HANDS TO HELP

MERRIMACK COLLEGE

Merrimack College
Hands to Help After School Tutoring

Tutor Handbook

2019 - 2020

Hands to Help
60 Island St, Suite 310
Lawrence, MA 01840

978-258-1632
handstohelp@merrimack.edu

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Hands to Help

A neighborhood resource center

Hands to Help includes a drop-in center that provides after school tutoring, tax assistance, ESL conversation classes, and general form assistance. Additionally, Hands to Help acts as an information referral site to other local non-profits and offers resources, such as computers, for public use.

"*What does love look like? It has the hands to help others. It has the feet to hasten to the poor and needy.*

It has eyes to see misery and want. It has the ears to hear peoples' sighs and sorrows. That is what love looks like."

Saint Augustine
Homily on the First Epistle of John 7.10

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Hands to Help After School Tutoring

Welcome! As a tutor for the Hands to Help (H2H) program this handbook will provide you with all the information you need to have a successful year as a tutor. Read this handbook, use it, write notes in it and refer to it as needed. Tutors are expected to comply with all provisions of the H2H Tutor Handbook. Questions or concerns about the policies in the handbook should be directed to H2H Staff. Tutors will be notified of any changes in policy or procedure.

Program Procedures and Policies

Tutors are expected to abide by the policies and procedures listed in this handbook.

Scheduling Policy

☑ After school tutoring is available on site at Hands to Help, from 2:30 – 5pm on the following days:
    Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday
☑ Merrimack H2H Tutors usually serve 2-5 hours per week
☑ You are not permitted to miss any course to volunteer

Terms of Service

☑ H2H accepts volunteers to tutor students in grades 1st-8th. Tutors will serve one-on-one or with small student groups to assist with homework.
☑ Tutors will serve through the end of the semester. If a tutor must terminate their commitment prior to the end of the semester, two weeks written notice to H2H Staff is required.
☑ The schedule assigned to each tutor must be maintained for the entire semester. Any proposed changes to the schedule must be reviewed and

approved by H2H Staff. Tutor attendance will be monitored according to this agreed schedule.

Attendance Policy

- ☑ A **maximum** of two (2) absences per semester is allowed. Tutors will not be credited for time not served. Discipline procedures will begin after two absences. Missing more than two scheduled days of tutoring can result in your removal from the program.
- ☑ <u>Pre-arranged Absences:</u> To request time off in advance, an emailed request must be submitted to Hands to Help staff at least one (1) week in advance. Requests will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
- ☑ <u>Emergency/Unforeseen Absence:</u> If a tutor must be absent due to an emergency or illness (not a pre-arranged absence), they must email Hands to Help staff the night before if possible, or at least thirty (30) minutes before their scheduled starting time.
- ☑ <u>Emergency/Unforeseen Lateness:</u> If a tutor is going to be late they must call Hands to Help at least thirty (30) minutes before the scheduled start time for the shift.
- ☑ <u>Coming in Late/Leaving Early:</u> A **maximum** of two instances of lateness/leaving early is allowed per semester. Disciplinary procedures will begin after two instances of coming in late/leaving early.

Transportation

- ☑ Tutors must have their Merrimack College ID when reporting for their scheduled shift. Tutors may travel to/from Hands to Help by driving or using the Merrimack van.
- ☑ If tutors need to get a ride with the Merrimack van, they should contact the Stevens Service Learning Center (stevenscenter@merrimack.edu).
- ☑ On days where two vans are needed to bring tutors back to Merrimack College, please make sure that tutors who started service at 2:30 pm get to leave on the first van that arrives to take tutors back to campus.

Confidentiality

All 1st-8th grade student information must be kept confidential. Any tutor who improperly uses or discloses H2H confidential information will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination from the program.

Confidentiality guidelines for tutors:

- ☑ Do not take pictures of students.
- ☑ Do not post anything to social media about students.

- ☑ Do not obtain home address, email address, or telephone number, or any social media accounts of students.
- ☑ If a student finds you on social media, deny any requests to connect.
- ☑ Do not communicate with or meet up with students outside of the tutoring program.
- ☑ Do not ask students about their legal residency status or their citizenship status.
- ☑ Do not refer to students by last name, use only the student's first name.
- ☑ Do not discuss personal information about a student with other AR tutors or anyone outside the AR program.

Communication

- ☑ It is the tutors' responsibility to make sure the Hands to Help staff have accurate and up-to-date personal contact information. H2H staff must be promptly notified of changes to phone numbers or email addresses.
- ☑ Important program announcements and reminders are sent by email. Check your email regularly so you do not miss important information.

