

Holy Spirit School Recess Duty Policy

Thank you for taking the time to acquaint yourself with the Recess Duty Policy. This document presents many details to help new parents. Each year parents of all students in kindergarten- eighth grade are asked to work as many as three recess shifts, or six hours. This parent involvement in recess helps the school in several ways: by reducing the number of professional staff on the playground we free up teachers to spend that time planning lessons; we eliminate the need to hire special part-time monitors (keeping our tuition costs down); we model to the children the important connection between school and family. Additionally, we benefit by seeing our kids having a great time with their fellow students.

Going into the 2016-17 year, all families will be asked to select 2 dates for recess which meet their own scheduling needs. After all families have signed up for those 2 slots (or been assigned slots by the recess coordinator), a fraction of the families will be randomly assigned the remaining slots. All families working three slots in the 2016-17 year will be given 2 volunteer hours.

All questions/concerns not addressed in this document should be forwarded to the 2016-17 Recess Duty Coordinator, Regina FitzSimmons Olson (regina_fitzsimmons@yahoo.com).

You are required to be at the school from: 11:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. Please be on time. Bring a time piece (e.g. watch) so you can manage the schedule.

- **Recess Sessions** (when the bells ring)
 - **11:15a.m. until 11:40 p.m. (Grades 6-8)**
 - 3 parents report to the basement classroom hallway by the large staircase or the stairs that lead to Meeting Room 3. Follow the kids up the large stair case and out the back doors near the gym.
 - **11:50 p.m. until 12:10 p.m. (Grades 3-5)**
 - 2 parents report to the classroom hallway to the right when facing the front office to get the 4-5th graders. Follow the kids to the back door.
 - 1 parent reports to the hallway on the left when facing the front office to retrieve the 3rd graders. Exit out the door in that hallway.
 - **12:25 p.m. until 12:45 p.m. (Grades K-2)**
 - The classroom hallway to the left when facing the front office. Follow the kids out the back doors.
 - Note that Pre-School recess is separate and managed by teachers so they will not be involved.

Your Role

- You are NOT a game organizer
- You are NOT there to play though it may be tempting☺

- You are NOT the police
- You are there as a **monitor** and **mentor** for the children
- Be Cheerful
- Be Aware and Alert. ***Please put away your cell phones.*** Keep your eyes on the kids.
- Be Safe
- Be Timely
- Be in Control
- Be Kind but Firm. Discipline children as needed to maintain a safe and cheerful environment. Most children respond well to adults. Keep your cool and play the part of calm and in control adult. The kids will follow your lead. Remember that sometimes standing near them with a patient look is all you need to correct some situations.
- Control the boundaries. Be aware of all egresses and help make sure the students stay in the intended play areas. Prevent student “escape attempts” ☺ or wandering off, be it planned or accidental.
- If there is an **injury**, notify one of the teachers IMMEDIATELY.
- Students requesting to leave the playground areas **MUST** be approved by a **teacher** and the student must always go with a buddy.
- Adults retrieve balls that go in the street or woods.
- Students are not allowed to be outside without a teacher present. If you need help use the radio or pick two students to be “buddies” and send them to the front office with a message.
- When outside, please do not use this time to visit with other parents, but rather do your part to keep recess safe for the children.
- NO small children are permitted to accompany you during your playground duty.
- IF ASSISTANCE IS NEEDED, PLEASE INFORM THE TEACHER ON DUTY.

Expected Behavior for the Children

- Age appropriate assembly (lining up in hallways and walking out as a class)
- NO abusive language to anyone
- NO bullying
- NO pushing, wrestling, tackling, dog piling, waving or throwing sticks or rocks, sword fighting (with sticks, swords, hoops, or anything), whacking, hitting, throwing of dirt/grass, entangling others with hoops or ropes, taking other kids’ toys, no playing dead or throwing yourself at the ground, or equivalent mayhem that could lead to injury or sour feelings.
- NO kids in the woods. **Simple Rule for the kids:** *If they look up and see foliage (trees, branches, leaves) above them they are in the woods.* This helps you with border disputes.
- NO kids in the ditch, beyond the chained edge of the parking lot, or beyond the fences.

- NO laying on the ground.
- NO running when in the school classrooms or hallways.
- Children should be encouraged to remain visible to parents and teachers on the field, on the playground, or in the parking lot blacktop.
- Encourage mobility if you see a child sitting or laying on the ground. This is their time to run and jump.
- Ideally kids will be running, jumping, walking, laughing, chatting, playing games, etc. Happiness generally abounds.

