

J. A. Laird welcomes parent participation in our school programs. There are many opportunities in our school for parents to volunteer and to actively participate in their child’s educational program. Research indicates many positive outcomes for children when parents volunteer and actively participate in their child’s school. We welcome you to our school and thank you for your willingness to partner with us in providing an excellent educational program to your child and their classmates.

**All volunteers to our school require a police security clearance, which is valid for 5 years. If you require a security clearance, please visit or** **email** **the school office for a letter that you can take to the RCMP.**

Volunteer guidelines are established for the benefit of our children. Volunteering and visiting within the school building is a privilege. The needs of the children are our highest priority. Please check in and out at the school office using the QR code or the sign-in booklet and wear a visitor lanyard during all times of your visit. Whether you are volunteering on a regular basis or for a one time project or event, please arrive a few minutes early to park your vehicle and enter the building through the main entrance.

Please notify the school office and the classroom teacher in advance if you are unable to make a prearranged volunteer event. Our ability to proceed with field trips is often based on having enough parent volunteers, so advance notice if you cannot attend is crucial.

**Part of Our Team**

As a school volunteer, you are part of a team supporting student success. Every team member is a role model for students. Setting an example of professionalism and good citizenship involves interacting with students, staff, and other visitors in a respectful manner. Accepting direction and responsibility, and showing appreciation for school staff will set positive examples students will remember. School volunteer roles and participation/access to student activities are contingent upon respectful interactions with students and staff). Your involvement helps build a school community that emphasizes academic excellence, community engagement, basic skills, individual strengths, technology integration, and a love of learning. When you model for students the kinds of positive behaviors and attitudes they need in order to succeed, your work as a volunteer will help them develop into the productive citizens that will result in a tremendous source of school and community pride. Please also ensure that your clothing does not inadvertently send a message that may not be appropriate for elementary-age students.

**COVID-19 Guidelines**

All volunteers and visitors to our school must sign in and out on their volunteer day. A QR code is located at the school office, and can be used to sign in using your cell phone. Alternatively, you may use the daybook in the school office. Volunteers are required to wear a mask at all times while inside. Regular handwashing is encouraged, especially when moving from one space to another. If a student is not wearing a mask, it is possible that they have been exempted: we do not “pressure” students to put on a mask. In that instance, keeping a 2 metre distance is recommended. Most importantly, we are asking everyone to **stay home if you are sick**.

**Confidentiality**

Volunteers are expected to maintain complete confidentiality related to students and staff. There can be no discussion of any particular child’s behavior, challenge or achievement with anyone while at school, in your home, or in the community. Students have a right to privacy. Staff has a right to a bully free and harassment free work environment.

Students may disclose something about their personal lives while in school. This information should be kept confidential and not shared in any manner at any time. If you hear something that may be a threat to students or staff, report the matter immediately to the teacher or school administration. Volunteers must agree to not exchange phone numbers, emails, or any other form of communication with our students.

**Responsibility to Report Child Abuse or Neglect**

Any Volunteer or Visitor who has reason to believe that a child has been subject to abuse, maltreatment or neglect has a responsibility to report their concerns. Information about how to report is included in the annual volunteer training. If you are unsure how to proceed, please speak to the child’s teacher or the principal.

**Effective Communication**

As a school volunteer or visitor to the school, it is crucial that the lines of communication stay open and clear. If you are unsure about what is expected of you, or how to perform tasks or operate equipment, please ask someone for assistance. If you are volunteering in a classroom or activity room in the school, please ensure that you are clear on your responsibilities and that you are comfortable with your duties. Please do not undertake any duty or responsibility that you do not feel comfortable with. If you have any questions, we are here to help.

**Dress for Success!**

Days at school include many and varied activities. Often, you will be asked to support an outdoor field trip. Please ensure that you dress appropriately (layers, sensible shoes) and come prepared to support both inside and outside the school. If you are unsure, please chat with the supervising teacher prior to the event to get more information about what your day might entail.

