

VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK 2025 - 2026



St. Johns County School District St.
Augustine, Florida
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Dear Volunteer:

WELCOME!

Whether you are a parent, businessperson, community leader, senior citizen, peer tutor or college student we are most grateful that you have made a commitment to serve with our schools on a volunteer basis. Volunteers play an important and valuable role in education. We know that few schools can exist without their contributions, which represent generosity and sometimes sacrifice. Students, teachers, administrators, parents and the community benefit from the work of people like you who freely share their talents and resources.

This handbook was compiled as a guide for volunteers. We hope that many of your questions about our school and school system can be answered in this guide, or through the volunteer orientation meetings at the individual schools. Should you have any questions or need additional information, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator at your school or Cheryl Freeman, Volunteer Coordinator for the district, at 904-547-3952.



Dr. Brennan Asplen
Superintendent of Schools

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Executive Director for Community Relations

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ST. JOHNS COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT MISSION STATEMENT

THE ST. JOHNS COUNTY SCHOOL
DISTRICT WILL INSPIRE GOOD
CHARACTER AND A PASSION
FOR LIFELONG LEARNING
IN ALL STUDENTS,
CREATING EDUCATED
AND CARING CONTRIBUTORS
TO THE WORLD.



THE GENERAL GOALS OF THE SCHOOL VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

- To provide individualized educational assistance to students.
- To enrich the students' curriculum and in turn broaden their awareness and experience.
- To improve students' self-evaluation and worth by increasing their opportunity for educational achievement.
- To increase students' self-motivation for learning by providing a positive attitude toward education.
- To encourage the development of self-control and independence in students.
- To provide students with an opportunity to develop social competency.
- To relieve the teacher of some non-instructional tasks and duties.
- To reinforce lesson skills.
- To stimulate community interest, concern and support for the educational system.
- To provide an opportunity for interested community members to become involved directly with the educational system and processes.
- To strengthen school-community relations through direct and positive participation in the school.
- To enhance all aspects of the educational process.

ROUTINE PROCEDURES FOR VOLUNTEERS

1. Assure that a school access form has been completed or that the current form is valid (every 3 years) - apps.raptortech.com/Apply/OTY0OTplbi1VUw==
2. Sign in (with valid ID) and out upon arrival and departure at the front office.
3. Always wear name badges while at the school.
4. Promptly report to the assigned faculty or staff member.

NOTE: For the safety and welfare of the students, a background check will be conducted for all volunteers. School Access Forms are processed through the Raptor software system.

**THANK YOU FOR
BEING
A SCHOOL VOLUNTEER!!!**

QUALITIES OF A GOOD SCHOOL VOLUNTEER

- Be dependable and punctual (always calling the school to notify the student and/or teacher if you are unable to come).
- Remember that the teacher is in charge of the classroom.
- Conform to school policies and know the importance of the volunteer's role as a good example of behavior, speech and dress.
- Respect cultural differences of young people.
- Know that special information about teachers and students is confidential. Keep your observation on a professional level.
- Be willing to work under supervision of a staff member.
- Talk over any problems with appropriate staff (teacher, counselor, etc.)
- Schedule parent-teacher conferences for your children during non-volunteer hours.
- Follow the teacher's plans completely.
- Ask if you do not understand a directive or assignment.
- Have time and a willingness to serve on a regular basis.
- Have or be willing to acquire skills needed to improve and enrich a learning program.
- Possess a warm, friendly and positive attitude.
- Abide by confidentiality rules for all students, personnel, and other school volunteers.
- DO NOT assume responsibility for the discipline of pupils.
- Do not chew gum on campus.
- Do not smoke on school premises. St. Johns County Schools are all smoke- free.

SUGGESTIONS FOR DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE VOLUNTEER/TEACHER RELATIONSHIPS

- Establish a good working relationship with the teacher.
- Discuss special help needed for students, time at which teacher needs assistance most, and area and goal that the teacher is pursuing.
- Exchange phone numbers so that, if necessary, contact may be established.
- Let the teacher know what training you have received and discuss the service assignment together.
- Come to the classes at the time and day prearranged by staff.
- Be warm, friendly and courteous always.
- Never disagree with the teacher in front of students or let the students play you against each other.
- Keep channels of communication open and honest. If there is a problem, speak with the appropriate staff member. Don't be afraid to ask questions.
- Let the teacher know if you have discovered a serious problem or challenge that may affect a student's work.
- Be willing to receive directions and supervision from the teacher or other members of the school staff.
- Clearly understand the task which has been identified and work toward a specific goal.
- Make sure the teacher in charge of the activity is aware of your plan of action and approves it.
- Identify appropriate classroom behavior the teacher wishes to reinforce.
- Assure that all anticipated questions are asked about an assignment, to avoid interrupting the teacher during instructional time.

