



2016/17

Volunteer Handbook

Mill Falls Charter School

100 William Loeb Drive, Unit 1 | Manchester, New Hampshire 03109
603.232.5176 | www.millfalls.org

WELCOME TO OUR VOLUNTEERS

We are honored that you would like to partner with us in this most wonderful journey to educate today's young people and tomorrow's citizens! The staff and administration of *Mill Falls Charter School* welcome active and visible parent/guardian and community member involvement in the life of the school. Voluntarism enriches the school learning environment for our children and the lives of those donating their time.

The *formal* education of our children, however, is primarily the responsibility of the teachers, staff, administrators and Board of Trustees of *Mill Falls* – and we need you, as a caring parent/guardian and/or community member, to honor this as you join in our work. As a volunteer, you will work under the direction of the staff and school leadership to support their ultimate goal of meeting the educational needs of the children.

Our volunteers assist in projects large and small, in very meaningful ways. Volunteer activities reflect *Mill Falls'* Montessori core values through commitment to inclusion, fairness, grace, courtesy, respect and cross representation of our student/family population. All projects and event planning are done in full collaboration with the school administration and only with their approval and oversight. Fundraising projects are organized in collaboration with the school administration and the Chair of the Foundation Board, as required.

We look forward to your continued interest, support and involvement in the *Mill Falls* mission and goals. We hope you enjoy your time with us and we welcome your feedback for the continued improvement of our volunteer program.

Enclosed are basic guidelines for all school volunteers. We thank you for reviewing the enclosed and for helping us continue to build a safe environment for our children and staff by following carefully constructed guidelines to insure a successful experience for all involved.

Once you complete the review of this Handbook, please return your completed Volunteer Packet to the front office *(please see page 15 for details)*.

Our thanks,
The Administrative Team

Mission Statement

Mill Falls Charter School creates life-long learners by providing an intellectually rich and challenging experience delivered through the Montessori tradition. In a safe and peaceful setting, dedicated educators foster students' individuality, creativity and critical-thinking skills to fully prepare them for future scholastic, civic and personal success.

As a Montessori school, *Mill Falls* offers its students a differentiated curriculum and individualized instruction in multi-age classrooms, nurturing our students' social and emotional growth alongside their academic achievements. Learning is maximized by teaching that is geared to each student's individual academic level and by leveraging each child's unique learning style. Classrooms are carefully prepared with a complete complement of hands-on Montessori manipulatives and resource materials to facilitate inquiry and provide students with a concrete understanding of abstract concepts. *Mill Falls* is committed to embracing diversity and creating responsible citizenry through ongoing lessons in grace, courtesy, respect and responsibility.

Our Vision

High Academic Achievement & Standards • Individualized Learning • Fostering of Creativity & Curiosity • Successful Montessori Programming • Nurturing Social & Emotional Growth • Mixed-age Classrooms • Respect & Celebration of Diversity • Development of 21st Century Learners • Service-Learning Opportunities • Integral Parent/Guardian Engagement • A Strong School Community Led by Qualified & Nurturing Educators

Mill Falls Charter School is New Hampshire's first public Montessori school. *Mill Falls* brings together children of all backgrounds and learning styles in mixed-age classrooms that merge the individualized and academically integrated Montessori approach with the Common Core State Standards. Students' emotional and social growth is cultivated alongside their academic growth in an inclusive and diverse public school setting.

Research indicates that parent/guardian voluntarism in schools enhances student self-esteem, increases academic achievement and cognitive development, and improves student behavior and attendance. Our staff sees parents/guardians as valued partners in extending and enriching the educational program. In addition, we hope parent/guardian and community volunteers will come to know they make a difference through contributions of time and talent. Parent/adult involvement allows staff to draw upon supplemental and often unique adult resources and expertise.

Parent/guardian and other adult volunteer support of our mission and investment in our success is an important element of building and maintaining our school community.