Statement of Non-Discrimination

- ☑ Hands to Help welcomes tutors without regard to race, religion, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, disability, citizenship, military status, size, marital status or any other characteristic protected by federal, state or local law. Tutors are expected to actively contribute to a welcoming environment for all.

Alcohol Policy

- ☑ Merrimack College Hands to Help prohibits the use of alcohol by any tutors before or during program hours. This applies to tutors who are over 21 years of age. Any violation of this policy will result in termination.

Tobacco Policy

- ☑ Merrimack College Hands to Help prohibits the use of tobacco products and e-cigarette products by any tutors during program hours. This applies to tutors who are over 18 years of age. Any violation of this policy will result in termination.

Drug-Free Workplace

- ☑ Merrimack College Hands to Help prohibits the use of any illegal or legal drugs by any tutors during program hours which have not been prescribed by a doctor. Any violation of this policy will result in termination.

Sexual Harassment

☑ Merrimack College Hands to Help prohibits any staff member, tutor or student from making unwelcome sexual advances of a verbal or physical nature toward another staff member, tutor or student. Disciplinary action will be taken.

Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting

☑ If a tutor suspects that a child is being abused or neglected, or if a tutor witnesses an incident, these guidelines should be followed:
1. Stay calm to avoid upsetting the child and escalating the situation.
2. Do not attempt to investigate. If the child chooses to share information with you, listen respectfully but do not ask probing questions. Reassure the child that they are in a safe place.
3. Confidentiality rules must be strictly enforced when discussing the situation. It is not appropriate to discuss abuse and neglect allegations with anyone other than H2H staff.
4. While as an unpaid volunteer you may not be legally required as a "mandated reporter" to report suspected abuse or neglect, as a volunteer with Hands to Help, we require you to do so. Immediately report any suspicion to a staff member.
5. H2H staff will assist you in immediately reporting the abuse to the Department of Children and Families (DCF).
6. Between 8:45 am and 5 pm, call the DCF Lawrence Area Office at 978-557-2500.
7. For nights, weekends, and holidays dial the Child-at-Risk Hotline at 800-792-5200.

General Conduct Standards

Tutors must abide by all regulations of the Merrimack College Handbook and Hands to Help policies while working as a tutor. You can find the Merrimack College Student Handbook online at:
http://catalog.merrimack.edu/index.php?catoid=5
In the event that tutors violate Merrimack College or Hands to Help program policies, a system is in place to handle discipline in a timely and fair manner.

To provide a high quality program for 1st-8th grade students and the best possible volunteer environment for tutors the following general conduct standards will be followed:

☑ Strive to provide the highest-quality service to the students.
☑ Act in a professional manner in all H2H activities.

- ☑ Act in a respectful manner when communicating with students, families, teachers, program partners, other H2H tutors and H2H staff.
- ☑ Direct concerns and problems regarding the program to H2H staff.
- ☑ Arrive with a positive attitude. Be present and patient with students.
- ☑ Promptly sign in and sign out each day.
- ☑ Ask staff to sign your hours log once a week or every other week. Staff will not sign off on hours served that have taken place more than two weeks prior to signing.
- ☑ Keep your cell phone and other electronics away / out of sight. Arrive with your cell phone sufficiently charged. You will not be able to charge your cell phone at Hands to Help.
- ☑ Always tutor in an open area with a Hands to Help staff member present. **TUTORS SHOULD NEVER BE ALONE WITH A STUDENT OR MULTIPLE STUDENTS. If you find yourself alone with a student, immediately ask another volunteer to step in or return to a space with other volunteers. If you notice a volunteer alone with a student, immediately notify a staff member. This is to keep all children, tutors, and staff members safe.**
- ☑ **Do not use the bathroom when children are using the bathroom. When children use the bathroom, stand in the doorway of the suite so that you can see the entrance to the bathroom and you can see inside Hands to Help at the same time.**
- ☑ **Tutors should never meet students outside the program or talk (call, text, or direct message) with students outside of the program.**
- ☑ Immediately notify a staff member if you hear about any bullying.
- ☑ Do not accept or give gifts to children or youth with the exception of cards, artwork, or other homemade, personalized items. Do not accept or receive any gifts of monetary value.
- ☑ Do not use profanity in the presence of children/youth or community members at any time. Do not discuss sex, alcohol/drugs, or any illegal activities in the presence of children/youth or community members.

