

School Volunteer Handbook



Patrick County Public Schools
104 Rucker Street
Stuart, VA 24171
www.patrick.k12.va.us

Approved
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County School Board

Table of Contents

1 Welcome	3
2 Volunteer Coordinator	3
3 Becoming a Volunteer	4
3.1 Volunteer Registration	4
3.2 Volunteer Orientation	4
3.3 Volunteer Assignment	4
4 Finding a Volunteer Activity	4
5 School Volunteer Procedures	5
5.1 Sign In/Sign Out	5
5.2 Volunteer Name Badge	6
5.3 Telephone Calls	6
5.4 Work Space	6
5.5 Parking	6
5.6 Younger Children	6
5.7 Working in Your Child's Classroom	6
5.8 Personal Possessions	7
5.9 Your Schedule	7
5.10 Avoid Classroom Disruptions	7
5.11 Reporting Problems or Concerns	7
6 School Policies and Procedures	7
6.1 Crisis Plan	7
6.2 Tobacco, Alcohol, Drug, and Firearm Free Zone	8
6.3 Field Trips	8
6.4 Granting Access to Students	8
6.5 Dress Code	8
6.6 Student Illness, Injury or Accidents	8
6.7 Administration of Medication to Students	9
6.8 Demonstrations of Affection	9
6.9 Responsibility for Students	9
6.10 Discipline	9
6.11 Transportation of Students	9
7 Confidentiality	9
8 Assisting Students	10
8.1 Individual Assistance	11
8.2 Small Groups	12
10 Conclusion	12
11 Appendix - Forms	14
Volunteer Checklist	15
Volunteer Registration	16
Volunteer Agreement	17

1

WELCOME!

Welcome to the Patrick County Public Schools Volunteer Program. We are pleased that you are choosing to participate as a member of our educational team. Your help is essential to our students' academic success. Naturally, teachers and staff appreciate the help you give, but most of all the students enjoy seeing parents, friends, and community members taking an active part in their education. When you volunteer in our schools, you help

- ❖ Your child
- ❖ Other children
- ❖ Teachers
- ❖ Principals
- ❖ The community



In this handbook you will find the expectations and requirements for becoming a volunteer. Please take the time to read through this document and retain it for future reference. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Volunteer Coordinator, teacher or principal at your school. Again, thank you for your time and interest, and we wish you a wonderful year as a member of our learning team!



“Volunteers don’t necessarily have the time, but they have the heart.”

- Anonymous

2 Volunteer Coordinator

The school you choose to volunteer at may have a volunteer coordinator. This person will be either a volunteer or a staff member. He or she serves as the liaison between you and the teacher/school. This person’s role is to coordinate the needs of the teachers and the school and match these needs with willing and able volunteers like you. If you have questions, the volunteer coordinator is a good place to start. However, every school may not have a Volunteer Coordinator, so be sure to ask when beginning your service who to go to with questions.

3 Becoming a Volunteer

There are several steps to becoming a volunteer: 1) Volunteer Registration, 2) Volunteer Orientation, and 3) your assignment. Please read the following carefully so that you will know what is expected.

3.1. Volunteer Registration

Each volunteer will receive a copy of the Volunteer Handbook. After reading this handbook, you should fill out, sign, and return two forms to the school office:

- Volunteer Registration Form
- Volunteer Agreement Form

Both forms can be found in the Appendix of this book. They will also be available at the yearly orientation meetings.

3.2. Volunteer Orientation

All volunteers who have not previously attended a volunteer orientation are required to attend an orientation session in which school policies and procedures for volunteers are reviewed. These sessions will be offered at the beginning of the school year, so if you are joining us later in the year, the Volunteer Coordinator, teacher or principal will provide you with the information you missed.

3.3. Your Assignment

Once you have been through orientation, you will be asked to assist with a teacher, team or task. You may be asked to help at school or at home.

