Volunteer Handbook

2019-2020

TIM WYROSDICK
SUPERINTENDENT of SCHOOLS

Timothy S. Wyrosdick

Superintendent of Schools

Douglas A. Dillon Administrative Center
6032 Highway 90
Milton, Florida 32570
Phone: 850/983-5150
Facsimile: 850/665-0836

Dear Volunteers,

Welcome to the wonderful and rewarding world of volunteering. Volunteers give the children of Santa Rosa County schools their time and talents. Volunteers choose their jobs. Their choices include helping the media centers, reading stories to children, doing art history lessons, helping with physical education classes and/or music, going on field trips, making classroom items, tutoring students, or acting as a special friend/grandparent to students.

Volunteers bring much to our children. In return, the volunteers receive smiles, love, and the satisfaction of helping make a difference in a child's life.

Your commitment to children is needed and appreciated. Thanks for being a Special School Volunteer.

Yours truly,

TSWyrosdick

Tim S. Wyrosdick
Superintendent of Schools

DISTRICT 1	DISTRICT 2	DISTRICT 3	DISTRICT 4	DISTRICT 5
Linda Sanborn	**Buddy Hinote**	**Carol Boston**	**Jennifer Granse**	**Wei Ueberschaer**

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Santa Rosa District Schools

MISSION STATEMENT

Preparing students for success by providing
a superior, relevant education.

General Goals of the Santa Rosa District Schools

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

- Increase parent and family engagement in each child's education
- Provide assistance and support to classroom teachers and other educators and support staff in the school
- Improve communication and strengthen relations between the school and the community they serve
- Enrich student experiences beyond what is normally available in schools through unique resources that can be contributed by volunteers

Structure of the School Volunteer Program

The volunteer program at each school is individualized to meet the specific needs of the students, teachers and staff at that school. The Principal and the school-based Volunteer Coordinator oversee the volunteer program at their school site and have the following responsibilities:

PRINCIPAL:

- Determines school site guidelines for volunteers
- Assesses the school's needs for volunteer assistance
- Defines the objectives for the school volunteer program
- Provides guidance and support for all persons involved in the program at the school site
- Selects a staff member to serve as the school site-based volunteer coordinator
- Monitors compliance of the school's site-based volunteer program with district and state rules and expectations including monitoring of volunteer background checks, board approval and ensures that each volunteer has a district badge and is wearing it while on campus
- Facilitates training of school personnel on guidelines (do's and don'ts) for utilizing the services of volunteers and having them in the classroom

SCHOOL SITE VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR:

- Surveys teachers and other staff to determine needs for volunteer assistance
- Leads the recruitment and registration of volunteers
- Facilitates the orientation and training of both volunteers and school staff
- Assigns volunteers to work with specific teachers, on special projects or events and with specific areas of the school
- Serves as a liaison between resource person for volunteers and school staff
- Keeps accurate records of volunteer services and hours including ensuring volunteers have been background checked, board approved and have the appropriate volunteer badge
- Disseminates volunteer-related information to volunteers and staff
- Facilitates school recognition events for volunteers

Procedure to Become a Volunteer

For the safety of our students and staff, and so that we are in compliance with state statutes, any person who wishes to volunteer in Santa Rosa County must first go through the following process:

1) Complete the volunteer application (both Level 1 and Level 2 volunteers) and turn it in to the school at which you wish to volunteer.
2) Answer all questions truthfully
3) Level 2 volunteers - Level 2 volunteers are those who will attend or chaperone an overnight field trip with students. In addition to going through the Level 1 process, Level 2 volunteers must complete the Level 2 process which includes fingerprinting. The Level 2 volunteer applicant will pay the costs associated with obtaining Level 2 clearance and the Level 2 badge.

