



## **PARENT VOLUNTEER COMMITMENT MANUAL**

### ***A PVC Guide for MSW Families***

**Vision:** We envision a school that cultivates independent, self-advocating, intellectually curious learners engaged in a global community.

**Mission:** We deliver an individualized, self-paced, structured education in a nurturing environment that allows students the opportunity to explore topics deeply and reach their fullest potential.

**Diversity Statement:** The Montessori School of Westminster is committed to individual and organizational efforts to build respect, dignity, fairness, caring, equality, and self-esteem in our students, staff, and community, resulting in an environment that is inclusive of all. We recognize that diversity includes, but is not limited to, culture, gender, sexual orientation, age, traditions, beliefs, physical attributes, and access to resources. We strive to create curriculum, programs, and activities that encourage diversity and a high regard for all.

**Non-Discrimination Policy:** The Montessori School of Westminster admits students and conducts its employment practices without regard to race, color, religion, gender, national and ethnic origin, sexual orientation, or disability.

# **PARENT VOLUNTEER COMMITMENT MANUAL**

## ***A PVC Guide for MSW Families***

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*MSW reserves the right to edit, update, or amend this publication and policies at its sole discretion.*

## OVERVIEW

Requirement	Value	Who	How	When
30 hours per family	\$20 per hour	Anyone who provides work can represent your family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt;Defraying costs</li> <li>&gt;School-sanctioned committees</li> <li>&gt;Educational experiences</li> <li>&gt;Increase enrollment &amp; retention</li> </ul>	June 15 through June 14 of the following year

### PVC-QUALIFYING JOBS

#### SUGGESTIONS LIST

*This list does not represent every job available. Please follow MSW Updates and classroom communications for additional job listings.*

- Attend All-School Night event
- Attend Winter All-School Night event
- Attend Parent Education event
- Attend Transition Dinner event
- Attend Parent/Teacher Conferences
- Board of Trustees Participation
- BOT Committee Work
  - Buildings & Grounds Committee
  - Development Committee
  - Finance Committee
  - Marketing Committee
  - IT Committee
- MSW Parent Organization Work
  - Teacher Appreciation Week planning & set-up/take-down (food, décor, etc.)
  - Administrative Staff Day planning & set-up/take-down (food, décor, etc.)

- MSW Community-wide events – leaders, helpers, event marketing (digital skills, copying flyers, etc.), set-up/takedown
- Garden adoption & maintenance
  - Plant & shrub selections & purchases
  - Planting & watering
  - Weeding
  - Mulching
  - Seasonal changes
- Birdhouse maintenance
- School maintenance
- Painting
- Office substitute
- Office aide
- Open House childcare assistance
- Shopper
- Library volunteer
- Classroom parent
- Classroom work/mover
- Field Trip drivers (including long-distance trips with Middle School)
- Classroom fish/pet caregiver/keeper
- Classroom cleaner
- Laundry
- Classroom staff substitutes
- Gardening education for students
- Classroom presentation of cultural traditions
- Classroom presentation of crafts or hobbies
- Classroom snack
- Photography
- Fundraisers/special events – project managers & assistance
- Dance event assistance
  - DJ (music)
  - Chaperones
  - Set-up/take-down
- Assemble summer mailing packets
- Organize bookshelves in library

- Organize supply closets
- Paint sheds
- Sand & paint benches
- Paper cutting
- *Tomorrow's Child* magazine distribution preparation
- Weeding
- Cutting & trimming laminated items
- Refrigerator cleaning
- Shelf cleaning
- Photocopying
- Book reading & review as needed (Upper Elementary)
- Grandparent Day helpers & food contributors
- Scholastic Book Fair
  - Project leader
  - Set up
  - Take down
  - Customer service/cashiers

This list is not inclusive of all PVC jobs that will be available. Please follow the weekly MSW Updates and classroom communications for additional opportunities. Your questions are welcome; please call the MSW office at 410.848.6283.