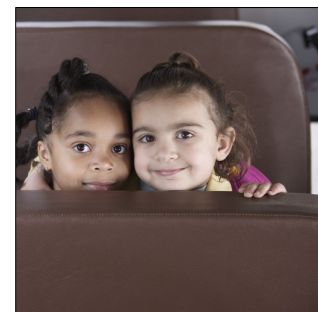
4 Finding a Volunteer Activity

As you consider what you would like to volunteer to help with, look over this list of possible activities for ideas:



- In the classroom: help teachers with group projects and activities
- In the school: help monitor recess, hallways, and cafeteria
- School beautification: help improve and maintain school grounds by weeding, raking, etc. or by helping build special projects
- Computer lab: Assist students in the computer lab or teach after school classes to students or adults about computer technology
- Field Day: lead games, organize events, obtain donations, and help with food
- Library: assist the librarian by shelving, repairing, cataloguing, and checking in/out books, assisting students, Book Fair

- School picture day: assist with organizing and monitoring of students
- Office Assistant: Work in the school office with clerical tasks such as copying, distribution of snacks, filing, typing, phone calls, etc.
- Transportation: Monitor students when getting on/off buses to ensure that they are riding the correct bus, assure safety of car-riders
- Classroom presentations: Share your special skills, talents, and knowledge with students
- Off-site opportunities: assemble instructional materials such as games and special activities, create classroom newsletters, prepare folders, sew costumes or paint sets for plays, etc.
- Instructional: tutor individuals or small groups in reading, math, science, or history either during school or after school
- Mentor: support and motivate a student through serving as a caring role model (*Please note: additional background checks may be required for this role.*)
- Business partners: exchange of human resources between a business and a school for one-on-one tutoring, mentors, student/teacher recognition, judging student competitions, etc.
- School committee: serve on a variety of committees, booster clubs, advisory councils, or the PTO
- Athletics: share your athletic skills and interests through coaching, organizing, and providing food for sports teams
- Academic teams: assist with organization, practice and competitions
- Translator
- Donate goods/supplies
- Financial gifts
- Fundraisers: take up orders, give out merchandise



Every activity may not be available at each school. Check with the school you are volunteering with to see where you are needed.

5 School Volunteer Procedures

5.1 Sign In/Sign Out

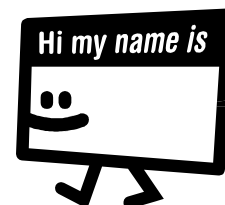
Because student safety is a primary concern and the responsibility of the school, always report to the school office and sign in before beginning your task for the day. You should also sign out before leaving. If available, please use the volunteer sign in sheet. There are several reasons for this requirement:

verification and recognition of volunteer service, maintenance of school security, liability purposes, and so you can be located in case of an emergency.

If you choose to volunteer through activities that are completed at home, please complete a volunteer time sheet, available through the office, and return it to the school monthly.

5.2 Volunteer Name Badge

After signing in, please obtain a name badge to wear while in the school. This ensures that school staff and students can easily identify you.



5.3 Telephone Calls

Volunteers may bring cell phones to school, but please turn them off or to silent mode while in the school. A ringing phone is very distracting to students and staff. In case of an emergency, you may be contacted by calling the school office.

5.4 Work Space

Our schools use every available space. Please ask the person for whom you are volunteering where your workspace should be. Do not leave confidential materials exposed at your workspace. After you have finished any activity within the school, it is important to tidy up afterwards. Make sure scissors, glue, and etc. get put back in proper place.



5.5 Parking

Please park in “Visitor” parking spaces. Avoid parking in the fire lane, where buses enter/exit, or in staff parking spaces.

5.6 Younger Children

While we look forward to having your small children in school with us one day in the future, the time you are volunteering is not the time for them to visit the school. Please do not bring young children with you when volunteering. If this is a problem, you can still be helpful by volunteering to do

tasks at home.

