

ESCAMBIA COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK



SCHOOL VOLUNTEER PROGRAM



Community Involvement Department
J.E. Hall Educational Services Center
30 E. Texar Drive
Pensacola, FL 32503
(850) 469-5676 (850)469-5675

IMPORTANT INFORMATION – The Basics

THANK YOU for volunteering with the Escambia County School District!
This handbook will answer some questions you may have and may be used as a reference to you as a volunteer.

You are strongly encouraged to attend orientation and training sessions offered by the school's volunteer program. The sessions are designed to help you feel more comfortable in your volunteer setting and provide you with additional information which will enhance the success of your volunteer work. These training sessions will provide you with the "tools of the trade."

We wish for each of you a successful, rewarding, and satisfying experience. Should you have any additional questions or need other information, please feel free to call your school's volunteer coordinator, consult with the teacher to whom you are assigned, or contact the district school volunteer coordinator, Wanda Kotick, in the Office of Community Involvement (850) 469-5676 or (850) 469-5675).

Feel free to use the form below to record information about your school(s).

Name of School _____

Phone Number _____

Principal _____

School Volunteer Coordinator _____

Teacher's Name (if applicable) _____

Grade Level _____ **Room Number** _____

School Hours _____

Day(s) and Hour(s) to Work _____

District Volunteer Coordinator: Wanda Kotick

Phone Number: (850) 469-5676 or (850) 469-5675

ALWAYS REMEMBER TO SIGN IN AT THE OFFICE WHEN YOU ARRIVE AT YOUR SCHOOL AND SIGN OUT WHEN YOU LEAVE. REMEMBER TO WEAR YOUR VOLUNTEER IDENTIFICATION WHILE ON SCHOOL GROUNDS.

Helping Yourself While Helping Others from helpguide.org

- Volunteering allows you to connect to your community and make it a better place.
- Helping out with even the smallest tasks can make a real difference to the lives of people and organizations in need.
- Volunteering can benefit you and your family as much as the cause you choose to help.
- Dedicating your time as a volunteer helps you make new friends, expand your network, and boost your social skills.

Getting the most out of volunteering

You're donating your valuable time, so it's important that you enjoy and benefit from your volunteering. It's important to make sure that your volunteer position is a good fit and to communicate with the people you're working with in the volunteer organization.

Ask questions. You want to make sure that the experience is right for your skills, your goals, and the time you want to spend. If you have any questions, be sure to speak up. Questions to ask your volunteer coordinator might address your time commitment, if there's any training involved, who you will be working with, and what to do if you have questions during your experience.

Make sure you know what's expected. Before starting, make sure you are comfortable with the organization, know what is expected, and understand the time commitment. Consider starting small so that you don't over commit yourself at first. Give yourself some flexibility to change your focus if needed.

Don't be afraid to make a change. Speak up if your experience isn't what you expected. Don't force yourself into a bad fit. Talk to the school about changing your focus or consider looking for another match.

Enjoy yourself. Most importantly, make sure you're having fun! The best volunteer experiences benefit both the volunteer and the school.

GENERAL INFORMATION

PARKING: Each school has a different method for handling parking. Some schools may have restrictions on where to park. Please ask your school's volunteer coordinator to explain the school's rules for parking.

REGISTRATION: All volunteers must complete an application and an Affidavit of Good Moral Character prior to volunteering at the school.

ATTENDANCE: All we ask is dependability! Because each job is important and has to be done, please notify the person for whom you are working or call the school when you are unable to be there at the assigned time.

ID BADGES: While you are on school grounds, please wear your volunteer identification.

RECORDS: The District requires that a record be kept of all volunteer hours. Sign in and out each time you volunteer.

CONDUCT: Your conduct should provide for and reinforce the safety and well-being of students. You are a role model for your students and should dress and act appropriately. Cell phones need to be silenced.

MEDICATION: Volunteers are **not** permitted to administer medication to students.

DISCIPLINE: It is the teacher's responsibility to discipline the students.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Classroom work with students is **always** confidential. Keep your observations on a professional level. A volunteer must not divulge information to which he or she may have access.

ACCIDENTS: All accidents that occur when a student is under your supervision should be reported to the supervising teacher immediately. If you are involved in an accident, please report to office immediately and fill out the necessary report form.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT PROGRAMS

MENTOR PROGRAM

Community, military, and business volunteers attend a one-hour training before being placed one-on-one with a student for one hour per week during the school year. As a role model and listener, the Mentor provides positive reinforcement and friendship, builds self-esteem and promotes the value of education. In addition to the required training provided by the Mentor Project Director, mentors must also be fingerprinted by the school district at no cost to the volunteer.