TUTORING TIPS

1. Before the first session of tutoring, the tutor must meet with the student's teacher.
2. Find a quiet place where you can work with the student, while assuring that you are always in line of sight of staff.
3. Establish a friendly relationship with the student prior to beginning an academic assignment.
4. Be sensitive in communicating with the student. Be a careful listener.
5. Establish where the student is in his/her work by requesting that the student explain some of the work he/she has done previously.
6. If you are going to miss a session, call the school and have a message relayed to the teacher and/or student as soon as possible.
7. Remember that you are acting as a role model for students and you should dress and act appropriately.
8. Don't let an unhappy tutoring situation continue for long. Seek help from staff. If the situation is not rewarding to both you and the student, it will not be beneficial.
9. Unless the teacher requests it, avoid having the child just repeat his/her classroom lessons for you. In collaboration with the teacher, devise your own games and materials to supplement classroom assignment and stimulate new areas of interest.
10. Have a large folder or envelope for each child you tutor. Have him/her bring this to each session so that materials worked on under your direction will not be confused with class-assigned papers.
11. Be patient. Some may work more slowly on academic problems. This is often because they are less secure. Your patience will be encouragement.
12. Repetition is the name of the game. Devising different ways to get the student to repeat what is being learned will prove successful.
13. Give the student opportunities to make decisions about your work together and then carry through.
14. Games are a powerful teaching tool. Use them and talk about them with your student.
15. Each student is an individual and is motivated by different reward systems.
16. Be sincere but praise an honest effort by your student.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES AT THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LEVEL

1. Tell stories to children.
2. Listen to children read.
3. Conduct flash card drills.
4. Provide individual help.
5. Assist in learning centers.
6. Set up learning centers.
7. Reproduce materials.
8. Work in clinic or library.
9. Check out audio-visual equipment.
10. Practice vocabulary with non-English speaking students.
11. Make instructional games.
12. Play instructional games.
13. Play games at recess.
14. Assist with visual tests.
15. Prepare visual materials.
16. Develop programmed materials.
17. Reinforce recognition of numbers.
18. Become a SAC member.
19. Help with book fairs.
20. Work with special challenges.
21. Assist with field trips.
22. Make props for plays.
23. Set up/run a bookstore.
24. Gather resource materials.
25. Help children with computer skills.
26. Help children with arts and crafts.
27. Help with cooking projects.
28. Set up experiments.
29. Take attendance.
30. Assist with lunch duties.
31. Work on perceptual activities.
32. Make lists of library resources.
33. Talk to children- be a friend.
34. Prepare teaching materials.
35. Supervise groups taking tests.
36. Discuss careers or hobbies.
37. Reinforce learning of the alphabet.
38. Practice handwriting skills.
39. Take part in PTO/PTA events.
40. Help recruit PTO/PTA members.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES AT THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LEVEL

CONTINUED

41. Drill recognition of color words.
42. Help children with motor skills.
43. Play a musical instrument.
44. Help students who play instruments.
45. Make puppets.
46. Dramatize a story.
47. Set up a 'grocery store' to practice math skills.
48. Drill spelling words.
49. Drill multiplication tables.
50. Make reading carrels from boxes.
51. Tell stories with puppets and flannel boards.
52. Assist with sing-a-longs.
53. Show video of life in other countries, parts of the U.S., crafts, and/or games.
54. Discuss care and training of pets.
55. Demonstrate different artistic abilities.
56. Discuss life from the point of view of a person with a disability and the importance of understanding others.
57. Discuss attitudes, feelings, and emotions.
58. Share ethnic backgrounds and experiences.
59. Discuss farm life and farm animals.
60. Demonstrate gardening skills.
61. Help prepare assembly programs.
62. Discuss vacations.
63. Discuss aspects of safety.
64. Share information on local history.
65. Demonstrate pioneer crafts— weaving, candle making, soap making, musical instruments, toys and dolls.
66. Assist in preparing courses in photography, drama, knitting, square dancing, etc.
67. Reinforce spelling and vocabulary words.
68. Help select library books.
69. Show a video to a group.
70. Share stories of growing up and living in different times and/or places.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES AT THE SECONDARY SCHOOL LEVEL

1. Help students who were absent make up assignments.
2. Help non-English speaking students with vocabulary and conversational skills.
3. Assist in organizing a college fair.
4. Assist teachers in gathering resources for units of study.
5. Serve as a math tutor.
6. Serve on a homework hotline team.
7. Assist athletic coaches.
8. Serve as a listener for students.
9. Perform clerical duties.
10. Assist in arranging and supervising special school events.
11. Help with registration.
12. Proctor standardized tests.
13. Be an attendance office volunteer.
14. Assist in a school book store.
15. Assist in book fairs and science fairs.
16. Be a special speaker about careers, experiences, travel, etc.
17. Help students in the guidance office find answers to questions about careers and universities.
18. Help students with special projects.
19. Help students with resource materials in the library.
20. Assist in the school clinic.
21. Read textbooks to students with reading challenges.
22. Assist students with special needs.
23. Assist in science labs.
24. Assist in vocational classes.
25. Accompany students on choral, band, club or athletic trips.
26. Assist students in art, music, acting, etc.
27. Help arrange field trips.
28. Sponsor school clubs.
29. Assist in developing school publications.
30. Assist in putting on student performances.