5.7 Working in Your Child’s Classroom

As a parent you know that your child may behave differently when you are present than when you are away. While parents are always welcomed as volunteers in their child’s school you may be asked to fulfill another volunteer assignment outside of your child’s classroom, as this may be a distraction. Your child’s education is our primary focus, and we want to minimize any distraction that may hinder the educational process.

5.8 Personal Possessions

The school system is not responsible for your personal possessions. Therefore, we encourage you to bring only the necessities you will need while at the school.

5.9 Your Schedule

Please try to keep all appointments and be on time. The teachers and students depend and plan on you being there. If you are unable to make your scheduled visit, please call the school as soon as possible. Only commit to the time you will realistically be able to give.

5.10 Avoid Classroom Disruptions

Our teachers' number one priority is the students and their education. They will not be able to stop their class for conversation, but they are grateful you are there to help. Try to be quiet and undistruptive. Schedule your time so plans can be made for your visit. Do not wander the halls or interrupt your child's classroom. If you wish to speak with a teacher, leave a note in the front office.



5.11 Reporting Problems or Concerns

There may come a day when you get frustrated with your assignment or concerned about something that happens while you are volunteering. Try not to let this be a roadblock for you – address it head on. Feel free to talk to the teacher, the principal, or the Volunteer Coordinator at an appropriate time about your concerns. The school values your contributions and will work with you to alleviate your concerns.

6 School Policies and Procedures

6.1 Crisis Plan

The school you will be volunteering in has an official Crisis Plan. Each teacher and principal has a copy of this plan. Please familiarize yourself with this plan so you will be prepared in case of a drill or an emergency. Drills are required by law and are an important safety precaution. Volunteers are expected to participate in all drills. While you are at the school, the two most common drills you might experience are a fire drill and a tornado drill.

Fire drill – Routes for the nearest fire exit are posted in each room. Assist students in leaving the building in a single file line. Students should remain with their class, as the teacher will need to call roll.



Tornado drill – Students are to follow their teacher in a single file line to a designated area. Once there, students should assume a crouched position on their knees with head down to protect eyes and head. Students must sit close together and remain quiet.

In the unlikely event that you are ever involved in an emergency situation at school, remain calm. The students will follow your lead in scary situations, and the calmer you stay, the calmer they will stay as a group.

6.2 Tobacco, Alcohol, Drug, and Firearm Free Zone

Patrick County Public Schools is a tobacco, alcohol, drug, and firearm free zone. Employees, volunteers, visitors, and students may not use tobacco or alcohol on school grounds or property. It is the policy of the school division to prohibit the use, possession for consumption, sale or dispensing of illegal drugs and narcotics on its premises. The presence on its premises of any person who is under the influence of illegal drugs or involved in the abuse of alcohol or legal drugs is also prohibited. Furthermore, firearms are not permitted on school grounds at any time.



6.3 Field Trips

Every class participates in at least one field trip each year. Based on individual school guidelines, volunteers may or may not be utilized as chaperones on a field trip. If serving as a chaperone, you must treat all students the same, dress appropriately, and cover all costs you may incur while on the trip as indicated by the school. Volunteers are not allowed to bring additional children on field trips.

6.4 Granting Access to Students

If any person asks to speak to or take a student, you must direct that individual to the teacher or the principal. Under no circumstance should you grant such a request. Even if you know the person making the request, follow school procedure.

6.5 Dress Code

Students notice what you wear. Please dress comfortably, but follow school dress code and remember that students look to you as a role model.

6.6 Student Illness, Injury, or Accident

If a student complains of not feeling well or of being injured in some way, you should immediately notify the teacher, principal or a staff member. No matter how minor an injury appears to be, make sure that the teacher is notified. Do not attempt to administer any type of aid. If you note blood or vomit, or see that a

student has had a bathroom accident, immediately secure the assistance of a staff member. Do not try to clean up the situation – there are certain procedures that school staff are required to follow in these situations.

6.7 Administration of Medication to Students

Never give a child any medication, including over-the-counter medications. Even if you know the child very well, you need to let the teacher address this request.



