

St. Lucie Public Schools Volunteer Handbook



St. Lucie Public Schools VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

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Volunteers in Public Schools Program Goals

- Provide individual educational assistance to students
- Improve students' self-worth by increasing opportunities for educational achievement
- Relieve teachers of many non-instructional tasks and duties
- Stimulate business and community interest, concern, and support for the educational system
- Enhance all aspects of the educational process

Volunteers in Public Schools Code of Ethics

As members of a movement to improve and enrich the lives of our children, volunteers have a challenging role to play. Here are some guidelines to help:

- *Volunteers never replace the teacher.* Volunteers will work directly or indirectly with students, and offer a supplementary service, provide motivation to develop a student's receptivity to learning, and help the student acquire a better self-image.
- *School staff and teachers will decide the specific tasks that need to be performed and provide the information and materials volunteers will need.*
- Demonstrate respect and understanding for each student as a person are the most important ingredients in working effectively as a volunteer. Self-esteem and self-confidence are basic to learning.
- *Teachers oversee the instruction and the discipline of each student.* The volunteers are to guide and encourage the student along the path the teacher has chosen. The personal interest volunteers show may be the catalyst that makes a student recognize his/her own worth and ability to achieve.
- *Volunteers will consider any information about the students privileged and to be held in the strictest confidence.*
- Volunteers are asked to support the basic aims of education by:
 - ❖ Maintaining consistent and regular attendance.
 - ❖ Following all regulations and procedures of the school and the district.
 - ❖ Discussing concerns with staff members at appropriate times.
 - ❖ Observing discretion in commenting on school matters.

The way we communicate with children affects all aspects of their personal growth. The tone of our voice, our body language, and the words we choose make an impact on how their self-esteem develops. It is important to use language of respect whenever interacting with children. It is vital that we never shame, insult, belittle, discourage, or label children, their feelings, decisions they make, or their actions.

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The commitment volunteers make to our students is a significant one. As they participate in school activities, volunteers are looked to as role models. Therefore, it is imperative that volunteers conduct themselves in a correct and responsible manner, thereby making the *Volunteers in Public Schools* program a complete success.

Volunteers in Public Schools Policies

- The Board encourages volunteer participation by individuals and groups in local schools, central and area offices, and supervised off-school activities before, during, and after school hours.
- Definition: A volunteer is a non-paid person functioning under the sponsorship of the Board and at the direction of the responsible administrator.
- The Director of Volunteer Services shall be responsible for the direction of the program and its compliance with all laws pertaining to volunteers, which include the recruitment of volunteers and the evaluation of the program.
- Volunteers registered with the school volunteer office are protected by the Board's Workers Compensation and General Liability Self-insured programs the same as employees.
 - ❖ All volunteers must be approved 72 hours prior to participation.
 - ❖ All schools shall maintain a log, which records names, dates and hours of services, and tasks assigned. All volunteers shall sign in and out when volunteering in a school or in a school-related activity.
 - ❖ Volunteers shall register each year.
 - ❖ Volunteers must wear an identification badge while on school property.
- Volunteers are subject to a security screening prior to participation in the volunteer program, including a search of the volunteer's name against the registration information regarding sexual predators and sexual offenders maintained by the Department of Law Enforcement under Section 943.043, Florida Statutes. The District shall decline to accept volunteer services from persons who fail to pass the background screening.
- Categories
 - ❖ Instructional Volunteers - Provide services to students and staff on a regular basis.
 - ❖ Resource Volunteers - Provide curriculum enrichment for students on an occasional basis by discussing jobs, demonstrating crafts, or sharing collections or hobbies with classes, etc.
 - ❖ Organizational Volunteers - Comprise the school community

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organizations such as: PTO, boosters, School Advisory Committee (SAC), civic groups, etc.

- ❖ Mentor Volunteers - Work with individual students encouraging academic remediation, communication skills, and goal development.
- ❖ Fundraising Volunteers - Individuals or groups to raise dollars to benefit the school or clubs.

Volunteer Activities

The volunteer coordinator at each site will assist volunteers in determining the activity best suited to match skills, interests, schedules, and needs of the school.

