

# Queen of Apostles Catholic School



# Volunteer Handbook

2009 - 2010



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## **We Are Prophets of a Future Not Our Own** **Archbishop Oscar Romero**

It helps, now and then, to step back and take the long view.  
The kingdom is not only beyond our efforts,  
it is beyond our vision.

We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is God's  
work.

We plant seeds that one day will grow.  
We water seeds already planted, knowing  
that they hold future promise.

We cannot do everything  
and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that.  
This enables us to do something,  
and to do it very well.  
It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way,  
An opportunity for God's grace to enter and do the rest.

We may never see the end results,  
but that is the difference between the master builder  
and the worker.

We are workers, not master builders,  
ministers, not messiahs.  
We are prophets of a future not our own.

Dear Volunteers,

On behalf of the Queen of Apostles School community, I want to thank you for your generous sharing of time and talent. It is because of your help that we are able to offer an excellent spiritual and learning environment to our children.

The Church has, for many generations, encouraged us to make use of our talents in offering assistance where and when needed. In the document *To Teach as Jesus Did*, Catholic bishops emphasize the important ministry of the Church, which has been and continues to be service to others. The spirit of volunteerism has long been a tradition in our Catholic schools. The high success rate of our students is based largely on the spirit of community among our parents and staff. This is not just a theory, but is supported by the research of such people as Donald Erickson and William Bennett (his book, *Schools That Work*, highlights the correlation between parent involvement and student achievement).

The call to serve is met every day in the halls of our school. Moms and dads, grandparents, and friends help in the clinic, in the cafeteria, at recess, on field trips, and in the classrooms. The PTO Board and the PTO members explore ways to improve the educational opportunities, through chairing grant, development, and technology committees and chairing or working on fund-raising activities. Parents take precious vacation leave to serve lunches and to monitor recess periods.

The paramount concern for all of us is the safety of our children and of our parents, teachers, and staff. With that objective in mind, I have compiled the policies and expectations that will help to ensure the safety and well-being of the members of our school community. It is not possible to predict every situation, but it is important that we meet challenges with calmness and sensitivity. It is also important that you, as a volunteer, understand the requirements that are pertinent to your position. This is a working document, so if you have input as to items that should be considered for inclusion in the 2008-2009 volunteer handbook, please write or email me your suggestions at the end of this school year.

Again, I want to thank you for all you do.

God bless,

Joanne Yates

## Queen of Apostles Volunteer Program

Queen of Apostles has a very well-organized and comprehensive service/volunteer program. The different service options are made available in the back-to-school packet, website announcements, and PTO meetings. Also, you may contact a PTO Board member or the Principal for more information on how to get involved in our wonderful school. You can also ask about jobs that take into consideration any special requirements. For example, some jobs may be done in the home while others require daytime commitments at the school.

### Requirements to Volunteer

A volunteer must be at least 18 years of age. Some volunteer positions require background and fingerprint checks, as well as attendance at a *Virtus* workshop. Coaches and scout leaders are examples of volunteers who must go through this process. These requirements are for everyone's protection, both volunteer and child.

Additional information can be obtained by accessing the Diocesan website.

### School Service Requirements

It is required that each family serves a specific number of hours. This should not be a burden but rather a way to model the virtue of responsibility that we are teaching our children. If all of the community does not get involved, more is asked of few people. This can cause feelings of resentment which are directly opposed to all that we stand for as a faith community. Also, it could result in having to cancel activities which enhance the social climate of the school for both the children and the adults. It also may result in less fund raising activities to benefit the academic excellence that we foster at Queen of Apostles.

### PTO Service Requirements

**Volunteers may not approve or allocate monies from either the PTO budget or the school budget. All PTO expenditures must be approved by the PTO Board and the principal. If there is no prior approval, expenditures will not be reimbursed.** A volunteer working on a PTO committee should get approval from the PTO president, who in turn will discuss the expenditure with the PTO Board, the principal, and the pastor. A committee working with a specified budget (such as the various Gala committees) must stay within the budget and must get approval for expenditures. This is done through the committee chairperson who will present the expenditures to the PTO president, the PTO Board, the principal, and the pastor.

