

Tips for Teachers

Guidelines for the FGP

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*Updated September 2018*

***Thank you for being a partner with the Foster Grandparent Program sponsored by AmeriCorps Seniors at Missoula Aging Services. We strive to provide meaningful service for volunteers. We also are available for training and support with our Volunteer Station partners. Foster Grandparent Volunteers are assigned to assist teachers in mentoring students.***

This guideline booklet is for your quick reference. Copies of our volunteer handbook are available upon request.

# GLOSSARY

**Missoula Aging Services:** also referred to as MAS

**Foster Grandparent:** also referred to as FG

**Foster Grandparent Program:** also referred to as FGP

**Volunteer Station:** the school, pre-school, daycare or youth organization where the FG serves

**Volunteer Station Manager:** the teacher or other staff person with direct supervision of the FG Volunteer

**FG Volunteer Coordinator:** the MAS Staff Member overseeing the match between the FG and the Volunteer Station Manager

# THE PROGRAM

The Foster Grandparent Program (FGP) is a federally and locally funded volunteer program for retirees, aged 55 and older. The program has been in our area since 1971 and has been sponsored by Missoula Aging Services since 1981. There are more than 31,000 FGP’s nation-wide, with 3 projects sponsored in Montana.

The FGP is required to follow all federal rules set by Congress and AmeriCorps*.* AmeriCorps includes FGP, Senior Companion Program, RSVP Volunteer Program, and VISTA.

# FOSTER GRANDPARENT BENEFITS

***Foster Grandparents earn benefits while serving with the program. Some include:***

* Training, recognition, and the knowledge that they are doing something good for the community
* Supplemental liability insurance, CIMA
* Paid time off
* 10 Paid holidays
* Quick access to other MAS programs
* A meal at the volunteer station
* Mileage reimbursement at a rate of .50 cents a mile from their home, to the Volunteer Station and back to their home
* A tax-free stipend of $3.00/hour

***\*\*Note re: CIMA:*** *If there is ever an accident, Foster Grandparents are* ***not*** *covered under worker’s compensation. Their primary insurance pays first (if they have insurance) and the CIMA volunteer insurance through MAS picks up when there is a balance due. Always notify MAS AmeriCorps Seniors if an accident happens, even if the FG volunteer is not hurt.*

# LANGUAGE

FGs must use appropriate language—no swearing, inappropriate jokes and comments, or crude remarks. Volunteer Station Managers should model/instruct the FG volunteers on the “language of the school.” Example: “Criss-cross /Applesauce” for sitting down, “use your inside voices”, etc. Each station has a preferred way of saying things and the FG volunteers need to use consistent language.

# SERVICE HOURS

FG volunteers serve 15–40 hours a week. Assignments are made based on input from the FG, the FG Volunteer Coordinator and the Volunteer Station Managers. MAS AmeriCorps Seniors has a contract (Memorandum of Understanding) with each volunteer station. *FGs will be paid the stipend for four hours on regularly scheduled days when the Volunteer Station does not need them.*

**STUDENTS SERVED**

Federal guidelines state that FG volunteers must serve with students who have circumstances that limit their academic, social, or economic development. ***A volunteer can be the “Grandma/Grandpa” to an entire class***, ***but they are required by federal guidelines to be mentors to specific students who need extra assistance***. Each volunteer must focus on at least 6 students who the Volunteer Station team feels could benefit from having one-on-one assistance or small group help.