Note: After the Level 1 volunteer application has been submitted, the volunteer applicant will be background checked by the school(s) at which he/she wishes to volunteer. The applicant will be contacted by phone or letter concerning whether or not he/she is cleared to volunteer. The applicant will be informed that they will have a volunteer badge at each school site(s) at which they will volunteer. This badge must be worn at all times while volunteering. Volunteers who are not wearing their badge may not volunteer and may be asked to leave the school site – no exceptions.

CRIMINAL OFFENSES WHICH MAY DISQUALIFY AN INDIVIDUAL TO SERVE AS A VOLUNTEER

Assault
Arson
Battery
Burglary
Carrying a concealed weapon
Child Abuse
Contributing to Delinquency of a Minor
Domestic Violence
Drugs/Drug Paraphernalia
(sale or possession of)
Sexual Offense regardless of victim's age
Felony
Forgery
Grand Larceny
Incest
Lewd & Lascivious Act
Property Damage
Prostitution
Resisting a Law Enforcement Officer
Theft
Trespassing
Violent Crime of Any Type

Any individual approved to volunteer during the current school year who has been charged and convicted of any of these offenses must notify the principal(s) of the school(s) in which they volunteer within 48 hours.

LEVEL 1 VOLUNTEERS

A Level 1 volunteer is a non-paid person who provides help and support at a school under the direction and supervision of school personnel

School Volunteers Shall:

- be in good physical and mental health
- receive information regarding rules and policies from the appropriate staff member(s) as it relates to
- their volunteer duties
- shall be provided with proper supervision both during training and during volunteer activities at the
- school site
- be approved by the School Board or its designee
- be assigned only to staff members requesting their service
- shall maintain effective student/class management strategies to ensure the safety and well-being of all students.
- shall be assigned only to staff members requesting his/her services.
- shall provide instructional activities in accordance with the directions of the supervising teacher/staff member.
- shall **not** assume responsibility for the discipline of students.
- shall **not** contact parents regarding the performance of students or write comments on documents that go home without approval of the supervising teacher/staff member.

School Volunteers May Not:

- assume responsibility for the supervision of a class in the absence of a certified teacher or be alone with students on the school campus or during a field trip
- grade student work on anything other than objective work (i.e.,: true/false, multiple choice, etc.). The teacher must review ALL papers, checking for accuracy and determining student progress
- discipline a student
- establish instructional objectives
- make decisions regarding the relevancy of certain activities or procedures in the attainment of instructional objectives
- provide the initial instruction for accomplishing instructional objectives
- make decisions regarding the appropriateness of certain teaching materials for accomplishing instructional objectives
- make judgments regarding the attainment of instructional objectives, unless these judgments are based upon clear and objective criteria (such as specific achievement standards on a true-false test).
- contact parents regarding the performance of students, write comments on papers that go home or let parents know details of what occurred during the school day with their child
- bring a pre-school or any other child with them when they volunteer.

LEVEL 2 VOLUNTEERS

Individuals who voluntarily chaperone or participate in a school-sponsored overnight trip with students are Level 2 Volunteers and:

- shall be fingerprinted at no cost to the district.
- shall first be approved by the School Board of Santa Rosa County.
- shall be of good moral character
- shall receive information regarding district and site rules and regulations from the site administrator and appropriate staff members.
- shall receive instructions regarding policies and practices that relate to his/her specific assignment.
- shall be assigned only to staff members requesting his/her services.
- shall **not** assume responsibility for the discipline of students.
- shall **not** contact parents regarding their student or any other but shall notify an administrator or teacher immediately if there are any concerns related to a student

Special Note:

1. The sponsoring organization shall be responsible for following all federal and state regulations and guidelines with regard to their employees.

2. The Santa Rosa District School Board shall not be responsible for reporting for tax purposes any wages earned by individuals described in this policy. Such reporting shall be the total responsibility of the employing organization and/or the individual employed by them.

Volunteer Opportunities

The following is a list of just a few areas in which volunteers may serve in our schools. Where and when a volunteer is needed or placed is dependent on the needs of the school:

Classroom Instructional Volunteer – Provides individual students and small groups of students with reinforcement and skill practice, assists students with daily assignments, listens to students read, helps students who have been absent catch up, etc.

