

# PROCEDURES FOR SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS



**COMMUNITY  
INVOLVEMENT**

**1960 Landings Blvd., Sarasota, FL 34231**

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## WELCOME VOLUNTEERS

By becoming a volunteer for the Sarasota County School District, you are taking a positive step toward making a significant impact on the excellent programs offered in our schools. Volunteers bring help, guidance, and real-world experience to our students while supporting teachers and staff.

As you work with our students, I would also ask you to encourage them to be excited about life--to have a positive attitude that will get them through challenging times as they grow and learn. Volunteerism, in and of itself, models an attitude that students will need for a fulfilling life. You are teaching our students to be productive citizens of the community.

This document will help you make a smooth transition into your volunteer job, giving you an overview of the school volunteer program and the opportunities available. My hope is that you will find personal satisfaction in what you do.

The Sarasota County School District is one of the most successful in Florida. We owe much of our success to motivated students, a talented staff, and a supportive community. That support is consistently demonstrated through the skill and commitment of our volunteers.

As schools face the growing challenges of providing more service with fewer resources, we recognize more than ever that we could not possibly continue to give our students the quality education they deserve without your unwavering dedication. We are honored and grateful to have you on our team.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B. Asplen".

Dr. Brennan Asplen  
Superintendent of Schools

## **A BRIEF HISTORY OF VOLUNTEERS IN SARASOTA COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

The Sarasota County School District volunteer program was initiated in 1979 through a very special partnership among the nonprofit sector (Junior League of Sarasota), the private sector (The United First Federal Savings and Loan and the William G. and Marie Selby Foundation), and the public sector (Sarasota County School District) to create a coordinated, school district-wide volunteer and partnership program that provides support through training, recruitment, orientation, recognition, networking, and enrichment for the school volunteers and the teachers with whom they work. Today this program, now coordinated by the Office of Community Involvement, continues to facilitate a structure that provides coordination and support to all schools while still encouraging the program in each school to be responsive to local staff, students, and community needs and interests.

We all work together toward supporting instruction and academic excellence in our schools. School volunteers are fellow community members: parents, students, business partners, professional people, and retired citizens. They share their special knowledge, concern, skills, hobbies, and talents to provide support and enrichment for the instructional programs in the schools.

With school budgets limited to only the most pressing needs, volunteers represent a limitless resource of expertise, attention, and affection to help students succeed in school, cope with personal problems, and expand their appreciation of the community members. The pairing of a student with an adult or retired citizen builds an early foundation for intergenerational learning and relationships.

Throughout the school year, community involvement in the Sarasota County School District plays a significant role in supporting quality education for students. Many school volunteers return year after year. Schools always are happy to welcome both familiar and new faces to the school volunteer family.

Thank you for choosing to be involved. Your commitment to our students today is a tremendous investment in tomorrow.

## BECOMING A SCHOOL VOLUNTEER

If you are not yet a Sarasota County School District volunteer, you can become one in two ways:

1. **If you know the school at which you want to volunteer**, you can contact the Volunteer Coordinator at that school directly to discuss volunteer opportunities specific to that school and fill out the *Volunteer Application* located on the Community Involvement website.
2. **If you are uncertain about which school or what kind of experience you are interested in**, please contact the Office of Community Involvement at (941) 927-9000, extension 31500. After a brief telephone interview, the staff will match your talents and interests to a volunteer job that you will enjoy and to a school that can use your services. Following a background screening and approval through the volunteer application process, the school's Volunteer Coordinator will orient you to the school and place you in your volunteer position, matching your interests to the school's volunteer needs.

### To help with your placement, consider these questions:

- *Would you like to work directly with students?*
- *What kind of volunteer job would you like to do? (For Volunteer Job Descriptions see pages 6 - 8)*
- *Where would you prefer to work -- elementary, middle or high school; a special programs school; or vocational/career/technical school?*
- *What days and hours do you prefer?*
- *How much time do you want to commit to a volunteer job?*
- *What professional and life experiences do bring to your volunteer experience?*
- *What are you looking for in your volunteer experience?*
- *What languages do you speak?*

**You do not need a teaching certificate or experience in education. All you need is**

- a genuine interest in helping students,
- a commitment to your volunteer activity,
- a cooperative attitude with faculty and staff,
- training as recommended for your volunteer placement,
- flexibility,
- regular attendance, and
- good health.

