

2017-18 VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK



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Shaker Heights City School District
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www.shaker.org/face.aspx



Shaker Heights Schools

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Mission

The mission of the volunteer program is to inspire and promote volunteerism within the Shaker City School District.

Vision

Shaker is the first-choice school district for all students

Purpose of the Shaker Heights City School Volunteer Programs

1. To support academic achievement and District goals, to assist teachers in providing basic skills instruction, to enrich quality of instruction, to enhance interpersonal experiences for students, and to assist school staff with support.
2. To increase children's motivation for learning.
3. To build an understanding of school programs among interested citizens and business/community organization partnerships.
4. To strengthen school/family/community relations through positive participation.
5. To promote family engagement by actively supporting and seeking collaboration with the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO), school/community advisory groups, and special events.
6. To enhance District educational programs.
7. Volunteer opportunities are listed on the Family and Community Engagement (FACE) District web page, in each school building(s), or by contacting your building PTO: shaker.org/face.aspx

Volunteer

A volunteer is an unpaid person who has decided to perform services for the school district on a voluntary basis. A volunteer shall serve in such capacity without compensation or employee benefits of any type. All volunteers serve at the discretion of the Shaker Heights School District without any expressed or implied privileges beyond those found in this handbook and may be released from volunteering if so deemed necessary. Volunteering in a school is a unique and exciting experience and a benefit to both the school and the volunteer. It is designed to promote and maintain a supportive relationship between students, their schools and their community.

To become a Shaker Heights City School District Volunteer:

1. Complete the online volunteer registration packet at shaker.org/volunteer.aspx
2. Complete the volunteer waiver form: [Adult Waiver Form](#) or [Minor Waiver Form](#)
3. Review and sign the volunteer handbook and sign signature form on last page.
4. Complete the background check/fingerprints process (if required)
Call: 216-295-6036 (*See Appendix*)

**If you do not have wifi access, registration packets are in each school building.
(See your building's senior administrative assistant for paper packet.)**

Expectations of Volunteers

1. Understand and accept the students in terms of their own backgrounds and values.
2. Support and supplement the instructional program of the classroom teacher. The volunteer's role is assistance not replacement of staff. Be understanding and appreciative of the work of the school staff and the volunteer program.
3. Have a professional attitude and the ability to work cooperatively with school staff and others.
4. Communicate regularly with the principal, teacher, building secretary or PTO representative, etc. via email, telephone, in person, meetings or logbook.
5. Attend recommended or required orientation and training sessions. Orientations are held to provide clear expectations for the volunteer.
6. Be prompt, reliable, flexible, dependable and consistent in attendance. If you must be absent, call the school and let them know. The students will be disappointed you can't come, but are reassured that you care enough to call.
7. Understand and observe all regulations and procedures in the assigned school (i.e. fire drills, accident reporting, lunch and coffee privileges, pupil restroom and drink privileges, inclement weather procedures).
8. Notify the principal or teacher immediately if a student confides in you about an abusive situation. (Inform the student the information must be reported to the appropriate authority.)
9. Leave personal concerns and pressures at home. Leave school problems at school.
10. Respect confidentiality with relationship to the school. Ensure that a child's work and behavior in school are held in confidence. However, please connect with a school principal if you are worried/concerned or need support with a challenging situation.
11. Remember that you are acting as a role model for children. Treat individuals with respect and courtesy and expect the same in return.
12. Please keep in mind that volunteering will involve learning new skills and learning about students. The school's role, and therefore the role of the volunteer, is always to improve the academic achievement of our students. We do this in a variety of ways, including academic instruction and personal support.
13. A volunteers must be identified as such in each building by wearing a visible ID. The volunteer will need to request an ID badge at the school(s) requested for volunteering services.
14. **ALWAYS** sign in and out through the school main office or security desk whenever you come to the school. (This is an important procedure for the safety of our children and volunteers, and it allows us to track volunteer hours for insurance and District information purposes.)

