

## Mentor/Volunteer Handbook for



# Lakeshore Intergenerational School

**Welcome to our community of lifelong learners and spirited citizens!**

Welcome to the Lakeshore Intergenerational School (LIS) Mentor/Volunteer Program. You are now a part of a large educational team made up of administrators, teachers, support staff, and volunteers working together to help students become lifelong learners and spirited citizens.

You have much to contribute to the mentoring program. Your talents, hobbies, experiences and, most of all, your own personality will add depth and dimension to our school's programs.

This handbook has many helpful hints on making volunteering beneficial and rewarding for you, the teacher, and most importantly our students.

We thank you for your contribution to our proud tradition of intergenerational mentorship, and your service to our community!

### **Our Vision Statement:**

The Intergenerational Schools are successful Intergenerational Learning Communities that are transforming Cleveland, and the world, into a better and more equitable global community. The Intergenerational Schools will serve as a model to encourage and assist other communities to create similar learning environments.

### **Our Mission Statement:**

Lakeshore Intergenerational School connects, creates, and guides a multigenerational community of lifelong learners and spirited citizens.

## **The Basics of Volunteering:**

### **What to do first:**

Sign in every day in the Volunteer Sign-In Book provided outside of the main office. This record enables LIS to accurately report on the number of volunteer hours contributed each year. This will also help the office find you in case you get an emergency phone call. After you sign in, please collect your name tag and put it on. All school mentors and visitors must have a visible identification. Please return your name tag before you leave so it will be there for you when you return.

### **Your children:**

There are no babysitting services available through the school. We request that family member volunteers not bring younger siblings along.

### **Use of equipment:**

Check with the classroom teacher about training opportunities and appropriate timing before you use copying machines or laminating equipment. Realize that the machines must be kept in good working condition, and it is critical that teachers and other school staff can access school equipment when they need to. Office phones may be used if you need to make a brief call while at LIS. School staff will also relay a phone message to you.

### **Smoking policy:**

We ask that volunteers refrain from smoking anywhere on school property.

### **Emergencies:**

The school conducts regular, unannounced fire and tornado drills. If one should occur while you are volunteering, please accompany your student's class as they leave the building. Students may need your help in remembering (1) to walk in line through the nearest exit, (2) to leave all coats and books in the classroom, (3) not to talk, push, or run, and (4) to wait in line quietly until an all-clear signal is given to school staff to return to the building.

**If you are late or absent:**

Please give the school adequate notice when you know you will be unable to be present or will be late. You can reach the main office by calling (216) 586-3872.

**Problems or concerns?**

When questions arise, please seek answers right away from Mr. Hallowell. If for any reason you need to change roles, please speak up! You are a valued member of the school community and we want to ensure this is a meaningful experience for you!

**School calendar:**

Each volunteer will be provided a copy of the LIS school calendar so that they are aware of school holidays and events. A monthly calendar will also be displayed near the mentor sign-in binder and copies will be available upon request. The classroom teacher or Mr. Hallowell will advise you in person or by phone if there are special activities such as field trips that may conflict with your regular volunteer schedule.

The school holds all-school Community Meetings approximately once a month on Friday mornings. These last for approximately 30 minutes. All volunteers are welcome to attend at any time! If we have a Community Meeting on one of your scheduled days, please participate with us in the gym.

## Working with children:

Children need to develop a strong sense of **personal worth**. A child who has no self-confidence can create a barrier that will make learning difficult. Helping a child develop a better self-image may be the most valuable contribution you, as a volunteer, can make.

When working with children, BE YOURSELF. Maintain a friendly, yet firm and consistent manner and show students that learning can be fun.

**Some tips** for maintaining successful interactions with your children:

- **Names** are important to people. Learn the students; names and their correct pronunciations as soon as you can. Also be certain students know what you wish to be called.
- Give honest, specific, and deserved **praise** for student achievement and effort. Success breeds success, and you are in a unique position to focus on students' strengths and positive behavior. When you must criticize, keep it constructive and try to preface the corrective remark with something positive or encouraging. A light or witty comment helps mistakes seem less tragic.
- Realize that the **attention span** of most children is not comparable to that of an adult. Make every effort to respond to a child's need for movement and variety.
- If you are mentoring an individual, **take breaks** as needed. If you are helping a small group, refocus their attention and spark their interest if students get distracted. If you are making a special presentation to the class, be flexible and aware of cues from the students that it is time to move on or switch gears.
- **Be patient**. Sometimes progress is slow. All children are different, but each has the same need for your attention and interest in his/her accomplishment.
- Your warmth and enthusiasm have a very positive effect on children. Show **simple gestures of caring**: a smile, a pat on the back, a high five!
- Greet students with the **courtesy and respect** which you expect in return. If you do not get these desired responses from a student, try not to take it personally. Assume that the child is having a problem that is not related to you. **Be fair, consistent, and impartial**; and, by all means, keep your **sense of humor**!
- **Model proper language usage**. Children learn language from the language they hear. Expect to hear some fantasies, tall tales, incorrect and unacceptable language. Some children hear language and see behavior at home which is not acceptable at school. Instead of criticizing a child's home, explain the type of language and behavior that is appropriate for school use.
- **Engage the child's imagination**. Asking questions and creating a context for discussion allows children to make connections between what they already know and what they can learn from a book. While reading, fill transition moments with a thought-provoking question, a riddle, a song, a mini-activity, or encouragement to reflect on the lessons of the story. Young people love to voice their opinions and know they are being heard.

