valid for 3 years and are not transferable from organization to organization. One needs to be on file here at Atlantis even if you have already filled one out for youth sports or for another organization. Please note that you will need to call ahead to confirm that a staff member will be available when you arrive at the school to complete a CORI form.

Once a CORI is completed and approved the Family Resource Center will notify you with a letter that is sent home with your child. At that time you may begin to volunteer here at Atlantis Charter School. As well, when your CORI is about to expire you will be notified so that you can arrange to complete a new CORI.

Below is a list of staff and their scheduled availability at each building who are able to accept the CORI Applications. Calling ahead is suggested to ensure that when you arrive at the school they are available and not in a meeting or out of work on that particular day.

Linda Celona, Finance Director

Lower School - 2501 South Main Street - 508-672-1821

Mondays – Fridays 7:30am to 3:00pm

Kristi Oliveira, Human Resources Director

Upper School – 37 Park Street - Room 328 on the 3rd floor, 508-672-1821ext 2328:

Mondays 8am to 4:30 pm

Tuesdays 8am to 4:30 pm

Lower School -2501 South Main Street-Room 232 on the 2nd floor, 508-672-1821 ext 1232:

Wednesdays 8am to 4:30 pm

Fridays 8am to 4:30 pm

High School – 189 South Main Street- 2nd floor, main office, 508-6720-629

Thursdays 8:00 am to 4:30pm

Fridays 8am to 4:30 pm

If you have any questions about the process or about volunteering contact the Family and Community Resource Center Lower School, 508-672-1821 ext. 1030 ask for Liz Goulart

Atlantis Charter School

Parent Acknowledgement of Parent Volunteer Handbook

This form is used to acknowledge receipt of, and compliance with the Atlantis Charter School Parent Volunteer Handbook.

Procedure

Complete the following steps:

1. Read the Parent Volunteer Handbook
2. Sign and date in the spaces provided

By signing below, I agree to the following terms:

I have received and read a copy of the "Parent Volunteer Handbook".

Student's Name: _____ Grade: _____

Parent/Guardian Name (Print):

_____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Name (Signature):

_____ Date: _____