Parent/Guardian Commitment

Students at *Mill Falls* achieve the greatest success when our teachers and families work together. We see parents/guardians as key participants in the building of the school community and the success of the program. The regular presence of our students'

parents/guardians is part of the landscape of the *Mill Falls*, not an exception. Parents and Guardians are deeply encouraged to forge connections to the education and social development of their children and to the success of *Mill Falls*.

Parent/guardian presence in a volunteer capacity not only assures the children that their parents/guardians care about their education, but also sets an example for giving that mirrors the values of Montessori. In support of our charter, families are requested to contribute 10-20 hours of volunteer time per school year. Total parent/guardian participation hours are recoded and will be reported annually to the state and at times to other organizations supporting our work.

Our Commitment to You

As a public Montessori school, we believe that we are responsible for creating and maintaining a child-centered learning environment that fosters grace, courtesy and respect for everyone in our school community: students, staff, parents/guardians and volunteers. Especially since our school has such a need for and commitment to our volunteers, we promise to:

- Treat our volunteers with grace, courtesy and respect;
- Make every effort to assign volunteers to positions that match what they like to do and know how to do best;
- Provide volunteers with the information they need about our schools, policies, people and programs;
- Offer support throughout the volunteer experience;
- Make sure volunteers understand how and to whom to talk about any concerns;
- Give volunteers the opportunity to evaluate and share comments and suggestions about their volunteer experience; and
- Celebrate! Celebrate! Celebrate! The contributions our volunteers make to the quality and culture of our schools with recognition, a smile, and frequent thanks!

Your Commitment To Us

The mission of the *Mill Falls*' Volunteer Program is to increase student achievement and satisfaction with their school experiences through meaningful parent/guardian and community involvement to support our staff and to help meet our mission and goals. As a school volunteer, you make a world of difference to our staff and students.

You:

- Enrich the school program by sharing your experiences and talents with students and staff;
- Stimulate community interest, concern and support for education by sharing your experiences with our children in the school;
- Enhance student learning by reinforcing specific skills, providing enrichment experiences, and expanding the walls of the school to include the community;

- Strengthen the school-community partnerships through your positive and constructive participation;
- Support and strengthen our students' sense of self by showing that they are important to you, taking the time to listen to them and by helping them have a joyous and productive learning experience;
- Become a better community member as you learn about the many skills, talents and contributions of the faculty, staff and other volunteers who contribute to the school;
- Increase your own sensitivity to the challenges of today's young people and strengthen your resolve to help them; and
- Model the importance of giving back to the community so that our children will do the same as they grow and mature.

Our Code of Ethics for Volunteers

Grace, Courtesy and Respect

Montessori schools are founded on these principles: children learn from watching adults around them. In your volunteer work at *Mill Falls*, please practice patience and understanding toward the children and staff. This helps our young learners value and apply these qualities.

As adults guiding our community, we model each of these behaviors on a daily basis and expect that any adult visiting would do the same. Conduct yourself with dignity, courtesy and consideration at all times.

The following actions are examples of how our students model grace, courtesy and respect. These are important for you to model during your time on campus.

- Before entering the environment, stop at the threshold and observe.
- Enter the environment with quiet voices, soft steps and minimal disruption of the classroom.
- Move about the room silently avoiding carefully placed works on the floor.
- Care for each of the materials and the environment as if they were our own with gentle movements.
- When addressing a friend, speak in a pleasant tone and only if they are not engaged in a work.
- The hallway is an extension of our classroom and meant only for quiet travel, avoiding waving to friends inside other classrooms through the windows.
- Clean up work when completed and return to its designated place.

Confidentiality

In your work as a volunteer, you may witness, read and/or hear information about students that is *confidential*. It may be the results of classroom or achievement tests, awards or honors, attendance data, financial, health or personal family information, social or behavioral actions, program enrollment, or reports of parent/guardian-teacher or parent/guardian-counselor conferences. There may be times that another staff person

may need to share confidential information with you, or a student may tell you something in confidence. You may hear conversations between students and teachers, students and students, or between district personnel. All these things are confidential and should never be discussed with others who do not have a legitimate need to know.