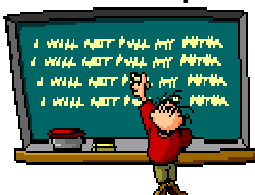
6.8 Demonstrations of Affection

Be careful when showing affection to a student. Even though your heart is certainly in the right place, adults must be cautious with physical contact. Ask the teacher or principal for guidance if you are unsure what is allowed.

6.9 Responsibility for Students

While volunteering, remain in the presence of a teacher, staff member, or others. Avoid being alone in an isolated circumstance with a student or students even for testing/evaluations. Prevent yourself from assuming responsibility for a group or classroom, even for a short period of time, unless a background check is arranged with the school.

6.10 Discipline



Discipline of students is the responsibility of the teacher. Volunteers should never be put in a position of having to enforce discipline. If you are having a problem with a student, immediately inform the teacher. You may not at any time punish a student verbally or physically.

6.11 Transportation of Students

Do not transport students. If you are picking up someone else's child, that child's parent or guardian should have already notified the school.

7 Confidentiality

Confidentiality is absolutely essential! When you volunteer, you will become a "trusted adult" to the children you come in contact with. As such, they may unselfconsciously share information about themselves and their families. Treat this information as confidential, and protect it as the gift that it is.



Please be aware that information you may hear, see, or otherwise acquire while at the school is considered privileged information and is to be kept private. Volunteers must respect the confidential nature of school records, including grades, test scores, behavior and attitude of

students as well as interactions and relationships between staff members and students.

Breaching confidentiality can be hurtful to children, their families and staff. Some possible situations you may encounter are:

- ❖ *“Wasn’t it cute when Johnny . . .”* “No matter how cute, funny or charming a classroom event may be, it is not okay to repeat stories about students. What happens in the classroom stays in the classroom.
- ❖ *“How do you think my child did on . . .”* “Many parents are tempted to ask you about how their children behave in school. This is even more likely if you are friends outside of school. If parents have questions or concerns encourage them to talk to the classroom teacher. Respond to their questions with “I am sure if you schedule an appointment, the teacher would be happy to answer your questions.”
- ❖ *You see or overhear something . . .* As a volunteer you may see or hear things from staff or students that they would not want to have repeated outside the school. What happens in the classroom, hall, gym, etc. stays at school. If you have concerns about something you see or hear, talk to the teacher or principal.
- ❖ *“My grandfather is moving away.”* Or *“We went on vacation to Myrtle Beach.”* As students become comfortable with you, they might decide to share personal information. You need to keep this private, even if you know the child and their family outside of school.
- ❖ *When you have a concern . . .* If a student tells you something or you see something that causes you to feel concerned for the student, tell the teacher or the principal. You are not betraying a trust if you share the information with the appropriate person for the child’s wellbeing.

8 Assisting Students



There may be many reasons you choose to volunteer: get involved in the school, meet and get to know your child's teachers, gain experience for job applications, serve the community, and more. Everyone who volunteers, however, can agree that one reason they give their time is to help students. The students, after all, are what school is all about. When volunteering, you may be asked to work with students either individually or in groups.

8.1 Individual Assistance

You may be asked to help a student who needs some individual attention. A student who has been absent or who is having difficulty with a particular subject (reading, math, etc.) will benefit from your special assistance. The following suggestions will be helpful when assisting an individual student.



- ✓ If you don't understand the assignment or materials, ask the teacher to explain it to you. If you still are not clear, don't hesitate to ask to be assigned a different task to help with.
- ✓ Teachers often have different ways of arriving at the same end result. You will want to make sure that your way of doing a problem is the same as the teacher's so that the student does not get confused.
- ✓ Make sure you have specific directions from the teacher about the assignment.
- ✓ Find a quiet place to work where the student and you can talk quietly without disturbing the rest of the class.
- ✓ Take a few minutes to get to know the student and build a one-to-one relationship with the student.
- ✓ Let the student explain where he/she is at with the assignment. The ability of the student to clearly explain work leading up to an assignment lets you know how much the student already understands.
- ✓ Let the student work independently as much as possible. Provide encouragement, but offer the opportunity to come up with the solution alone before stepping in with assistance.