- After-School Programs - Supervise, under the direction of the teacher, any after-school activities.
- Arts and Crafts - Work with the art or classroom teacher helping students develop creativity and expanding appreciation of art.
- Business Partner - Provide expertise and resources to enhance the career-based educational perspective by participating in advisory committee functions, opportunities for career related internships, and/or special events and programs which assist students in skill development.
- Chaperone Events/Trips - Provide additional support and supervision of students while on field trips, sporting events, etc.
 - ❖ Must be 18 years of age to chaperone a K-8 field trip.
 - ❖ Overnight field trip chaperones must be fingerprinted through *Fieldprint* at your own expense. (District authorization and prior approval required.)
 - ❖ For all students to be adequately supervised, only those students enrolled in the participating classes will be allowed on the field trips/athletic activities/field day activities.
- Classroom Support - Work with an assigned teacher.
- Volunteers may not bring their children into classrooms. This presents a liability and is disruptive to the classroom.
- Office Assistance - Work with a school department or office staff performing designated departmental tasks such as: maintaining records, keeping inventory, duplicating materials, cataloging materials, or preparing teaching aids data entry.
- Clinic Support – Assist in the clinic to provide services for those students who are ill or who are unable to be in class because of health reasons and help with health screening activities such as visual and hearing screenings.
- Community Resource - Provide special demonstrations, tasks or instruction on a variety of topics including careers, hobbies, travel or interests which enrich

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student awareness and knowledge.

- Exceptional Student Support - Assist exceptional education teacher in implementing instructional activities for individual or groups of exceptional education students.
- Media Center Support - Work under the supervision of the media specialist to assist in operating the media center by shelving, filing, clipping, circulating, and processing books are some of the tasks to be performed.
- Mentor/Tutor - Work with a student or students on an individual or small group basis for approximately one hour per week to provide academic reinforcement, assist in goal development, and serve as a role model to students who may have been identified as at-risk.
- Speakers of Other Languages Assistance - Aid in establishing effective written and oral communication among limited and non-English speaking students, parents and school personnel.
- Special Activities Support - Perform occasional but important support as needed for the duration of a project by serving on committees, working with parent / teacher groups, assisting with special school activities, working in the school store, or assisting with school fund-raising projects.
- Supervision Assistance - Assist in the cafeteria, hallways, parking lot, or playground to provide additional supervision.
- Career/Technical Skills Support - Assist individual students in areas of applied technology and career development activities.
- Miscellaneous Opportunities to Support – Other areas include, but are not limited to: Math Superstars, readers/listeners, chorus, band, physical education, and maintenance (gardening).

All volunteer services must be under the supervision of a staff member. All volunteer activity is at the discretion of the school administration.

Sign-In/Sign-Out Policy

Each time volunteers enter a school to volunteer, they must sign in, wear a nametag, and sign out when leaving the school. This requirement is necessary for the following reasons:

- Safeguarding our students and maintaining campus security.
- Following School Board Policy calls for a sign-in procedure.
- Locating a volunteer in case of an emergency telephone call.
- Providing insurance coverage for volunteers while volunteering at school for a specific purpose. Volunteers are not covered if they have not completed a volunteer application or do not sign in when visiting the school.

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- Verifying volunteer service as work experience.
- Recognizing volunteers for their dedication and service to our schools.
- Qualifying for the Florida Department of Education Golden School Award by demonstrating twice as many volunteer hours as students enrolled.

General Volunteer Procedures

- Each year volunteers must apply online by completing the most recent volunteer posting and submitting it to Human Resources.
- Volunteers must always work under the supervision of a district employee and are never to meet a child alone.
- Volunteers agree to practice the “No Touch” policy. Praise and encouragement are the approved methods to demonstrate care and respect. All students and parents should adhere to the school’s dress code unless otherwise indicated.
- Volunteers must wear an identification badge every time they are on school campus or supervising events.
- If volunteers are going to be absent for a scheduled activity, or if volunteers are unable to speak at the agreed time, they should call the school and ask that the teacher and/or student be informed of this absence.
- Volunteers should be prompt. Due to scheduling requirements, it is important to make every minute count.
- Volunteers are asked to commit to time they can realistically expect to fulfill.
- Once volunteers receive their assignment from the school volunteer coordinator, they should meet with the teacher when the teacher does not have students in the classroom. This will provide an opportunity to discuss the assignment, learn about procedures, etc. Volunteers should be encouraged to set up additional meetings, if necessary, to get further instructions, discuss a problem, and learn about materials.
- The teacher always oversees the classroom, and the teacher will provide any discipline that is required.
- Volunteers are expected to maintain strict confidentiality with information to which they have access while performing their duties.
- When they have questions about policies and procedures, volunteers should follow the proper channels within the school and ask the appropriate person (the teacher, the principal, or the school volunteer coordinator).
- Parent volunteers are not placed in their child’s classroom on a regular basis.
 - ❖ School Board Policy 3.80 – only at the request of the teacher and the approval of the principal.
- No alumni under the age of 21 are permitted on campus during regular school hours.

