

ST. IGNATIUS SCHOOL



VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

The mission of St. Ignatius School is to provide spiritual and academic growth based on the principle that every child is created in the image of God.

ST. IGNATIUS SCHOOL

239 Harrow Street | Winnipeg, MB | R3M 2Y3 | Telephone: 475-1386 Fax: 475-3961

E-mail: school@stignatius.mb.ca Website: www.stignatius.mb.ca

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Welcome from the Principal.....	1
Message from SISPAC Executive.....	1
Introduction.....	2
Building a Strong Volunteer Community.....	2
Getting Started.....	3
Opportunities.....	5
Sharing Knowledge, Tips, and Ideas.....	7
Acknowledgement Form.....	8

Please note: For the purposes of this handbook, the term *parents* is used broadly to refer to parents, guardians, or any other assigned caregiver to the student.

PRINCIPAL'S WELCOME

Dear Parents,

You, our parent volunteers, are an integral part of our school. You add so much to the educational and enrichment experiences that our students have at St. Ignatius School, and we count on you greatly. Our parents and staff have created this handbook to give you some guidelines about your participation.

We hope that these guidelines help to build your confidence and give you some direction, so that you feel as if your time spent here has been worthwhile. Remember that there are countless ways of contributing to our student's education: school, community, and parish.

Whatever you choose to do when you volunteer, please know how much you are appreciated!

Sincerely;

Danielle Kolton
Principal

MESSAGE FROM SISPAC EXECUTIVE

Dear Parents:

St. Ignatius School is a nurturing, faith-based environment where school staff, parish, and parent partnerships flourish. The education of our children is a shared responsibility that we value; positive outcomes for our students are reaped from the contributions of time by parents.

Every parent is automatically a member of SISPAC (St. Ignatius School Parent Advisory Committee), which is an important entity that supports the school and parish through various activities. SISPAC strives to be a community-building body. Among our commitments are: hosting celebratory receptions for school and liturgical events; special lunches and bake sales; our annual spring BBQ; our annual parents' dinner (Dinner in the Hall); and acting as a Parents' Advisory Council to the school board. These are only a few of the responsibilities we assume, but all have a common denominator: they require *volunteers!*

SISPAC has a wide range of volunteer opportunities that allow parents to choose how often or how little they become involved. From one-time volunteer opportunities that require little time commitment, to more involved opportunities that would allow you to get to know your school on a regular basis, there is something for everyone.

Please review the options found in this handbook and select one that fits your schedule, whether it be serving on our board, or making a commitment to a one-day/one-time event (or two!).

As Christians, we are all called to be a People of Service. We ask you to consider volunteering for SISPAC; your time will be greatly appreciated by everyone. You, your children and our whole school community will benefit.

Yours sincerely,
SISPAC Executive sispac@stignatius.mb.ca

INTRODUCTION

St. Ignatius School staff and the St. Ignatius School Parent Advisory Council (SISPAC) created this handbook. We want to welcome you and help you make the most of your volunteer experience. There are so many different ways to participate at St. Ignatius School; we hope this handbook will help to guide you.

As a parent and a volunteer, you are an important part of the St. Ignatius community. When you become a volunteer, your work takes on special significance; though you are not part of the formal school staff, you share in its responsibilities while working with students. When you volunteer at St. Ignatius, you help your child, other children, teachers, and the community.

BUILDING A STRONG VOLUNTEER COMMUNITY

At St. Ignatius School and Parish, we have a strong tradition of parent involvement. Because volunteers are such an integral part of St. Ignatius, it is important to keep our standards high. We kindly ask that all volunteers:

- Be responsible and safe- -always put children first.
- Respect confidentiality. Students and staff have a right to privacy.
- Be professional.
- Communicate with the classroom teacher and/or committee members.
- When things come up in your life, and you can't fulfill your commitment, let someone know. It's all right for this to happen sometimes, but we need to know!
- Ask for help --don't suffer in silence!
- Share your experience with others (within the bounds of confidentiality, of course!) and encourage new volunteers.
- If possible, try to replace yourself when you move on, and help to train the new person.

