

Alton Central School Volunteer Handbook



2020-2021



“2019 New Hampshire K-8 School of Excellence”

Alton Central School's Principal Welcome

*“When the story of these times gets written,
we want it to say
that we did all we could and it was more
than anyone could have imagined.”*

- Bono

Welcome to Alton Central School! As a volunteer in our school community, I hope you will feel very welcomed and feel our enthusiasm about your work with our school and students! Please know that we all appreciate what you do, and Alton Central School is a better place for all of us, because *you* are a part of us.

The handbook outlines the FAQ, and the philosophy of being a contributor through the volunteer program. As you begin your work, do ask for clarification or for more information that you need to feel comfortable with your tasks. If you are asking, the chance is good that someone else has the same question, and you'll be helping someone else learn more and feel comfortable, too.

Don't be shy!

I am looking forward to meeting you when you are here, so I hope you can introduce yourself when you are in the front office getting your volunteer name tag. Our paths will cross in many ways this year – we're all in it together. Enjoy your fellow volunteers, our faculty, and all the staff who are here making ACS be that place we all want to be.

Sincerely,

John W. MacArthur, Jr.

Alton Central School's Volunteer Coordinator Welcome

Welcome to the Alton Central School Community! We are thankful that you have chosen to volunteer your time to help our students. With the support of volunteers like you, the opportunity to meet the individual needs of each child is enhanced immeasurably.

Alton Central School encourages volunteer participation in our school's programs and activities. There are many opportunities to volunteer and actively participate in the educational program. Research indicates many positive outcomes for children when parents and community members volunteer and actively participate in their children's school.

Your involvement helps build a school community that emphasizes academic excellence, community responsibility, basic skill development, individual strengths, technology integration, and a lifelong love of learning. As a volunteer, you provide enrichment opportunities that complement the educational experience for students while supporting teachers and staff.

We welcome you to Alton Central School and thank you for your willingness to partner with us in providing an excellent educational program. If at any time throughout the year you have suggestions, questions, and/or concerns please contact me directly at the contact information provided on the following page.

Sincerely,

Kathy Lagace

Volunteer Coordinator

Contact Information

Alton Central School

41 School Street
Alton, NH 03809
www.myacs.org
(603) 875-7500

SAU 72

252 Suncook Valley Road
Alton, NH 03809
(603) 875-7890

Superintendent

Pamela Stiles
pstiles@sau72.org
(603) 875-7890

Principal

John W. MacArthur, Jr.
jmacarthur@sau72.org
(603) 875-7500

Assistant Principal

James LaFreniere
jlafreniere@sau72.org
(603) 875-7500

Volunteer Coordinator

Kathy Lagace
klagace@sau72.org
(603) 875-7500

GOALS OF THE VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

The volunteer program at Alton Central School will act as a liaison between the school and surrounding community. It will consist of members from diverse backgrounds, ages, skills, and abilities. The community volunteers will provide classroom and clerical support to the faculty and staff by fulfilling the needs and desires of the school. This will allow the faculty and staff to focus on creating an engaging learning environment for our students.

The volunteers, while unpaid, are considered a vital part of the Alton Central School team. Their tasks will include roles as room parents, classroom assistants, putting up art displays, making photocopies, staffing the book fairs, assisting with after school activities and clubs, reading and playing with children, and actively participating in the events that make the school a positive place of learning and fun.

Not only will this program help the faculty, staff, and students, it will provide community and family members with a first-hand connection with the daily endeavors of their child's life in the school community.

- To help teachers and staff provide an outstanding educational experience for every child.
- To provide assistance that will allow the curriculum to broaden.
- To make use of expertise from community members.
- To embody a commitment to partnership between parents, educators and the community and to maintain positive relations between all.

VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK AND ORIENTATION

This Volunteer Handbook is an important part of volunteer orientation. It contains helpful information relevant to ACS and discusses various volunteer duties. Please read this document thoroughly. The Volunteer Program will also provide an appropriate orientation and/or access to training for volunteers as well as educators and staff.

Any questions regarding volunteer duties and/or the Volunteer Program may be directed to the Volunteer Coordinator, the school Principal, and/or the school staff supervising volunteer work.

VOLUNTEER QUALIFICATIONS

The most important qualification a volunteer possesses is a desire to help students navigate the road to academic success and personal happiness. No formal degree, training, or experience is required; just your willingness to share your time and interests.