## SECTION 1

### YOUR PARENT VOLUNTEER COMMITMENT

Participation of our parents and other family members is integral to the functioning of the school. Active involvement is an excellent way to get to know the school, other parents, your child's guide, and Montessori method. Without parent involvement, the school would lose its sense of community.

#### **WHY REQUIRE PVC?**

Parent Volunteer Commitment (PVC) hours **defray costs** that would normally be incurred to effectively operate the school. In addition to direct reduction of expenses, PVC hours serve to enhance participation in **Board or school-sanctioned committees, provide educational experiences** for the students and parents, and/or **increase enrollment**. Listed events which increase parents' understanding of Montessori method and understanding of MSW curriculum and procedures qualify. Examples are located among the pages of this manual. Please contact the school office should you be unsure if something qualifies for PVC credit.

#### **WHO QUALIFIES?**

PVC hours may be fulfilled by any member of your family or by friends who help with a project. For example, if you build shelves for a classroom, and a grandfather paints them, your family is credited with all the hours necessary to finish the project.

#### **HOW MANY HOURS?**

**The required annual number of hours per family is 30.** Any additional hours are greatly appreciated, but they cannot be carried over to the next school year, except for referral hours.—Please see the Referrals section of this manual for more information on how to qualify.

#### **REPORTING YOUR HOURS WORKED**

As you participate in PVC, you will need to report your hours. Any hours accumulated from June 15 through June 14 of the following calendar year will apply for the current school year. You can report your completed hours at any time by visiting the school website's parent

portal (called “myMSW”) at  
<https://montessorischoolofwestminster.org/mymsw/> .

### **CHECKING YOUR HOURS**

Please note that the school website does not currently provide a cumulative total of completed PVC hours, and, once submitted, there is no history to review. However, you are welcome to contact the administrative offices of the school to discuss your PVC account. Event-related PVC work will be reported to the office by the event coordinator.

### **INCOMPLETE HOURS**

Should you not fulfill the required hours by June 14, you will be billed for the balance of unfulfilled hours at the rate of \$20 each.

### **APPROVED PURCHASES**

If you need to purchase materials for completion of your PVC projects, **advance approval is required**. Reimbursement forms are available through the school office. The forms should be returned to the school office once materials are purchased or the PVC job is completed. If you prefer, dollars spent to complete a PVC task may be credited towards your PVC requirement at the rate of \$20 per hour. For example, if you are building shelves, and the lumber costs \$40, you may report two hours of PVC time in lieu of being reimbursed. Again, **advance approval is required** for the amount the materials will cost. Forms for cost reimbursement need to be submitted to the administrative offices of the school within 30 days of purchases.

### **MARYLAND STATE TAX**

Because MSW is a registered non-profit, the school is exempt from paying Maryland sales tax when a copy of the tax exemption certificate is presented at purchase. Please obtain a copy of the MSW tax exempt certificate from the school office before making a purchase. It is recommended that you advise retail store management or customer service personnel before presenting your copy of MSW’s tax exemption certificate at retail stores. Some stores require registration before a purchase is made using the tax-exempt certificate. MSW will not reimburse sales tax in either cash or PVC time.

## **DONATIONS**

The only **donated** items that may be counted towards PVC at the exchange rate of \$20 per hour are food for events and classroom supplies that have been specifically requested. If you are donating other items that do not apply to PVC, you may be able to claim the donation as a “gift-in-kind” for tax purposes. Please check with your tax preparer for more information. Kindly note that donations of items to the school require pre-approval.

## **PVC OPPORTUNITIES/JOBS**

Please review this Manual, the weekly MSW Updates (email), Montessori Compass messages, and speak to your child’s guide for PVC opportunities. We look forward to working with you in the coming year. Kindly call the school offices at 410.848.6283 should you have any questions about PVC or parent involvement at MSW.



## SECTION 2

### VOLUNTEER GUIDELINES

#### **ATTIRE**

As you volunteer, you are setting an example for MSW students. We ask that you dress in a modest, clean, and appropriate manner.