The following are examples of conduct that may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination:

- ☑ Excessive or unauthorized absences
- ☑ Excessive or unauthorized tardiness
- ☑ Failure to follow the H2H dress code
- ☑ Violation or infraction of H2H program values
- ☑ Theft or inappropriate removal or possession of H2H property
- ☑ Falsification of records
- ☑ Insubordination or other disrespectful conduct
- ☑ Fighting or threatening violence in the workplace
- ☑ Profanity in the presence of students or community members
- ☑ Attendance at H2H activities while using or under the influence of alcohol or drugs

- ☑ Sexual or other unwelcome or unlawful harassment
- ☑ Failure to notify the program of any criminal arrest or conviction that occurs during the term of the program
- ☑ Failure to report any suspected child abuse or neglect
- ☑ Violation of any H2H or Merrimack College policies or expectations for satisfactory performance or conduct.

Dress Code

- ☑ H2H tutors must wear a neat and clean shirt/top, pants/shorts or skirt/dress, and appropriate footwear. Clothing may not have holes or rips.
- ☑ DON'T wear any clothing that exposes your midriff or underwear. Skirts, dresses, and shorts must be worn at a professional length.
- ☑ Hats, headscarves, headwraps, durags, or other similar items ARE allowed.
- ☑ DON'T wear clothing with any logos, pictures or words portraying drugs, cigarettes, alcohol, nudity, or sex.
- ☑ DON'T wear clothing that degrades any ethnic, religious, racial, or gender group.
- ☑ Visible tattoos must not depict drugs, cigarettes, alcohol, nudity, or sex. Any tattoos that contain such subject matters must be covered up.
- ☑ Tutors wearing inappropriate clothing will be sent home to change, will need to make their own arrangements for transportation to the site and must notify the site that they will be late or absent as appropriate.

Discipline Procedure

Certain activities are prohibited while at Hands to Help. Participating in any of the following activities will result in disciplinary action:

1. Engaging in any activity that is illegal under local, state or federal law;
2. Engaging in activities that pose a significant safety risk to others;
3. Drinking alcohol, tobacco or e-cigarette usage, or illegal drug use;
4. Inappropriate or unprofessional conversations

- ☑ **Steps in the three-strike discipline procedure**:

    1. **Informal Warning:** For a first minor offense, the initial step will be a verbal warning by the appropriate AR staff member, who will point out the violation to the tutor, offer alternatives and outline repercussions. This will be accompanied by written documentation of the concern/violation that will be placed in the tutor's file. At the first offense the AR staff may place the tutor on probation, the duration and terms of which will depend

on the nature and severity of the offense. *Examples of infractions that can result in an Informal Warning include but are not limited to:*

    a. Tutor is late or absent but does not call off
    b. Tutor does not follow the dress code
    c. Tutor is not utilizing time appropriately at the site (not tutoring students, texting or otherwise using a cell phone during tutoring, talking with other tutors instead of students, etc.)

2. **Formal Warning:** For a second offense, the AR staff member will issue a written warning documenting the violation and develop a plan for how the performance will improve. This written warning will be placed in the tutor's file. At the second offense the AR staff may place the tutor on suspension, the duration and terms of which will depend on the nature and severity of the offense. Suspension is one or more days without participation and compensation.

3. **Termination:** For a third offense the tutor will be terminated from the AR program. <u>Immediate termination of service will occur in the following situations</u>:

    a. tutor is intoxicated/under the influence of drugs while working
    b. tutor is grossly insubordinate
    c. tutor signs in for time not actually worked

Grievance Procedure

☑ Tutors should meet with H2H staff to discuss a grievance and develop a plan to resolve the dispute. If the grievance is not resolved it will be adjudicated by necessary college or legal authority.

Tutor/Student Relationship

☑ Tutors also double as mentors. Remember that students observe and hear everything! Be aware that even a casual conversation with another tutor about weekend plans could be inappropriate for a child to hear. Tutors not only work with students to improve reading but should also act as positive roles models to the students.

☑ Tutors are not permitted to use cellphones, tablets, or laptops during tutoring sessions.

- ☑ Tutors may not add students on any social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, or other sites. Tutors may not know students phone numbers.
- ☑ Tutors may not arrange meetings with students outside of the Hands to Help program.

Relationship Closure Policy

Anticipated Program Semester/Year Closure
- ☑ Participating elementary students will be given an explanation of the program timeline before the program start and at the beginning of the program year by H2H staff and tutors.
- ☑ Participating elementary students will be reminded throughout the program semester of when the program ends. As the closing date nears, students will be given more frequent reminders.
- ☑ Tutors will let their student(s) know if they anticipate any upcoming absences. (E.g. "I will be gone this Wednesday, but I'll be back the next Monday to tutor again.")
- ☑ Tutors and mentees will celebrate the closure of the program year with an informal certificate ceremony on the last day accompanied by a celebration.

