



Parent Volunteer Handbook

*“It is in giving that we receive”
Sacred Scripture*

Rev 7/11

Welcome

Welcome to St. Dominic School and thank you for offering your gift of time, talent, and treasure in the service of our school community!

Catholic Education has a long and rich history and foundation in parent voluntarism. Through the exercise of parental choice, Catholic schools have educated scores of students with a knowledge of the Catholic faith, a zeal for Christian service and myriads of academic and social skills. It is the parents who are the first educators of their children and it is the generosity of the parents who share their time and talents so that the torch of education can be shared with the professional educators in the Catholic Schools. Voluntarism is a natural outgrowth of a sense of involvement in the school.

Parents at St. Dominic School have volunteered in every area of education to facilitate the learning process for the students. They have assisted with mind, heart and spirit in the everyday functioning of the school as well as in special events that have enabled the administration and teachers to perform their work with competence and Christian concern in an atmosphere that fosters academic excellence and Christian leadership.

Volunteer Activities/Programs

There are many activities in which volunteers are needed at St. Dominic School. Each activity has a variety of responsibilities. Volunteers need to familiarize themselves with the duties of any given service in order to execute their services with reasonable care and ability. These responsibilities are noted within this handbook under “Volunteer Responsibilities” and “Responsibilities for Specific Programs/Assignments.”

Volunteer Rights

As a St. Dominic School volunteer, you have the right to:

- be welcomed as a valued member of our school community;
- be assigned to a volunteer area where you feel comfortable and confident;
- the respect of our school community;
- receive necessary information and orientation;
- have your questions answered clearly and promptly;
- volunteer as long as you and the administration agree.

Volunteer Responsibilities

It is important for all volunteers to understand and appreciate the following responsibilities and/or conditions for volunteering at St. Dominic School:

- Every activity in St. Dominic School needs to be performed in an atmosphere of Christian kindness and concern for one another.
- Volunteers are expected to support the Catholic teachings of the Church and refrain from expressing any opinion that varies from Church teaching.

- Diocese of Trenton requires that anyone who interacts with our children attend Virtus Awareness Training.
- Volunteers must always be positive role models. Children model a great deal of their behavior on their experiences with their own parents and other adults. Actions truly speak louder than words and these actions are often copied and repeated by children.
- Volunteers need to be physically and mentally present to the students if they are volunteering in a supervisory capacity. The health and well being of the students, especially the younger ones, depends on this consistent vigilance. Children may never be left unsupervised and care should be taken that parents situate themselves when volunteering so that the safety and care of the children is maximized. If parents have volunteered to be of service in a situation of supervision, such as the cafeteria, classroom, gym or playground, they are committed to a serious responsibility. Any parent unable to fulfill an assigned supervisory responsibility needs to inform the office with sufficient notice so that a replacement can be obtained.
- Any form of corporal punishment is not permitted at St. Dominic's. Corporal punishment is any punishment that can be construed as punitive, including shaking, pushing, hair pulling, etc. Volunteers need to refrain from any touching that could be considered punitive.
- Children work best in a fair, consistent Christian environment. Volunteers are asked to consider what is in the best interests of all the children when volunteering at St. Dominic's.
- Volunteers are encouraged to enhance the professional atmosphere of the school by dressing appropriately and modestly for the activity at hand.
- Every word spoken to an adult or child needs to bespeak language that is uplifting and reverential. There is never a place or time at St. Dominic's where foul, demoralizing language or curse words are permitted. If children use inappropriate language they need to be immediately told that it is unacceptable and instructed in a better way to express themselves. Verbal interaction with children should always be positive and Christ-like.
- All volunteers must support the authority of teachers, staff, and administrators.
- Volunteers must arrive on time and stay for the agreed-upon time. If a volunteer is going to be absent or late for their assigned position, he/she should notify the appropriate persons/school office.

