



Volunteer Orientation  
Community Relations Department  
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### **Philosophy**

- Every child is important as an individual.
- Every child has the right to read.
- Every child has basic needs.  
Some of these needs are:
  - To be loved and understood.
  - To feel approval from peers and adults.
  - Warmth and security.
  - Continuous reassurance and the safety of being able to fail without embarrassment.
  - To be valued as a person of dignity regardless of success with traditional academic skills.
  - To express frustration.
  - To be listened to with understanding when expressing themselves verbally and emotionally.
  - To accomplish learning tasks successfully.

### **Why do schools need volunteers and school partners?**

Volunteers support and enrich the lives of schoolchildren and make our community a better place in which to live by:

- Building self-esteem and self-confidence
- Giving students extra chances for success
- Bringing enthusiasm and encouragement for academic pursuits
- Giving students instant feedback
- Adding another adult friend to a student's experience
- Serving as role models
- Increasing students' knowledge of the business community
- Becoming an advocate for students and teachers
- Introducing volunteerism to children
- Establishing a school and community partnership for quality education

### **Volunteers' rights**

- The right to know as much about the school as possible, its policies, its people, and its programs;
- The right to well-planned and well-presented training for the job, and as follow-up to initial training, information about new developments;
- The right to sound guidance and direction by someone who is experienced, well-informed, patient and thoughtful, and who has time to invest in giving guidance;
- The right to a suitable assignment with consideration for personal preference, temperament, life experience, education and employment background;
- The right to a variety of experiences -- as interests and needs change, through special project assignments;
- The right to be heard, to have a part in planning, to feel free to make suggestions, to decline assignments that are not a personal "match;" and to have respect shown for an honest opinion;
- The right to recognition through day-by-day signs of appreciation.

## Dallas ISD Regulations

The Dallas ISD is bound by law and local school board policy to set certain standards for all staff and volunteers to follow, so that schoolchildren (and their families) will be protected while they are attending school. Therefore, everyone is asked to observe these safeguards:

- So that only authorized people shall be allowed on school grounds: **volunteers shall check in at the principal's office or designated place when they arrive at a school.**
- So that the school nurse or other authorized person can follow the required procedures where sickness or medications are concerned: **volunteers must avoid giving medications or medical treatment to a child.**
- So that each family's beliefs and religious habits will be respected: **volunteers must avoid proposing any personal or religious doctrines or beliefs to a student.**
- So that the student may be kept free of unusual pressures and the family's privacy of beliefs may be respected: **volunteers must avoid promoting political candidates or parties.**
- So that staff persons who are responsible for the overall care of the student can take the necessary actions: **volunteers must seek the aid of school personnel in case of serious discipline problems, or suspected mental health or drug/alcohol problems (and not take matters into their own hands).**
- So that their parents are not expected to return unauthorized expenditures: **volunteers must avoid lending money to students.**
- So that one business does not have an unfair advantage over another: **volunteers must avoid promoting any specific business, commercial products or brand names.**

## Responsibilities of volunteers

- Attend an orientation/training session.
- Complete and sign a volunteer application form.
- Meet the school principal and familiarize yourself with the school building.
- Locate and use the volunteer sign-in sheet.
- Call the school if you are unable to attend, so a message can be given to the teacher and students.
- Meet the teacher or other staff person to work out volunteer activities and the number of students with whom you want to work.
- Support teachers: remember that volunteers act only as assistants.
- Keep communication open between you and the teacher, exchanging telephone numbers if you wish.
- Share matters of concern with the contact person of your group, the principal, or the partnership coordinator.
- Work within the rules of the school; observe the no-smoking rules and dress codes.
- Keep any information confidential about students. **(The exception is child abuse or extreme family difficulties; then notify staff members only.)**
- Avoid expressing dissatisfaction with school or staff in presence of students.

## Tips for getting ready

As a school volunteer, you help promote and maintain a supportive relationship between students, faculty and staff.

- Ask questions! No question is inappropriate if you don't know the answer.
- Tell the principal or school partnership coordinator if you are having problems.
- If you are given a child with discipline problems, return the student to the teacher.

*Be Honest*                    in your approach and attitude. It will aid in developing trust.

*Be Patient*                    when working with students.

*Be Friendly*                    with a smile and a thank you, you can accomplish miracles.

*Be Respectful*                    treat individuals in the same matter you wish to be treated.