

## Reading Is Fundamental Volunteer Instructions

- **Complete your background check. (Required for all volunteers.)**
- You will receive an email from [TheAdvocates@sterlingvolunteers.com](mailto:TheAdvocates@sterlingvolunteers.com) with the subject line *Invitation from Book'em*. **CHECK YOUR JUNK/SPAM FOLDER.** The links often go to spam.
- Please click on the link: *Order My Background Check*. Complete the information requested.
- You will receive an email confirming that you completed the background check.  
*Subject line: You did it! You're on your way to becoming a Verified Volunteer.*
- Sterling Volunteers will then complete the background check on behalf of Book'em.
- Once Book'em has been notified and verified that you are eligible to volunteer, you will receive another email from [TheAdvocates@sterlingvolunteers.com](mailto:TheAdvocates@sterlingvolunteers.com) with the subject line: *Book'em has reviewed your background check*. This email confirms that you are now an official RIF volunteer.
- **Once we receive your clear background check, Book'em will email you with your classroom assignment, or you will receive it at orientation. Included in the email/paperwork will be your teacher's name, email address, school information and Primary Book'em contact (either Caroline Lewis or Cari Sands).**
  
- **Email your teacher to introduce yourself and set up your first visit.**
- **Keep this email short** – long emails are more likely to get ignored. See the **“Contacting Your Teacher”** sheet in this packet for details about how and what to include when you email your teacher. Pay close attention to the next steps if you don't get a response. You can also use the included **email templates** that are very helpful!
- **Include your RIF School Liaison on this email.** Liaison information is included with your teacher assignment.
- **Email your teacher the day before your visit to confirm** the day and time.



- **One or more days before or the day of your reading visit, go to Cockrill Elementary School, 4701 Indiana Ave, Nashville, 37209, RIF Book Room 132, to pick up books to distribute to the students in your assigned class. You can also get your books at Glengarry (200 Finley Drive, Nashville 37217) if that is a more convenient location. (\*\*If you are assigned to a classroom at Dodson or Paragon Mills, you may pick up books for your class on site at your assigned school instead of traveling to Cockrill. See more details below.)**
- **Please consider taking a [Teacher Questionnaire](#) with you on your first visit. We recommend giving it to your teacher to fill out while you are reading to the students and getting it back before you leave. It has several questions to get some additional information to help you in getting to know the students in your classroom better and how to best communicate with your teacher moving forward.**
- **All Book Room hours: 7:45am – 3:00pm, M-F. School starts at 8:00 and ends at 2:45. Keep in mind that traffic can be heavy at the beginning/end of the school day.**
- **Check the [MNPS calendar](#) before going to your school and the book room. The book room is available to volunteers *only* when school is in session.**
- **Check in at the school by signing in at the Front Office and getting your visitor badge. *\*Take your ID with you for the front office to scan at sign in.***
- **While in the book room, please adhere to all safety procedures. Schools sometimes have safety drills of various kinds. If you are in the building during a safety drill or event, follow the directions hanging by the door on the inside of the Book Room. [Here](#) is a copy of the Safety Procedures for your reference.**
- **If an accident occurs while you are volunteering with Book'em, please use this [link](#) to complete the Accident/Incident Report.**
  - a. We now have 3 mini book rooms. Glengarry Elementary Book Room, like Cockrill, is open to any RIF reader for choosing their books. The mini book rooms at Dodson Elementary & Paragon Mills Elementary are to be used only by readers at those schools. At each location, select enough books for every student to pick one book each plus 5 more books to allow for choice. If you don't know the number of students in your assigned class yet, take 30 total books for the first visit. This is important in order to give every student a choice of books. This will also allow for the teacher to select books for students who are absent, and to keep the extra copies to use however your teacher would like**

(classroom library, give to students at other times, etc.). **Please see specific instructions for those book sites here: [Dodson, Glengarry, Paragon Mills.](#)**

- At the beginning of the school year, you will want to select easier books in the current grade level or books that are one or more grade levels below their current grade level based on what your teacher shared about the students' reading levels, if you were given that information. Most MNPS students are not reading at grade level.
- We have Bilingual/Foreign Language books for students if needed. Your classroom teacher can help you know if your class would enjoy having that option.
- Most volunteers take 2-4 copies of several titles, so that if students want the same book, they can hopefully get it. (Do not promise to bring a specific book for students next time as the books in the RIF room change constantly, and there's not a guarantee a given title will still be available.)
- **Be sure to count and sign out your books for students in the binder in the RIF Book Room, or on the clipboard at the satellite sites.** (Also note the number on the back of your nametag, so you'll know how many books you will be distributing and can accurately log that through our RIF Volunteer online portal after your visit.) **\*At Cockrill, the binder is organized by school that you are assigned to. Please note the instructions for which books to log and which school page you are signing. At the satellite sites, please note all info to log in each column on the clipboard log sheets.**
- There are blue Book'em **book bags in the book rooms** that you can use to transport your books. \*Please only take 1/school year. If you need an additional bag or forget yours on the next visit, there are other fabric bags you may use in a red milk crate by the back counter of the Cockrill book room. You are also welcome to bring your own bags if you prefer. TIP: The books can be heavy. Some volunteers bring a rolling bag or even a small suitcase to transport their books.
- In the Cockrill book room, get enough **Tip Sheets** for each student to have one, plus one for your teacher. Tip Sheets are numbered 1 through 5, so take sheet #1 for your first visit, #2 for your second visit, etc. Please take enough English/Spanish for the entire class, then a few additional of both the Kurdish/Arabic and Somali/Burmese sheets in case any of those are needed. **At Dodson, Glengarry & Paragon Mills:** There is now one Tip sheet with QR codes that have all the languages available on one sheet. You can take one for the entire year rather than having 5 different sheets to take throughout the year. Please look on the mobile cart or shelving for tip sheets if at Dodson, Glengarry, or Paragon Mills.

