



Pathways for School Volunteers

Broward County Public Schools 

A Letter to All School Volunteers

Dear School Volunteer:

Our community is very fortunate to have thousands of citizens who are dedicated to supporting both our students and our schools. Each day, these volunteers display selfless acts of service to assure that all Broward County Public School students receive a quality education in a safe and secure learning environment. We are very proud of this commitment to quality education and appreciate your interest in joining as our partner in providing the finest education possible for our students. The goals of the school volunteer program are to:

1. Provide individualized educational assistance to students
2. Enrich the curriculum
3. Improve students' self-worth by increasing the opportunity for educational achievement
4. Relieve the teacher of some non-instructional tasks and duties
5. Stimulate community interest, concern and support for the educational system
6. Establish a school-community partnership for quality education
7. Enhance all aspects of the educational process

As you volunteer in our schools, your varied life experiences and training will enhance the education of our youth and have an impact on their lives. The role you have selected is both exciting and challenging and will provide you with opportunities for personal enrichment and fulfillment.

We hope that this booklet will provide useful information that will guide you in building a productive and pleasing relationship with the school staff and students you will be assisting.

Your personal interest and desire to help is welcomed and appreciated. Youth are our most important natural resource and their education will form the foundation of the future.

Thank you for investing in our future.

Sincerely



Anne F. French, Supervisor
Volunteer Services

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To complete an online volunteer/mentor application or to learn more about volunteer opportunities in Broward County Public Schools, visit our Web site at:

www.getinvolvedineducation.com/volunteer_services.html

Volunteers in Schools Benefits Everyone

The Volunteer Gains

- Personal satisfaction by helping children learn
- The opportunity to learn new skills or polish old ones
- Knowledge and understanding of Broward County Public Schools
- Work experience that may lead to a future career

The Student Gains

- Additional individual attention
- An accepting atmosphere for learning reinforcement
- A chance to succeed, thus building a better self-concept
- A good friend who is a warm and caring adult

The School Gains

- Positive public relations with the community
- Improved student achievement and behavior
- Additional services without extra costs
- Increased community understanding and support

The Broward County Community Gains

- Better educated students
- Greater confidence in the educational system

Framework of the School Volunteer Program

At the School

School-based staff liaisons for volunteers and volunteer coordinators are a vital link to successful volunteer programs. In cooperation with the principal, they jointly coordinate and direct their school's program and many outstanding volunteer activities. Each school models its volunteer program to meet the needs of the students and teachers at the school.

The responsibilities of the school include:

- Presenting training to staff members on effective utilization of volunteers,
- Surveying needs of teachers for volunteer assistance,
- Recruiting and registering volunteers, especially parents,
- Arranging for orientation and training,
- Assigning volunteers to specific teachers,
- Serving as a resource person and advisor to school volunteers,
- Providing a welcoming environment for the community,
- Keeping accurate records of volunteer services and hours,
- Coordinating school recognition for volunteers.

At the District Office

Volunteers Assisting Students and Teachers (VAST) provides district-wide support and coordination to the school-based volunteer programs in Broward County Public Schools.

VAST is responsible for:

- Developing and disseminating volunteer materials,
- Presenting training workshops,
- Recruiting volunteers from the community at large,
- Working with school-based coordinators to develop and maintain school programs,
- Networking with community involvement programs,
- Sponsoring district-wide recognition events.

VAST is also responsible for coordinating and implementing special school volunteer programs including: Meet the Masters, Math SuperStars, I'm Thumbody, and the Classroom Speakers Directory.

Importance of Signing In and Signing Out

Each time you go to school to volunteer, you must sign in, wear your name badge and sign out when your day's service is complete. These requirements are necessary for the following reasons:

1. Safeguarding our students and maintaining campus security is of the utmost importance.
2. In case you receive an emergency telephone call, you can be found.
3. While volunteering at school for a specific purpose, individuals are covered by School Board insurance provided they have completed a volunteer application form and have signed in.
4. Verified volunteer service can be used as work experience for future employment.
5. Individual volunteers will be recognized for their dedication and service to our schools. Volunteer attendance records are used to determine award recipients.
6. The Florida Department of Education presents the Golden School Award to schools whose volunteers have recorded two hours of service per student enrolled.
7. Your school, and the school district, would like the opportunity to thank you for your service.

There are a variety of systems in place for volunteers to sign in and sign out. Some Broward schools use a computer system that electronically records all volunteer hours. This system may require you to show picture identification when you arrive and "swipe" this picture identification through a scanner. This system normally prints a personal name badge for you to wear while on the school campus. A swipe of your name badge is used to tell the school when you are signing out for the day. This computer equipment is usually installed in the front office. The friendly office staff members will be happy to help you learn the easy steps to signing in and out.