Volunteer Protocol/Procedure Checklist

When you first meet with the building principal, teacher or PTO representative, plan to discuss the following:

1. Days and times to work in classroom, school or event.
2. Procedures for volunteer and expected ways to keep in touch (regular conferences, telephone conversations, notes, informal meetings).
3. How the contact person will tell volunteer of the day's assignment (folder, note or other means).
4. How the students will address the volunteer (school or volunteer's preference of having students use first name or Mr./Ms./Mrs.).
5. Materials, strategies or games to be used.
6. School policies, procedures and rules (such as classroom management system, reinforcement techniques, classroom planning, emergency procedures, where volunteer can leave personal belongings, and whether volunteers are welcome in teachers' lounge and lunchroom).
7. Protocol for informing contact person about volunteer absence.
8. If you work on academic areas with students, you should also discuss:
 - Pertinent background information about the student(s) the volunteer will work with (within the appropriate standards of student information confidentiality).
 - Special strengths of the student(s).
 - Special needs of the student(s).
 - Tips for working with specific students (learning style and reinforcement techniques).
 - Procedures for taking student(s) out of classroom for individual work.
 - Designation of work area location.
 - Alternate plan if student is absent.

Rights of Volunteers

Volunteers have the right to:

1. Know as much about the school as possible, including its policies, its staff and its programs.
2. Sound guidance and direction by the District and your assigned school(s).
3. A suitable assignment with consideration for personal preference, temperament, life experience, education and employment background.
4. A variety of experiences, through transfer of one activity to another, and through special project assignments.
5. Respect for honest opinions or different perspectives.

Tips for Volunteers

1. Names are important. Make sure you say the student's name the way the student wants it to be said. Learn to spell it correctly. Make sure the student knows your name and can pronounce it correctly.
2. Show that you are interested in the students as-people by caring about what they say and showing you care by your words and actions.
3. Encourage and support student successes. Build self-confidence by praising them honestly and frequently.
4. Avoid making comparisons between students, between teachers and between schools.
5. Always remember to be fair and consistent.
6. Students make mistakes. Let them know that making mistakes is part of learning. Don't be afraid of making mistakes yourself.

Overnight Field Trip Chaperones

1) All volunteers/chaperones must follow the current steps for volunteering at Shaker Heights City School District.

- Complete Volunteer Registration Packet and Waiver.
- Attend the recommended orientation and trainings conducted by the school district and your assigned school PTO (as applicable).
- Complete a background check/fingerprints process as required (*see appendix*)

2) Prior to the overnight field trip, the field trip coordinator is required to provide a list of the volunteers/chaperones screened for overnight field-trip to the building lead secretary.

- Verification of continuous residence will be required for overnight field-trip chaperones. The District HR department will verify residence (driver's license, mortgage, insurance, property tax statement and/or pay stub...)
- All Volunteers are required to read and sign the Volunteer Registration Packet

Safety and Liability Issues

Where should I work with a student?

Locations will vary, depending upon availability and the preference of the student's teacher. You may end up working with the student in the hallway. Sometimes a teacher will direct you to an empty classroom. Be sure to leave the door open at all times, and to sit in two desks which are easily seen by those passing by. Always work in a public area, on site. If you are working with a student in an after-school program, it may be tempting to offer the student a ride home. Your volunteer experience is limited to the public school setting or assigned location. Never go off-site with a student and never give a student a ride in your vehicle.

Working with Students of Different Cultures

Students in Shaker Heights Schools come from many different families, cultures and communities—each with its own set of values and beliefs. Because our own cultures, beliefs, values and behaviors are so naturally a part of who we are that it is often difficult to understand others with different traditions. Each individual must honor the beliefs and habits of his or her own culture, while learning to respond to the beliefs and habits of the school culture. Understanding the students’ cultures and helping them to understand the school culture will increase your ability to help them learn. If you are having difficulty understanding students, please contact the principal, teacher or PTO representative.

Discipline

Students rarely have behavior problems while working with volunteers. However, our schools have detailed discipline plans, and the responsibility for discipline rests with the professional staff. Volunteers may not discipline students. Please make the teacher aware of any discipline problem that might arise while you are working with a student.

Restrooms

Staff restrooms are available for volunteers. Volunteer adults must never use a student restroom or accompany a student into a restroom stall.

Dismissal of students

Volunteers may never dismiss a student from school. Under no circumstances may a volunteer take a student off-campus. Volunteers may not walk or drive students to their homes.

Can I hug the students?

Some students, especially at the elementary level, will naturally become attached and show affection. Students may crave affection and attention, so it is important that you handle the situation with sensitivity. A front hug is inappropriate and should be avoided. Use other signs of affection, such as “high fives.” In addition, regardless of age, students should never sit on your lap.