Band or Chorus Volunteer – Assists the Band or Chorus Director as needed.

Volunteer Coaches - Assists certified Head Coaches and Assistant Coaches in schools' Athletic Programs. Additional coaching training and fingerprinting is required of volunteer coaches. Please consult the athletic department for further information.

Media Center Volunteer – Assist with media center tasks such as shelving books, preparing new books for circulation, creating bulletin boards and assisting students with book selection and research, and reading aloud to groups of students.

Student Volunteer - Provides peer and cross-age tutoring (middle school, high school, or college students).

Room Parent - Works with the classroom teacher to assist with classroom parties and serves as a liaison to parents for disseminating information.

Vision Screening Volunteer - Assists with vision screenings for students. This process takes several days, depending on the size of the student population. Training is required.

At-Home Volunteer - Projects at home might include cutting out letters, drawing posters, making crafts-anything that could be done at home. This is convenient for working parents or those with “little ones” at home.

Field Trip Volunteer - Upon request of the teacher, help chaperone students during field trips. For those who will not be volunteering at any point in the year and only wish to attend a field trip(s), they will need only to complete the Field Trip form and not go through the Level 1 volunteer process.

Box Tops & Receipts for Education - Volunteers help collect labels and receipts from various products, as needed. Collecting/counting these labels can serve as an excellent source of funding for school projects

School Pictures Volunteer - Volunteers help organize students for picture-taking sessions on school picture days. (fall pictures/Christmas pictures/class or club pictures/spring pictures, etc.)

School Event Volunteer (festivals/jamborees/carnivals) Volunteer workers and planners are needed to plan and implement school carnivals and jamborees. These activities are enjoyable for students and families and can be an excellent fundraiser for the school.

Community Resource/Guest Speaker - Upon request of the teacher, speak on subjects(s) of interest to students, such as careers, hobbies, travel, etc.

PTA/PTO - Depending on the needs of the PTA/PTO, serve as chairman or a member of specific committees in this organization.

SAC (School Advisory Council) - Volunteers will be nominated and elected by the parent population to serve on the School Advisory Council. This is an advisory board which helps develop and implement the School Improvement Plan. Service on this council is very important to school success and helps connect the school to the home and community and the home and community to the school.

VOLUNTEER GUIDELINES AND EXPECTATIONS

School volunteers always work under the supervision of a teacher or other school district employee at each school and only with those staff who have requested the services of the volunteer. Volunteering is a scheduled, prearranged activity. The district is responsible for the education, safety and well-being of each student. Understandably for these reasons, the teacher and/or principal may dismiss any volunteer whose actions are not in the best interest of the school or students.

In the best interest of our students and staff, and so that we are in compliance with state laws and regulations, we ask that volunteers know the following guidelines and expectations prior to beginning their service as a volunteer in Santa Rosa District Schools. The failure of a volunteer to abide by the following may result in termination of the volunteer's services with our school district:

- As volunteers work with the staff and students, information of a confidential manner may be shared. The problems, abilities, relationships and confidences of students, their parents and the staff should NEVER be discussed with anyone who does not have the professional right or the need to know.
- 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 the volunteers.
- Do not discuss a child's school progress or difficulties with their parents. This is the teacher's responsibility.
- Occasionally, a child might confide in a volunteer about family matters or personal problems. Keep this confidential. If 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 administrator.
- In accordance with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), volunteers will not have access to certain types of information including student permanent records, medical files, teacher grade books and will not grade student work. School volunteers are considered mandatory reporters of suspected child neglect and abuse. If a student discloses that he/she is in a dangerous situation or if you have reason to suspect neglect/abuse, please report this immediately and privately to campus administration who will help you with further reporting to DCF.
- Students rarely have behavior problems while working with volunteers. However, our schools have detailed discipline plans and the responsibility of discipline rests with the professional staff. Volunteers may not discipline students. Make the teacher aware of any discipline problem that arises while working with a student.
- Volunteers may never release a student from school. Students who must leave school early for any reason must receive permission from the school office and sign out before leaving. Under no circumstances may a volunteer take a student off campus. Volunteers may not walk or drive students to their homes.
- Volunteers, like all adults, are role models for children. Therefore, volunteers are expected to demonstrate good character and ethical behavior. A volunteer may not engage in any behavior or activity that may cause harm to themselves or others. In addition, physical contact is not encouraged and should be limited to brief encouraging behaviors such as a "high five" or a hand shake.