Only staff that is responsible for the design, preparation and delivery of education and related services may have access to written or oral information about students and their families. Both students and staff have the right to expect that nothing that happens to them, or is discussed about them, will be repeated outside the school to anyone, including the child's parents/guardians.

It is expected that volunteers will never share confidential information about a student or staff member with others, including the volunteer's, student's or staffer's family. Even occasional remarks made to other volunteers or staff that draw comparisons between rooms and/or teaching styles are not permitted under this policy, which has been created to protect all parties and the school and to abide by the federal FERPA law (Family Educational Protection Act).

Parents/guardians, friends or community members may, in good faith, ask you questions about the progress or problems of a student knowing that you are a volunteer. Discussion of individual students, teachers or staff, their actions and/or their abilities is considered a breach of professional conduct and a breach of the policy, and may be grounds for your dismissal from our volunteer program.

Please always keep in mind that the student's teacher(s) is (are) the most appropriate person(s) with whom to discuss a child's progress and problems. You should always direct any questions about a child to the child's teacher(s).

Reliability

The school relies on your support and presence. Follow through on tasks by attending to scheduled times, and please give notice of absence whenever possible.

Flexibility

Remember that you are at school to help all students. Parents/guardians, please keep in mind that you will be making a contribution whether you are working with your child's class or in another setting. Determination of the need for and role(s) of classroom volunteers rests with the teachers and school leaders.

Positive & Direct Communication

Good communication leads to strong and positive relationships. Please address any concerns or issues promptly and productively. Avoid letting concerns intensify; talk to the person directly and as soon as possible. If you feel uncomfortable speaking to the staff member directly, please speak with the administrative team for support. Please respect the persons involved by avoiding discussion with other school or community members.

Note: It is important that as a volunteer you are realistic about the amount of time that you can offer the school and what you are unable to handle. Being at *Mill Falls* should be a positive experience; however, this may not be possible if your commitments outweigh the amount of time or energy that you have available.

VOLUNTEER PROCEDURES

Accidents - Students

Please report all accidents, injuries and apparent illnesses to the classroom teacher(s) or to the front desk immediately. Do not leave an injured child to seek assistance; send a child or another adult to report that you need assistance.

Accidents - Volunteers

Please report any accident, injury or apparent illnesses you might sustain while volunteering to a member of the administrative team as soon as possible. And we all appreciate your staying home and taking care of yourself if you are not feeling well.

Emergency Drills

Volunteers are required to participate in emergency drills. While in the building, egress maps are posted in all rooms; if you are unsure of the procedure for evacuation or lock down, please check with the classroom teacher(s) or school administration.

Entrance (Please call if unable to come when expected)

- Sign in
- Check in with Front Desk for direction and to be escorted through the school
- Pick up name tag and wear at all times on campus or with field trip
- Sign out and return name tag when leaving
- You may wish to leave valuables, such as a purse, locked in your vehicle as we have no place in the school to secure them

Harassment/Discrimination

Mill Falls is committed to protecting the rights and dignity of all members of the *Mill Falls* community including both children and adults. *Mill Falls* prohibits acts of harassment, discrimination, intimidation or bullying. Any actions that disrupt the safe learning environment of *Mill Falls* will not be tolerated.

Such incidents will be treated on a case-by-case basis led by the Administration and if need be, the Board of Trustees.

Child Abuse & Neglect

To comply with the Child Protection Act (RSA 169C, 1979), it is the policy of the school that any teacher or other school employee or volunteer who suspects that a child's physical or mental welfare may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect must report such abuse. There are two ways to go about reporting. We prefer that you seek the assistance of our Educational Program Director who will then call the Division of

Children and Youth Services and/or the student's local police department. If you prefer to report on your own, we do request that you notify the Educational Program Director of your action, which will of course be kept confidential.

Under RSA 169C, school personnel, who in good faith make a report of suspected child abuse or neglect, have immunity from any liabilities, civil or criminal. The good faith of the reporter is presumed.