Other schools use a volunteer service log that requires you to sign-in and out on your specific timesheet. At these schools, personal name badges are provided for you to wear while on campus. The service log and name badges are normally kept in the front office. Again, the staff members will be happy to help you learn this method for signing in and signing out.

Guidelines for Volunteers

Your interest and concern for students have motivated you to volunteer in Broward County Schools. Thank you. This is a challenging and rewarding role.

To make your experience as a school volunteer a beneficial one for the students and for you, please follow these guidelines as you assist in the schools:

1. The main concern of volunteers while engaged in school activities must be the safety and education of students.
2. Volunteers may not give students medication.
3. Volunteers may not divulge individual student's grades, records and abilities, which are personal and confidential information. Students have a right to confidentiality under Florida Statute 228.093 that covers:
 - Academic work completed
 - Family background information
 - Standardized test scores
 - Attendance records
 - Health data
 - Grades
 - Interest inventory reports
 - Teacher or counselor ratings and observations
 - Reports of serious or recurrent behavior patterns
4. Volunteers are not permitted to supervise a classroom or discipline students. These actions are the responsibilities of the teacher and school.
5. Volunteers will be assigned only to staff members requesting assistance.
6. Volunteers should set a good example for students by their manner, appearance and behavior.
7. Volunteers are required to complete an application form annually before helping in the school.
8. Volunteers are required to sign in and out.
9. For identification, volunteers are required to wear a name badge when helping with school activities.

“Teamwork”

*I dreamed I stood in a studio
And watched two sculptors there,
The clay they used was children's minds
And they fashioned them with care.
One, a teacher used the tools of school
Reading, music and art.
The other, a volunteer, worked with a
Guiding hand and gentle loving heart.
Day after day, the teacher toiled
With a touch that was deft and sure,
While the volunteer labored
By the teacher's side
And polished and smoothed them o'er.
And when at last, their task was done
They were proud of what they had wrought.*

*For the things they had molded together
Could neither be sold nor bought.
And each agreed working together
Was better than working alone.
For beside the teacher and volunteer
Stood confident children on their own.*

Teacher + Volunteer = A+ Team

Teachers Provide:

- A welcome and relaxed atmosphere
- Direction and assistance
- Satisfying experiences
- Instruction in classroom procedures
- Classroom supervision and student discipline
- Time to discuss ideas and problems
- The school calendar of events and holidays
- Volunteer information for substitutes

Volunteers Provide:

- Time to participate in the orientation program
- A commitment of time to the classroom
- A positive attitude
- A good model for students
- Quick and thorough work
- Student assistance as directed by the teacher
- Open and honest communication with the teacher
- Punctuality
- Notification to the teacher or volunteer coordinator of planned absences.

How Students Learn

1. Students learn by doing, not by passive observance.
2. Students learn by asking questions and by searching for answers to their questions.
3. Students learn by discovery.
4. Students learn by using all their senses, whenever possible.
5. Students learn by experimenting.
6. Students learn by sorting and combining objects.
7. Students learn by repeating experiences.
8. Students learn by building their self-confidence.

Helping an Individual Student

1. A student's name is very important. Make sure you say and spell it correctly.
2. Make sure your student knows and can pronounce your name. You might give the student a card with your name written on it.
3. Show that you are interested in the student as a person. Listen carefully to what the student has to say.
4. Students make mistakes. Let them know that this is part of learning. Don't be afraid of making a few mistakes yourself.
5. Build the student's self-confidence. Praise your student honestly and frequently.
6. Encourage students to feel, smell, taste and listen as well as look at objects.
7. Let students discover.
8. Ask questions which may lead to the answer instead of providing the answer.
9. Give the students as much time as they need to understand new ideas.
10. Be reliable. Students will be disappointed if you are absent. Show you care by calling to let them know you can not be there as planned.
11. If you are helping at your child's school, allow your own child room to grow. Volunteer in a location other than your child's classroom.

Helping in a Small Group

1. Offer each student a chance to participate. Quiet students are sometimes ignored.
2. Do not expect every student to enter into all activities in the beginning. The teacher will tell you at what point they all should be involved.
3. Allow each student to grow in independence by letting him/her do as much as possible without your help.

How to Communicate with Students

The following suggestions are provided to help you communicate with students in order to get positive results.