- Take your lead from the staff and dress appropriately for the job you are doing. Casual clothing is fine; however, be neat and professional. No spaghetti straps or bare midriffs, and t-shirt messages should be of a positive nature.
- Volunteering is a scheduled, pre-arranged activity. Please be prompt and consistent! We know there will be times when you will be ill, on vacation or unable to volunteer for one reason or another. However, please let the staff know as far in advance as possible if you cannot volunteer. Telephone the school office and leave a message for the teacher or staff member with whom you work. Remember that the teacher will be expecting you on the days you are scheduled to volunteer and so will the children.
- The school handbook outlines the school rules. Refer to it if you have any questions. Ask your supervisor to explain the school policy for use of telephones, eating facilities, fire drills, and emergency procedures. Remember, volunteers are to use staff/adult restrooms, NOT student restrooms.
- Use reasonable judgment in making decisions when there appears to be no policy or when the policy is not communicated. As soon as possible, consult with your supervisor.
- Possession of tobacco products (e.g. cigarettes, cigars, smokeless tobacco) on K-12 school grounds, buildings, parking lots, playing fields, and vehicles, and at off-campus school-sponsored events is not permitted.
- Upper Grade Volunteers - Sometimes volunteers feel students or teachers in upper grade levels do not need them. Be assured, however, that your presence and assistance is still welcome and needed. Volunteering with older students is just as important as in the early grades; it simply has to be adapted to the developmental and educational needs of the students. If you would like to volunteer with older students, feel free to speak to the principal or a teacher for specific ideas.
- Parent involvement in their child's class and school is encouraged and solicited. Research shows that a child's success in school is directly related to their parents' interest and involvement. However, the educational process in a classroom can easily be interrupted when a younger child is present. Volunteers may not bring preschool children to school while volunteering in a classroom, the office or on a field trip.
- To ensure that the learning environment is not disrupted, cell phones are to remain completely silent when volunteering.
- The needs of students, staff, and volunteers vary when it comes to allergies. For that reason, please consult your school about procedures and practices to be followed. It is critical that those procedures be followed exactly. Do not bring anything to school or give anything to students without consulting the teacher first. For example, in a latex-free school, something as simple as an eraser may be a hazard. Please remember to share any special needs you may have with staff as well.

When Working with Students

- ❑ Call the student by name when you can.
- ❑ Accept the children as they are.
- ❑ Encourage and affirm the student. Use positive comments that will allow the children to feel good about themselves. Praise even the smallest successes.
- ❑ Admit when you do not know an answer or are not sure what to do. Feel free to ask the teacher for assistance, when necessary.
- ❑ Be caring but firm. Patiently allow the students to think and to form their own answers.
- ❑ Be a good listener but be careful not to give advice or to make promises that you may not be able to keep.
- ❑ Please do not give students any materials, including food, without first discussing it with the teacher.
- ❑ When you speak to a student, get down on his/her level and make eye contact.
- ❑ Do not give the student the answers!
- ❑ Be friendly and enthusiastic – it is contagious!

Responsibilities of Teachers and Staff

Volunteers are an important part of the educational team. The suggestions and opinions of volunteers are always welcome. It is the professional staff that is held responsible by law for decisions that are made regarding the instruction of students, the management of the school, and student safety and discipline. For this reason, volunteers always work under the supervision of teachers and administrators. Volunteers supplement and support the teacher in the classroom or assist in other areas of the school.

