

Volunteer Handbook Summary



Welcome

Thank you for joining the Fort Worth Independent School District's Volunteer Program. We look forward to building a mutually beneficial relationship in which you use your talents, passion and skills to benefit the children in our schools, and at the same time, you also positively enhance your own life. Following is a summary of the FWISD Volunteer Program policies and guidelines. Please refer to the FWISD Volunteer Handbook and the online policies and regulations for more in-depth information.

Mission, Vision, Values and Goals

The purpose of the Fort Worth ISD Volunteer Program is to be an integral part of the education of all children, and to promote a partnership between school and community. The volunteer's role in this framework is to complement and supplement the work of the staff as they pursue the goals, mission and vision of the school and District.

Mission: Preparing students for success in college, career and community leadership.

Vision: Igniting in Every Child a Passion for Learning

Goals: Increase Student Achievement
Improve Operational Effectiveness and Efficiency
Enhance Family and Community Engagement
Develop a Workforce that is Student and Customer-Centered

Volunteers work directly under the supervision and guidance of the principal or designee.

Roles and Responsibilities

The school Principal leads and guides stakeholders, volunteers amongst them, in ways that can contribute to the school and District's mission.

The school staff is responsible for creating a welcoming environment by working collaboratively with parents and community.

Volunteers support the staff and leadership in meetings the school's needs more effectively.

Benefits of Volunteering

"One of the great ironies of life is this: He or she who serves almost always benefits more than he or she who is served." - G.B. Hinckley
Volunteer service always benefits everyone involved. Find out how students, parents, school, volunteers and community benefit from working together in the volunteer handbook.

Volunteer Partnership Expectations

Knowing what is expected in one's role is essential. Some expectations are similar for volunteers, staff and teachers.

- Genuine love for children.
- Friendly, cooperatively and professional attitude.
- Punctuality and dependability
- Discretion and trustworthiness

However, all groups have the same goal in common: academic success and the best educational experiences for every child.

Requirements and Process

Requirements:

- 18 years of age or 21 if applying for volunteer driver.
- Online application with consent for a background check
- Current photo identification issued by U.S. Government
- Attend an orientation session provided by the school or the District and, if necessary, training.

Process:

1. Volunteer submits online application.
2. Application is automatically sent for background check clearance. Volunteer receives confirmation email to advise her/him of approval status.
 - A volunteer with **non-clearance** status will be directed to the Office of Professional Standards to find out the reason for non-clearance and options for clearance (817-814-1888).
 - Volunteers with an **"approved"** status will be directed to the school for placement and orientation.
3. Orientation may be done at school or at the Professional Development Center, and if necessary, online.
4. Placement is conducted by school volunteer coordinator.

Approved volunteers will be required to present a current photo identification issued by any U.S. Government agency at the school, the first time they volunteer.

A volunteer "approved" status will be valid until June, 30, 2017. Volunteers must re-apply annually.

Considerations

- Application does not guarantee placement
- Not all offenses prevent a person from volunteering
- All searches and information are confidential.
- Change of legal status should be reported within 2 days.
- Parents who have children in FWISD schools and who have a criminal record that would preclude them from volunteering with the District may still participate in their children's education at their schools by attending parent meetings, open house, school activities, special events, etc.
- Volunteer shall report to assignment at least 15 minutes ahead of time.
- Volunteer shall maintain professional boundaries with students and staff.
- It is recommended not to give or accept personal gifts or transportation.

Policies and Procedures

- As part of standard school **safety** practices, **volunteers must always check-in and check-out at the main office.**
- **Volunteers must wear badges provided by main office.**
- Volunteer must report all hours including those in service for parent-teacher associations, councils, booster clubs or those spend in doing work at home that supports staff in their work toward student achievement.
- Volunteer Hour is any hour spent providing a **non-paid** service to the school.
- Volunteers may not discipline a child. Consult teacher/staff.

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Policies and Procedures - continue.

- Volunteers should inform school staff when they need to be Absent. Ideally, no less than 24 hours.
- For safety, volunteers should not bring children.
- Mobile phone or texting is not permitted in classrooms.
- No smoking or eating allowed during volunteer service.
- Volunteers may not administer any medication.
- Volunteers must not perform professional services for which a certification or license is required.
- Volunteers may not take photos of students unless there is a signed consent form from parents in file.
- Posting pictures or sharing student information is permitted only on FWISD managed sites or with school and/or parent permission.
- Volunteers will not use the District internet resources for any purpose perceived as a conflict with District's values.
- No alcohol or drugs.
- Volunteers shall work with kids in the presence of more than one adult.
- Volunteer must avoid promoting any specific business, commercial products, or brand names.
- A volunteer may supervise other volunteers provided she/he is under direct supervision of a paid staff member.
- During bad weather or emergencies, volunteers should follow FWISD through its website, social media, school volunteer coordinator or their organization.
- Volunteer drivers must be 21 years of age and must meet special requirements. Contact volunteer coordinator.
- The District shall not be liable for any injuries that occur while riding in vehicles that are not provided by the school.
- Problems, criticisms, or grievances must not be discussed in public areas or in presence of students. Refer to campus staff or/and District Volunteer Specialist (817-814-2973).

Working with Students

All procedures and policies are important. However, the following are particularly important in working with youth.

- Diversity: Volunteer should model respect for all students and understanding of any difference.
- Boundaries: Learn to be aware of and respect personal boundaries. Avoid proposing any personal or religious beliefs to students. Volunteer-student relationship should be restricted to school. Verbal praise is recommended as a way of encouragement.
- Confidentiality: Volunteer must not discuss anything that they observe or hear in school.
- Safety: Learn procedures for fire, weather, and other emergencies. Report accidents. Never move a child involved in an accident.
- Abuse: It is required by law to report any suspicion of abuse or neglect.
- Role Model: Interact with staff in a positive way to be a model for positive adult relationships.

Additional Policies and Guidelines

- Dress and grooming shall be clean, neat, and suitable to the volunteer's assignment. Shorts, tennis and blue jeans are accepted if appropriate for the volunteer's task.
- Media shall be referred to the volunteer coordinator, principal or the District's Communications department.
- Volunteer shall remain informed of new policies, procedures, and updates.
- Volunteers must report to office any injury or accident.
- Volunteers must know nurse's office and first aid kit location.
- Volunteers are responsible for providing his/her own insurance coverage.
- It is recommended not to initiate or accept friend requests for social media networking with minors met as a volunteer of FWISD. Social media interaction can be done through FWISD managed platforms.

Customer Service

Customer service is the intentional effort to understand and exceed a customer's needs in a responsive and positive manner. Volunteers are expected to demonstrate this behavior in all customer interactions. Review customer service standards and communications guidelines in the volunteer handbook.

Recognition

School based recognitions are used to acknowledge volunteers throughout the year. In addition, volunteer's stories are featured in the District's social media and nominations are submitted for local, state and national volunteer awards. During the National Volunteer Week in April, Fort Worth ISD joins the nation in celebrating and thanking their volunteers. On this week, volunteers are featured in the District's social media every day and their importance to the FWISD mission is highlighted in the District's website. Certificates of recognition are awarded to volunteers who contributed over 100 hours. The week culminates with a luncheon or special event that honors volunteers from the District who have demonstrated an exemplary dedication or who have gone above and beyond in supporting the District's mission and their school's goals.

Frequently Asked Questions

Refer to handbook for answers to these questions.

Volunteer Agreement

Volunteer must sign this document after reading policies and procedures.

Questions or Extra Assistance.

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