PARTNERS IN EDUCATION

Partners in Education is designed to expand education opportunities and enhance experiences in the Escambia County School District through increased contact with local businesses, civic clubs, governmental organizations and churches.

We have many ways that businesses, large and small can partner with the district and provide support. This can be in time, in-kind donations or charitable contributions. Please contact the Community Involvement Coordinator to find out more information.

VOLUNTEER JOB DESCRIPTIONS

CLASSROOM ASSISTANT

Works under the direction or in cooperation with the classroom teacher to perform non-professional tasks so that the teacher may devote full attention to the accomplishment of his or her objectives for the class.

CLERICAL ASSISTANT

Works under the direction or in cooperation with the school staff to provide clerical support for the school. (Copying, sorting, filing, etc.)

SCHOOL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SAC)

The SAC functions as a resource to the principal and members work as a team to develop the school improvement plan. Members elected represent a broad cross-section of the school's student population and the area in which the school is located. Volunteers from the community can express an interest in becoming a member of the school advisory council.

ARTS AND CRAFTS ASSISTANT

Works with art or classroom teachers to help students develop their creativity. The volunteer provides many opportunities for students to discover and develop their abilities to their fullest. Assist teacher with presentation of materials for art instruction or assist students with art projects.

GUIDANCE ASSISTANT

Works under the direction or in cooperation with guidance counselors to provide services to the school guidance department. Often requires specialized training, especially on matters of confidentiality.

LANGUAGE ARTS/READING TUTOR

Works under the direction or in cooperation with the classroom teacher or special reading teacher to extend the language skills, listening, speaking, reading or writing skills of the student.

MATH TUTOR

Works with the classroom teacher or math teacher to provide individual help.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION ASSISTANT

Works under the direction or in cooperation with the classroom or physical education teacher to provide a wide variety of experiences for students through physical education.

SPECIAL ACTIVITIES VOLUNTEER

Provides occasional, but important support needed for the duration of a particular school project or event. This can be proctoring tests or participating in a school-wide event (carnival, field day, celebration).

MEDIA CENTER ASSISTANT

Works under the direction of the school media specialist supporting the services of the media center. This job includes maintenance tasks that speed the availability of books and materials to the student.

SCHOOL LUNCHROOM AIDE

Supervises the lunchroom according to school practices during lunch periods, helps maintain order, helps children when assistance is needed, and works with administration and teachers to improve procedures.

STUDENT VOLUNTEER

Provides peer and cross-age tutoring (high school, middle school, or college students).

HOMEROOM PARENT

Works with the classroom teacher to assist with classroom parties, and serves as a liaison to parents for disseminating information.

SUNSHINE MATH VOLUNTEER

Works with the classroom teachers to coordinate this math enrichment program for grades 1-6. This includes the distribution and grading of worksheets.

VISION SCREENING VOLUNTEER

Assists with vision screening for students. Process takes approximately 1 to 3 days depending on size of student population. Training is required.

“AT HOME” PROJECTS

This might be cutting out letters, drawing posters, making crafts-anything that could be done at home- especially convenient for working parents or those with little ones at home.

FIELD TRIPS

Upon request of teacher, help chaperone students during field trips.

REFLECTIONS PROJECT

“Reflections” is an art competition sponsored by the National PTA. Students compete in visual arts, photography, literature, and music. Volunteers are needed to assist students with projects, to assist in judging, and to forward submissions to the county competition.

LABELS/RECEIPTS FOR EDUCATION

Volunteers help collect labels and receipts from various products as needed.

SCHOOL PICTURES

Volunteers help organize students when class pictures are taken.

CARNIVAL

Depending on needs of carnival committee, volunteer workers and planners are needed.

COMMUNITY RESOURCE

Upon request of a teacher, speak on subject(s) of interest to students such as careers, hobbies, travel, etc.

PTA BOARD

Depending on needs of PTA, serve as chairman or member of specific committee.

QUESTION AND ANSWERS

1. How do I become a volunteer?

Any person interested in volunteering may do so by contacting the volunteer coordinator at the desired school or by calling the Community Involvement Office at 469-5676. You will be asked to complete a volunteer application listing your skills, interests, preferred location, grade level and type of volunteer service desired. The application includes an Affidavit of Good Moral Character.

2. What are the qualifications to become a school volunteer?

The qualifications needed to be a school volunteer are a personal desire to help, a sincere interest in students, an ability to follow school procedures and policies, and a willingness to make a definite time commitment. Any training that is needed will be provided by the teacher and/or School Volunteer Coordinator. A teaching background is not required as volunteers work under the direction of a school's professional staff.