#### **APPROPRIATE LANGUAGE**

While you attend any school function, our expectations are that you use appropriate language to send suitable and proper messages to students, staff, visitors, and others.

#### **ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS**

Volunteers and visitors are prohibited from using electronic devices, including cell phones, in the presence of students. Please make certain all audible alerts are turned off before volunteering. Staff members' limited use of electronic devices is regulated administratively.

#### **CHAPERONES –**

##### **FINGERPRINTING/BACKGROUND CHECK REQUIREMENT**

Being a chaperone is a big responsibility. We ask that you focus exclusively on the trip/activity and its importance while volunteering for an MSW event. You will be charged with the supervision of a pre-assigned group of students. You are responsible for supervising their behavior, health, and safety. *Only those volunteers who are fingerprinted for the purpose of obtaining a background check and have undergone required training about responses to suspected abuse or neglect will be allowed to supervise students without a staff member present.* To inquire about the process necessary to become a chaperone, please contact the Administrative Assistant in the school office.

##### **CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT TRAINING REQUIREMENT**

Child abuse and child neglect are against the law. *MSW volunteers will undergo training on proper responses to suspected abuse and neglect.* If you have reason to believe that abuse or neglect has occurred, it is your responsibility to report such suspicions. You can do so by contacting Carroll County Department of Social Services at 410.386.3494.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, a federal law, protects student information. Volunteers are required to protect the confidentiality of all student information while volunteering and after participating in all school events.

## **ILLNESS/INJURY PRODECURES**

All injuries of students or volunteers need to be reported to a staff member immediately. There are certain procedures that need to be followed when a student is ill. Volunteers working with students should check with a staff member as to these procedures.

## **STUDENT ALLERGIES**

Volunteers are not to bring food to school or school-related activities unless approved beforehand by a staff member as there are students with varying degrees of allergies among the MSW student population. We are a peanut-free school. Peanut-free includes peanut butter and any food items containing any form of peanuts. All volunteers must follow this policy.

## **WEAPONS AND FIREARMS**

We prohibit anyone other than sworn law enforcement officers in the regular course of their duty from carrying or possessing any rifle, gun, knife, or deadly weapon of any kind on any part of the school's property or at any school-related event. Vehicles parked on school property or used for school-related events are also prohibited from containing any weapons or firearms.

## **EMERGENCY DRILLS AND SITUATIONS**

All volunteers are required to register in the school office upon arrival at MSW. Volunteers must follow the same evacuation procedures as staff and students. Volunteers should know the various exit routes within the facility. Volunteers may re-enter the building when notified to do so.

## SECTION 3

### **PVC OPPORTUNITIES DESCRIBED**

The following group of brief position descriptions may be useful in considering a specific PVC assignment. You may want to do one major job, several small ones, or any combination that works for your family.

### **DEFRAYING COSTS**

#### **SCHOOL MAINTENANCE**

Minor repairs and improvements are needed to ensure the most attractive and safe learning environment for MSW students. Hours of service can generally be arranged at your convenience. These PVC opportunities provide options for families with busy work schedules because many can be performed on weekends or evenings and especially during summer months when our outdoor environment requires extra attention. Here are some examples from past years--

*Gardening and Grounds Maintenance:* Families may visit our campus to participate in the maintenance of its grounds and gardens. Duties include mulching, weeding, trimming bushes, planting trees, etc. Contact our Buildings and Grounds Committee for more information about maintaining our environment by calling the school office.

*Painting:* Furniture, shelves, classrooms, sheds, etc.

#### **OFFICE SUPPORT**

*Office Substitute:* Due to vacations or special programs, we occasionally need to find a replacement office worker. Duties include answering telephones, greeting visitors, and light clerical assignments. Hours would correspond with the school day.

*Office Aide:* We are always in need of extra hands to complete small tasks such as laminating classroom supplies, cleaning the office, filing, ordering supplies, and data entry. Consider setting aside some time each week or each month to help in the office.

*Open House Support:* Parents are needed to welcome guests and provide childcare during open house events held for prospective families. Dates and times are listed on the school calendar. Please contact the Director of Admissions if you are interested.