- Try to enjoy children by **embracing the differences** in the students with whom you work. Look for the unique contribution each student can make.
- And on the subject of absences...if you have a close relationship with a student, such as in a tutoring situation, **be sensitive to the possibility that he/she might take your absence personally**. A special message to that student might alleviate this potential problem.

## Self-discipline:

The goal for all our students is self-discipline which results from self-confidence. The most important action you can take to help troubled and troubling children is to establish a warm accepting relationship with them. After you have developed a rapport, you are in a better position to determine the causes of a child's misbehavior and to help the child gain self-control and improved self-esteem.

**Remember that discipline is the teacher's responsibility; however, some suggestions may help when inappropriate behaviors occur:**

- Expect cooperation and indicate your confidence in the student that a behavior will improve or misbehavior will not recur.
- Remain calm and objective; control your own temper.
- Separate your attitude about the behavior from your attitude about the person. Let the child know that you are dealing with the situation because you care, and that you continue to care about him/her even though you do not like what was done. Drop the matter when it is settled without holding a grudge.
- Do not embarrass students in front of their peers.
- Speak in a private about misbehavior.
- Avoid power struggles with students. Never ridicule, use sarcasm, make unreasonable demands, or threats with students.
- Do not punish an entire group because of the actions of one or a few students.

**\*Remember, the goal is to help all students develop a positive self-image, strong enough to enable them to control their own behavior.**

## Ten Commandments for Volunteers:

1. **Understand** the job you are undertaking.
2. **Accept training** appreciatively, and contribute your knowledge and experience.
3. **Match your interests** to the needs about you and therefore to the job.
4. **Serve with faithfulness** and continuity, and listen for and report new insights about your work.
5. **Discover its meaning** to the total program of which it is a part.
6. **Open yourself to opportunities** for growth in skills, sympathy, self-confidence, and responsibility.
7. **Value** your special two-way role as community interpreter.
8. **Contribute** to supervision through self-evaluation and a willingness to ask.
9. **Give loyalty** to the institution, its staff, and its program.
10. **Take pride** in the volunteer's career. It pays handsomely in treasures of the spirit.

**\*\*Adapted from writings of Dr. Daniel Thursz and Mrs. Leonard Weiner\*\***

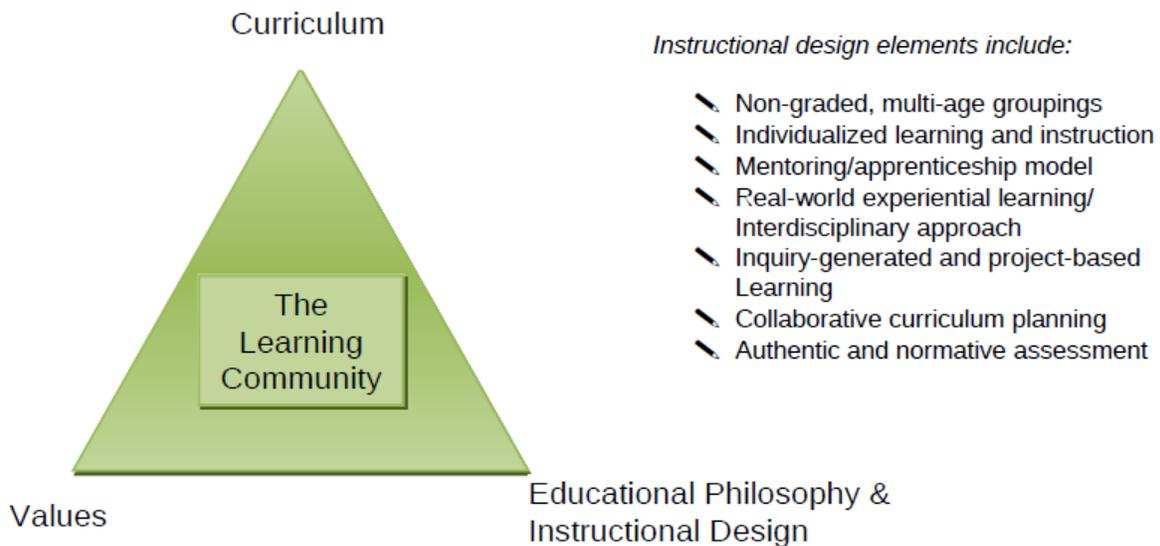
## Educational Philosophy:

The educational philosophy of the school is grounded in two main beliefs:

- 1) Learning is a life-long developmental process.
- 2) Knowledge is socially constructed in the context of culture, experience, and community.