## FLORIDA VOLUNTEER PROTECTION ACT 2014

### Florida Torts Code Section 768.1355

#### **768.1355 Florida Volunteer Protection Act.**

(1) Any person who volunteers to perform any service for any nonprofit organization, including an officer or director of such organization, without compensation from the nonprofit organization, regardless of whether the person is receiving compensation from another source, except reimbursement for actual expenses, shall be considered an agent of such nonprofit organization when acting within the scope of any official duties performed under such volunteer services. Such person, and the source of any such compensation, if the volunteer is not acting as an agent of the source, shall incur no civil liability for any act or omission by such person which results in personal injury or property damage if:

(a) Such person was acting in good faith within the scope of any official duties performed under such volunteer service and such person was acting as an ordinary reasonably prudent person would have acted under the same or similar circumstances; and

(b) The injury or damage was not caused by any wanton or willful misconduct on the part of such person in the performance of such duties.

1. For purposes of this act, the term “nonprofit organization” means any organization which is exempt from taxation pursuant to 26 U.S.C. s. 501, or any federal, state, or local governmental entity.

2. For purposes of this act, the term “compensation” does not include a stipend as provided by the Domestic Service Volunteer Act of 1973, as amended (Pub. L. No. 93-113), or other financial assistance, valued at less than two-thirds of the federal hourly minimum wage standard, paid to a person who would otherwise be financially unable to provide the volunteer service.

(2) Except as otherwise provided by law, if a volunteer is determined to be not liable pursuant to subsection (1), the nonprofit organization for which the volunteer was performing services when the damages were caused shall be liable for such damages to the same extent as the nonprofit organization would have been liable if the liability limitation pursuant to subsection (1) had not been provided.

(3) Members of elected or appointed boards, councils, and commissions of the state, counties, municipalities, authorities, and special districts shall incur no civil liability and shall have immunity from suit as provided in s. 768.28 for acts or omissions by members relating to members’ conduct of their official duties. It is the intent of the Legislature to encourage our best and brightest people to serve on elected and appointed boards, councils, and commissions.

(4) This section may be cited as the “Florida Volunteer Protection Act.”

**History.**—s. 1, ch. 93-139; s. 50, ch. 96-399; s. 1, ch. 2011-190.

## VOLUNTEER APPLICATION & APPROVAL PROCESS

To be approved as a Sarasota County School District volunteer, an individual first must apply. Returning volunteers must reactivate their account at the beginning of each school year.

For security and speedier processing, the school district provides a computer-based system through which potential volunteers can apply at home, on a designated computer at the school site, or the district Office of Community Involvement. Those interested in volunteering in schools must apply and be approved **for all volunteer services**. Completing this process does not guarantee a volunteer placement. Approved volunteers serve with the permission of the principal/school-based administrator.

Application and reactivation to volunteer automatically prompts a Level 1 Sexual Offender background screening, which is required for all volunteers, at no cost to the volunteer

- **Level 1 National Criminal and Sexual Offender Check** - This screening is automatically prompted upon applying to volunteer. Individuals desiring volunteer assignments in school system facilities must provide social security numbers and other personal information required to perform background screenings including but not limited to a national sexual offender check. The school district reserves the right to refuse volunteer assignments to individuals who fail to meet standards established by School District Policy 6.39. Those who do not pass the background screening will receive written notification from the school district Safety and Security Department.
- **Level 2 National Criminal Background Screening** - Volunteers who work with students in an **unsupervised** (out of sight or hearing of supervising staff) school-based setting and volunteer chaperones on **all overnight field trips** and **some daytime field trips** are required to pass a Level 2 national criminal background screening (fingerprints for criminal background check) in addition to being registered in the school district volunteer database and approved through the district School Safety and Security Department. The school staff will inform you for which daytime field trips Level 2 is required. Please contact the district's Safety and Security Department to make arrangements for Level 2 screening.