It is the duty of the volunteer to ask for assistance when needed. It is impossible to cover all scenarios, even in a most comprehensive orientation process. Therefore, volunteers should ask

for help and guidance. Staff and faculty are very grateful for the generous sharing of talent and time, and are always willing to render assistance to our cherished volunteers.

## **Volunteer Rights**

You, as a volunteer, are a valued member of the school community. You have certain rights which include the right to be treated with the respect that is due any adult staff member; the right to be included with the school community in any and all worship services; and the right to the tools and information necessary to the performance of the task for which you are assigned. You always have the right to ask questions in order to gain the information needed.

At Queen of Apostles, we emphasize the virtue of respect. If a volunteer feels that she/he has not been treated in a respectful manner by a student, the volunteer should talk with the homeroom teacher. It is appropriate for the volunteer to remind the child that disrespect is unacceptable, but discipline measures will be carried out by the teacher. (This will be discussed in more detail.) If the volunteer feels that he/she was treated in a disrespectful manner by a staff member, the principal should be informed. Volunteers should also model respect for each other, and any conflicts should be discussed between the concerned individuals, or, if necessary, with the principal.

Volunteers are welcome to join the school community for the prayers and Pledge of Allegiance in the morning, any and all school-wide prayer services, and school Masses.

The guidelines that are being presented in this handbook serve as general policy considerations. Specific information pertinent to specific tasks will be given to new volunteers. The playground supervisor is responsible for orienting the playground monitors; the cafeteria supervisor is responsible for orienting cafeteria monitors. The policy governing student behavior is included in the parent/student handbook, posted and reviewed by the homeroom teachers, the lunch room supervisor, and the playground supervisor. In many instances, there is a coordinator who is responsible for orienting volunteers. For example, there is a room parent coordinator who organizes room parent responsibilities, gala coordinators who organize the volunteers on their committees, etc. The office staff will train the volunteers who help in the office or the clinic. Volunteers who assist in the classrooms will receive instructions from the teachers.

The volunteer may seek more detailed information if he or she feels it is necessary to do so in order to successfully perform the assigned task. This can be done through the volunteer coordinator, the PTO president, the committee coordinator (if applicable), or the concerned individuals (i.e. office staff, teacher).

## Volunteer Duties

All volunteers are expected to arrive on time and perform the assigned task. Arriving on time is important, not only in consideration of the other volunteers and staff, but as the safety of the students could be at issue.

It is expected that volunteers respect and enforce school rules. This is important for the smooth and safe operation of the school environment. Policies and rules are given great consideration and are only effective if there is a consistency of enforcement.

It is important that volunteers remember that the school exists for the students, and that each one be treated as Jesus would treat them. This is, of course, true for all who work, teach, and serve within our school.

It is the duty of the volunteers to dress in a manner that is professional and appropriate.

It is the principal's discretion to determine if younger siblings can be safely included in the volunteer job. It is the policy of the school that siblings may not attend field trips or classroom parties.

Playground/cafeteria duties may be reassigned according to the needs of the day. If a volunteer is assigned playground duties but there is a need for extra lunch room support, the principal or lunch room supervisor may reassign volunteer personnel.

**No one is expected to foresee everything that could possibly happen, but one is expected to foresee reasonable happenings and to take appropriate precautions.**

## Discipline Code

The discipline code is delineated in the parent/student handbook. This code details behavior concerns and suggested accountability measures. Volunteers do not mete out punishment such as demerits or detentions. Behavior that warrants such responses should be brought to the **immediate** attention of a teacher or the principal. The volunteer should not discuss the behavior incident with the child, the child's friends, or with other adults. The volunteers should always support the authority of teachers and administrator.

## Field Trips

One of the most important, and often enjoyable, areas of volunteerism is serving as a chaperone for a field trip. It is an opportunity to visit some interesting locations and also to enjoy the students in an environment away from the school. As in most volunteer opportunities, it is also

an occasion to get to know other parents. Field trips are also situations where it is crucial to the safety and enjoyment of the educational experience that volunteers understand the guidelines.