1. Be sure the students understand what you're saying. We sometimes use words that they do not comprehend.
2. Keep your voice as low as possible. The students will get louder as your voice increases in volume.
3. Instruct students as though you expect them to comply. Give sufficient warnings and time. Example: "Jimmy, in five minutes you will need to stop painting and put your apron away".
4. If students gain your attention and praise only when they behave, they will soon learn your expectations of proper conduct.

Remember--- "All children smile in the same language."

Commending Students

Praising students for excellence, improvement or effort is very important to their success in school and in life. Honest praise helps students to assess their personal value and build their self-esteem. Mounting research shows that high self-esteem is important for academic success.

All children have the potential for liking themselves and having high self-esteem. This is not conceit, but rather the child's quiet comfort about whom he/she is.

Positive statements greatly influence students' attitudes about themselves and their success-building experiences. Be creative. Praise is a stronger motivator than gifts of candy. Think of the many ways you can boost a student's self-image by using words of encouragement and kindness.

Here are some examples of ways to praise:

- "I like the way you're working."
- "That's right! Good for you."
- "That's quite an improvement."
- "I'm very proud of the way you worked today."
- "It looks like you put a lot of work into this."
- "I'm happy to be around you."

Questions and Answers

1. **How do I become a volunteer?**

You will be asked to complete a volunteer application form listing your skills, interests and preferred school location, grade level and type of volunteer service. Also, your date of birth and social security number are required for School Board security procedures to safeguard students.

2. **I'm not a teacher, can I still volunteer?**

Yes! A teaching background is not required because a volunteer works under the direction of the professional staff and always assists in a supervised setting.. The qualifications needed to be a school volunteer are a personal desire to help, sincere interest in students, ability to follow school procedures and policies and a willingness to make a definite time commitment (three hours per week is the average amount). Any needed training will be provided by the teacher or at a special orientation workshop.

3. **How do I find out what volunteer services are needed?**

Volunteers must attend an orientation workshop. This session is designed to help you understand the volunteer program and to explain which opportunities for volunteer services are available. Your volunteer assignment is determined by your skills, interests and preferences as well as the volunteer service needs of individual schools and teachers.

4. **I'd like to volunteer, but I can't offer my services on a regular basis. Can I still volunteer?**

Yes! You may be a special activities volunteer who is involved with special school projects. You will find an outline of the duties in the job description section of this manual. The time commitment for the volunteer job depends on the specific project.

5. **I would like to volunteer, but I have a pre-school child. Can I bring my child with me?**

No, having a very young child in a classroom interrupts class procedures, disrupts the students, and prevents the volunteer from giving full attention to the work. However, you can still help the school by making arrangements to do work at home.

6. **May I choose the teacher with whom I want to work?**

Volunteers are only placed in classrooms where teachers have specifically requested assistance. Feel free to discuss your preferences with the school contact.

7. Suppose I don't feel qualified to perform the assignment I have agreed to undertake?

Feel free to discuss your concerns, reservations and preferences with the teacher or volunteer coordinator. Remember that there are lots of volunteer jobs that might better fit your needs.

8. What do I do about discipline?

Simply nothing. Disciplinary action is the legal responsibility of teachers and school staff. Volunteers should never be put in a position of having to enforce discipline. Immediately notify the teacher if you are encountering a discipline problem.

9. My friends and neighbors will ask about school. What may I say?

Volunteers can be a big help in interpreting the school to the community. We want you to talk about your school and your involvement. However, you may learn "confidential" information which, of course, should be treated as such. "Confidential" information is defined as the personal records, grades, test scores, behavior, and attitude of students. "Confidential" information is important school business and must never be discussed outside of the school.

Also remember that criticizing school personnel and school practices is not acceptable. Your job in school is as a professional working with other professionals. Address comments and concerns to school staff members only.

10. I am retired. Can I still volunteer?

Certainly. Many retired and senior citizens volunteer in our schools. In fact, you may be interested in becoming a part of the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program. RSVP is a nation-wide program that recruits senior citizens (age 60 and over) to work in all areas of the community. The School District works very closely with Broward County's RSVP program and encourages senior citizens that would like to volunteer in the schools to also join this organization. As a member of RSVP you receive special benefits including supplementary insurance coverage, a quarterly newsletter and an annual recognition program. In order to enroll as an RSVP volunteer, please telephone 954-563-8991.

Volunteer Job Descriptions

Career Shadowing/Internship Volunteers help secondary students learn about the jobs and careers.

Time Commitment: During the school day, amount of time varies.

Schools: Middle and High

Training: Provided by location.

Classroom Speakers discuss personal areas of expertise in a classroom setting. Topics might include careers, hobbies and travel.