**Exceptions may include:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Military Family | Terminal Illness | Parent Incarcerated |
| Developmental Disability | Abuse /Neglect | Student is a Teen Parent |
| Vision Impaired | Juvenile Offender | Physical Disability |
| Language Barrier | Homeless or At Risk For | Emotional Disability |
| Student is Substance Abuser | Learning Disability | Medically Impaired |
| Student has HIV / AIDS | Hearing Impaired | Other |

# REPORTING

***We will ask you for information 3 times during the year. We are required by our grant to show that the FG volunteers are making a difference in your classroom. We understand that they are part of your team and that all successes are due to the combined efforts of many people. We honor FERPA. Student names are not used when we compile FGP outcomes.***

* **Assignment Plan (Fall):** You will be mailed this form. On the form you will assign students. Each FG will be assigned at least six students per Volunteer Station. Reviewing the form with the FG creates an opportunity to provide supervision and support so that the volunteer can work towards being successful with the student. Please send the completed form to MAS. Be sure to make a copy for yourself and the FG.
* **Performance Measurement (Spring):** Federal rules require that the progress of the students served is measured. To honor confidentiality and FERPA we report on outcomes gathered in aggregate. ***The volunteer does not see this form.***We will mail you the form or bring it to the spring station visit. The form outcomes can be documented at a station visit, via mail or over the phone. We’ll ask you “of the students served, how many have improved, how many are at YOUR anticipated level, how many have exceptionalities”. We keep the original.
* **Evaluations (Spring):** We send you a simple evaluation form to complete with the FG volunteer. Complete and review it with the FG volunteer. Give them a copy and send the original to our office. That’s generally all we ask.

**APPROPRIATE ACTIVITIES**

**Foster Grandparent Volunteers *CAN*:**

* Serve as mentors to students
* Work with the teacher on teacher-assigned tasks
* Read to or with the students
* Sing, tell stories, play games with the students
* Eat with the students or school staff
* Reinforce and model good manners
* Help students with their school work
* Encourage, praise, and support the students
* Support and assist in learning situations or therapy
* Rock babies and feed them
* Escort students to the office or another location if it’s on the volunteer station property and in a public space where they are not the only adult
* Redirect students to help prevent bullying/fights
* Help students “stay on task”
* Teach students a skill they have with the teacher’s permission: knitting, foreign languages, piano, etc.
* Go out for recess and go on field trips if they want, but it’s not required
* Listen and learn along with the class so they can reinforce the class lessons the way the teacher wants it done
* Teach students to tie shoes, zip jacket zippers, etc.
* Attend band, choir, orchestra or seasonal performances by students at the volunteer station
* Attend trainings hosted by the school or community and be paid the stipend and mileage for participating

**INAPPROPRIATE ACTIVITES**

**Foster Grandparents *CAN NOT*:**

* **Discipline or punish students**
* Provide medical assistance
* Change diapers or assist with toiletry
* Help a child in the bathroom
* Accompany students into a dressing room
* ***Be left unsupervised with the students* (**if a teacher has to leave the room, the FG is instructed to stand in the doorway until another staff person comes)
* Connect through social networking stations online - no Facebook “friending”, Instagram, SnapChat, etc. with students or their families
* Serve as babysitters or provide respite care
* Grade papers, laminate, make copies **as the primary volunteer role -** they are there to spend time with the students
* Replace paid staff
* Wash, clean or cook as their primary role
* Perform household or custodial duties unless teaching a child how to do something
* Drive students in a vehicle
* Exchange email, address or phone numbers with students or their families
* Discuss student performance with parents, guardians or the community (this is a violation of confidentiality)
* Lift heavy objects or pick up/set down students
* Engage in religious activity as part of their activities or duties
* Bring guests to the volunteer station (unless the Volunteer Station has approved this in advance)

# FOSTER GRANDPARENT TRAINING

FGs go through a pre-service orientation with the FG Volunteer Coordinator and attend monthly in-service training hosted by MAS AmeriCorps Seniors. In-services are mandatory unless the weather is bad. The volunteer stations are encouraged to provide training or instruction for the FG whenever possible. The FG will notify volunteer stations in advance when he/she will be absent so they can plan accordingly. Volunteer Station Managers will be e-mailed a calendar monthly alerting them to in-service training dates and volunteer birthdays. Volunteer must attend the In-service unless the station supervisor receives permission for the FG to work in class that day. It is appreciated that teachers recognize the volunteer’s birthday. MAS contracts to have a criminal and sex offender background check done on each FG (MCPS approves all MAS background checks). This includes a ***national fingerprint check***. Volunteer stations are encouraged to do their own background checks on all volunteers.