*Shopper:* The school needs a shopper to purchase snacks, craft items, and a variety of other things. You will get a list from the office, purchase the required items, and turn in receipts for reimbursement. This is a great job for bargain hunters.

## **LIBRARY**

The library is a resource center for MSW students. It is staffed solely by volunteers. This position has been a favorite of MSW grandparents. Duties include, but are not limited to, listening to students read aloud, helping students find books, signing books out, cataloging new books into the library system, assisting students with photocopying, etc. Ideally, the school library should be open to students 9:30 to 11:50 AM each school day. While the afternoons are not as busy in our library, we welcome you to sign up for an afternoon library shift of 1:30 to 2:30 PM. We are always in need of afternoon help with large research projects. Typically, volunteers commit to one or two days per week throughout the year.

## **CLASSROOM SUPPORT**

This category of jobs provides a perfect opportunity for parents to be involved with their child's education. These jobs generally provide interaction with the child's guide and the classroom environment.

*Classroom Movers:* Throughout the year, especially prior to school starting in the week following the last day of school, guides rearrange classrooms. If this type of job interests you, please advise your child's guide.

*Classroom Parent:* The classroom parent supports the activities and plans of the guide by enhancing the link between the classroom and the parents. This may involve setting up the classroom snack schedule, making arrangements for field trips, developing classroom materials, shopping for materials or snacks, cleaning, and special projects. In some cases, the classroom parent handles these responsibilities directly; in

other cases, he or she may solicit PVC workers to be responsible for sections of any given project. Each classroom parent works with the guide to define the parameters of this position. The classroom parent also serves as an information source and worker solicitor between other parents and the school.

*Driving on Field Trips:* In the Lower and Upper Elementary classrooms, the students will take several field trips throughout the year. You will be informed of field trips ahead of time. Costs for parking may be claimed for PVC credit. Costs for entrance may be the responsibility of the field trip driver but can be used towards PVC hours at the rate of \$20/hour.

*Driving the Middle School Class:* The MSW Middle School class regularly travels to points farther away from the school and needs drivers prepared to make these journeys. The class begins the school year with a team-building trip one to two hours away from school. Two separate weeks are spent in Lake Anna, Virginia. This opportunity provides a way to earn 10 PVC hours by driving your child and a few friends one way.

*Fish Keeper:* Most MSW classrooms have an aquarium. We need one or two people who have some knowledge of tropical fish and their care to help us keep the classroom aquariums up to snuff and enhance the learning experience for the children.

*Classroom Cleaner:* Each classroom needs one or two people to come in once monthly and wipe down all surfaces. The hours necessary to do this job must be accomplished when the classroom is not in use (after 3:00 PM or when the students are on a field trip). This job gives you the opportunity to see all the classroom materials at close range, keeping you up to date with what your child's class is doing.

*Laundry:* Each classroom has several things which should be washed on a regular basis. Laundry can be dropped off and picked up when you bring your child to school. It is an ideal project for busy parents who want to do PVC work while at home.

*Classroom Substitutes:* Consider helping in MSW classrooms. Substitute training is a must and very helpful. When possible, the guides will call

you in advance to schedule, but there are times when they will need someone on short notice. Substituting is a great way to understand Montessori philosophy at all levels. This is the only position for which you may be compensated once your family's PVC requirement is fulfilled. Contact the Head of School if you are interested in substituting.

*Gardening - Education:* Help the children plant and learn about seeds and growing. All you need is a love of gardening and time to come into the classroom to help. It is a wonderful experience with the students.

*Gardening – Landscaping:* MSW is fortunate to have many linear feet of gardens throughout the campus. Garden plots may be adopted on an annual basis. You will plant and maintain a designated area throughout the school year, including summer months. Tasks include weeding, mulching, planting, pruning, etc. For more information, please contact the Environmental Educator for garden-specific information.