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- Once assigned, volunteers will go to the area or class -- they may never wander around campus or disrupt instructional time.

Background Checks

All volunteers are required to have a background check/security screening each year. This includes the following:

- All school site volunteers.
- Overnight field trip chaperones.
Overnight field trip chaperones must be fingerprinted through *Fieldprint* at their own expense. District authorization must be obtained prior to issuance of clearance.
- Volunteer coaches, club sponsors, mentors.
- Day trip field trip chaperones.

Expectations: No smoking, no profanity, no use of alcoholic beverages or controlled substances, limited use of cell phone, no picture taking of students without prior parent approval.

Volunteers sponsored by an agency such as Big Brothers/Big Sisters are screened through that agency.

Counting Volunteer Hours

Each school is unique in its composite of parental involvement, business support and community interaction. All schools are to be commended for its ongoing commitment to find creative strategies to recruit, maintain and maximize these resources to the benefit of its students and teachers.

The true measure of a school's volunteer program cannot be reflected solely by the number of hours amassed; however, consistent collection of this data is important as documentation for:

- A baseline measure of each school's individual success in recruitment and retention efforts.
- School Improvement Plan benchmarks.
- Local effort in matching grant applications.
- Recognition.

To ensure the consistent reporting of volunteer hours, please adhere to the following criteria:

- Orientations must be completed on a group or individual basis for all

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volunteers.

- Student/youth volunteer hours are counted only for time spent before or after school, lunch, and recess periods. Activities during school hours are not counted. Only hours directed on activities performed to benefit the school or its students may be counted.
- Student safety patrol hours are counted.
- Teacher volunteer hours are not counted if the task is a job-related activity or if there is compensation of any kind.
- Regarding faculty orientation on volunteer services, a minimum of 80% of the school staff must participate in training related to school volunteerism as a criterion for the Golden School Award.
- Administrators may not count volunteer hours if time served is at their own school.
- PTO/PTA and SAC meetings are counted for those parents/volunteers who have completed a volunteer application.
- Volunteering off school campus, such as fundraising, preparing classroom materials, telephoning, etc. are counted.
- Field trip chaperones are counted for the entire period of a trip, including overnight sleep time.
- Students in clubs and organizations may count the hours for the specific activities that directly benefit the school (i.e. school homework assistance, campus beautification, fundraising to purchase equipment/materials for the school, etc.).
- Band and sports booster clubs may count all their hours in service to the club.
- High school and college students who work with students and assist in a school may be counted as volunteers even if they are performing this service as a requirement for a course. The only exception to this is the education major who is doing his/her internship, during which time the student teacher is teaching a class and is at the school all day/every day. This does not count as volunteer time.

The overwhelming majority of volunteers generously give their time and talents, with little regard to their own personal recognition. Their greatest reward is in knowing that they are making a positive difference for our students and teachers. With that, many volunteers don't realize the importance of recording their volunteer hours. *Please request that the teachers and staff members who work directly with volunteers remind volunteers to record their hours.*

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For obvious reasons of security and liability, every visitor, including volunteers, who come on school campus, are required to sign in at the front office. As a convenience to volunteers, maintaining a volunteer logbook in the front office by the sign-in sheet is a helpful reminder.

School-based Volunteer Coordinators

Many schools have the benefit of hundreds of volunteers who are willing to contribute thousands of hours of valuable time. This requires a tremendous coordination between services offered and services needed. Each school should have at least one person designated as the school's volunteer coordinator. This person must be a current fulltime employee.

A calendar of events will be distributed to each volunteer coordinator.

Mentor Agency Programs

Mentors work with a student or students on an individual or small group basis for one-half to one hour per week for the purpose of increasing academic success. They can provide reinforcement, assistance in goal development, and serve as a role model to students who may have been identified as at-risk. Mentors may also work with a student who has a special interest or unique talent on a special project. School-based mentoring is limited to the school or designated mentor site under the supervision of a district employee.