- ✓ Rather than giving the answer when asked, direct the student's thinking so that the answer can be discovered independently. For example, the student might ask, *"Who made the first American flag?"* You would reply, *"Does your social studies book have an index? Perhaps you can find this information if you look under flag?"*
- ✓ When working one-on-one, be careful to stay on task. Some students are very good at sidetracking adults, especially if they do not want to do the assignment. While you want to get to know the student, realize that the job at hand is to work on the assignment.

8.2 Small Groups

When working with a small group, keep the following suggestions in mind.

- ✓ Stand or sit where each student can see and hear you.
- ✓ Giving a student a few moments to develop a well-developed answer allows high-level thinking to take place. If you are uncomfortable waiting for 20-30 seconds, join students in looking through notes or text. If students are unable to answer the question, refer them to the source of information.
- ✓ Respect all questions or responses offered by students, no matter how basic.
- ✓ Make sure each student gets the opportunity to answer. It may take some students a little while to feel comfortable enough with you to speak up – give them some time and lots of encouragement. Also, because some students need to learn to give others a chance, make sure that one student is not answering every question.
- ✓ Allow the student to complete an answer without interruptions. To check for understanding, ask another student to describe the same concept in his or her own words.
- ✓ Ask open-ended and probing questions, and rephrase questions if you don't get an answer.
- ✓ Include humor!
- ✓ Speaking softly is one good way to keep a group quiet – they have to talk softer in order to hear you. Also, speaking as if you expect compliance results in compliance.
- ✓ Remember the task at hand, and prevent unnecessary argument or repetition.
- ✓ As you prepare to end your group time, provide closure. You can do this by asking the students what they learned during the session, what they still need clarification on, or what they would like to cover in the next session. Summarize what you have gone over in the session. You might also ask them to come to the next session with their own question or a prediction of a test question.



9 Conclusion

In conclusion, a few final tips:

- Always make sure that students know your name, and try to learn their names as quickly as you can.
- Speak to students with vocabulary they can understand.
- Praise students for effort as much as for results.
- Show through your words and actions that you know that mistakes are a part of learning – don't be afraid to make a mistake in front of students. Let them see that you learn from mistakes, and they will do the same.

- **REMEMBER:** Volunteering is helping students and should be enjoyable. Let the students see that you are enjoying yourself and that you value your time spent with them.



We would like to thank you again for choosing to join our team as a volunteer. We hope your time spent here will be rewarding and we look forward to working with you!

10 Appendix A

Volunteer Checklist
Volunteer Registration Form
Volunteer Agreement Form

VOLUNTEER CHECKLIST

- ☐ I have received and read the School Volunteer Handbook.
- ☐ I have attended orientation for volunteers or have been oriented by the teacher, principal, or volunteer coordinator.
- ☐ I have filled out and returned my Volunteer Agreement and Volunteer Registration to the principal or teacher. These forms are mandatory and I will not be allowed to volunteer until they are on file.
- ☐ I have my Volunteer Log and know who to turn it in to at the end of each month, if working from home.
- ☐ I have a copy of the school calendar.
- ☐ I am familiar with the school crisis plan.
- ☐ I know where to locate a school map with evacuation paths clearly marked.
- ☐ I know where to sign in and where to get my volunteer name badge.
- ☐ I know what I will be helping with, and have asked questions if needed.
- ☐ I know whom to call if I am unable to come in at my scheduled time, and I know to call ASAP.
- ☐ I know the teacher's classroom rules and procedures and feel comfortable supporting these with the students.
- ☐ I understand confidentiality and feel that I can abide by these expectations.