When You Arrive

- Sign in at the school office. By signing in you prove that you have been there and ensure that you won't receive a bill as a "no show".
- Pick up a Visitor's Badge
- First parent checking in gets the playground key and teacher radio from the front office staff.
- If recess will be outside then proceed to the Gym. From the storage closet on the right when entering the gym pull out the recess cart (a tall cart with balls, jump ropes, hoops, etc. on it). Roll down the handicap ramp to the rear parking lot (by the cafeteria) with a buddy. Position it in the open so kids have easy access to all sides. Bring a buddy or a door stop since you do not want to get locked out and have to walk back to the front of the school.
- While you are outside make sure the chain rope is up at the entrance/exit to the parking lot. If it is not present notify the front office or the teacher on duty for the first session.

General Flow

- There will be three sessions of recess and each will follow the same general flow just in different locations.
- Wait in the lobby by the front office. Then about 2 minutes before the session time head to the session hallway (stated above).
- Position yourselves at the ends of the hallways. Determine which teacher has recess duty and give them the radio when the kids start assembling in the hallway.
- Two parents will go out with main mass of kids. The one in front will open up the playground with the key. Keep the playground key but leave the playground open until the last session is finished. The kids have a short time to play so we want them to have access to the playground the minute they arrive.
- On days when the back field is wet and sloppy recess may be on the upper parking lot.
- The last parent will check all the classrooms by peaking his/her head in the door to make sure all students are off to recess or with a teacher.
- The last parent will also give a reasonable effort to escort any students that are seen exiting bathrooms out to recess. If you see students enter the

- bathroom or clearly hear students in the bathrooms then wait patiently in the hall for them to exit.
- Position yourself at a point where kids can be seen and you are controlling the perimeter of the play areas. Feel free to roam as needed. Here are some good choices...
 - By the rope chain at the entrance/exit to the parking lot
 - By the back of the play ground near the intersection the woods and back fence.
 - In the vicinity of the playground gate
 - On the blacktop near the basket ball hoops
 - When the teacher blows the whistle, vocally encourage the children to pick up and return the toys to the cart. Encourage them to go line up for prayer by the handicap ramp of the back entrance.
 - Scan the entire play area for toys, jackets, or other personal possessions and try to connect them with the toy cart or the appropriate student before they begin prayer.
 - Join the children in prayer.
 - Get the radio back from the teacher so it is ready for the next session's teacher.
 - If this is the last session then lock playground and return toy cart to the closet in the gym. Do not get locked out.
 - There is usually a hand sanitizer station that magically appears for the children. You do not need to put it away. School staff manages this on a separate schedule.
 - Head back up to the front office until it is time to begin the next session of recess.
 - Checking Out: Sign-out, return your badge, the playground key, and the radio to front office.

Frequently Asked Questions [FAQ] (read them all)

Who schedules recess duty?

This is a rotating duty performed by a parent volunteer. The volunteer does his/her best to accommodate family schedule challenges. Please know that the coordinator has already attempted to optimize your recess duty dates. The Recess Duty Coordinator this year is Regina FitzSimmons Olson (regina_fitzsimmons@yahoo.com)

What if the day I am scheduled to do recess no longer works for me or never worked for me?

In this case you have three choices:

- 1) Change your personal schedule so you can perform your recess duty.

- 2) Look at the recess duty schedule and find another parent who is willing to trade dates with you.
- 3) Get a paid substitute. On the website you will find a list of paid substitutes. When in doubt get a sub.

How Do I get a sub (substitute) for recess duty?

Under the “Current Families Resources” tab on the school website you will find a “Paid Recess Substitute” list along with directions for contacting those listed. ***When contracting with a paid substitute, you will pay him or her \$20. Please make that check payable directly to the sub.*** The substitute will let you know the best way to get the check to her or him.

What happens if I do not show up and do not get a sub?

You will be fined a \$40.00 “No Show” fee by the PTO

No Shows should submit a \$40.00 check to the front office payable to Holy Spirit PTO. Please indicate on the envelope and on the memo of the check that this is a “recess no show fee”.

Please make every effort to come or secure a substitute. If the school does not have 3 parents report for recess duty there are two likely outcomes. 1) A teacher already who had plans for that critical 20 minute time slot must stop what she is doing and substitute for you 2) Recess will be cancelled for the kids.

Save money and make things easier for everyone- either swap or find a \$20 substitute.

I have a serious reason why I may not be able to perform my recess duty obligation, what do I do?

If you have a very serious long-term hardship then let the Principal and/or recess duty coordinator know about the issue. They can help you identify a solution.

Travel, temporary illness, and other common hardships are why we have a substitute program. Please arrange for a sub.