We ask that volunteer stations include the FGs in training when applicable. Possible trainings include: emergency drill instruction, orientation for volunteers, confidentiality, mentoring students with special or exceptional needs, “dos and don’ts” of assisting in the classroom. ***Foster Grandparents need to be given direction by the Volunteer Station Manager. Consider scheduling short doses of weekly supervision time with the FG****.*

# CONFIDENTIALITY

The importance of confidentiality is covered annually at in-services and orientation. It’s important for the Volunteer Station Manager to also make sure they remind the FG to respect the confidentiality of students, families and school staff.

# PERSONAL BELIEFS

FGs should not discuss politics, religion, or any other controversial matter in a persuasive way. FGs may not evangelize and they must accept and show respect for everyone’s individual beliefs.

# TIME SHEETS

FGs are required to keep a time sheet and record their hours and mileage for the program. A teacher, principal, or secretary must sign the time sheet to verify that the FG was there during the times listed.

**The teacher doesn’t have to worry about the time sheet. It’s the responsibility of the FG volunteer.**

FGs will be paid their stipend to stay home (four hours) on inclement weather days. FGs will also be paid their stipend to stay home (four hours) on regularly scheduled days when the volunteer station does not need them (e.g., parent teacher conferences, winter and spring break, etc.).

# COMMUNICATION

Communication is usually the cause of problems. It is important to talk to your FG if something is a concern. Please feel free to give them direction and positive redirection. They want to be useful and productive so if they say or do something that isn’t appropriate for your Volunteer Station, you need to tell them respectfully. If there is an issue that you do not feel comfortable handling alone, please contact your principal or ask another teacher to assist. The FG Volunteer Coordinator wants to hear about issues with FGs, help resolve them and support your message to the volunteer. If you suspect that a FG has limitations or is uncomfortable with a subject (like math, etc.) then ask them. There are ways of working around any limitation. MAS will provide additional training where applicable.

# DISMISSAL

In most cases, problems can be solved way ahead of time by good communication. Sometimes, however, a FG volunteer may be dismissed from the program if we feel their behavior will not change or if a situation is serious.

***REASONS FOR DISMISSAL* include but are not limited to:**

* Inability to meet the FG job description duties
* Failure to attend monthly in-services and other training sessions provided by the Volunteer Station or MAS
* Unwillingness or failure to cooperate with the Volunteer Station staff and rules
* Inappropriate conduct
* Disregard for confidentiality
* Discrimination
* Documented physical or verbal abuse of a student
* Repeated absences after using all Personal Leave and the Extended Leave of Absence
* Inability to carry out the assigned duties due to poor health
* Inability to understand and follow directions
* Consuming alcoholic beverages during the performance of service duties
* Being under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, or prescription drugs, impairing the ability to perform the assigned duties during service activities
* Repeated documented incidences of overstepping boundaries
* Failure to report that a student has shown aggressive behavior towards her/him or others.
* Disregard for Conflict of Interest policies
* Disregard for Mandatory Reporting Abuse and Neglect procedures
* Disregard for Emergency Procedures established by the volunteer station
* A Volunteer has not informed MAS AmeriCorps Seniors that allegations have been made by the volunteer station about unsatisfactory performance
* Reports from the volunteer station that a Volunteer does not

meet the expectations of the volunteer job.

# GIFT GIVING

FGs can give students a gift if they receive permission from the Volunteer Station Manager **and** if they are giving the same thing to all the students in the classroom (example: pencils, treats). Volunteer Station Managers can recognize the FGs with something that is allowable under their Volunteer Station policy. If the volunteer station manager chooses to gift the FG with something of greater value than $50.00, please contact the MAS AmeriCorps Seniors Program Manager.