Please note that Level 2 background screening **for mentors placed in schools through outside local mentoring organizations** (e.g., *Big Brothers/Big Sisters of the Suncoast, Inc., Girls Inc., Jewish Family & Children's Service of Sarasota-Manatee, Inc., Take Stock in Children, Costal Behavioral Lean On Me, and Faces of Accomplishment*) are conducted by those organizations. These organizations recruit, train, and place mentors in our schools through the school district Office of Community Involvement. **Mentor registration and reactivation is completed by school district Office of Community Involvement, not the mentor.**

- **Approved volunteers serve with the permission of the Principal, who may grant or revoke permission at any time at his or her discretion.**

## State and District Volunteer Requirements

Principals are responsible for the safety of their students and, therefore, for all persons on their campuses. It is a school district requirement and a responsibility of the volunteer to follow the safe campus procedures. Therefore, volunteers must do all of the following:

- ✓ **Always report to the school office before beginning** volunteer activity.
- ✓ Present a driver's license or state identification to be scanned through the visitor management system (RAPTOR) and receive an **Identification Badge that must be worn at all times on campus**. (This insures that students and staff can easily identify visitors approved to be on campus.) The system used in the district is called RAPTOR and is part of the state- and district-required security program that scans for sexual predators and offenders through a continuously updated national database. All school visitors and volunteers must be checked through RAPTOR upon every school visit.
- ✓ **Sign-in and out on the volunteer computer. Volunteers MUST sign-in and sign-out!**
- ✓ **Sign-in, sign-out, and log all hours in the appropriate categories on the volunteer computer.** School district procedure requires that all volunteers must sign in and out for all volunteer duty for the safety of both students and volunteers. Recording volunteer hours is a requirement of the Florida Department of Education. Community involvement is often a criterion for the awarding of grant money to schools and to the district. ***Also, approved volunteers in traditional district schools are eligible for Workers' Compensation coverage while on campus. However, to qualify, the volunteer must be active and approved in the school district volunteer system and must sign-in and out through the volunteer computer each time on campus.***



## **VOLUNTEER JOB DESCRIPTIONS**

The Sarasota County School District offers many exciting and meaningful volunteer opportunities. These include placements in elementary, middle, and high schools as well as Suncoast Technical College. Volunteers are placed in jobs best suited to their skills and interests. However, specific jobs may not be available at the school in which the volunteer prefers to serve or at the time available. In this case, the volunteer may select another job, do volunteer work from home, or ask to be referred to another school. Every effort will be made to ensure that every volunteer has a fulfilling and rewarding volunteer experience. Below are just some of the volunteer opportunities we have in the district.

### **INSTRUCTIONAL VOLUNTEERS**

Instructional volunteers provide direct services to one or more students on a regular basis. Typically tutors and mentors are in this category. For those volunteers who work one-to-one with students in unsupervised school-based settings, special application and approval processes are required by the district through the Office of Community Involvement (refer to *Volunteer Application & Approval Process* on page 4).

#### **Tutor**

A tutor may work one-to-one with a student or with small groups of students who need either enrichment or remedial help in academic subjects to reinforce basic skills. Duties may include reading, math, special projects, etc. Placements are made with students from kindergarten through high school.

#### **Mentor**

Mentors typically work with at-risk students. The major task is to motivate the student to stay in school and succeed in their academic endeavors. Through helping with academics, setting short-term goals, and serving as a role model, mentors provide encouragement and support to a student who needs to build self-esteem. Mentors are placed in schools through community agencies (e.g., Big Brothers Big Sisters, Jewish Family and Children Services, Take Stock in Children, Coastal Behavioral Lean On Me, and Faces of Accomplishment).

#### **Adult Literacy Tutor**

Adult literacy tutors work with adults who are learning basic skills. The one-on-one tutoring program is designed to accommodate the adult learner. Volunteers are assigned to adult centers where students are preparing for their General Education Diploma (GED) exams or learning basic skills.

#### **Teaching English Language Learners (ELL)**

ELL tutors help students increase their skills in understanding, speaking, reading, and writing English. Volunteers do not need to speak the students' native languages.

## **SUPPORT SERVICES VOLUNTEERS**

Volunteers in this category assist in the classroom, the office, and the lunchroom; chaperone fieldtrips and events; and are members of school-supported organizations such as booster clubs, the School Advisory Council (SAC), and PTA/PTO.