Student Release/Discipline

Volunteers do not have the authority to release a student from school; this is completed through the office. As a volunteer you are **not** expected to be responsible for the actions of the children and are asked to refrain from administering discipline. If a student is disruptive, seek the attention of a teacher or administrator who will handle the situation.

Substance Abuse

Volunteers are prohibited from consuming, possessing, furnishing, selling or being under the influence of alcohol or drugs in school or at any school sponsored, organized or associated function or on/in any property, facility or vehicle owned or operated by the school. Our building and surrounding campus is a smoke-free environment.

Work Routine (Further explained by the school staff and during on-the-job-training)

- Familiarize yourself with the rules and routines of the school and classroom. Please ask questions if unsure about a direction or routine.
- Respect the Montessori teaching learning process by not using your volunteer time for an informal parent/guardian-teacher conference or conversation.
- When volunteering in classrooms or on field trips, make other arrangements for siblings.
- Be open and honest in your communication to the staff and administration. If you feel a problem exists, help to identify the problem and communicate your concern directly to a staff member.
- Another reminder about confidentiality:
In the course of your volunteer work at our school, you may learn confidential information about students, parents/guardians or teachers. You are expected to keep this information confidential in any setting inside or outside the school, just as you would wish your own privacy rights to be respected.

There are times when student confidences cannot be kept. For example, if a student confides a desire to commit suicide to a volunteer, that confidence must be reported. Or, if a child exhibits behavior or speech which can be reasonably understood as dangerous to the child or others. Volunteers are expected, as all staff, to report this to the appropriate school personnel. **The guideline to follow is:** Any information which, if shared with parent/guardian and/or administrators that may save someone from harm, must be shared.

FIELD TRIPS: Exploring the World Outside of the Classroom

Part of the Montessori curriculum includes the tradition of leaving the security of the

classroom and going out into the world for intellectual exploration, physical challenge, service, etc. *Mill Falls* teachers will periodically organize such field trips to provide students with cultural, scientific, social or educational experiences.

Notices will be sent home in advance, describing the objectives of the field trip and requesting drivers, if needed. No student may go on a field trip unless his/her parent or guardian has signed a permission slip before departure.

Parents/guardians who volunteer to chaperone for field trips are expected to adhere to chaperoning guidelines and must be cleared through a criminal records check and vehicle compliance checklist. (Please see *Appendix A, Policy and Related Procedures for Transporting Mill Falls Students in Personal Vehicles.*)

Driving histories, vehicle compliance and background checks are performed whenever a driver applies and every other school year thereafter.

The following requirements must be met for all field trips and other school-sponsored events involving vehicles that are privately owned and driven:

- The driver must be at least 21 years old;
- The driver must submit to a background check and show no felony, DUI, or reckless driving convictions;
- The vehicle must be insured by the driver for the minimum limits required by *Mill Falls Charter School's* insurance company; and
- Students must wear seat belts at all times.
- The driver must fill out the Volunteer Driver Checklist before their first trip each school year.

Please note, New Hampshire law requires that any child under 7 years old or less than 57 inches tall (whichever is reached first) must be secured in an appropriate child restraint while travelling in a motor vehicle. Any child who is required to have a car seat according to this law, must provide a seat on any day when travel to a school activity is to be by motor vehicle. Without a car seat, a child will not be permitted to travel in your car.

All volunteer drivers are expected to:

- Follow the teacher provided directions
- Abide by all posted speed limits
- Drive directly to and from the field trip destination without stopping or detouring.
- Meet at designated times and locations as directed.
- Resist the temptation to stop for or supply food; due to dietary concerns, this is not allowed.

Please note, children not enrolled in the school may not accompany the class field trip.



APPENDIX A:
Policy and Related Procedures for
Transporting Mill Falls Charter School Students
in Personal Vehicles

Purpose: To clarify the policy and procedure involved in transporting Mill Falls Charter School students to activities held away from the school site.

Policy

Mill Falls Charter School (*Mill Falls*) may need to engage in activities where children are transported for school activities. The School's insurance policy includes *Hired and Non-owned Auto Liability* coverage.