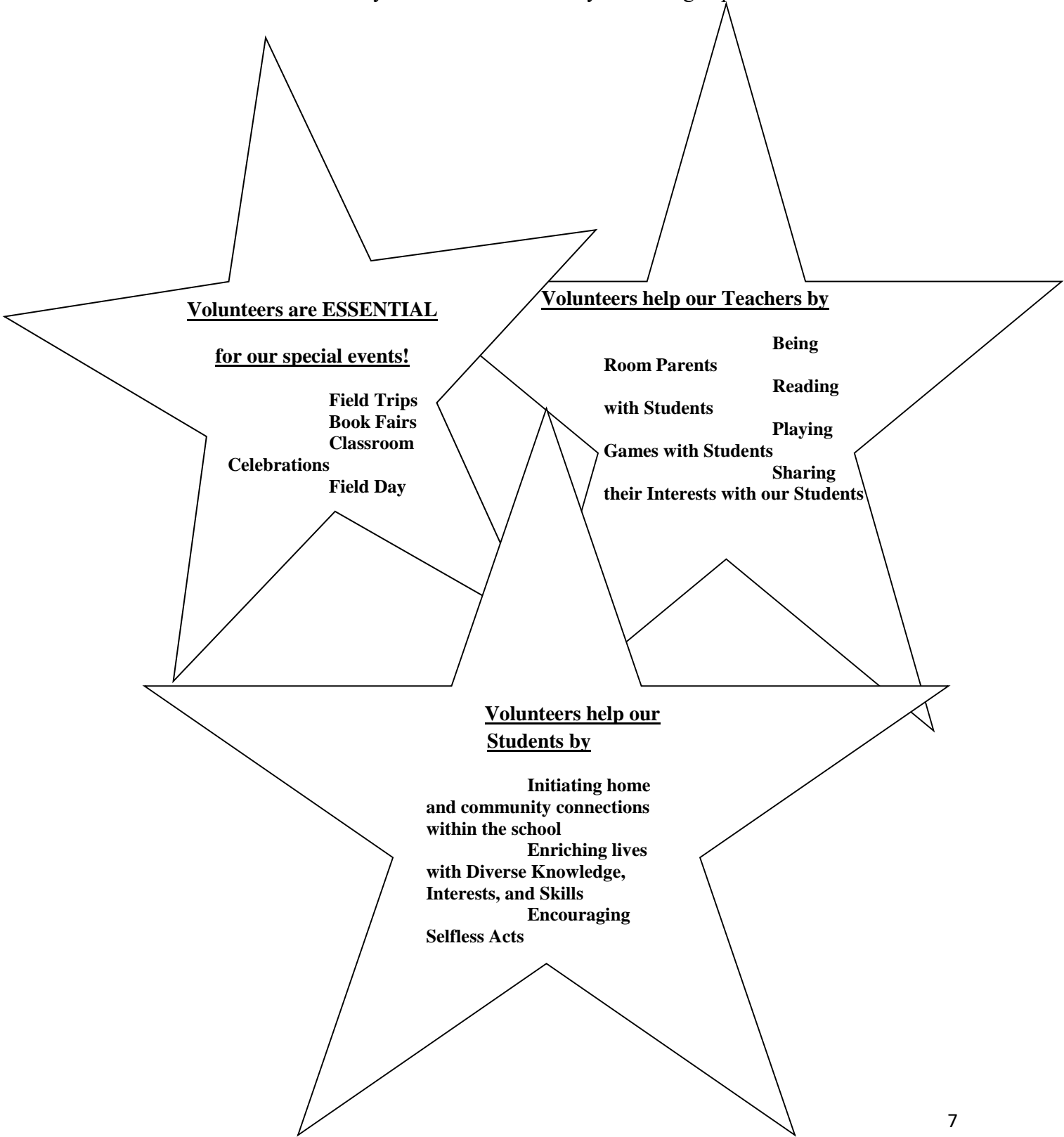
- Willing to work under the direction of school staff.
- Be reliable in their commitment.
- Maintain confidentiality about matters relating to students.
- Hold a professional attitude toward their volunteering experience.

“The Heart of a Volunteer is not measured in size, but by the depth of the commitment to make a difference in the lives of others.”

- DeAnn Hollis

WHY VOLUNTEER?

Every volunteer has their own reason for wanting to get involved, from building relationships with school staff to explore what their child is learning in the school environment to giving back to a teacher or school that does so much for our children. Volunteer at ACS, for whatever reason, and we're sure you'll find it to be a very rewarding experience.



EXPECTATIONS OF VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers must complete a new Volunteer Registration Form each year. The current Volunteer Registration Form can be found on the ACS website, or you can obtain one from the main office.

All volunteers will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement, sign an acknowledgment of policy procedures, and complete all volunteer training designated appropriate by the school administration. Please pay particular attention to the Confidentiality Agreement on the Volunteer Form. Volunteers must realize that confidentiality is of the utmost importance, in school and out of school.