### **Classroom Helper**

Volunteers work closely with the classroom teacher, assisting in various projects and interacting with students. Duties may include preparing bulletin boards, working on special projects, performing clerical duties, making instructional materials, and reviewing homework.

### **Office/Clerical Assistant**

Volunteer clerical assistants help the support staff at a school or administrative center. Volunteers perform a variety of school duties, as assigned by staff members, which may include those of receptionist, typist, computer input operator, telephone operator, and other office worker (filing, copying, mailing).

### **Library/Media Center Assistant**

Volunteers in the school library/media center help fill teacher and student requests for services. They may also work at the circulation desk, catalog and shelve books, use a computer, mend books, and operate audiovisual equipment. The volunteer may also help students with research and special projects or read aloud to them.

### **Chaperone**

Field trip volunteer chaperones have the opportunity to enjoy museums, exhibits, musicals, and plays as they accompany students and teachers on field trips. Volunteers for overnight field trips and some daytime field trips must pass a Level 2 criminal background screening. Please contact the school district School Safety and Security Office to make an appointment for Level 2 chaperone screening. Volunteers must be approved at Level 1 before they can apply for Level 2.

### **Computer Helpers**

Volunteers work with students using the computer. Volunteers may be involved in helping students with computerized instructional programs, training students to use the computer, or assisting in the computer lab.

### **School Advisory Council**

Schools elect members of the School Advisory Council (SAC) to represent a broad cross section of the school's student population and the area in which the school is located. A limited number of volunteers from the community may be selected as members of the council. The SAC functions as a resource to the principal and members work as a team to achieve school improvement goals.

### **Programs for Students with Disabilities Assistant**

Volunteers work with the teachers, assisting in various needs of students with exceptional needs (physical disabilities, learning disabilities, emotional disabilities, and intellectual disabilities).

### **Activities Volunteers**

Activities volunteers lend a hand to support school extracurricular clubs, groups, and events. Areas of involvement include participating in organizations such as PTA/PTO and sports and booster clubs and assisting with art, music, and drama programs.

### **Speakers**

Volunteers speak to classes or groups on topics related to their careers, hobbies, or interests. Volunteers provide enriching experiences for classrooms, small groups, or assemblies.

### **Business/Community Partner Programs**

Through these programs, community resources are matched to identified needs of individual schools. Schools, in turn, provide resources to meet identified needs of a particular partner such as a business or community group. Partners often contribute more than money to the program—they donate time and expertise, send tutors and mentors to volunteer in the classroom, speak to classes about their business or organization, and invite students on field trips or job shadowing opportunities.

### **Cafeteria Assistant**

Volunteers supervise the lunchroom during lunch periods according to school practices, help maintain order, and help children when assistance is needed.

### **Off-Site Volunteering**

"At-home" volunteer projects such as creating newsletters, phone recruiting of other volunteers, or helping with classroom teacher projects such as instructional materials are also available. Those volunteers must keep a written record of volunteer hours and report them to the school's Volunteer Coordinator.

## **RULES FOR VOLUNTEERING IN SCHOOLS**

Volunteer activities usually take place on the school grounds during school hours under supervision of school personnel. Other volunteer settings can include chaperoned field trips, school-sponsored athletic activities, extra-curricular events, and "at-home" volunteer projects such as creating newsletters or classroom materials. Volunteers should not be alone with a student but should be assigned a location where they are in visual or auditory contact with a school employee.

### **Reasons for Rejection or Dismissal**

Individuals who do not meet requirements for volunteers working with children, as established by state law and Sarasota County School Board policy and procedures, will not be accepted into the program. If a volunteer does not conform to the rules as outlined in this guide, the administrator may suggest alternative activities or assignments. If this option does not meet with success, the administrator may terminate the volunteer's placement. ***Volunteers will not be placed or will be dismissed if they falsify any information when applying to volunteer.***

### **Confidentiality**

According to School Board policy, volunteers must keep all information about a student **completely confidential**. Discussion of a student is restricted to the student's teacher, guidance counselor, or appropriate member of the school's administration. A misplaced comment can be devastating to a student, a family, and the volunteer program. ***Volunteers who breach confidentiality will be dismissed.***

### **Student Contact Outside of School**

Volunteers are prohibited from contacting students or their families outside of their volunteer assignment or away from school either in person, by telephone, by online communication, or through social media. Contact is prohibited through traditional phone, cell phone, voice mail, texting, Skype, FaceTime, video images, photographs, podcasts, computers, electronic tablets, e-reader, USB drives, notebooks, MP3 players, iPods, or any other electronic communications device. Volunteers are prohibited from interacting with students through any social media accounts including Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram, My Space, Flickr, mobile applications, or any other sites used to share information online. This prohibition does not apply to mentors who have contractual arrangements with a sponsoring agency and prior parent/guardian permission to interact with students outside of school.