What about days when school is canceled due to snow or something else?

If you are scheduled for recess on a day canceled for snow or other reason, you may find that you are rescheduled for a make-up snow day. Please be flexible and ready to either serve or find a sub.

How do I get credit for completing recess duty?

You or your sub MUST sign off at the front office on the sign in sheet in the slot with your name. Failure to do this will result in “no show” notifications and fines. Do not

let it happen to you. Even if staff see you doing other volunteer work that day you must come sign the sheet to receive credit.

Recess notices are not going to the email I prefer.

The Recess duty coordinator uses the emails on file with the school. Please correct the issue with the front office and then ask them to notify the recess coordinator.

I cannot make Sign Up Genius Work.

You may need to use one of the emails that you registered with the school. Make sure your Sign Up Genius account is using an email address that you previously registered at the school.

You may need to use the access code provided in the email invite to Sign Up Genius.

You may need to check that your computers Operating System and Browser are compatible with Sign Up Genius.

You may have an old account with Sign Up Genius and need to request a password reset or an account reset from them.

Did you consider that both parents work?

Yes. Many families have two working parents. That is why you are free to swap with another family or arrange for a substitute.

Does my family have to do recess duty if I have Pre-K student at Holy Spirit but also have student(s) in older grades (K-8)?

Yes.

Does my family have to do recess duty if we ONLY have Pre-K kids?

No. Your kids have a different kind of recess monitored by their staff so you are exempt. Feel free to ignore emails and instructions unless they are explicitly directed to your situation.

Does my family have to do recess duty if I am full time staff (e.g. teacher) at the school?

No, but you need to have the front office tell me. You may ignore emails and instructions unless they are explicitly directed to you.

Why are some families assigned more recess duties than others?

Simply because there is no perfect match between the number of families and the number of shifts. We make a best effort to exempt families from the random selection who served additional recess duties in the previous year.

Does recess duty count toward my families required service hours?

No. Recess duty is a separate commitment as stated in the Parent School Service Commitment and Opportunities Handbook.

There is one exception:

If you are notified that you are assigned an extra recess duty beyond the base amount, that recess duty can be used for a 2 hour credit to your required family service hours. To qualify you must complete ALL of your assigned recess duties for the year. Subs and swaps count but if you “no show” you will still be fined and receive NO service hour credits.

What is the master record for recess duty?

The master record for recess duty is stored on the computer of the recess coordinator. She will post a snapshot on the website for your convenience. Sign Up Genius and sign in sheets are NOT the authoritative schedule.

Sign Up Genius is blocked on my assigned date, how do I get the reminder?

It could be that someone else tried to sign up for that slot after the due date or graciously tried to sign up for way too many recess duties. If you are having trouble, contact the recess duty coordinator. She can find out who is blocking your slot and ask them to unblock so you can get email reminders.

On the website there are Date Sort and Family Sort lists, which one should I use?

Both schedule lists contain the same information. One is sorted by date and one alphabetically by family name for your convenience.

If you want to see your family assignments for the year just look at the Family Sort schedule and find your name.

If you want to see who has recess duty on a specific day just look at the Date Sort schedule list to find out the families who are serving. This is handy when you want to arrange a swap. You can find family contact info in the school directory.

I have one or more kids with different last names and now I have too many assigned recess duties, what do I do?

Contact the recess duty coordinator. She will help you straighten things out.

I have the same name as someone else in the school which recess duty is mine?

The name of your oldest child will be displayed. If this does not clear things up, please contact the recess coordinator.

What is the least amount of notice I may receive before finding out I have been assigned recess duty?

As evidenced by our process for the last several years we make significant efforts to give families 2 weeks' notice and in a majority of cases several months' notice before your assigned recess duty dates. That said, the school will encounter awkward schedule situations during the year to accommodate a variety of legitimate needs. Therefore we hold fast to the policy that we can assign you a recess duty with a minimum of 24 hours' notice. You always have the opportunity to make arrangements to swap with another parent or find a substitute.

I am confused about what I am supposed to do?

Ask the recess duty coordinator after you have reread this policy. She is there to help you.

I have a complaint. To whom should I address it?

I understand that for some families, recess duty can present difficulties. However, we have worked hard over the last 25 years to streamline the process and even reduce the number of hours parents work (for instance, 10 years ago, we all worked 4 shifts, two of which included cleaning the lunch room). If you are really running into a difficulty that needs to be addressed, please begin by contacting the recess coordinator via email. She will work with you to try and find a solution, or send your concerns to the appropriate person. Thank you for expressing your feelings/concerns in a civil manner consistent with the Christian atmosphere Holy Spirit School promotes.