- Commitment is important: once you become a volunteer others depend on you.
- Try to pick what is manageable and interesting to you.
- Be prepared. Communicate with teachers and coordinators ahead of time.
- Be on time. If you can't make it, let someone know. If necessary (e.g., in the library), try to find a substitute.

GETTING STARTED

All volunteers within classes or working individually with students are required to have a Child Abuse Registry (CAR) check completed before they will be able to volunteer in these capacities. Please ask for a form at the school office; there is no charge for this check. Your CAR will be valid for three years at which time it must be renewed. Casual volunteers at school and parish events will, in most cases, not be required to have this check completed.

Volunteers must report to the office when entering the school in order to pick up an identification badge. This volunteer identification must be worn at all times.

Before you start your first volunteer task, we ask you, and all volunteers, to be aware of the following points.

Safety

- You are expected to act as a good role model for the children.
- Complete your Child Abuse Registry check [CAR] form (if required) and submit it to the office. It is valid for three years.
- Always sign in and out at the school office. It is important for staff to know that you are in the building and it makes it easier to locate you in an emergency.
- Always wear a "Visitor" badge.
- As a courtesy to others, please turn off cell phones while working in the school building. If, on occasion, yours must remain on, please switch to a vibrate "ring." Furthermore, if your duties occur within an active classroom, or require you to be the sole supervisor of any children, please alert the teacher that you are expecting a call, and make plans to answer it that will not disrupt the class, or leave students unsupervised—or inactive.
- Always follow the correct fire safety procedures: there is no talking during fire drills; when in a classroom, follow the teacher out of the building and stay with the class; when not in a classroom, quietly exit the building and remain at a safe distance until notified that it is safe to return.

- If you are taking food into school, please check with the classroom teacher, because some food may be inappropriate for children with food allergies.

Confidentiality

All who generously volunteer, especially those who help in classrooms, are asked to take seriously the need to respect confidentiality. Classrooms are dynamic communities that are very much like families; the volunteer is being invited in to help and to be a part of the community. As in any family, children may have a bad day or say some things to another that can hurt feelings. They can also have special needs, which must be addressed with care and sensitivity.

In the same way that you would not share intimate observations of a friend's family, volunteers are asked to respect the rights of others and keep their observations to themselves. However, where a genuine concern is noted it should be brought to the attention of the teacher. School observations should not become the subject of general conversation. This is the same expectation that is placed upon all school employees and is designed to respect the rights of all students and families to prevent individuals from becoming involved in a situation of libel.

To make sure that students, staff and families feel comfortable, we all need to respect each other's privacy. Volunteers must be especially careful to honour confidentiality. Breaching confidentiality can be hurtful to children, their families, and the staff. It can also harm the good reputation our St. Ignatius School volunteers have earned over the years.

To help, here are some sample issues that can arise.

- **“Wasn't it cute when John . . .”** No matter how innocent, cute, funny or charming a classroom event may be, it is not okay to repeat stories about students. What happens in the classroom stays in the classroom.
- **When parents ask you questions:** Many parents are tempted to ask you about how their children behave at school. This is especially likely if you are friends outside school. It is not okay to put volunteers in this awkward position. Don't ask! Don't tell!
- If parents do have concerns, encourage them to talk to the class teacher.
- **When you see or overhear something:** As a volunteer, you might see or hear things from staff or students, which they would not want to have repeated outside the school. What happens in the classroom (or the hall, or the gym) stays at school.
- If you have concerns about something you see or hear, please talk to the classroom teacher, or principal if appropriate.
- **When students tell you about their family, pet, vacation, etc.:** As students become comfortable working with you, they might decide to share something personal. You need to keep this information private, even if you know the child and his family outside of school.

- **When you have a concern:** If a student tells you something that causes you concern, tell the classroom teacher. If you observe something that troubles you, tell the classroom teacher. The teacher is in the best position to deal with the issue appropriately.