Chaperones are provided with the field trip permission forms for their group – this form contains information such as emergency numbers, allergies, and other pertinent information. This information is kept in a sealed envelope, and the seal should only be broken in case of an emergency. This is a protection of privacy concerns. Because many students have allergies to certain foods, it is important that the chaperone does not provide any snacks or food unless there has been prior approval by the teacher.

All school rules, unless the principal explicitly states otherwise, are in force on field trips.

Chaperones must stay with their assigned groups. Volunteers should not make any student changes among groups.

Supervision is both mental and physical. Therefore, attention should always be focused on the students. This is not the time to be talking on cell phones or shopping in the museum gift shop.

If your own child is on the field trip, he or she must be treated no differently than any other student. If the teacher has specified that no treats are to be bought at the snack shop, it is certainly very inappropriate for the chaperone to buy something for his or her child.

## **Health and Safety**

If a student is slightly injured (a minor scrape) or feeling sick, the student should be sent to the clinic – always using the “buddy system.” If the injury is more extensive, then either an adult should accompany the child or, if it is dangerous to move the child (back injuries, severe pain indicating a broken bone), the office should be notified immediately via walkie-talkies (if the injury is outside) or via the intercom in the classrooms. A volunteer should never try to determine the extent of the injury or the nature of the sickness, but should always leave that determination to the office staff.

If a student is injured or becomes ill during a field trip, the teacher should immediately be notified and will take the appropriate action. The teacher will provide the necessary instructions to the chaperone in situations where a student has a specific health concern (Epi pen, diabetes, asthma).

It is highly recommended that volunteers, especially those in positions such as coaching, undergo CPR and First Aid training. The school makes the training available during the fall months for a small fee to the trainee. The school office also has contact information available for the company used by the school.

Dispensing of medication is the responsibility of a staff or faculty member. Teachers will take appropriate measures to see that children requiring medication on a field trip are accommodated.

## **Emergency Guidelines**

Volunteers should be familiar with emergency procedures. If the fire alarm sounds, everyone must vacate the building, even if it is known to be a drill. Fire routes are posted in all classrooms and all exits are clearly marked. A volunteer who is monitoring indoor recess should follow the fire escape route marked on the sign posted in the classroom, leading the students in a quiet, calm, and orderly manner. The classroom teacher will join the class as soon as possible, and “special” teachers have been instructed to help where needed.

An emergency disaster plan is included as part of the volunteer guidelines (see section titled “Emergency Procedures”). All volunteers should be familiar with this plan, but also should be assured that the faculty and staff are well trained to deal with emergencies and that the duty of the volunteers is to act in a supportive role.

As with any emergency situation, it is necessary to remain calm. Reacting emotionally will frighten the children and can hamper the safety of all.

Emergency plans for field trips are developed by the concerned teacher and approved by the principal. A copy is kept in the office for the duration of the field trip. A copy should also be provided to each chaperone. The information includes cell phone numbers, meeting points, and evacuation procedure.

## **Loyalty to Church and School**

It is important to understand that volunteers do not just “give time,” but also act as representatives of the Church and of Queen of Apostles School. Any disagreements with school policy should be discussed with the principal. It is expected that, since the volunteer is serving in a Catholic school, he or she will support the teachings of the Catholic Church and live in a manner that is consistent with the teachings.

## **Confidentiality**

In the course of volunteer work done in the school, a person may learn confidential information about a student, family, or faculty member. The faculty and staff put a very high priority on respecting the privacy of the students and families, but often, because of mere presence, private information is learned. It is expected that this information is kept confidential in any setting, inside or outside of the school. Volunteers want their own private information kept confidential and should respect the right to privacy of all members of the school community.

There is an exception to confidentiality, and that is in the case of a student sharing information with a volunteer which could result in injury to the student or to others. That information must be reported to the principal or to a teacher.