School Security

All students, staff members, parents/volunteers have the right to a secure environment. Security takes on many facets at St. Dominic's. Volunteers are asked to sign-in at the Main Office when providing service and to wear a "Visitor" badge. This will alert anyone who does not know the parent/volunteer that he/she has administrative approval to be in the building or on the grounds. All parents/volunteers who volunteer on a regular basis (for instance, weekly) are required to have their license entered into our School Check in System and participate in the Diocesan-wide Virtus – Protecting God's Children Program. Once these requirements are met, volunteers will be given an official St. Dominic School ID badge and red lanyard. Adequate adult supervision also increases the possibility for optimal child security and safety. Care should also be taken to secure the property, clothing, books, etc. of the children. Activities that foster a clean, well-managed facility also add to the security of the children.

Confidentiality

In the course of your volunteer work, you may learn confidential information about students and staff. As a volunteer, you are expected to keep this information confidential in any setting inside or outside the school, just as you would want your own privacy rights respected. However, there may be times when confidences cannot be kept. If a student confides that he/she is being abused or has a desire to hurt someone or him/herself, that information must be reported to the administration immediately. Simply put – Any information, which, if shared with parents and/or administrators, may save someone from harm, must be shared.

Health and Safety

Advocates for children, especially those who volunteer their services in Catholic education, need to be vigilant that every child's "health, education and welfare" are maintained at the highest level. The following are key points of health and safety for our volunteers:

- Volunteers in any type of supervisory capacity are asked to be vigilant that children are acting in a Christian manner that bespeaks Christian respect for body, mind and soul.
- Volunteers are asked to visibly display a visitor's pass or red lanyard volunteer badge so that the children know immediately that they have permission to be with them.
- Volunteers are asked to survey the surroundings of an activity to assure that the area is physically safe (no harmful obstructions are present) for the children.
- Volunteers are asked to report to administration, or its delegated authority, any person that they feel has no permission to be in the building or on the grounds when children are present.
- Volunteers are asked to protect children by assuring that safety mechanisms are in place, such as, locked doors or unobstructed paths.
- Volunteers are asked to notify administration's delegated authority when any student is hurt or feels sick. If a student appears too sick or hurt to go to the nurse, the nurse will be summoned by the administration's delegated authority to come to the child.
- Volunteers should give the a description of what happened to a sick or hurt child and the names of others who were present, so that the incident can be documented and, if necessary, followed up.
- If more than one volunteer is involved in an activity, the volunteers should spread out to maximize the field of vision and safety for all students.
- Volunteers should not administer first aid other than trying to make a child comfortable. The nurse is designated for any first aid treatments. The nurse or administration (not a volunteer) is also responsible for contacting a child's parent if notification is necessary.
- Volunteers should never allow themselves to be alone with a student or to physically touch them. This maximizes protection of the child as well as the reputation of the volunteer.
- Volunteers are never allowed to drive students to any destination without the expressed permission of the child's parent/guardian.

Responsibilities for Specific Programs/Assignments

Art Room

- Each parent volunteer is responsible for being in attendance on time according to the scheduled list. If a parent is unable to fulfill this responsibility, advance notice should be given to administration so that a substitute can be contacted in time.
- Volunteers are asked to situate themselves throughout the Art Room so that supervision is maximized.
- Volunteers need to ask the Art teacher at the beginning of a session about specific tasks that need to be done in the course of a lesson. Very often, because of the use of a variety of art mediums, the teacher will need assistance in distributing materials to individual students or groups. Care also needs to be taken to assist with the necessary clean up that follows an art lesson and the display of student artistic creations.
- Children are expected to handle all materials with care and safety. If any sharp or pointed objects are used, such as, scissors, compasses, etc., volunteers need to exercise due diligence in watching the children manipulate these materials in a safe way and in collecting them when they are finished being used.
- If volunteers notice that paints, glue or other materials have marred a surface, it should be immediately brought to the teacher's attention so that proper maintenance can be quickly obtained and the surface restored.