In most cases, the school will contract with the Manchester School District to transport *Mill Falls* students. The District buses provide both the vehicle and driver. In the event of an accident involving a hired bus contracted from the Manchester School District to transport *Mill Falls* students, the District's insurance is primary; the *Mill Falls' Hired Auto Liability* coverage will respond for the school if named in a lawsuit arising from the "hired" vehicle.

In the event that a parent/guardian, teacher, or employee of *Mill Falls* acts as a driver and uses their personal auto for a school activity, the driver's policy is primary and the school's *Non-owned Auto Liability* would respond for the school, if named in a lawsuit arising from the "drivers" vehicle.

Policy-Related Procedures

All students being transported to an off-site activity, whether by hired bus or personal vehicle, will be required to present a parent/guardian signed permission form before entering the bus/vehicle. Those without signed permission forms will not be permitted to be transported to the activity site by anyone other than the child's parent/guardian.

Prior to any driver transporting *Mill Falls* children for school activities, the following must take place:

- Anyone transporting *Mill Falls* children must have a clean background check to ensure there is nothing in their past that could endanger children. Failure to generate a clean background check will make the driver ineligible to transport *Mill Falls* students.
- The driver must provide verification of his/her personal auto insurance. (While it is recognized that personal auto insurance is not mandatory in New Hampshire, *Mill Falls* requires that anyone transporting children must provide proof of insurance.)
- The driver's personal auto insurance must include liability limits of at least \$100,000/\$300,000 designated for bodily injury.
- The Office Manager will need to review the driver's paper work and initial it, before the driver is allowed to transport *Mill Falls* students.
- A copy of the insurance policy will be made and kept on file at the School.

*Policy Approved by Mill Falls Board of Trustees on January 13, 2014.
Amended Policy Approved by the MFCS Board of Trustees on August 18, 2014.*



Background Check & Disclosure Authorization Form

In the interest of maintaining the safety and security of our students, employees and property, *Mill Falls Charter School* will order a background report on you in connection with your volunteer application. The background check company, ADP Screening and Selection Services, will prepare the background report for the school. ADP Screening and Selection Services is located at 301 Remington Street, Fort Collins, CO, 80524, and can be reached by phone at 800-367-5933 or at their Internet Web site address www.adpselect.com.

The types of information that may be ordered are limited to: name verification; Social Security number verification; criminal records check; sex offender status.

AUTHORIZATION FOR BACKGROUND CHECKS

After carefully reading this Background Check Disclosure and Authorization form, I authorize *Mill Falls Charter School* to order my background report. I also agree that a copy of this form is valid like the signed original. I certify that all of my personal information on this form is *true and correct* and understand that dishonesty will disqualify me from consideration as a volunteer with *Mill Falls Charter School*, or if I already volunteer for the school that my service as a volunteer may be terminated.

Last Name _____ First _____ Middle _____

Maiden/Other Names _____ Years Used _____

Social Security Number _____

Driver's License Number _____ State _____

Volunteer Signature Date

FOR IDENTIFICATION PURPOSES ONLY: Date of Birth ____/____/____
(Month/Day/Year)

ADDRESSES WITHIN THE PAST SEVEN YEARS (use a separate sheet as needed)

Present Street Address:

(Street Address, Apt)

(City/State/ZIP)

Prior Street Address:

(Street Address, Apt)

(City/State/ZIP)

From: ____/____/____ To: ____/____/____
(Month/Day/Year) (Month/Day/Year)



Mill Falls' Volunteer Confidentiality Agreement

Purpose:

The Mill Falls Volunteer Confidentiality Agreement addresses the expectations for the protection of confidential information that may be shared either purposefully or accidentally during volunteer service at Mill Falls Charter School.

Policy:

It is the policy of *Mill Falls Charter School* (MFCS) that Trustees and staff do not disclose, divulge or make accessible confidential information belonging to or obtained through their affiliation with MFCS to any person, including school volunteers, relatives, friends, business and professional associates, or to anyone other than to persons who have legitimate need for such information and to whom MFCS has authorized disclosure. Only staff that is responsible for the design, preparation and delivery of education and related services may have access to written or oral information about students and their families.