### **Attendance/Punctuality**

Reliability is essential because teachers and school staff plan for volunteer assistance. When beginning a volunteer assignment, the volunteer should ask who to notify when absent and the method of notification (e.g., phone, email, text). A volunteer who needs to be absent should contact the school as soon as possible to inform the person designated of the absence. Please check classroom calendars and the school district calendar for upcoming special events (e.g., assemblies, field trips, Teacher Professional Days) to see if volunteer services will be needed on that particular day.

### **Professionalism**

Because volunteers serve as role models, behavior and dress must be exemplary. Use of profanity, drugs, or alcohol is never tolerated, nor one making "advances" to a student, political or religious proselytizing, selling merchandise, or promoting a business. The job is that of a volunteer, but the commitment is that of a professional.

### **Reporting Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect**

Any person who knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is abused, abandoned, or neglected by a parent, legal custodian, caregiver, or other person responsible for the child's welfare is required by law to report such knowledge or suspicion. See Reporting Policy and Procedures on page 11.

**Student Discipline**

Volunteers should not discipline students. It is the teacher's responsibility to discipline the students. The volunteer should report discipline problems to the teacher or staff member supervising the volunteer setting.

**Touch**

Volunteers should refrain from physical contact with students.

**Student Medicine/Food/Gifts**

Volunteers are not permitted to administer medication. Because many children are afflicted with allergies, do not bring food, cookies, candy, etc. as a reward or treat. To be fair to all the children, gifts are strongly discouraged.

**Acceptable Use Policy for Computers, Networks & Information Technologies**

As stated in the School Board approved "Acceptable Use Policy," volunteers must adhere to the same computer and network policies as school staff including no use of school board computers or the school district network for any illegal activity or for any private purposes, including any private business purpose.

***Remember...***

Volunteer work that is done with a sense of commitment, open-mindedness, resourcefulness, and initiative is a very rewarding experience.

**What does the teacher need from the volunteer?**

Promptness	Loyalty	Business attitude	Caring
Discretion	Sense of humor	Initiative	Sensitivity
Patience	Enthusiasm	Creativity	Supportive influence
Dependability	Flexibility	Tact	

**What should the volunteer expect of the teacher?**

Consideration	Patience	Appreciation	Respect
Cooperative attitude	Caring	Courtesy	Classroom control
Good directions	Sincerity	Prepared Assignments	Welcoming attitude

**FOR ALL EMERGENCIES**

**Volunteers should check for emergency procedures for their volunteer location(s).**

Remain calm.

Be ALERT for suspicious and/or unusual activity, people, packages, or events.

Listen to alerts and instructions administered over the intercom system.

When in doubt, find a staff member and follow their lead.

## Child Abuse/Neglect Reporting Policy and Procedures

Florida Statute 39.201 states that “any person with knowledge or reasonable cause to suspect the abuse, abandonment, or neglect of a child by a parent, legal custodian, caregiver, or other person responsible for a child’s welfare is mandated to **immediately report these concerns to the Florida Abuse Hotline.**”

School district volunteers and partners also are bound to report child abuse by School Board Policy 2.80:

“The School Board strongly prohibits any action or omission constituting child abuse, neglect, or abandonment by any of its employees, agents, volunteers, or by other persons affiliated in any way with the School District. Further, all employees, agents, and volunteers must comply with Florida law requiring reporting of child abuse, neglect, or abandonment.”

Therefore, all school district volunteers and partners are mandated by both state law and School Board policy to report suspected child abuse or neglect immediately and directly to the Florida Abuse Hotline. **Reporting abuse to school administrators or other agency officials does *not* discharge the responsibility to report. The report must be made *directly* to the Florida Abuse Hotline.**

As described in the statute, the reporter is not obligated to provide evidence of abuse, but is required to report any reasonable suspicion of abuse so that an investigation can be initiated. The reporter’s identity is not revealed to the subjects of the investigation.

