



VSHA Employee Handbook

Welcome to the Village Schoolhouse Academy family! Here are some expectations and tips to help you navigate the school year.

Punctuality/Attendance

- Teaching Assistants should arrive at school at least 15-20 minutes before students to prepare materials and do any necessary clean-up. Start time for students is around 9am, making TA arrival around 8:45am.
- Employees are expected to be communicative about any delays in arrival. The Wilson's can be reached via phone call or text if situations arise that prevent employees from being to work on time. High performance and consistency may lead to flexibility in schedule, increase in pay, etc.

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- VSHA depends on a very reliable sick policy that ensures the good health of both teachers and students. If employees are sick and contagious (vomiting, bacterial and/or viral infections, etc) they are urged to notify employers at least 24 hours prior to their expected absence, as well as provide updates as conditions worsen or improve.

Typical Day

The main objective of a Teaching Assistant is to make the school day run smoothly by becoming the appendages to the Teacher's brain. Being available to help make Mr. Wilson's curriculum come to life requires flexibility and the ability to multi-task. While TA's may develop a routine, daily tasks shift with the temperaments of the children and the needs of the teacher. Here is a typical day in the life of a TA at VSHA:

- When you arrive at school, tidy up the classroom by sweeping up any residual crumbs or picking up supplies left out from the day before.
- As the scholars filter in, greet them and their parents whilst taking attendance (see "record keeping").
- The days begin with Mr. Wilson conducting Morning Gathering and the scholars writing ideas on individual white boards. During this time, observe students and redirect them when necessary; giving quiet reminders about expected behavior. Also be available to assist students in spelling. Mr. Wilson may also give TA's various tasks to complete before the day begins such as making copies.
- Math work begins after Morning Gathering. The scholars start by practicing math flash cards (see "record keeping"). While students work independently on math books, float around the room and offer help to any scholars that appear to be distracted or struggling. If help isn't needed, time may be spent correcting work, grading tests, tidying up, or organizing materials.
- Recess (take a break my friend! Check your phone, eat a snack, and decompress). Sometimes, Mr. Wilson may need you to watch the kids play so he can send out some last minute e-mails.

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- Literature begins after recess and goes until lunch (noon). Depending on the day, TA's are expected to give spelling tests, correct bookwork, or read with a certain age group.
 - Pack a lunch! At 12 o'clock everyone eats together in the Sunroom. Lunch is followed by recess (take a break my friend! Check your phone, read a book, or just decompress). Sometimes, Mr. Wilson may need you to watch the kids play so he can send out some last minute e-mails.
 - Afternoon activities vary depending on the day. Some days will be focused on science activities, while others will be centered around social studies. Either way, TA responsibilities remain the same: ask Mr. Wilson what he needs, set up any needed materials, float and help scholars, or tidy up and stay busy- the day is almost over!
 - At the end of the day the students will complete their jobs (clean up) and get ready to go home. When the classroom is empty, vacuum the rugs and head out!

There are plenty of things to do to stay busy if there isn't much demand for your assistance (see odds & ends). Doing dishes, organizing materials and books, sorting through loose papers, or just connecting with students are some extra things employees can do during the day.

Odds & Ends

There are many materials that need to be updated by Teaching Assistants to help the classroom operate smoothly. Updating these materials can be accomplished during down time. These tasks include but are not limited to:

- Updating and decorating calendars
- Writing monthly reminders to parents on outside chalk board
- Student job assignments
- Creating effective seating charts via observation
- Restocking "Book Tickets"
- Restocking "Bathroom Sign-In" sheets
- Taking attendance before and after field trips

- Supplying children with injury slips

Keeping the classroom tidy and organized is also a Teaching Assistant's responsibility. Maintaining the quality of the children's learning environment is an extremely important contributor to their comfort and success at VSHA. These tasks should be performed weekly and include but are not limited to:

- Washing dishes in sink
- Dusting surfaces
- Restocking paper-towels
- Vacuuming carpets
- Auditing "Lost & Found"
- Organizing

Record Keeping

Teaching Assistants are responsible for taking consistent records of the students' progress in various subjects. These records not only keep the children accountable for their success in school, but they also give Mr. Wilson information to provide an accumulated academic review for each child's parents. These records include but are not limited to:

- Attendance
- Math book progress
- Literary materials progress
- Multiplication, addition, and subtraction recall/memorization (math facts)
- Homework Check (math)
- Updated student files
- Updated school contact sheet (annual)

Health/Safety

Sick Policy:

The VSHA sick policy is very important for both students and staff to adhere to. The Village Schoolhouse Academy has oftentimes been a safe haven for children with compromised immune systems. If members of staff encounter a fever,

vomiting, or a contagious viral/bacterial infection, they are asked to stay home from work. Even on the mend, VSHA urges employees as well as students stay home 24 hours **after** the fever has broken and 24 hours **after** the Gastro-Intestinal symptoms (vomit/pain/diarrhea) have resolved. When you need to miss work due to sickness, notify the Wilsons by text including the symptomatic information. This is especially important if flu or GI tract symptoms **develop** as the day goes by at home. Keep us in the loop.