Approach

- Be professional and positive!
- Strive to give each child the best you can and know that other St. Ignatius School volunteers do the same when working with your child.
- Respect each child as an individual.
- Respect all school employees and fellow volunteers.
- If working in your child's classroom, try not to single him or her out for attention as this may make him/her uncomfortable.
- Don't distract teachers while they are teaching. If you have questions, wait until there is an appropriate moment.
- Honour your commitments and be on time.
- Find ways to be positive and notice things that are working well
- Try to make any criticism constructive.

Remember your time and energy are helping to make St. Ignatius School a great place to learn!

OPPORTUNITIES

Volunteering is a gift to the community and a gift to our children. We hope you'll also find it a gift for yourself. Everyone benefits.

All parents are invited, and also expected, to contribute some of their time, talents and energy to our community. From one-time volunteer opportunities that require little time commitment, to more involved opportunities that would allow you to get to know your school on a regular basis, there is something for everyone. There are also many ways to volunteer within the greater parish community.

SCHOOL-BASED VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES

Our parent volunteers enrich our academic environment by their presence and by their commitment to our children's education. Our teachers organize their own parent volunteers, or you may contact the office at 475-1386 or at school@stignatius.mb.ca to discover other specific opportunities.

In which ways will you choose to serve?

- Classroom
- Resource Room
- Library

- Coaching sports teams or activity groups
- Chaperoning field trips
- *Ignition* newsletter
- Lunch hour supervision for special educational events
- Book Fair

COMMUNITY-BASED VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES

St. Ignatius School Board of Directors

The members of the volunteer Board of Directors are representative of the diversity of talents within our school and parish communities. Parents of school children and parishioners are welcome to become Board members. The St. Ignatius School Board of Directors works collaboratively with the Principal and Pastor in creating and fulfilling our mission. Contact us at board@stignatius.mb.ca for more information.

St. Ignatius School Parent Advisory Council (SISPAC)

St. Ignatius School is a nurturing, faith-based environment where school staff, parish, and parent partnerships flourish. The education of our children is a shared responsibility that we value; positive outcomes for our students are reaped from the contributions of time by parents. SISPAC has a wide range of volunteer opportunities that allow parents to choose how often or how little they become involved. All parents/guardians are automatically members of SISPAC. There are monthly meetings advertised in the school calendar, to which you are invited!

In which ways will you choose to serve?

- Executive Committee of SISPAC – by nomination
 - Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, Treasurer
- Class-Sponsored Events (see website)
- Class Representatives – two/grade
- Special Lunches – 4x/year
- Hot Dog Lunches - monthly
- Bake Sales – 4x/year
- Annual BBQ
- Dinner in the Hall
- Wellness Officer
- Volunteer Coordinator
- Fundraising Coordinator
- Faith in Action
- Other fundraising events

PARISH - BASED VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES

You might also consider volunteering in the parish at liturgical celebrations, community committees or events.

Contact St. Ignatius Parish at www.stignatiusparish.mb.ca or call 474-2351.

SHARING KNOWLEDGE, TIPS, AND IDEAS

Although St. Ignatius has many special traditions, new ideas arise each year. To make the best of both, we encourage volunteers to share their ideas with one another, and with the staff, the Board of Directors and SISPAC.

If you see a better way to do something, don't be shy about coming forward. Names and contact details about whoever would be the best person to contact, can be found in the School Directory. Similarly, if you have had a great experience at another school, share with SISPAC your ideas about a potentially fabulous fundraiser or exciting school-wide project.

After you have worked for a while as a volunteer, you might decide to take on the role of a project coordinator. There are guidelines and information packages to help you as a coordinator complete your task. As a coordinator, it is essential to keep notes on your events so as to pass these along to future project leaders.

Clean up

After you have finished any activity within the school, it is important to tidy up afterwards. Classrooms and other public areas should be left clean and tidy.

Parking

Please be aware of the time limitations, and other restrictions, when parking on the streets around the school.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT SIGNATURE SHEET

I, _____, have read this handbook, and understand my responsibilities as a school volunteer.

I have completed my Child Abuse Registry form and attached it.

Signature

Date

Contact Information

Phone Number:

Address:

Email:

Comments:

Please return this completed form to the school office.