# ABSENTEEISM

*FGs are volunteers with the program*. Although they have a service schedule, occasionally they will have a doctor’s appointment or a personal matter during the week. They are required to let their Volunteer Station Manager and station know as soon as possible if they are going to be late or absent. FGs can use their Personal Leave, or they may elect to take time without pay. Upon using all Personal Leave, FGs may take a 30-day Extended Leave of Absence without pay. If FG volunteers cannot return to the volunteer station after using the Extended Leave of Absence they may be dismissed from service. FGs are encouraged to stay home if they are sick or if there is inclement weather with bad road conditions. FGs will be paid their stipend to stay home (four hours) on inclement weather days.

# PHONE CALLS AND VISITS

FG cell phones will be off during service time. Visitors of Volunteers are not allowed at the station unless they are there to provide transportation or a special arrangement has been made.

# TRANSFERS

A FG may be transferred to another station or classroom if the assignment isn’t satisfactory to the Volunteer Station Manager, principal, FG Volunteer Coordinator, MAS or FG volunteer. *Notify the FG Volunteer Coordinator with questions or concerns.*

**MAKING THE FG FEEL COMFORTABLE**

***Simple things that make a world of difference:***

* Making sure the FG volunteer has a comfortable adult chair to sit in, not a child sized chair.
* Assign the volunteer a place to work. Remember—the volunteers are older adults and some can’t bend over or stoop down very easily.
* Check your room to ensure fall prevention. Example: cover cords draped across the floor, clean up spills, push in chairs.
* Introduce volunteers to the Volunteer Station community/staff and parents of students.
* Make sure the volunteer knows your schedule.
* Show the volunteer where to park.
* Give the volunteer a tour of the Volunteer Station and maybe a map. Show the FG where the bathrooms are.
* Remember their birthdays, special events, etc.
* Include FGs in volunteer station events, class pictures, yearbooks, newsletters, parties, school papers, etc.
* Assign a mentor, possibly another FG, to help the volunteer get acclimated to the school community.
* Provide the FG with complimentary meals from the cafeteria.

**STATION VISITS**

During the school year the FG Volunteer Coordinator will conduct station visits to your volunteer station/school to check on the FG, complete paperwork and make sure that our partnership is going well. If at any time, you feel you need to talk to MAS, please don’t hesitate to call or email the office. If you want us to visit your station, just let us know! We welcome all comments and appreciate any ideas that you may have on trainings to provide for the FG volunteers.

# MANDATORY REPORTING – ABUSE AND NEGLECT

All FG’s are defined by Montana State law as Mandatory Reporters. FG’s are required to report any actual or suspected instances of abuse or neglect immediately to their Volunteer Station Manager and proper authorities.

Foster Grandparents may contact the FG Volunteer Coordinator for instructions on reporting to the proper authorities. Proper authorities are the Montana Child and Family Services Division. Contact information is below.

Disregard for Mandatory Reporting Abuse and Neglect will be cause for dismissal from service.

**Montana Child and Family Services Division**

· Child Abuse Hotline *(toll free, 24 hours)* 1-866-820-5437

· Child Abuse Hotline *(TTY-hearing-impaired)* 1-866-341-8811

# CONTACT US

Foster Grandparent Volunteer Coordinator  
 Email: [recruit@missoulaagingservices.org](mailto:recruit@missoulaagingservices.org)

Volunteer Services Supervisor, Foster Grandparent Program  
 Email: [ldegele@missoulaagingservices.org](mailto:ldegele@missoulaagingservices.org)

Office phone: 406-728-7682 Office fax: 406-728-7687

Website: [www.missoulaagingservices.org](http://www.missoulaagingservices.org)

# Please ask the FG Volunteer Coordinator for a copy of the comprehensive FG Volunteer Handbook if you would like more information.

# EMERGENCY INFORMATION

FG Volunteer Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Allergies: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Contact #1 Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Contact #2 Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Preferred Hospital /Doctor: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

FG Birthday: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_