**Report non-emergency cases** of abuse or neglect in one of the following ways:

1. **Telephone: 1-800-96-ABUSE (1-800-962-2873)**
2. **Fax: 1-800-914-0004, TTD: 1-800-453-5145**
3. **Website: <https://reportabuse.dcf.state.fl.us/>**

**Call 911 immediately to report emergency situations** that may result in significant harm or death of a child without immediate intervention. Then call the Florida Abuse Hotline at 1-800-96-ABUSE. **Do not report an emergency by fax or website.**

Failure to comply with the legal mandate and ethical obligation of Sarasota County School District volunteers and partners to report abuse and neglect will result in revocation of approved volunteer status and may result in criminal prosecution.

## TIPS FOR VOLUNTEERS

### If help is needed...

Volunteers who need instruction or clarification to perform a task should feel comfortable asking for direction. Volunteers should establish a method of communication with the staff person supervising their work, either written or verbal. If unhappy or uncomfortable with an assignment, tell that person or the school-based Volunteer Coordinator.

### Checklist

Find out about

- ✓ sign-in procedures and volunteer computer location
- ✓ the building layout and parking facilities
- ✓ discipline and classroom policies
- ✓ what is expected of a volunteer
- ✓ what to do when absent; who to notify
- ✓ how to work with a substitute teacher
- ✓ emergency procedures and safety rules
- ✓ school calendar
- ✓ class schedule
- ✓ where to eat lunch
- ✓ adult lounge, restroom facilities
- ✓ equipment use

To have a handy reference sheet, volunteers should complete the *Information Volunteers Need to Know* form included in this document.

### Enjoy the students

Be yourself! Accept students in terms of their background, values, manners, and vocabulary--theirs may be different from yours. By giving of yourself, by sharing time, and by caring, you are making a difference!

**Thank you!!**

**Always remember that you are appreciated! Sometimes the staff members get caught up in the tasks of the day and may forget to say "Thank you!" Please always know the time and energy that you give to students, teachers, schools, and our district are most valued!**

## CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILDREN

The following is a list of typical characteristics of five-, six-, seven-, eight-, and nine-year-old children. These characteristics should not be regarded as rigid norms; they simply show the kinds of behaviors that tend to occur at each age.

### ***A five-year-old.....***

- Needs a sense of belonging.
- Responds to praise, encouragement, and consistent direction.
- Searches for trust, fairness, and definite standards.
- Gains a feeling of security from definite routine.
- May allow the emotional tone of the morning to govern their entire day.
- Is prone to show fear of the new and unusual.
- Is not always able to distinguish right from wrong by adult standards.
- Has a developing sense of humor.
- Seeks companionship of other children and is anxious to gain group approval.
- Plays best in groups of two to seven children.
- Needs adult help learning to share materials and take turns.
- Needs to be liked and look like age-mates.
- Is not able to work and play without constant approval.
- Is willing and eager to assume responsibility within own level of maturity, but does not always assume responsibility for care of personal belongings.
- Is self-centered.
- Is a great talker.
- Is active, eager, interested, and curious.
- Learns by doing, experiencing, observing, questioning, imitating, examining, exploring, and investigating.
- Derives satisfaction from doing rather than from the product/outcome.
- Is eager to learn, but not ready for formal abstract work.
- Cannot always distinguish between fact and fantasy.
- Has a short attention and interest span.
- Likes someone to read to them.
- Needs much opportunity to manipulate and experiment with tools, materials, and ideas.
- Can carry play from one day to another.

### ***A six-year-old.....***

- Tries to leave babyhood behind.
- Enjoys being with adults—wants to help do tasks around the house or classroom.
- May demand attention, has little regard for others.
- Feels no responsibility for group goals—may join in a group activity, but will leave if s/he doesn't get desired role/part.
- Has difficult time with decisions and choices.
- Displays little social responsibility for organized games.
- Wants to be first; scrambles for whatever s/he wants by pushing, fighting, quarreling.
- Wants to be the leader and to win—it is hard to lose.
- Has a keen sense of competition, often boasting and comparing possessions, heights, and even families.
- Enjoys dramatic play.
- Enjoys trying to make things but cannot be expected to produce finished products.
- Has a short interest span; cannot sit still for long periods of time.
- Has difficulty cutting well or doing handiwork that requires much skill or control.