However, it is understood that it is possible that Volunteers may observe, overhear and/or read confidential information about a student, staff member or Trustee. This confidential information is not to be shared or discussed with others who do not have a legitimate need to know.

Volunteers must exercise good judgment and care at all times to avoid unauthorized or improper accumulation or disclosures of confidential information. Conversations at school or in public places, such as restaurants, elevators and airplanes, should be limited to matters that do not pertain to information of a sensitive or confidential nature.

Discussion of individual students, teachers or staff, their actions and/or their abilities is considered a breach of professional conduct and a breach of the policy, and may be grounds for your dismissal from our volunteer program.

This policy is not intended to prevent disclosure where disclosure is required by law. For example, a grave medical emergency, in which confidential information may be necessary for a student's care, is an exception.

At the end of a Volunteers work on a project or separation or departure from said volunteer role, all materials or items in the possession of the Volunteer that are either implicitly or explicitly owned by MFCS should be returned to the school.

I have read and understand the issues related to confidentiality and my work at a MFCS Volunteer.

Volunteer's Signature

Date

Printed Name



Volunteer Driver & Automobile Information & Checklist

DATE: _____

TRIP INFORMATION

Destination: _____

Trip Date: _____ Departure Time: _____

Departing From: _____ Expected Return Time: _____

DRIVER'S INFORMATION

Name: _____

Cell Phone Number: _____ Email: _____

Home Phone: _____

Please circle either YES or NO for each item.

- I am older than 21 years of age.
- I have a valid NH State driver's license – copy of license attached.
- License #: _____ Exp. Date: _____
- I have had no vehicle moving violations or at-fault accidents within the last three years.

If you have had any, please list:

DRIVER'S CAR and INSURANCE INFORMATION

Maximum Number of People to be Transported in Volunteer's Vehicle: ___ Children ___ Adults

Vehicle Year/Make/Model: _____ LIC PLATE#: _____

- I carry liability insurance with minimum insurance coverage on my automobile of not less than the following amounts (while it is recognized that personal auto insurance is not mandatory in NH, *Mill Falls* requires that anyone transporting children must provide proof of insurance.):

Bodily injury.....\$100,000 per occurrence/\$300,000 combined limit
 Property damage.....\$ 50,000
 Medical payment.....\$ 5,000

Insurance Company: _____ Policy #: _____

- I have attached a copy of the declarations page from my policy.

The School Leader or the Teaching & Learning Coordinator will need to review the driver's paper work and initial it, before the driver is allowed to transport *Mill Falls* students. A copy of the insurance policy will be made and kept on file at the School.

(continued on reverse side)

VEHICLE INSPECTION CHECKLIST

Please check the box beside each item.

- There is a working seat belt for the driver and each passenger, and I enforce the wearing of seat belts by all.
- I will not transport any child that requires a car or booster seat by NH law, unless the child has the appropriate seat that can be installed in my car.
- My vehicle's brakes, including the emergency brake, are in good working order.
- My vehicle's tires have legal tread depth that meets State of NH Inspection Standards.
- My vehicle's brake lights, turn indicators, and headlights are in good working order.
- My vehicle's windows are clear and provide an unobstructed view for the driver.
- My vehicle has functioning rear view mirrors (center and left side).
- My vehicle has no other physical defects that would interfere with the safety of the driver or passengers.
- My vehicle has a rated capacity of ten passengers or less.
- If my vehicle has dual airbags, I will not seat children under 12 or small persons in front passenger seat.
- I will not transport students in a motor home, fifth-wheel trailer, cargo compartment of a van or truck bed.

The above information is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I hereby give my permission for a copy of my personal Motor Vehicle Report to be ordered and used in consideration of my transporting students during field trips.

Signature of Volunteer Driver

Date

ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW

Please check the box beside each item.