Remember to keep in mind the cultural perspective and personal context of touch from the student’s perspective. Cultural influences, beliefs and personal history affects a student’s comfort level regarding personal boundaries. Some children are not inviting of touch and may want more personal space; respect their wishes.

What is the Purpose of the Volunteer Handbook?

The Shaker Heights City School District wants you, as volunteers, to be successful and to carry out your responsibilities in a caring and appropriate manner. We want you and all students to feel comfortable and have a positive experience.

Maintaining Confidentiality

As you work with the staff and students, information of a confidential matter may be shared with you. The problems, abilities, relationships, and confidences of students, their parents, and the staff should never be discussed with anyone who does not have a professional right or need to know them. Like teachers, volunteers are bound by a code of ethics to keep confidential matters within the school. The staff and students need to know they can trust you.

Please do not discuss a child's school progress or difficulties with his/her parents. This is the teacher's responsibility.

Occasionally, a child might confide in you about family matters or personal problems. If you feel that it is vital for the school to have this information in order to help the student, discuss the child's conversation (in private) with the teacher or principal.

As the relationship with a student progresses, he or she will begin to trust you and may start to confide in you. You should take time to listen and show that you care. However, do not make a promise you cannot keep. If a student reveals information relating to a possible abusive situation, let the student know that you care and are there to listen and that you are required to pass this information onto a teacher, counselor or principal who can offer help. There is also a chance that someone may already have insight into the situation, which could help you to understand and work better with that student. Personal information about yourself should be shared only as it is relevant to the work you are doing with the student. Avoid giving personal contact information such as your address, phone, social media page and email without parental/guardian consent.

APPENDIX

Fingerprints and Background Checks Policy

1. A supervised or unsupervised interaction with students determines whether or not a volunteer needs to be fingerprinted for a background check by the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). Please note these definitions:

- **Category I Supervised Volunteers** are always in the presence of a staff member, inside and outside of school. No fingerprints are required. -Examples include assisting students with reading or math in the presence of a staff member.
- **Category II Unsupervised Volunteers** are able to engage with students with or without the presence of a staff member. Unsupervised volunteers are permitted to work with or around students without the constant and direct observation of a school staff member. Adults in this category must be fingerprinted and successfully pass a background check every three years. Examples include assisting students with reading or math in a hallway outside of the classroom, escorting students to restrooms and accompanying a class or group of students for an off-campus activity or field trip.

2. There is a federal legal requirement for background checks. In accordance with the provisions of the National Child Protection Act (1993) and the Volunteers for Children Act (1998), any unsupervised volunteer must be fingerprinted and successfully pass a background check before the volunteer is allowed to work with students. It is District practice to fingerprint unsupervised volunteers every **three (3) years**. Supervised volunteers do not require fingerprints because they are under the direct observation of the school staff. Volunteers will be contacted by HR every 3 years to renew fingerprints.

3. Volunteers should call Human Resources at 216-295-6036 to schedule an appointment for fingerprints. There is no charge for this service for the 2017-18 school year.

4. Volunteers should plan at least 30 days in advance for completion of the background check. The results of the background check may come back as quickly as a few hours or as long as thirty days. Therefore, volunteers should plan ahead to ensure a background check is completed prior to any specific volunteer activity, student event or field trip. The District has no control over the length of time the State of Ohio or Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) takes to complete the background check process.

5. The background check result (pass or fail) will be emailed to the volunteer from the Human Resources department. The FACE Center and lead secretary at each school building will keep a list of the approved volunteers for each school. **If you have any questions, please contact the HR department (216-295-6036) or FACE Center (216-295-6268)**



Volunteer Acknowledgement

By signing below I acknowledge that I have read and understood, and agree to comply with the terms and conditions set forth above.

Adult/Parent/Guardian Volunteer Signature

Minor Volunteer Signature

District Witness Signature

Date

AFTER COMPLETION, PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO YOUR SCHOOL OFFICE OR THE FACE CENTER:

Shaker Heights City Schools
Family and Community Engagement
3450 Lee Road
Shaker Heights, OH 44120
Phone: (216)-295-6268
Email: langford_k@shaker.org

For Office Use Only
Building(s) Assigned: _____

Background check needed: ___ Yes ___ No