- **For your first visit only**, also take enough **Guardian Letters** for each student to have one, plus one for your teacher. (Follow the same format as tip sheets for the various languages.) Take the tip sheets and guardian letters with you to hand out to the students with their books. \* At Cockrill, tip sheets and guardian letters are located on the back counter of the book room. At the satellite sites, the guardian letter is located on or near the book log cart.
- While in the book room, if you have not gotten **your Book'em/RIF nametag** yet, find it in the box labeled NAMETAGS on the white folding table – alphabetical order by last name. (If you do not have a nametag in the file, please sign your name on the sheet next to the file that says “I need a nametag”.) If you are using a satellite BookRoom location, email Cari at [cari@bookem-kids.org](mailto:cari@bookem-kids.org) and your name tag will be taken to the appropriate satellite bookroom location.
- Your nametag has a label on the back that has space for you to note information about your visits. It also has a QR code that takes you to the RIF Volunteer Online Portal to record information after each visit.
- **Choose two to four books to read to your class and practice before your visit.**
- You won't have time to read four books, but you may need a choice of what to read.
- Be sensitive about seasonal books (e.g. not everyone celebrates Halloween.) Check with your teacher first.
- If your teacher suggests a book or topic, please respect their request. Their time is limited, and sometimes they have specific needs for read-alouds.
- You can borrow books from the RIF Lending Library in the RIF Book Room at Cockrill. They are located on the rolling carts in the middle of the room and have color coded dots to signify grade levels (see end of carts for grade level key). These must be returned to the RIF Book Room at Cockrill (at your convenience). They do not need to be checked out or included in the book log in the book room(s). There are not Lending Library books at the mini book room sites at Glengarry, Paragon Mills, and Dodson.
- There are large format read-aloud books in the drawers of the back counter if you prefer this style. Please return to Cockrill the next time you are there – they do not have to be checked out or logged.
- You may use a book from the book room shelves to read aloud but **don't take extra copies** of the read-aloud to distribute to the students as an option for their book to keep – they will ALL want it!

- You can check out books from the public library. Children’s librarians love recommending read-aloud titles.
  - You can read books from your personal collection if they are age and content appropriate.
  - See the [recommended read aloud list](#) if you need some suggestions to consider.
  - Here are some [tips for reading aloud](#) to elementary students
  - Make sure that **you like the book**. If you don’t like the read-aloud, the students probably will realize that as you read it.
  - Please be mindful of the diversity of students in MNPS schools.
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- **Head to your school for your visit on the date you scheduled with your teacher.**
  - Make sure that you **allow yourself time to get to your school**, sign in at the office, and find your teacher’s classroom. **Have your ID ready to sign in at the office.**
  - Remember to wear your Book’em/RIF nametag, take your read-aloud books, books to distribute, tip sheets for each student, and guardian letters (for first visit only).
  - **Introduce yourself every time you visit the class.** Mention that you are a volunteer with the Book’em Reading Is Fundamental program. Dress appropriately.
  - **Read to your class for about 15-20 minutes.** This may mean reading more than one book. Come prepared.
  - Be sure to briefly talk with the children about **how you use and enjoy reading**. This helps them understand how their studies relate to the real world. **Ask them questions** about what you read to them, what they remember, etc.
  - If there’s time, share more about yourself and ask the students questions about what they are learning, what they like to do, what they like to read, etc. Let them ask you questions, but do not overstay the scheduled time.
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- **Distribute the books for about 10-15 minutes.**
  - Let your teacher know that you have books for your students and ask them where a good place would be to put the books out, so the students can select their books after you’ve read aloud with them.
  - Ask the teacher to help you select students to come pick out their books in small groups. Each student gets one book to take home as their own. **Emphasize to students that these books are their forever books to keep.**
  - Ask the teacher to select a book for each absent student.

- Let the teacher know that they get to keep the extra books to use however they want (classroom library, give to students at another time, etc.). **If teachers do not want to keep the extra books, leave them in the front office as you leave with the liaison's name attached by Post-It (ask teacher for liaison's name if you are unsure).**
- Encourage the students to write their names in the front of their books.
- As you leave, say goodbye and let the students know you're looking forward to seeing them in a month or so.
- If possible, make sure you have your next visit scheduled before you leave.
- Please **do not overstay** the time your teacher has allotted for your visit. Teachers are pressed for time during the school day.
- After your visit, **log your visit through the RIF Volunteer Online Portal** – see QR code on the back of your nametag or go to this site: [Bookem-kids.org/record-visit/](http://Bookem-kids.org/record-visit/) You can also find the site by going to the [Book'em](http://Book'em) website and clicking the Volunteer tab, then click RIF Readers - Log Your Visit, or by scanning this code:



- You are committing to **making 5 visits** between now and the end of the school year. Consistency is very important for elementary students. They are counting on you to show up and come back and they need and want these books. **If it works for both you and the teacher to read additional times, that is fine but you will not be able to take books for the students for any visits over the 5.**
- Take into account that schools are closed for holidays, breaks, built-in days off, and inclement weather. Refer to [MNPS calendar](#) in your orientation packet for this information.
- **Contact us if you get behind or can't continue** and we will help you troubleshoot communication issues or reassign your class to another volunteer if needed.

**And, finally – HAVE FUN! Your enthusiasm for reading will be contagious (in a positive way)!**

**Need help? Contact Caroline Lewis or Cari Sands at [Caroline@bookem-kids.org](mailto:Caroline@bookem-kids.org), [Cari@bookem-kids.org](mailto:Cari@bookem-kids.org) or 0615-255-1820.**