3. May I bring my pre-school child with me?

No, bringing pre-school children with you to school may present a liability for the school. In addition, having a very young child in a classroom may interrupt class procedure, disrupt the students and prevent the volunteer from giving full attention to the work the teacher has prepared. Many school volunteers with pre-school children have formed a cooperative babysitting service among themselves and take turns with babysitting. This can be worked out among volunteers at individual schools. You can, however, still help the school by planning to do work at home.

4. When friends and neighbors ask me about school, what may I tell them?

Volunteers can be a big help in representing the school to the community. We want you to talk about your school and your involvement. However, you may have access to "privileged information" which, naturally, should be treated as such. "Privileged information" is defined as personal records, grades, test scores, behavior and attitude of students. This is important school business and should never be discussed outside of the school.

Criticizing school personnel and practices is not acceptable. Your job in school is as a professional working with other professionals. This includes

social media. Never post information or pictures about students on social media.

5. May I choose the teacher with whom I wish to work?

Volunteers are only placed in classrooms where teachers have specifically requested their assistance. The School Volunteer Coordinator and the Principal at the individual school make the decisions about placement of volunteers.

6. What if I am not happy with the job assigned to me?

Please notify the School Volunteer Coordinator. Every effort is made to place volunteers in a situation which matches the needs of both the volunteer and the job. There are enough different jobs for everyone to feel comfortable. Teachers also have the opportunity to ask for a different assignment for a volunteer.

7. What do I do about discipline?

Disciplinary action is the legal responsibility of teachers. Volunteers should never be put in a position of having to enforce discipline. If you are having a problem, immediately inform the teacher.

8. What should I do if I am unable to be at the school at my assigned time?

As soon as you are aware that you will be unable to be at the school at your assigned time, call school personnel to let them know. The teacher has planned his/her schedule according to the time that you have agreed to help. If possible, please keep your assigned schedule.

9. Why is it important for me to sign-in and out each time I volunteer at a school?

There are many reasons this requirement is necessary, such as maintaining school security, verification of volunteer service which can be used as work experience for future employment, liability purposes, in the event you receive an emergency telephone call, you can be found. The school may also be eligible for the Golden School Award presented each year by the Florida Department of Education for outstanding volunteer programs.

TUTORING TIPS

Set a positive, warm learning environment when working with students. It takes time and patience for you and the student to feel comfortable and friendly. Take the first step toward building the desired relationship by simply being yourself. The following points may also help as you begin working with students.

A student's name is very important. Make sure you say the student's name the way the student wants it said. Learn to spell the name correctly.

Make sure the student knows and can pronounce your name. Writing it down on a card for him/her may be helpful.

Be a careful listener. Show that you are interested in the student as a person. Listen carefully to what the student has to say. Ask questions about favorite activities, family members, good friends, and personal hopes and dreams. By your words and actions, let the student know that you care.

Make it your first goal to become friends with the student. The student will benefit from this personal relationship. The student will be more willing to learn from someone he/she likes.

Relax and be yourself. Maintain a sense of humor.

Build your relationship slowly and it will continue to grow by your acceptance of the student, your faith in his/her ability, your honesty, your sensitivity, and your trustworthiness. Never promise something with which you cannot follow through or produce.

Students make mistakes. Let them know that making mistakes is a part of learning. Do not be afraid of making mistakes yourself.

Build the student's self-confidence. Praise your student honestly and frequently. Attentiveness and effort can be as important as performance. Accentuate the positive; minimize the negative.

Be patient. Students learn at different rates and in different ways. Any sign of progress, as little as it might be, will be your greatest reward. Some children work more slowly on academic problems because they are less secure.

Repetition is important. Devise different ways of doing things so the student can repeat what is being learned.

Be sincere and praise any honest effort on his/her part. Look at failures as an opportunity for another try at the same task. He/she should never see failures as negative. A student quickly loses respect for the giver of undeserved praise.

If the student starts to digress from the work assignment, help him/her refocus on the subject by saying, “How does this apply to what we started talking about?”

You might find out from the teacher a future assignment that will require a lot of reading. By reading the assignment with him/her and seeing that he/she understands it well, you could give him/her success for that day in class. This should also give him/her help with his/her self concept which is one of your major goals.

When speaking to students:

Avoid comparing students and their work.

Give students a choice only when you intend to abide by that choice.

State directions in a positive form. Example, “Use the blocks for building,” rather than, “Don’t throw the blocks.”

Your goal should be success.

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75 North Pace Boulevard

Pensacola, FL 32505

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