- Is eager to learn—assimilates countless words and phrases; describes objects more completely; expands vocabulary.
- Learns by concrete observations and direct participation.
- Can identify opposite and rhyming words.
- Can define simple words.
- Can solve many problems independently.

***A seven-year-old....***

- Does not respond promptly.
- May forget easily.
- Fights with playmates.
- Plays in pairs or in groups.
- Is interested in magic, puzzles, collecting and exchanging baseball cards, etc.
- Is concerned about being good.
- Is easier to discipline, sensitive to praise.
- Complains and sulks.
- Thinks teacher is really paramount in school.

***An eight-year-old....***

- Is money-mad.
- Makes fewer complaints about teacher.
- Is expansive and speedy.
- Has a longer attention span than younger children.
- Is alert, friendly, and interested in people--but sometimes is careless, noisy, and argumentative.
- Has feelings easily hurt by careless remarks.
- Understands time and money concepts.
- Likes team games.
- Is critical of brothers and sisters.
- Needs frequent reminders about responsibilities.
- Is demanding of mother.
- Is sensitive to criticism.
- Needs adult praise and encouragement.

***A nine-year-old....***

- Has new forms of self-independence.
- Has increasing self-motivation.
- Resents interruptions.
- Has a strong sense of right and wrong.
- Is easily discouraged.
- Is competitive in work and in play and is afraid of failure.
- Cries only when emotions are overtaxed.
- Is a great worrier and is anxious to please.
- Makes fewer demands on parents.
- Is a loyal and devoted friend.
- Is more interested in talking and listening than in working.

## **FAQs**

### *(Frequently Asked Questions)*

#### **How to become a volunteer?**

Any person interested in volunteering may do so by contacting the Volunteer Coordinator at the school of interest or by calling the district's Office of Community Involvement at (941) 927-9000 extension 31500. Those interested will be asked to complete an electronic volunteer application. The application includes a national sexual offender screening at no charge to the volunteer. This application can be completed at home, on volunteer computer at any school, or in the Office of Community Involvement at the school district administration complex. Please note you will need to present a form of identification at a school site or the Safety and Security Office in the Blue Awning Building at the Landings.

#### **What are the qualifications to become a school volunteer?**

The qualifications necessary to be a school volunteer include 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 needed will be provided by the school-based volunteer coordinator and the person the volunteer works with at school. A teaching or education background is not required as volunteers work under the direction of a school's professional staff.

#### **May volunteers bring children with them to their volunteer assignment?**

No, bringing other children for whom the volunteer is responsible to the volunteer assignment presents a liability issue for the school. In addition, having other children on campus disrupts the school and/or class procedures, disrupts student and teacher focus, and prevents the volunteer from giving full attention to volunteer work. Volunteers with young children at home can, however, still help the school by making arrangements to do work at home or help with special events.

#### **When friends and neighbors ask about the volunteer's work and the school, what may the volunteer share with them?**

Volunteers can be a big help in representing the volunteer program to the community. Talking about involvement in volunteering in the schools may inspire others to volunteer. However, volunteers may have access to "privileged information" which, naturally, should be treated as such. "Privileged information" is defined as personal records, grades, test scores, and the behavior and attitude of students, and information the student shares with the volunteer. This is important school business and should never be discussed outside of the school. Criticizing school personnel and practices is not appropriate. The volunteer's role in the school is as a professional working with other professionals.

#### **May the volunteer choose the specific assignment?**

Volunteers are placed in volunteer assignments based on the school needs. Efforts are made at the school to match volunteer interests with the school needs, but that cannot be guaranteed. Volunteers are placed only with teachers who have specifically requested volunteer assistance. A volunteer may submit a request to work with a specific teacher or in a particular role to the

school Volunteer Coordinator, but the coordinator and the principal at the individual school make the decisions about volunteer placements.

### **What if a volunteer is unhappy with the assignment?**

Volunteers should feel comfortable communicating with the school Volunteer Coordinator about assignments. Every effort is made to place volunteers in situations that match 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. If the volunteer program at the assigned school does not fit the volunteer interests, volunteers should contact the district's Office of Community Involvement for assistance in finding a better fit at another school.