Patrick County Public Schools
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Volunteer Registration

School Name: _____
Your Name: _____ Date: _____
Do you have a child enrolled in this school? Yes No
If yes, child's name: _____ Grade: _____
Relationship to child: _____
Mailing address: _____

Home phone: _____ Cell phone: _____
Best time to call: _____ Email: _____
Emergency contact: Name: _____ Telephone: _____
If you have any medical condition, please note here: _____

Please check one or more options you would be interested in assisting with if available:

- ☐ Classroom Assistant for Mr./Ms. _____
- ☐ School beautification: help improve and maintain school grounds by weeding, raking, etc. or by helping build special projects
- ☐ Computer lab: assist students in the computer lab or teach after school classes to students or adults about computer technology
- ☐ Field Day/Festivals: lead games, organize events, obtain donations, and help with food
- ☐ Library: assist the librarian by shelving, repairing, cataloguing, and checking in/out books, assisting students, Book Fair
- ☐ School picture day: assist with organizing and monitoring of students
- ☐ Office Assistant: work in the school office with clerical tasks such as copying, distribution of snacks, filing, typing, phone calls, etc.
- ☐ Transportation: monitor students when getting on/off buses to ensure that they are riding the correct bus, assure safety of car-riders
- ☐ Off-site (home) opportunities: assemble instructional materials such as games and special activities, create classroom newsletters, prepare folders, sew costumes or paint sets for plays, etc.
- ☐ Instructional: tutor individuals or small groups in reading, math, science, or history either during school or after school
- ☐ Mentor: support and motivate a student through serving as a caring role model (*Please note: additional background check may be required for this role.*)
- ☐ Business partners: exchange of human resources between a business and a school for one-on-one tutoring, mentors, student/teacher recognition, judging student competitions, etc. Employed at: _____
- ☐ School committee: serve on a variety of committees, booster clubs, advisory councils, or the PTO (Parent Teacher Organization)
- ☐ Athletics: share athletic skills and interests through coaching, organizing, and/or providing food for a sports team
- ☐ Academic teams: assist with organization, practice and competitions
- ☐ Translator – What language(s) do you speak? _____
- ☐ Donate goods/supplies
- ☐ Financial gifts
- ☐ Fundraisers: take up orders, give out merchandise
- ☐ Classroom presentations – You can share about: _____
- ☐ Other: _____

Hours you would like to volunteer (**check one**): _____ Weekly – what days/hours? _____
_____ Monthly - what days/hours? _____
_____ As needed for special events/projects
_____ Other: _____

Thank you for choosing to become a school volunteer!

Please turn in your completed registration form to the Volunteer Coordinator, Teacher or Principal. Please note that all volunteer options are not available at all schools.

We'll see you soon!

Volunteer Agreement

I would like to volunteer at _____ School. I have read and understand the Volunteer Handbook. In order to serve as a volunteer, I understand that I must abide by the procedures and rules in the Volunteer Handbook, maintain the confidentiality of students and staff, and meet volunteer expectations as outlined. I understand that my failure to abide by procedures and rules, maintain confidentiality, or to meet volunteer expectations may result in no longer being allowed to volunteer in the school.

As a volunteer, I am aware that I am not covered under Worker's Compensation Insurance. Additionally, Patrick County Public Schools is not responsible for my possessions or property while I am volunteering.

Have you ever been convicted (as guilty or not innocent) of a violation of law other than a minor traffic violation? **(Circle one):** No Yes

If yes, please explain: _____

Have you ever been convicted (as guilty or not innocent, or a determination of abuse or neglect founded against you) of any offense involving moral turpitude, the sexual molestation, physical or sexual abuse or rape of a child, or any like offense against an adult: **(Circle one):** No Yes

If yes, please explain: _____

I understand that if I make a materially false statement regarding any of the above offenses, I will be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor. I further understand and agree that I am under duty to report to the Patrick County Public Schools any conviction for any offense other than a minor traffic violation that occurs after I sign this application as long as I serve as a volunteer in the school division.

Name (print)

Signature

Date

This form must be completed before beginning your volunteer service. Once completed, this form is to be turned in to the principal, where it will be kept in a confidential file.