Confidentiality is also waived in the instance of suspected abuse. Persons suspecting child abuse or neglect should contact the person or designee in charge of the appropriate school or parish or contact the child protective agency of the county or city where the child lives.

## **Supervision of Volunteers**

The principal is responsible for the total school operation; thus, the principal supervises all who serve in any capacity in the school.

*No volunteer should send information to parents or collect money for classroom activities without prior approval of the principal.*

## **School's Right to Amend**

Queen of Apostles School reserves the right to amend the guidelines and policies put forth in this handbook, and volunteers will be notified promptly of any changes.

## **Concluding Thoughts**

I have often heard Our Lord referred to as the Master Teacher, but I also see Him as the Model of volunteerism. He gives totally of Himself. Prayer to Him will ensure that the ministry of service to Catholic education will make a profound difference in the faith formation and academic environment of our young people. This is accomplished through the efforts of the adults in our school community, including the teachers, staff, and parents.

## **GUIDELINES FOR LUNCHROOM/PLAYGROUND MONITORS**

Upon arriving for duty, proceed to the office window, sign your name in the Volunteer/Visitor Register and fill out a label with your name (to be worn while you are in the building).

The arrival times, as listed below, should be adhered to as the safety of the children is of concern if there is not adequate supervision.

Upon completion of your duty, please sign out in the Volunteer/Visitor Register..

Please see below for special requirements concerning lunchroom and playground duties.

### **The classrooms**

- Check with Playground Supervisor to see which class you will be supervising
- See list of rules below

### **General**

For the safety of the children and for your own liability, there must be adequate supervision at all times. If you have any questions or concerns, please bring them to the attention of the Playground Supervisor.

### **Playground Accidents**

**If there should be an accident on the playground, contact the playground supervisor.**

Always make your judgment call on the side of safety – if a child is injured, treat the situation as serious. Remain calm, contact the correct personnel. If it is obviously a minor injury, send the child with a buddy to the office. **NEVER SEND A CHILD ALONE TO THE OFFICE.** Only school-employed personnel may care for a child who is bleeding.

### **Black Top Regulations**

- Students must play in designated areas
- May not leave designated area without permission
- Follow directions and requests of playground supervisor and monitors
- Share equipment with classmates
- Follow the rules of the game being played

- Exercise good sportsmanship
- Stop using all equipment and line up in designated area recess is over
- Walk quietly when entering the building

While the students are encouraged to engage in sports and active play during the recess period, there are some limiting rules, always considering the safety of the children. Rules include touch rather than tackle. The playground supervisor and monitors may stop play that is considered dangerous.

### **Indoor Recess Regulations**

- Students are respectful to parents on duty.
- Students must remain in classrooms, and may not roam the halls.
- Students must obtain permission to leave the classroom for any reason.
- Students must be seated for indoor activities.
- Students should use moderate voices

Discipline concerns should be immediately brought to the attention of the playground supervisor who will take the appropriate action. Volunteers should not discipline students, although it is appropriate to warn or caution a student if the play is becoming dangerous. Volunteers should not discuss student behavior with other students or with parents.

While the children are eating lunch, volunteers should be walking among the tables, assisting and monitoring as necessary. Attention should be focused on the children and not on other adults in the lunchroom. The volunteer should not hesitate to remind the students of acceptable behavior and manners, but significant discipline concerns should be brought to the attention of the Lunchroom Supervisor.

Young children may need assistance in opening milk cartons and food containers. To encourage self-sufficiency, the lunchroom monitor should show the child how to open these items, assist the child as necessary, and praise the efforts of the child.

### **IMPORTANT: Due to insurance liability concerns, we are not permitted to heat or microwave any food items for students.**

Children must sign out in the designated book if they leave the lunchroom for any reason, including visits to the restroom or the clinic.

Students should be reminded that they should use the allotted time to eat and drink. If a child does not finish his/her lunch, bring this to the attention of the Lunchroom Supervisor who will arrange extra time if necessary. While talking is certainly permitted, the children may need to be reminded to keep their voices at a moderate level. If it is getting too noisy, the lunchroom monitor may use the signal for quiet.