BENEFITS FOR SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS

Signing up to become a school volunteer means signing in each time you come onto a school campus. Those volunteers who are appointed by a School Board or its designee are considered agents of the School Board and serve as an integral part of the educational team. School volunteers are considered a valuable resource to the educational system.

TAX BENEFITS

Many out-of-pocket expenses that a volunteer expends while rendering services without compensation are considered as contributions and are deductible from federal income tax. People who expect to itemize deductions are urged to maintain careful and complete records of expenditures and services rendered. Expenses which may be deducted include:

- transportation to and from home to place of service
- mileage to and from home to place of service at the current rate
- per diem allowance to cover reasonable travel expenses or difference between reimbursement and actual cost if receipts are retained while rendering donated services
- cost of uniform if required
- reasonable non-reimbursed out-of-pocket expenses directly connected with and solely attributable to gratuitous services performed related to volunteered services
- dues, fees or assessments paid to qualified organizations

(Federal Tax Law-IRS Publication #526)

FUTURE EMPLOYMENT

In many instances, volunteer or unpaid experience is recognized as previous employment and experience. The State of Florida Employment Application, under "Periods of Employment" ask for (among Others) job-related volunteer work, if applicable. Information required includes the time of employment, name and address of employer, supervisor's name and title, job title, hours per week, and specific duties and responsibilities and other information.

A resume should treat volunteered experience and skills the same as paid experience and note that this date and information is from "volunteered services".

VOLUNTEERS IN EDUCATION POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

A school volunteer is any non-paid individual who gives his/her time to a school or school staff member while performing assigned duties. Duties assigned to school volunteers shall be consistent with Florida Statutes and State Board of Education rules.

Following are the St. Johns County School District Guidelines for school volunteers.

(1) Conditions for serving as a volunteer shall include:

- (a) Being in apparent good health
- (b) Being at least eighteen (18) years of age or the minimum age required for instructional personnel, if assigned duty involves the welfare and safety of students
- (c) Being a positive example through appropriate dress and behavior
- (d) Being cooperative and courteous to all people
- (e) Exhibiting the six pillars of character - trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship
- (f) Being cleared to volunteer through current background screening measures
- (g) Upholding confidentiality for all students, personnel, and volunteers

Any volunteer who does not meet the standards set forward by the district for volunteering in its facilities may lose their volunteer privileges.

(2) The Volunteer Services Coordinator shall be responsible for the direction of the volunteer program, and its compliance with all District and State requirements pertaining to volunteers. All schools shall maintain a volunteer log on the Raptor volunteer tracking system to record volunteers' names, dates, hours of service, and person to whom assigned. All volunteers shall show identification, sign in and out through the Raptor system, and wear name tags when on a school campus.

(3) The principal shall assure the School Board and the Superintendent that the volunteer possesses a clear understanding of State and District rules relating to the responsibilities of the volunteers and the safety, welfare, and health of students. When the volunteer is assigned duties requiring knowledge of rules of a special nature, it shall be the principal and staff person's responsibility to ascertain that the assigned volunteer possesses the necessary knowledge to perform such duties in a proper and reasonable manner.

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VOLUNTEERS IN EDUCATION POLICIES AND GUIDELINES CONTINUED

(4) It shall be the principal and school-based coordinator's responsibility to assure the School Board and the Superintendent that each volunteer possesses a clear understanding of all State and District instructional practices and rules relevant to a volunteer's responsibilities if he/she is expected to assume the responsibility for assisting a teacher in promoting student learning activities. When a volunteer is assigned duties requiring knowledge of instructional practices and policies of a specialized nature, it is the instructional staff member's responsibility to ascertain in advance that the assigned volunteer possess the necessary knowledge.

(5) The volunteer shall complete a period of supervised training when assigned to assist a new staff member or is assigned a type of duty which he/she has not previously performed. The length of such supervised practice may vary depending upon the capability and prior experience of the volunteer. Personnel records are not required for volunteers.

(6) Volunteers shall not perform any of the following:

- (a) Establish instructional objectives
- (b) Determine the relevancy of certain activities or procedures to attain instructional objectives
- (c) Select materials appropriate for accomplishing instructional objectives
- (d) Make judgments regarding the attainment of instructional objectives unless such judgments are based on clear and objective criteria
- (e) Assign or administer punishment or perform disciplinary measures
- (f) Be left with a class, group, or individual without staff supervision

(7) The school principal and instructional staff members who are assisted by a volunteer shall be responsible for assigning duties to the volunteer that are consistent with Florida Statutes and State Board of Education Rules. Any administrative or instructional staff member who willfully and deliberately is in violation shall be reported to the Superintendent for such action as he/she deems proper.

Statutory Authority: Section 1012.01 (5), Florida Statutes

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