Time Commitment: During the school day, amount of time will vary.

Schools: Elementary, Middle and High

Training: Provided by location

Classroom Volunteers work regularly with a classroom teacher. They help students and assist with projects and field trips.

Time Commitment: During the school day, average of one hour per week, regularly scheduled.

Schools: Elementary, Middle and Exceptional Student Education Centers.

Training: Provided by location.

Clerical Volunteers help with typing, photo copying, and clerical duties in schools and offices.

Time Commitment: During the school day, average of one hour per week.

Schools: Elementary, Middle, High and Exceptional Student Education Centers.

Training: Provided by location.

Exceptional Education Volunteers work with students with special learning needs at schools and special centers.

Time Commitment: During the school day, average of one hour per week.

Schools: Elementary, Middle, High and Exceptional Student Education Centers.

Training: Provided by location.

Health Room Volunteers help with the management of a school's health room. They provide comfort to students and help with student health screenings.

Time Commitment: During the school day, average of one or two hours per week.

Schools: Elementary

Training: Provided by Broward County Health Department.

I'm Thumbody Volunteers present a short self-esteem building program to second graders.

Activities help students value their own unique qualities and abilities.

Time Commitment: During the school day, average of one hour per week.

Schools: Elementary Only

Training: Provided by Mental Health Association.

Literacy Volunteers tutor adults who are learning to read.

Time Commitment: Time of day varies, one hour per week for one semester.

Schools: Adult Centers

Training: Provided by Vocational Adult and Community Education Department

Listener Volunteers act as supportive adult friends to students identified by guidance counselors.

Parents or grandparents cannot be Listeners in their own child's school.

Time Commitment: Weekly, during the school day

Schools: Elementary and Middle

Training: The Mental Health Association provides training.

Media Center/Library Volunteers help students select books, work at the circulation desk and help shelve books.

Time Commitment: During the school day, average of one or two hours per week.

Schools: Elementary, Middle and High

Training: Provided by Media Specialist.

Meet the Masters Volunteers show and discuss art prints in elementary classes. Trained volunteers lead student discussions about the artists' styles and lives.

Time Commitment: During the school day, average of one hour per week.

Schools: Elementary

Training: Provided by Volunteer Services Department.

Read Aloud Volunteers inspire students to be readers by helping them learn to appreciate stories and books.

Time Commitment: During the school day, average of one hour per week, on regular basis.

Schools: Elementary

Training: Provided by location

Special Activity Volunteers help with a specific project at a school or at a district office. The time commitment required is usually short-term and intensive. Projects include; curriculum fairs, student competitions, screenings and productions.

Time Commitment: Depends on the activity, usually short-term and intensive.

Schools: Elementary, Middle and High

Training: Depends on the activity.

SuperStars Volunteers work with a math enrichment program designed to sharpen students' thinking and problem solving skills.

Time Commitment: May be done after the school day, depending on school.

Schools: Elementary only

Training: Provided by Volunteer Services Department

Volunteer Tutors give students extra help with academic subjects, especially at the middle and high school levels.

Time Commitment: During the school day, average of one hour per week.

Schools: Elementary, Middle and High

Training: Provided by the teacher.

Youth Mentors serve as positive role models for students who need motivation to stay in school. Mentors offer a listening ear and encouragement.

Time Commitment: On a consistent basis, during the school day, one hour per week.

Schools: Elementary, Middle, and High

Training: Two-hour training session required.

“The Volunteer’s Creed”

A hundred years from now

It will not matter

What my bank account was,

The sort of house I lived in,

Or the kind of car I drove.

But the world may be different

Because I was important

In the life of a young person.

My Personal School Directory

School Information

School Name _____ Phone Number _____

School Address _____

Principal _____

School Office Staff _____

Assistant Principal _____

Guidance Counselor _____

Parent Organization President _____

School Advisory Council Chairperson _____

School Procedures

Fire Drills _____

Dress Code _____

Opening and Closing Times _____

Location of Sign In Book, Name Badges _____

Parking _____

Who to call when you are absent _____

Eating in the School _____

Use of the Telephone _____

Volunteer Coordinator

Staff Liaison for Volunteers _____

Volunteer Coordinator _____

Your Volunteer Assignment

Teacher's Name _____

Room _____ Date to Begin _____

Day(s) _____ Time _____

Teacher's Planning Time _____

Notes



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Individuals with disabilities requesting accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) may call the Equal Educational Opportunities Department (EEO) at 754-321-2150 or TDD # 754-321-2158.

www.browardschools.com