- If the volunteer will drive for more than one day, the school has obtained the information to order a Motor Vehicle Driving Record from the NH Department of Motor Vehicles.
- If the volunteer will drive for more than one day and will have unsupervised student contact, the district has obtained the information to order a NH Background Information Check to include Motor Vehicle and Criminal Background Check.
- All students have parent/guardian permission to ride with a volunteer driver.
- All unchecked responses on this form have been addressed satisfactorily.

I have reviewed the above information and this driver and vehicle are approved for this trip.

Signature

Date

Printed Name and MFCS Position Held



Volunteer Understanding Checklist & Sign Off

After reading the Volunteer Handbook, please carefully review this checklist. Then return your Volunteer Information packet to the school office. The packet must include the following completed documents: Volunteer Agreement, the Background Check & Disclosure, Volunteer Confidentiality Agreement and if you wish to be a driver the Volunteer Driver & Automobile Information & Checklist. Thank you!

Volunteer Agreement Safety & Liability Issues

- As the relationship with a student progresses, he/she will begin to trust you and may start to confide in you. You should take time to listen and show them that you care about them. However, do not make a promise you cannot keep. If a student reveals information relating to a possible abuse or neglect situation, let the student know that you care and are there to listen but that you are required to pass this information on to a staff member who can offer them help.
- Personal information about yourself should be shared only as it is relevant to the work you are doing with the student. Do not give the student personal contact information such as your address, phone, personal website, and email.
- Some students will naturally become very attached and affectionate toward you. Some students may crave affection and attention, so it is important that you handle the situation with sensitivity. Unfortunately, front hugs should be avoided. Instead, carefully put your arm around a child's shoulder and turn it into a side hug. Use other signs of affection, such as "high fives." In addition, regardless of age, students should never sit on your lap.

Working with Children from Diverse Cultural Backgrounds

- Building a diverse student body is a core value at Mill falls. Our students come from many different families, cultures, and communities, each with its own set of values and beliefs. Our individual culture, beliefs, values and behaviors seem so naturally a part of who we are that it is often challenging to understand others with unique traditions. Understanding the students' cultures and helping them to understand the school culture will increase your ability to help them learn. Please consult with the school administration if you have any questions.

Confidentiality

- Students and staff at *Mill Falls Charter School* have the right to expect that all volunteers will keep information about them confidential. Additionally, the U.S. congress has addressed the privacy-related concerns of educators, parents/guardians and students by enacting the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (known more commonly as "FERPA" or the "Buckley Amendment").
- Each student with whom you work has the right to expect that nothing that happens to or about him or her will be repeated to anyone other than authorized school employees, as designated by the administrators at your school.
- You may not share information about a student even with others who are genuinely interested in the student's welfare, such as social workers, scout leaders, clergy, parents/guardians, grandparents, or nurses/physicians. However, a grave medical emergency, in which confidential information may be necessary for a student's care, is an exception. Thus, you must refer all such questions to the school employees so authorized and indicated to you, typically the student's teachers or the administrative team.

- Parents/guardians, friends or community members may in good faith ask you questions about a student’s problems or progress. Again, you must refer all such questions to the authorized school staff. You may not share information about a student even with members of your own family.
- Before you speak, always remember that violating a student’s or staff member’s confidentiality isn’t just impolite; it’s against the law.

Volunteer Understanding Agreement

I, (print name) _____, have read and agree to the policies, procedures and terms mapped out in the Mill Falls Volunteer Handbook.

I understand my role and responsibilities to uphold the strict confidentiality law and policies adhered to by all school staff and leaders and pledge to keep such confidence as described in the handbook.

I understand that for my Volunteer Packet to be complete, it must include the following completed and signed documents:

- Volunteer Agreement
- Background Check and Disclosure
- Volunteer Confidentiality Agreement
- Volunteer Driver & Automobile Information & Checklist (only if you wish to be a driver).

Volunteer’s Full Name (printed)

Volunteer’s Signature

Date

Volunteer Coordinator’s Signature

Date

Printed Name and MFCS Position Held