Athletic Coaches/Assistants

Athletic coaches/assistants come under the auspices of the St. Dominic Sports League. All coaches/assistants are given an additional sports league handbook at the beginning of each school year. All coaches/assistants are expected to follow any and all rules set forth by the St. Dominic Sports League.

Cafeteria

- Each parent volunteer is responsible for being in attendance on time according to the scheduled list. If a parent is unable to fulfill this responsibility, advance notice should be given to administration so that a substitute can be contacted in time.
- Parents are asked to situate themselves throughout the cafeteria so that supervision is maximized.
- Children are expected to speak in a conversational tone at the table and display acceptable table manners.
- Assistance is needed, especially with the younger students, with opening of milk containers, juice boxes, lunch boxes and wrapped food items or utensils. Volunteers need to go to the child, not the child to the volunteer, so that the child can remain seated. This will enhance the order in the cafeteria and prevent drinks or food from being spilled.
- Volunteers are asked to assist the students in the clean up effort. Children should be encouraged to cleanup after themselves and instructed to place everything disposable at their places in waste baskets before being dismissed from the cafeteria.
- Volunteers are asked to take a prayerful stance when Grace After Meals is recited. Children are expected to be reverent at prayer.

- Volunteers are asked to assist with the lining up of the children when it is time to leave the cafeteria.
- Volunteers who are assigned for Friday coverage will assist the children in the classrooms rather than the cafeteria. The children may also be eating in the classrooms when there are special activities taking place that warrant it. If this is the case, go directly to the first grade aide who will assign a classroom to each monitor. Children are expected to remain seated while eating, dispose of lunch garbage in the large receptacles and line up quietly when it is time for recess. The playground monitors will lead them outside.
- Volunteers need to follow the list of rules given to the students regarding their behavior in the cafeteria. These include:
 - All food and drinks (except ice cream) must be purchased upon entering the cafeteria. No child may re-enter the kitchen once he/she is seated unless there is an extenuating circumstance.
 - Students may talk softly during lunch, however, talking is not permitted after prayers.
 - Students must raise their hands to ask permission to use restrooms located in the cafeteria.
 - Students must be respectful at all times to adults in the kitchen and cafeteria.
 - Students must sit properly with both feet on the floor.
 - All students must remain seated until their table is called to throw away their garbage.
 - No student may leave the cafeteria to go to his/her classroom after lunch, unless the student's name is documented by the supervising person in a note given to the person in charge of the cafeteria that day.

Chaperones on Class Trips

- Class trips are planned for the educational value they offer and for the enjoyment of the students. Parent volunteers are asked to facilitate the work of the teacher and tour guides so learning in a setting outside of the classroom is maximized.
- Each parent volunteer is responsible for being in attendance on time according to the scheduled list prepared by the teacher. If a parent is unable to fulfill this responsibility, advance notice should be given to administration so that a substitute can be contacted in time.
- Each parent will be assigned students to chaperone and supervise on a trip by the classroom teacher and approved by the school administration.. The parent needs to be physically and mentally present to these assigned students during the course of the trip. If the parent is not familiar with the students, he/she should keep a list of the names of students and do frequent head counts throughout the day. Teachers will prepare lists prior to the trip and make identification badges for younger children to facilitate the chaperone's job.
- Parent volunteers are asked to remind children to be seated when on the bus and to speak in a conversational tone. Everyone's good behavior is expected so that the bus driver can drive safely to the trip's destination and return home safely.
- If a parent or a student needs to leave the group, use a restroom, get medical attention, etc., the parent needs to partner with another parent or teacher so that no child is ever left

alone. Parents need to partner with another parent when there is a scheduled rest stop. One parent should go to the restrooms while the other watches the remainder of the group in an adjacent area.

- Parents are asked to assist the students with refreshments during the day. Children are expected to clean up after themselves and leave eating areas in good order. Parents need to check any place the students have used so that it is left clean and no personal belongings are left behind. Nothing of value should be left unattended on the bus.
- The parents need to assist the teacher at the end of a trip when the children should be escorted to busses. A headcount must be done before any bus leaves an area.