### **What does a volunteer do about student discipline?**

Disciplinary action is the legal responsibility of teachers and other school staff. Volunteers should never be put in a position of having to enforce discipline. A volunteer experiencing a problem with student behavior should immediately inform the person supervising the volunteer's work.

### **What should a volunteer do if unable to be at a school at the assigned time?**

When unable to be at the school at the assigned time, the volunteer should contact school personnel to inform them. On the first visit to the school, be sure to ascertain the way in which (e.g., email, phone call) and to whom (e.g., front office staff, volunteer coordinator, teacher) the school wants volunteer absences reported.

### **Why is it required and important for volunteers to sign-in and out on the volunteer computer each time volunteering at a school?**

There are many reasons this school district requirement is necessary, such as but not limited to:

- maintaining school security,
- documenting service for liability purposes and in the event of an emergency,
- required reporting to school district and state,
- collecting data that supports grant applications, and
- recognizing volunteers for their dedication and service.

The school may also be eligible for the Golden School Award presented each year by the Florida Department of Education for outstanding volunteer programs, which is based on the number of volunteer hours at the school and which is required for the school to be awarded the Florida Department of Education Five Star School designation. Also, volunteers in traditional public schools (not charter schools) are covered by the school district's Workers Compensation insurance policy but ***only*** when signed in during the volunteer time to the volunteer computer system as an official, approved volunteer. School District policy requires volunteers to sign in and out of the *Volunteer Station* when on campus.

# Community Involvement Volunteer Information Sheet

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
                    Last                      First                      M.I.

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
                    Street                      City                      Zip

Education/Work Experience: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Volunteer Experience: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Special Skills: (Foreign Languages, Computer, Public Speaking, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Months Available: \_\_\_\_\_

Days Available: M T W T F S S (circle); Times Available: \_\_\_\_\_

What are your special interests in volunteering? (See other side for areas of interest.)

\_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE COMPLETE THIS PAGE (both front & back)  
AND RETURN IT TO THE  
VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR AT YOUR SCHOOL**

**FOR OFFICE USE ONLY**

APPROVED \_\_\_\_\_ DATE ASSIGNED \_\_\_\_\_

RAPTOR SCREENED & NAME TAG \_\_\_\_\_

**VOLUNTEER SITUATIONS PREFERRED**

- Working with individual children (one-to-one)
- Working with small groups
- Working with materials
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**GRADE LEVEL(S) PREFERRED**

- Kindergarten level
- Primary (grades 1-3)
- Intermediate (4-5)
- Middle School (6-8)
- High School (9-12)
- Vocational

**TYPES OF VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE PREFERRED**

- Adult literacy
- Art/Music/Dance/Drama
- Cafeteria
- Clerical (filing, typing, etc.)
- Computer lab
- English Language Learners
- Field trip chaperone, event chaperones
- General classroom assistance
- Guest speaker
- Health Room/Clinic
- Library/Media Center
- Projects at home
- Reading Tutor
- Math Tutor
- Special events
- Student with special needs
- Mentor
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## **INFORMATION VOLUNTEERS NEED TO KNOW**

### **People you will want to know:**

Principal \_\_\_\_\_

School Secretary \_\_\_\_\_

School Volunteer Coordinator \_\_\_\_\_

Assistant Principal(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Guidance Counselors \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Organization President (PTO, Boosters) \_\_\_\_\_

School Advisory Council (SAC) Chair \_\_\_\_\_

School Business Partner Coordinator \_\_\_\_\_

### **School procedures you need to know:**

Emergency Drills \_\_\_\_\_

Dress Code \_\_\_\_\_

Opening & Closing Hours \_\_\_\_\_

RAPTOR Sign-in Procedures \_\_\_\_\_

Volunteer Sign-in Computer \_\_\_\_\_

Parking \_\_\_\_\_

Who to contact when you will be absent \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number/email address \_\_\_\_\_

### **Your assignment:**

Job \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_

Room \_\_\_\_\_ Date to Begin \_\_\_\_\_

Day(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor's Planning Period \_\_\_\_\_

**\*NOTES \***