*Classroom Snack:* Throughout the year, you will be asked to prepare a snack for your child's classroom. The schedule is set up by the classroom parent or guide and generally includes all parents. Parents' snack contributions are often aligned with their child's birthday.

## **PHOTOGRAPHY**

The school is always looking for photographers and videographers for special school-wide events as well as individual classroom events. The school may possibly use these photographs for advertisements, school literature, or social media.

## **SCHOOL FUNCTIONS**

*Fundraisers/Special Events:* Parents are needed to coordinate programs and activities for special events. PVC hours are only given to individuals who are participating in the actual organization or management of the activity or special event. See the section in this Manual entitled "Parent Education / Retention" to learn which events confer PVC credit for attendance only.

## SECTION 4

### **PARTICIPATION ON BOARD- OR SCHOOL-SANCTIONED COMMITTEES**

#### **BOARD OF TRUSTEES COMMITTEES**

The following committees welcome your yearlong commitment to attending regular meetings and the implementation of various committee projects:

- **Buildings and Grounds Committee**
- **Development Committee**
- **Finance Committee**
- **Marketing Committee**
- **Information Technology (IT) Committee**

#### **OTHER SCHOOL-SANCTIONED COMMITTEES**

- **MSW Parent Organization**

For committee information, contact the school office via email to [office@theMSW.org](mailto:office@theMSW.org) or by calling 410.848.6283.

## SECTION 5

### **EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES**

*Cultural Awareness:* Do you or someone in your family have a culture or tradition to share with students in the classroom? Do you celebrate holidays which the students would enjoy learning about? Let us know.

*Career Awareness:* This very important task involves coming into the classrooms to share your profession or career. Students learn a great deal from this experience and are proud to have their family members sharing with the class.

### **AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES**

New after-school activities will be taken into consideration for addition to activities such as a Robotics club or MSW Daisy/Girl Scout troops. If you would like to discuss an on-going commitment to leading an after-school group, please contact the Head of School.



## SECTION 6

### INCREASE ENROLLMENT & RETENTION

#### **REFERRALS**

MSW families are eligible to receive 25 PVC hours for referring new families to our school who enroll at least one child. The referring family's name must appear on the Application for Enrollment when it is submitted to the school. If there are multiple referring names listed, the PVC hours will be divided accordingly. **These are the only PVC hours that may be carried over from year to year.**

MSW families are also eligible to receive two PVC hours for referring new families who attend an Open House, tour, or observation. If you attend the Open House with the referred family, the PVC hours awarded increases to four. If the family enrolls a student, these hours convert to the 25 hours listed above which can then be carried over to the next year. Families attending an Open House as your referral must be certain to sign in at the event, listing your name on the attendance sheet or during online event pre-attendance registration.

Referrals that result in full enrollment are eligible for a \$500 tuition credit in addition to the non-expiring PVC hours described above. Please contact the Registrar for additional information about referral benefits at MSW.

#### **MARKETING**

Work with administrative staff members on advertising, branding, and event goals as needed throughout the year.

#### **PARENT EDUCATION | RETENTION**

To assist parents in learning more about Montessori method and the curriculum used at MSW, parents receive PVC hours for attending the following annual school events:

- All-School Night
- Parent Education Sessions
- Winter All-School Night

- Transition Dinners
- Parent/Teacher Conferences

Parents or guardians of students who attend the above-listed events may report their hours for PVC credit. Each parent who attends may submit PVC hours. Parents are responsible for reporting PVC hours accrued in this manner.

## SECTION 7

### PVC HOURS - TRACKING

#### **REPORTING YOUR HOURS WORKED**

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#### **INCOMPLETE HOURS**

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Please contact the MSW offices at 410.848.6283 with your questions.

## SECTION 8

### TRACKING YOUR PVC SUBMISSIONS

<i>JOB DATE</i>	<i>DESCRIPTION</i>	<i>SUBMITTED ON</i>	<i>NOTES</i>

*Questions About Your Submitted PVC Hours? Contact the MSW Business Officer | Jen Seletzky | 410.848.6283 | jseletzky@theMSW.org*