**Interests and Talents**

We want to make the best match we can between volunteer opportunities and your interests and talents. Please let your child’s teacher know how you can best contribute. Your input may lead to the development of additional volunteer opportunities.

**Behavior Issues**

If you notice a student acting inappropriately or have specific concerns related to a student, it is your responsibility to call such matters to the attention of the teacher or other supervising school personnel. Never take corrective measures into your own hands. Do not confront students (e.g. talk with a student about how they are treating your own child, etc.) or attempt to reprimand. Always ask a staff member for help.

**Sign In**

Volunteers are required to sign in at the office and receive a volunteer or visitor badge that you are required to wear at all times while volunteering. Signing in each time you volunteer allows school personnel to locate you immediately in case of an emergency. Parents should not drop by to volunteer. Only scheduled volunteers should be in the classroom.

**Volunteer Assignment and Visitor Access**

Please adhere to your specific volunteer assignment or designated visitor location. Visitors and volunteers may not randomly walk the building or “visit” classrooms or areas that are not specific to their volunteer or visitor assignment. Volunteers and visitors may not utilize their time in the school to interrupt instruction, hold unscheduled parent conferences, take cell phone calls, monopolize staff time, or seek answers to questions during inappropriate times. Parents are encouraged to contact their child’s teacher through a phone call or email to ensure their questions are addressed. Visitors and Volunteers should respect our teachers’ time, as they have many responsibilities to conduct. Teachers and staff are entitled to have a lunch break. Please do not attempt to use this time for your own purposes. Respectful interactions, courtesy, and being mindful of precious instructional time goes a long way to ensuring a positive, harmonious school experience for all.

**Allow Students to Be Themselves**

Every student is unique. Join us in making sure each child feels that he or she is a very special person. Allow for differences and celebrate unique gifts and developing traits. Always avoid comparing students with others in their school or families. Allow students time to think about their answers. Guide them by asking questions that will lead to correct answers rather than being the one to supply the answer. Know that we are teaching students that it is acceptable to make a mistake and that learning to correct mistakes is an important part of the learning process.

**Washrooms and Staff Room**

There are adult washrooms just across from the school office. Please do not use student washrooms at any time. If your visit crosses the lunch hour, feel free to use the staff room. There is a fridge, kettle and microwave available for your use.

**Technology**

As a Volunteer, you may be working with technology with students. Please ensure respectful use of the Internet, and do not leave students unattended when using technology. Please be familiar with the [School Board’s Policy on Acceptable Use of Technology 2700.2](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Cterriann.hayes%5CAppData%5CLocal%5CMicrosoft%5CWindows%5CINetCache%5CContent.Outlook%5CDNLPG8VF%5CPolicy%20Manual%20Sections%201000-2000.pdf). If you must accept/make a cell phone call or send/receive a text message, we ask that you step out of the classroom and away from student learning. Please keep your phone on silent while in the school. **At no time can students be photographed or filmed with or without their permission.** Teachers may request that a parent take photographs of an activity using a school device. This is permitted, as we have the opportunity to vet the photographs prior to publication.

**Emergency Procedures**

From time-to-time schools hold emergency drills (Fire, lock down, hold & secure). There is also the possibility of an unplanned emergency event occurring. Please take all events seriously, and follow the classroom teacher’s lead in responding appropriately.

**Become a PAC Member**

Many benefits await the families who become active PAC members, but it is the students of J. A. Laird that receive the greatest rewards. Selfless, dedicated parents who seek to do good for all children have opportunities to take on leadership roles in PAC. Please reach out to a PAC representative to get started, or attend the next PAC meeting for more information about the engaging student opportunities and meaningful ways in which parents can become involved. PAC meeting dates and times are always included in the parent newsletter, but typically take place at 7 pm on the fourth Tuesday of each month. Currently, PAC meetings take place over ZOOM.