Tutor Termination
- ☑ Tutors will serve through the semester. If a tutor must terminate their commitment prior to the end of the semester, two weeks written notice to H2H staff is required.
- ☑ Tutor must let the elementary student know when their last day of tutoring will be.
- ☑ Tutors must hold a closing conversation with their mentee.
- ☑ Tutors who are terminated by Hands to Help staff will likely not have a closing conversation with their mentee. The Hands to Help staff will step in to guide a closing reflection with the mentee.

Mentee Termination
- ☑ Some mentees may drop out of the Hands to Help program or be suspended or expelled, with or without notice to the tutor(s).
- ☑ If able, the tutor may have a closing conversation with the mentee.
- ☑ Tutors are encouraged to talk about their thoughts and feelings regarding the early tutor-mentee closing with fellow tutors or other Hands to Help staff.

Closing Conversation
- ☑ Tutor will be honest, candid, and supportive, regardless of the reason for the termination. Tutor will talk about the reason for ending the relationship honestly, but also appropriately.
- ☑ Appropriately discuss your thoughts and feelings for the mentee and your feelings about the termination. Encourage your mentee to do the same.

- ☑ Be positive and supportive, especially about what the future may hold for your mentee.
- ☑ Do not tell the mentee that you will keep in touch or see them around.

Lawrence School Closings

- ☑ If Lawrence Public Schools is closed or there is a delay due to inclement weather conditions or an emergency such as snow, fire or power failure then Hands to Help tutoring will be canceled.
- ☑ Official school delays and closings will be announced on local TV and radio stations and posted on the Lawrence Public Schools website at www.lawrence.k12.ma.us.

Merrimack College Closing

- ☑ If Merrimack College is closed or there is a delay due to inclement weather conditions or an emergency such as snow, fire or power failure then Hands to Help tutoring will be canceled.
- ☑ Official school delays and closings will be announced in a red or yellow banner across the top of the homepage of www.merrimack.edu.

Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) Check

- ☑ H2H tutors must pass a CORI check before they volunteer at Hands to Help.
- ☑ H2H tutors must pass a CORI check at the beginning of each year of volunteering. Tutors who have completed a CORI check in previous years still must pass a CORI check for the current volunteer year.

Training Information

- ☑ Failure to attend mandatory training sessions can result in suspension or termination of tutor position.

Initial Training. Conducted by Hands to Help staff and other trainers. Topics include:

- ☑ Orientation with Augustinian Volunteer (mandatory)
- ☑ Online Mandated Reporter Training (OMRT) for Child Abuse (mandatory)

Additional Training. Additional training may be conducted by Hands to Help staff and other trainers. Topics may include:

☑ Cultural Competency & Humility
☑ Restorative Practices

Staff and Supervisory Structure

☑ **Hands to Help Director – Rosana Urbaez** – Directs and oversees all aspects of Hands to Help at Merrimack College including the O'Brien Scholars program and Mack Gives Back.

☑ **Hands to Help Assistant Director – Lisbeth Valdez** – Assists in all aspects of Hands to Help at Merrimack College and leads the Lunch in Lawrence program.

☑ **Hands to Help Graduate Fellow – Katlyn Alves** – Manages after school tutoring program including field trips. Manages new High School to College program.

☑ **Hands to Help Augustinian Volunteer – James Wroblewski** – Assists in managing after school tutoring program including field trips. Orients new tutors at Merrimack before beginning as volunteers and also works with Campus Ministries.

☑ **Hands to Help Student Employee – Berny Lugo** – Assists with various aspects of Hands to Help at Merrimack College including paperwork, flyer creation, client consultations, and translation.

☑ **Tutor** – Volunteer serving as a reading tutor for 1st-8th grade students. Tutors are accepted to volunteer and report directly to H2H staff. Tutors are responsible for tutoring sessions, time records, and sign-in/sign-out.

Merrimack College Hands to Help
Tutor Handbook Agreement

As a Hands to Help Tutor with Merrimack College's Hands to Help tutoring and mentoring program, I certify that I have received a copy of the Merrimack College Hands to Help Handbook.

I have read and understand the Merrimack College Hands to Help Handbook in its entirety. If I have any questions regarding policies in the handbook or not discussed in the handbook, I will ask the Merrimack College Hands to Help staff. I will re-read the handbook at least twice a semester and as needed if any questions or issues arise. I understand that policies in the handbook may change, and that I will be updated of any policy changes.

I agree to abide by the policies and procedures in the Merrimack College Hands to Help Handbook. I understand that breaking any policies or procedures may result in disciplinary actions, including termination from the program.

I agree to represent both the Hands to Help program and Merrimack College in a positive manner during all aspects of the program.

_____   _____

Signature of Hands to Help Tutor   Date

_____

Hands to Help Tutor's Name - Printed