Several agencies have a variety of effective mentoring programs already in place throughout the district. These include:

- President's Challenge to SOAR/Take Stock in Children IRSC and The Education Foundation
- Boys and Girls Clubs of St. Lucie County Before and After School Programs
- Big Brothers/Big Sisters - St. Lucie Soars

The participant's role with Big Brothers/Big Sisters is defined as follows:

Role of Case Manager

Managers play an essential role in assuring that the match is a successful and positive experience for everyone. Get to know your Case Manager and use him/her as a resource throughout the duration of your match.

An effective Case Manager will:

- ❖ Interview the mentor for information to be used for placement and background screening purposes.
- ❖ Interview the student to get preferences and assess current needs (i.e.

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- ❖ academic, social skill development, etc.).
- ❖ Contact students during the first few months to provide support, track progress and establish goals.
- ❖ Maintain contact with the mentor/tutor and student throughout the match.
- ❖ Conduct match evaluations on periodic basis.

Role of the Mentor

Mentors will:

- ❖ Abide by the policy and procedures of the school. The school case manager will inform the mentor of the rules during his/her orientation.
- ❖ Spend one hour per week with the assigned student on school grounds during school hours/extended day hours, under school personnel supervision. Meeting with the student off school property or in an undesignated area of the school (i.e. any closed room/area in which the student and mentor/tutor are secluded and alone) will result in the closing of the match.
- ❖ Attend school field trips, with teacher permission when possible and any recognition ceremony in which the student would receive an award. Mentors will not drive students in any vehicle under any circumstance. Doing so will result in the closing of the match.
- ❖ Notify the school-based case manager, school office (volunteer coordinator) and their assigned student of any foreseen absences. Mentors need to contact their student the day before scheduled visits to confirm meeting and/or call the school to confirm the student's attendance on the day of the meeting.
- ❖ Set goals with their student and case manager. Mentors are encouraged to utilize resources available to them (i.e. media center, computer lab, etc.).
- ❖ Discuss any concerns with the school-based case manager. Mentors are not to discuss any personal information concerning their student with others.
- ❖ Participate in evaluation of the mentoring program and the progress of the mentored student on a periodic basis.
- ❖ Contact the BB/BS case manager on a monthly basis.

Role of School Personnel

The school principal will:

- ❖ Assign a contact person from the school for the mentor-based program.
- ❖ Serve as ex-officio liaison in the event of an emergency and the contact person cannot be reached.
- ❖ Assist the school-based mentoring staff in recognizing students and

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mentors for their participation in the program.

The school contact person (volunteer coordinator) will:

- ❖ Serve as the primary contact for the school-based mentoring staff.
- ❖ Serve as the liaison between teachers and administrative staff of school and school-based mentoring staff.
- ❖ Assist in establishing policies for school-based mentoring program (i.e. sign-in policy, student pick-up procedures).
- ❖ Designate appropriate areas for student and mentor/tutor to meet (i.e. library, cafeteria, playground).
- ❖ Provide school evaluation of school mentor program at the end of the school year, if asked.

Role of the Student

The student will:

- ❖ Make every effort to be in attendance for the scheduled mentor meeting.
- ❖ Contact the school office in advance when he/she will be absent for a scheduled mentor meeting.
- ❖ Be courteous, cooperative, and respectful to the mentor.
- ❖ Inform his/her teacher of any questions or concerns regarding the mentor match.

General Mentor Program Procedures

- ❖ Teacher and/or other instructional personnel identify student candidates.
- ❖ Referral forms are completed and submitted to the school-based agency case manager.
- ❖ Mentors may be recruited by the mentor agencies, school or school district office.
- ❖ Mentors **MUST** complete a St. Lucie Public Schools Volunteer Application or returning volunteer form.
- ❖ Mentors must complete registration/paperwork required by the specific mentoring agency.
- ❖ Parents **MUST** complete and return a parental permission form.
- ❖ Mentoring agency will screen and review mentor applications.
- ❖ Mentoring agency will provide at least one hour of mentor training.
- ❖ Mentoring agency will appropriately match students and mentors.
- ❖ Mentoring agency will provide case management and speak with the mentor at least once per month.
- ❖ School personnel will contact case managers on an “as needed” basis.
- ❖ School representative will contact the mentor in a timely manner if

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- possible, in the case of a student's absence.
- ❖ If possible, the teacher is responsible for providing appropriate materials for the student and mentor to cover during the scheduled mentor appointment.
 - ❖ The school will include mentors in any appropriate volunteer recognition activities.
 - ❖ School Board policy orientations will be provided by agencies for each mentor/tutor.