Class Parents

Class Parents come under the auspices of the P.T.A.-Class Parent Committee. All class parents are given an additional class parent handbook at the beginning of each school year. All class parent volunteers are expected to follow any and all rules set forth by the St. Dominic P.T.A.

Clerical Duties

Volunteers are often asked to help with organizational and clerical activities especially those involving fundraising. For the effective running of the school and its events, volunteers performing clerical tasks need to observe the following:

- Volunteers counting money should do so in the presence of another volunteer or school personnel. Strict accounting of all monies is required by administration and the Diocesan auditors. Volunteers should count and label all amounts. Documentation of what the money is for as well as the student's name, grade and amount should be kept. Cash/checks should never be left unattended; the office staff will lock up any school monies in a secure environment.
- Copies of any orders for fundraising activities should be kept in the event of lost or misplaced orders.
- Volunteers who make copies for the school should receive training on the machinery by office personnel or their duly designated representatives.
- Volunteers who help make copies of notices, teacher materials, etc. should list the number of copies on the clipboard list kept next to the copier in the mailroom.
- Volunteers who experience technical difficulties with machines should notify the office immediately so that office personnel can assist the volunteer or notify the servicing company, if necessary.
- Volunteers for clerical duties need to keep accurate records. Any notices that are prepared by volunteers should be grammatically correct, attractive and approved by administration before being copied or distributed.

Communication Envelopes

- Communication Envelopes are sent home on the 15th and the 30th of each month unless another date is designated in the Parent Handbook/Calendar.
- Volunteers who prepare communication envelopes need to arrive at 8:00 AM and pick up all materials from the main office.
- Volunteers are asked to sort envelopes by homeroom and check that every envelope has been returned. Parents who did not return their envelopes should be given a pack of

information. New envelopes should be made if one is lost or not returned. Packets of information should also be placed in each staff member's mailbox.

- Volunteers work in an assembly fashion to place all the information together and place it in envelopes.
- Volunteers should deliver communication envelopes to the classrooms when all the stuffing is completed. Care should be taken not to disturb instruction that is in progress by unnecessary talking with teachers.
- Volunteers may be asked by administration to prepare two packets of information for students of divorced or separated parents. This information is confidential unless specific parents state otherwise.

Computer Room

- Each parent volunteer is responsible for being in attendance on time according to the scheduled list. If a parent is unable to fulfill this responsibility, advance notice should be given to administration so that a substitute can be contacted in time.
- Volunteers are asked to situate themselves throughout the computer room so that supervision is maximized.
- Volunteers are asked to handle all software and materials carefully and expect the children to also handle the equipment with care.
- Volunteers need to ask the computer teacher at the beginning of each new session what specific tasks he/she should assist with to facilitate the instruction.

General Events/Fundraisers

Every special event or fundraiser has its unique responsibilities. In preparation for these events, chairpersons and committee members (P.T.A. and parent volunteers) are asked to meet with administration in advance of the event to decide the various roles needed by volunteers in order to make the event safe and successful. All volunteers need to be apprised of their duties so that they can adequately perform the tasks needed. Since coverage is important to the success of any event, parent volunteers are asked to make every effort to be on time and perform the assigned tasks.

Gymnasium

- Each parent volunteer is responsible for being in attendance on time according to the scheduled list. If a volunteer is unable to fulfill this responsibility, advance notice should be given to administration so that a substitute can be contacted in time.
- Volunteers are asked to situate themselves throughout the gymnasium so that supervision is maximized.
- Volunteers need to ask the gym teacher at the beginning of a class about specific responsibilities during a gym session.
- Volunteers are asked to encourage the children to use the gym equipment with care so that subsequent groups will have access to the same equipment.
- Volunteers need to encourage good sportsmanship, the importance of being a good winner or a gracious loser and enjoyable, safe fun.
- Volunteers are asked to assist in orderly grouping for activities.
- Volunteers are asked to help reiterate the rules for any given game.