Preventing Illness and Promoting Cleanliness

There are multiple ways to prevent children from missing school due to sickness. Teaching Assistants are expected to perform daily tasks that keep our school clean. These tasks include but are not limited to:

- Disinfecting door handles, light switches, and other commonly-touched surfaces at the end of the school day.
- Refresh tissue and hand sanitizer supply at each table when needed.
- Remind children to wash their hands after using the bathroom, after blowing their noses, and before eating lunch.
- Politely remind scholars to “cover their cough”.

Discipline

At VSHA we focus on fostering compassion, problem-solving, and self-reflection in our students. While staff prefers to use other avenues of correction aside from authoritative discipline, there are situations that require more strict consequences.

In mild instances such as peer distraction or verbal social altercations, we encourage students to process their actions and the feelings of others emotionally. We call these instances “Teachable Moments”. Ways to solve these kinds of problems include:

- Teacher mediation
- A casual apology
- Requesting that students write a formal apology
- Having the scholars talk out the problem privately

If a student displays signs of bullying and becomes aggressive, violent, unrelenting, and disrespectful AFTER staff has implemented other avenues of correction, they are met with more annoying repercussions. These may include:

- Loss of recess time
- A task which derives as a logical consequence of the student's actions
- Quiet time alone in the next room
- Call home and early pick up (last resort)

No matter the behavior, staff is NEVER permitted to use methods of humiliation or aggression to correct a child. Never touch a child in anger. Tag team with another staff member. Avoid power struggles and use Mr. Wilson as a resource. ***Give yourself the gift of revision.*** Nobody is perfect, sometimes a bad day comes with a shortage of patience. If an interaction with a student doesn't sit well with you, pull them aside and apologize. Explain your intent and revise your message; this demonstrates to the scholars that it's ok to be wrong and make mistakes. It's all good!

Social Media

Today almost everybody uses social media- including our very own students! VSHA staff are walking representations of our establishment and our commitments to scaffolding responsible young adults.

No illicit content is permitted on staff social media platforms. Not only does this behavior promote carelessness and toxicity, it is available for the public eye to see and associate with VSHA.

Your social media profiles should be clean enough to be followed by students- however, if you would like to keep your adult life private from scholars and parents, adjust your privacy settings accordingly.

While it is natural to want to share the beauty and fun of VSHA's colorful atmosphere, pictures of students' faces are **not** allowed to be featured on your social media platforms *unless* you have written or verbal permission from the child's parents. An exception to this rule is posting candid photos on the Village

Schoolhouse Parent/Community Facebook page. This is where parents go to see pictures of their scholars enjoying their time at school.

Privacy

While Teaching Assistants are an essential part of the operation of VSHA, they are not permitted to impede on the managerial duties of the Wilsons as Headmasters and owners. If parents come to TA's with concerns or questions about their student, defer them to Mr. Wilson. He has undergone years of schooling and training to address concerns without disrupting community dynamics. Here is an example of how concerns should **NOT** be discussed between parent and TA:

Parent: "My son told me he has been having issues with another student. Can you tell me more about this?"

TA: "Your son has been very aggressive and violent, I think he may be upset about something from home."

Here is a good example of how concerns **SHOULD** be discussed between parent and TA:

Parent: "My son told me he has been having issues with another student. Can you tell me more about this?"

TA: "I'm so sorry to hear that your son has been having a negative experience. Let me check in with Mr. Wilson and see if he has noticed any patterns or addressed the issue."

This comforting response provides Mr. Wilson with an opportunity to speak to the parent in a way that he sees fit as an experienced educator.

If you witness and/or deal with any concerning behavior between children, parents, or staff, report details of the event back to Mr. Wilson so he may address the issue accordingly. Mr. Wilson should be the first to know about a dispute or dilemma in order to provide parents with detailed and knowledgeable feedback.

Professionalism

Working with children is a fulfilling and honorable experience that requires certain professional expectations. While VSHA promotes self-expression, there are expectations for staff behavior and appearance.

The Golden Rule

We expect the scholars to treat each other with kindness and use manners to structure communication and interactions. Staff is expected to talk to children with the same respect and grace that we try to instill in them. Apologizing for social blunders, saying excuse me, asking for favors politely, and refraining from interrupting are behaviors that help us lead by example.

Is that Appropriate?

Profanity and obscene or crude language is not to be used by staff. Even substitutes for curse words are highly discouraged. We encourage scholars to use thoughtful vocabulary to express frustration and expect staff to do the same. While there isn't a formal dress code for TA's, we expect you to dress in a modest fashion that insures comfort and movement.