

A Day in the Life of a WatchDOG

So the time has come and it's your turn to be the WatchDOG at school. **What will you experience?** What is expected of you? Will you have a great time with not only your child, but their friends also? Rest assured every dad, step-dad, granddad and uncle thinks the same things before their first day. For many of us, it has been at least 10 years since we were in school ourselves.

Depending on whether you are a WatchDOG at a primary or secondary school, that will determine the amount of student interaction you will have in the classroom setting. For either level, you will have plenty of student interaction during arrival, departure, lunch, and just being present within the school hallways.

All WatchDOGS are recognized by a uniform chosen by the school. (i.e. **Official WATCH D.O.G.S. t-shirt, ball cap or vest**) Make sure you wear this uniform so that the students and faculty can recognize your positive presence on campus.

At every school, arrival is an important part of the day. The goal is to provide students an encouraging start to their day, by opening their car door and welcoming them or simply providing a "high five" as they get off the bus. Helping our schools cut down on late arrivals supports the students and the teachers.

Once the car and bus duty is completed, go directly to the front office for WatchDOG orientation. Most schools will provide a written schedule of teacher's names and room assignments where you will interact with students along with a list of other duties you may participate in throughout your day.

The goal of a WatchDOG is to be an unobtrusive presence on the campus. Somebody who makes a difference just by being there and visible. After your orientation, take time to walk the whole school and familiarize yourself with the layout. This will help you prepare for the day and let the students and teachers see there is a WatchDOG for the day.

Most often, the WatchDOG will have the opportunity for structured time with a class or a group of students twice in the morning and then again in the afternoon. This is a real opportunity for you to become a part of the education system by supporting students and teachers in the learning and achievement process. Whether it is primary or secondary, you may be inspired to read to the kids or have them read to you. If you love to sing, you may choose to take part in the choir for an hour. Just by sitting in as an adult during some classes provides needed focus by the students towards the teachers lesson. Physical Education class at any level gives the WatchDOG the chance to test his skills with Kindergarteners up to Seniors in high school. The opportunities for WatchDOGS are endless.

Lunch is always a great time for student interaction. Eating with your own child and their friends will open doors of communication as you step in to their social life at school. It is awesome to watch your child interact with other students. Once your child's lunch is over, stay in the lunchroom for the other students. Introduce yourself to them and support the staff in the cafeteria as needed.

If you are a WatchDOG at a primary school, *PLAY* at recess with the kids. They cannot wait for you to swing, play soccer, do the monkey bars, or just go down the slide. This is your chance to put some more *FUN* into your day. Make sure to look for those kids who may not have someone to play with. Have them join you in the fun at recess.

As a WatchDOG, you want to close out the day strong. Involve yourself in afternoon classes and commit time to be present in the hallways and around the school. Departure from the school is an exciting time for the students. You have made the day great for them by supporting the school as a volunteer.

As a dad, step-dad, granddad or uncle, you will have just experienced the opportunity to give a little back to your community by making your school a better place for your kids. Thank you for your commitment of reconnecting with your children.