ALL volunteers are required to undergo a criminal records check in order to volunteer at school. The criminal records check is required to be completed every three years for all volunteers. The Alton School District will pay the cost.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

Criminal Records Check Procedure: For the safety of the ACS students and staff, and in accordance with Federal Law, ALL volunteers must complete a Criminal Records Check. This process takes time to complete, sometimes up to a month. Please follow these steps to allow the process to move along smoothly and as quickly as possible:

1. Submit a completed Volunteer Registration form to the Volunteer Coordinator through the Main Office.
2. Request a digital fingerprint scan in person at the Alton Police Department. You will be given a Criminal History Record Inquiry (CHRI) confirmation form upon completion of fingerprint scan. It is possible that you may be required to have a traditional ink imprint done if the digital scan is unsuccessful.
3. Return the confirmation form (or the inked fingerprint card) and the notarized Criminal Record Release Authorization Form (Sections I and II) to the Volunteer Coordinator at the ACS Main Office as soon as possible. There is a strict deadline to be met by the SAU in order to complete the process.
4. The SAU will notify the Volunteer Coordinator when they have received the results from the DMV.
5. The Volunteer Coordinator will notify you when you have been cleared to begin volunteering at ACS.

Identification and Sign-In

Student safety is a high priority at our school. Therefore, you must always report to the office before you begin and after completing your volunteer activity. A designated sign in/out clipboard will be provided to document all volunteer access of the building.

Volunteers must wear their name badges while in the building and during the duration of the activity. This will ensure that students and staff can easily identify you. Any adult without a badge will be sent to the office to sign in. Safety is vital to all of us, and will give our students the best possible school environment.

We appreciate your cooperation!

Commitment and Timeliness:

Once you make the decision to become a volunteer, please know that others depend on you. Try to pick an assignment that is manageable and interesting to you. Communicate with the coordinator and teacher ahead of time if necessary.

Be on time. If you can't make it, let someone know as soon as possible so that a replacement can be found if necessary. When you are late or do not come in for your volunteer session, it can upset the routine of the event, classroom, and/or students' schedule.

Reliability is expected from volunteers because teachers and staff plan for your assistance. If you will be absent or have changes in your schedule, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator and/or call the school ASAP.

Attire:

Your appearance should be neat and consistent with the dress code of the school.

Tobacco and Drugs (prescription and over-the-counter)

Our school is a drug free workplace. Drugs of any kind are not permitted to be in the presence of children. Please be aware of what you have in your pocketbooks or backpacks. Volunteers are not permitted to give over-the-counter medication to students.

Tobacco use of any kind is never permitted in the school or on school grounds (including the parking lot); this includes evening and weekend times.

Emergency Procedures:

To be prepared for emergencies, learn the correct procedures for responding to emergencies and for following the rules for all drills. Please see the front office for instructions.

In the event of a lockdown, fire drill and/or evacuation, volunteers are NOT allowed to take their children and leave the school grounds. In a lockdown, appropriate directions will be provided by school staff and/or posted in the room. In a fire drill and/or evacuation, volunteers need to check in with the designated leader in the designated location. Cell phone use is not permitted during a crisis

Family Members:

It is not always in the best interest of a child to have parents, grandparents, guardians, etc., volunteer in their children's classrooms. Therefore, volunteers may be utilized in classrooms other than those in which their children are enrolled. Please disclose on the Volunteer Registration Form if you would prefer to only volunteer in your children's classrooms.

Younger and/or older siblings of our students are not permitted to accompany volunteers in the school during volunteer responsibilities (unless approved prior to assignment).

ACS VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Below is a list of some of the opportunities available to volunteers at ACS. Many of these activities could not take place without help from our volunteers.

More opportunities will arise throughout the school year that are not listed here. Anyone interested in volunteering should complete and maintain a current Volunteer Registration Form.

The Volunteer Program is always looking for new volunteers to become involved.

A more detailed job description of responsibilities will be provided, if warranted, at time of the volunteering opportunity. When available, the description of responsibilities can be located in the main office at time of event. You can find a sample description at the end of this document.

Room Parent (Grades K-3): Assist classroom teacher with communication about classroom events with other parents. This task varies by teacher. Some teachers have the room parent very involved in activities within the classroom, while others have the room parent only involved when setting up classroom parties.

Classroom Assistant: Assist the classroom teacher with daily lessons and activities.

After School Enrichment: Coaching and/or assisting in after school extracurricular activities. Such activities can include: Destination Imagination, Zumba, Yoga, Chess Club, Book Club, and more.

ELT (Extended Learning Time): Helping students with homework and understanding class materials.

School Wide Services:

- Signing visitors in/out of building during special events
- Making photocopies
- Hanging art displays
- Reading with students
- Playing math games with students

Book Fairs: Helping students choose and purchase books they can enjoy for many years to come. ACS generally holds two book fairs a year.

Field Day: Assist the Field Day Committee with the day's events. Tasks can include running stations, serving lunch, and helping students. Field Day normally takes place during the last weeks of school.

Title I Prep Work: Preparing packets, switching out books, making photocopies and other various tasks for the Title I Team.

School Flu Shot Clinics and Health Screenings: Volunteers walk students to/from classroom to/from Nurse's Office (or station set up in the building).

Kindergarten and Preschool Screenings: Volunteers walk students to/from classroom to/from the location for the screenings.

Ski Program and Field Trip Chaperones: ALL field trip chaperones are required to undergo a Criminal Records Check.