Teachers will pick the classes up at the end of lunch. *Grace After Meals* precedes dismissal. The time between lunch periods is to give the lunchroom monitors time to clean the tables and prepare for the next group.

## EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

In an emergency situation it is **important to remain calm** and to **keep the children calm** and focused. Plans help alleviate panic and therefore ensure orderly process. Therefore, the following plans are to be used by Queen of Apostles Catholic School in the event of an emergency situation. It is imperative that the children are informed that they are safe and secure at school. They also should know that part of the reason we are safe is that we have developed plans in the case of an emergency. It is also important to stress, when discussing safety with the students, that they must stay focused, listening for directions or instruction, and they may not talk during an emergency situation.

### Fire Drills:

- An alarm will indicate that everyone must leave the building immediately;
- The exit route is posted in each classroom;
- Teachers must be familiar with alternate routes in case primary route is blocked; (*Note: volunteers working in the classroom should follow the teacher's instructions regarding alternate routes*);
- When the fire alarm rings, students leave the classroom quickly and quietly;
- The teacher brings the red emergency folder (and grade book, if possible);
- Homeroom teachers join their homerooms; special teachers stay with class; attendance is taken and missing and/or absent students are noted on the form;
- The administrator/administrator designee checks that all forms are returned and all are accounted for prior to giving the signal to return to class;
- Information concerning fire drills is also listed in the Crisis manual (see below).

### Intruder on Grounds (code = Lock Down):

- Code announced over intercom;
- The outside doors will be locked;
- Shades will be drawn;
- Continue teaching, although students should be escorted to bathrooms (teachers with planning time, aides, volunteers in building will assist with this);
- No one will be permitted to enter or to be dismissed until all-clear is given;
- If we are notified that there is a dangerous situation on or around the building (an intruder with a weapon trying to gain access); the office will use the code "Severe Weather" to indicate that you are to follow the procedure for a tornado alert. This will guarantee that the students are kept in a controlled environment and away from windows. Again, any staff member who does not have a class will be available to help). (*Note: volunteers should go to the closest classroom, faculty lounge, or office area and follow the lock*

*down procedure; volunteers who are on playground duty and notice anything suspicious should immediately contact the playground supervisor or the office via walkie-talkies; a volunteer may use his/her discretion to bring the children inside if there is a stranger on the grounds or a situation, such as an animal, that the volunteer feels could put the children in jeopardy – the safety of the children is paramount).*

### **Intruder in Building (code = Lock Down – Level One):**

- Immediately lock all classroom doors
- Students and teachers move to the wall area out of sight of the door or to the closet if it can accommodate the whole class;
- Students are to be perfectly silent until the all-clear is given (*note: volunteers should immediately go to a classroom, faculty lounge, office area, or other room, and immediately secure the premises by locking the door, remaining quiet, and waiting until the all clear signal is given).*

### **Evacuation of Building**

- Notice to evacuate will be given over the loudspeaker
- All teachers are to make sure that their students are accounted for and lead their class to the police station;
- The school secretary will call the emergency personnel, inform the parish secretary, and proceed to the police station, bringing all emergency forms;
- “Specials” should immediately report to the office for instructions – some personnel will be instructed to proceed to the designated location and assist the teacher, some personnel will be instructed to remain and assist the principal;
- The principal will check the building, deal with emergency personnel, and with any parents who arrive on the scene.

**Do not use cell phones, as a bomb situation could be exacerbated by the use of this device!**

Students should only be released from the police station to parents as they arrive on the scene, as this will ensure order and that each child is accounted for and safe.

The policy on releasing a child remains the same as it is for any dismissal. The students may only be released to a parent or a person listed on the emergency form.

Teachers with children in the school must remain with their class and allow their own child(ren) to remain with their homeroom teacher until such time as all students have been released. This ensures the safety of all concerned.

*Volunteers should evacuate the building and proceed to the designated areas. m1mcm03*

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