- Volunteers need to assist any student who is hurt in gym activities and act according to the directions of the gym teacher so that the injured student receives appropriate medical care, bandages, etc.

Hallway Monitors

Hallway Monitors are the first line of security at St. Dominic School. Anyone coming into the building needs to pass the hallway monitor wearing a visitor pass so that administration, staff and students know the person has permission to be in the building. The duties of hallway monitors include:

- Volunteer monitors are the first people outsiders meet at St. Dominic School. Monitors should welcome visitors in a Christ-like fashion and ascertain their reason for coming to the school.
- Volunteer monitors should request that visitors report directly in the school office. All volunteers are expected to sign-in, even if they come on a regular basis.
- It is the main office's responsibility to initially buzz-in all visitors. The buzzer will unlock the main door so that hallway monitors are not responsible for the initial entry of any individual.
- Volunteer monitors are asked to watch parishioners who ask to use the restrooms. They should exit the building immediately after using the facilities.
- Volunteer monitors work on a regular basis. If monitors are unable to come on their assigned days, prior notice should be given to the office so that appropriate means can be taken to insure the safety of the children.

Library/Media Center

- Each parent volunteer is responsible for being in attendance on time according to the scheduled list. If a volunteer is unable to fulfill this responsibility, advance notice should be given to administration so that a substitute can be contacted in time.
- Volunteers are asked to situate themselves throughout the library so that supervision is maximized.
- Volunteers need to ask the librarian for specific tasks that need to be done or supervised at the beginning of a session.
- Volunteers are asked to encourage the children to respectfully handle books and media equipment and to replace them in the same place and condition as they originally found them.
- Volunteers are asked to assist students in finding appropriate books or research materials.
- Volunteers are asked to assist the librarian with clerical help when children are taking books out of the library.

Playground

- Each parent volunteer is responsible for being in attendance on time according to the scheduled list. If a volunteer is unable to fulfill this responsibility, advance notice should be given to administration so that a substitute can be contacted in time.
- Volunteers are asked to situate themselves throughout the playground so that supervision is maximized.
- Volunteers are asked to facilitate good sportsmanship on the yard and encourage the children to play appropriate group games that are inclusive of all of the students.

- Volunteers are asked to encourage the children to take turns where it is appropriate.
- Games that require excessive running or body contact should not be permitted. Volunteers are asked to encourage the children to choose games that are reasonably safe and age-appropriate and able to be played considering a large number of children are on the yard.
- It is an expectation that children act with respect, in word and action, toward the adults and other children present on the yard.
- Volunteers are asked to assist the children in lining up at the end of recess and expect a modicum of quiet as they prepare to return to classes.
- If the weather is inclement or some other reason requires the children to remain inside the school building during the recess period following lunch, the children will have recess in their homeroom classrooms. For the safety of the children and the good care of all equipment in the classrooms, children are expected to remain seated and either play seat games, read or have relaxing conversations with the students who sit near them. Excessive noise and shouting ought to be discouraged since it shows a lack of courtesy to others in close quarters. Additionally, other classes may be on a different schedule for recess and may need a lower tone of voice in surrounding areas.

Supervision of Volunteers

The principal is responsible for the total school operation; thus, she supervises or delegates supervision of all who serve in any capacity in this ministry.

Right to Amend

The principal reserves the right to amend this handbook. Volunteers will be notified promptly of any changes.

Parent Volunteer Handbook



I have read the Parent Volunteer Handbook located on the school website [*\(www.stdomschool.org\)](http://www.stdomschool.org) and agree to uphold all the recommendations and expectations contained in it. I understand, that as a Parent Volunteer, I will assist St. Dominic's administration and staff in a manner that fosters Catholic values and the best interests of the children.

Parent Volunteer's Name (Please Print)

Parent Volunteer's Signature

Street Address

Town

Telephone

Cell Phone

Date

Type of Service

* Volunteer Handbook can be found under the link for "General Information."