At LIS, we believe that **all individuals are capable learners**. Each individual brings his or her own talents, interests, experiences, and cultural heritage to the learning situation. Learning takes place best in an environment where these differences are valued and respected. Learning is facilitated when the focus is on the learner's strengths and when the environment encourages risk-taking by being comfortable and nurturing. In such an environment, teachers and students work together to develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to participate effectively in their diverse communities.

Shared power and choice, modeling and mentoring, collaboration, and direct teaching in response to observed needs and interests characterize the teaching in a classroom with these goals at heart.



## Who can volunteer?

Almost anyone! Age, background and educational experiences vary considerably among community members helping to serve our children in the schools. What all good volunteers share in common is that they are:

- **SINCERE** in their desire to help children.
- **SENSITIVE** to the policies and procedures of the school in which they volunteer.
- **RESPONSIBLE** to the commitment they make.
- **REASSURING** to the students they work with by helping them see themselves as likeable, valuable persons capable of achieving.
- **RESPECTFUL** of the confidences of others.
- **PATIENT** in their dealings with others realizing that progress seldom comes quickly and may not always be readily apparent.
- **CAPABLE** of seizing every opportunity to help students feel good about themselves. Give abundant, sincere, deserved praise.
- **COOPERATIVE** and willing to respect individual differences as well as the strengths and weaknesses in students. Be sensitive to their self-doubts and their fragile days.
- **LIFELONG LEARNERS** and spirited citizens.

We ask that all volunteers attend a mandatory training session each fall, and that they undergo an official BCI check with the state of Ohio before they are eligible to volunteer at LIS.

## Responsibilities of a Mentor/Volunteer:

Volunteers are expected to make a professional commitment to the tasks they have accepted. They should approach the volunteer program in a positive way and be prepared to learn new skills, make new friends and improve the schools and communities where they serve.

Effective volunteers strive to:

- Arrive promptly, and call the school if you must miss a day. Learn the children's names.
- Become familiar with school policies and practices. In the classroom, learn where things are kept, and help to keep them there.
- Be consistent and reliable.
- Be prepared to be flexible and willing to adapt to changing routines and unexpected interruptions. Be willing to try new ideas!
- Encourage the children. Seize every opportunity to help children feel good about themselves. Speak in a positive way and point out the things they do well.
- Remind children of appropriate behavior when they are breaking rules, but do not belittle a child or make comparisons between children.
- If you disagree with anything you are asked to do, discuss it with the teacher or Intergenerational Coordinator privately.
- Be a part of the team – keeping the lines of communication open between you and all involved.
- Be a positive and enthusiastic source of information about the program.
- Help spread the good word about our school.

## What should you expect in return?

As a volunteer, you are a valuable member of an educational team and you should expect some things from the school:

- AN INTRODUCTION to class rules and routines, to the students, and to related staff by the classroom teacher and the Intergenerational Coordinator.
- ORIENTATION to the program and training as needed.
- SPECIFIC GUIDANCE and clear instructions for each new assignment.
- MEANINGFUL TASKS which promote student learning and put to use your interests and talents.
- RESPECT as a busy adult making important contributions.
- DISCIPLINE problems will be handled by the teacher or school staff.
- RECOGNITION for all you do to help students.
- A REASONABLE WORKSPACE suitable for the job to be done.

### **Benefits of intergenerational volunteering confirmed in research study**

Research conducted at TIS during the 2007-2008 by a researcher from Oxford University explored whether intergenerational volunteering could enhance quality of life for persons with mild to moderate dementia. Volunteers from Judson Park Assisted Living Home were divided into two groups: one that volunteered weekly at NWIS, and a second group that participated in a peer education seminar. Those at NWIS experienced a statistically significant reduction in stress, and achieved comparatively better scores on cognitive functioning, sense of purpose, and sense of usefulness.

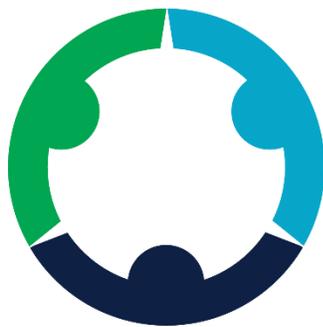


## Principles of Confidentiality:

Confidentiality can be achieved and maintained when the volunteer fully realizes the true value of “humaneness” and respect for the dignity of all persons. The following will assist the school volunteer in practicing “confidentiality principles”:

- The volunteer must realize that most school problems are really no “big deal.” For school problems are to be expected – just as other professions and businesses expect day-to-day problems.
- The volunteer must not be quick to judge the actions of others.
- The volunteer must regard the confidence of others as sacred.
- The volunteer should not talk negatively about any child to a teacher or other school staff while at school or in the community. However, sincere concerns about a particular child should be discussed with the teacher or intergenerational coordinator immediately.
- The volunteer must remember that there are varying views and philosophies about what the teacher and school should do for the student and there is not just one way to teach.
- The volunteer must remember that he/she carries a “public image” of the school and that each volunteer is a community ambassador for LIS.
- The volunteer must respect the confidential nature of school records, test scores, discipline, learning difficulties and home studies. These things should never be discussed with anyone except the appropriate school staff.

In closing, thank you for volunteering at



**Lakeshore**  
Intergenerational School