Volunteers may not ever be asked to:

- ❑ Provide the Curriculum or Teaching Plan
- ❑ Discipline Students
- ❑ Have Access to Student Permanent/Medical Files
- ❑ Grade Student Work or Record Grades
- ❑ Diagnose Student Needs
- ❑ Counsel Students
- ❑ Use Student Restrooms
- ❑ Be asked to supervise a group of students alone or be asked to act as the substitute teacher for a class

Should you have a volunteer working in your classroom or under your supervision, please **DO:**

- ❑ Let your volunteers know how pleased you are when you have their assistance.
- ❑ Introduce volunteers to students.
- ❑ Show your volunteers where to place personal belongings and the location of the adult restrooms.

- ❑ Take volunteers on a short tour of your campus and introduce them to key staff members when possible
- ❑ Prepare a workspace and provide necessary supplies for your volunteers.
- ❑ Explain fire drills and emergency procedures, school and classroom rules.
- ❑ Provide volunteers with a list of student names and/or a seating chart when
- ❑ appropriate.
- ❑ Report any concerns related to a volunteer to administration immediately
- ❑ Call and cancel in advance a volunteer who is scheduled to work in your
- ❑ classroom or area if they are no needed rather than have them take time to show
- ❑ up when there is little or nothing for them to do
- ❑ Create a pleasant working atmosphere. Volunteers should feel comfortable about asking questions.
- ❑ Good training and active supervision can make the difference between an
- ❑ effective volunteer and an ineffective one.
- ❑ Always give careful directions and explanations of duties to volunteers. We all
- ❑ have our own way of doing things and volunteers cannot be expected to do
- ❑ things specifically your way unless you direct them to do so. Provide examples
- ❑ or demonstrate how you would like tasks to be performed.
- ❑ Train your volunteer to use materials and equipment.
- ❑ Share professional materials with volunteers.
- ❑ Inform volunteers of the children's needs and how to meet them.

CONFIDENTIALITY

As volunteers work with the staff and students, information of a confidential manner may be shared. The problems, abilities, relationships and confidences of students, their parents and the staff should NEVER be discussed with anyone who does not have the professional right or need to know. If you find it necessary to share special information about students (learning style, death in family, etc.) remind the volunteer that this is confidential. It is the responsibility of the staff to share information carefully.

Like teachers, volunteers must keep confidential matters within the school. School volunteers are also considered mandatory reporters of suspected child neglect and abuse. If information is disclosed to you from a volunteer about a student that is in a dangerous situation or there is reason to suspect neglect/abuse, help the volunteer seek out administration immediately.

RECOGNITION AND APPRECIATION

It is vital that the volunteer feels a part of the educational team and feels good about their experience. This is what keeps them coming back. It does not take much to make volunteers feel welcome and

appreciated. It is vital to recognize the many hours volunteers donate to our district. The only pay they receive is the satisfaction of doing a job they enjoy. You can help to make your volunteer's experience a rewarding one.

It is important that each school have a recognition plan for their volunteer program. When setting dates on your school calendars and planning your celebrations, remember that National Volunteer Week is in April. Recognition of volunteers may include birthday cards, holiday cards, a year-end party or reception, small gifts at various times throughout the year, greeting volunteers by name and encouraging students to do the same, teacher or staff member or students writing thank you notes to volunteers, mention the contribution of volunteers in a school newsletter, the school marquee or on the school's website, and treat volunteers as you do your staff and other team members.

CHECKLIST FOR A SUCCESSFUL VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

- ☐ Have I followed district policies and procedures?
- ☐ Do I plan ahead and have jobs ready for volunteers before they arrive?
- ☐ Have my volunteers been trained prior to volunteering?
- ☐ Are verbal instructions and written directions to volunteers clear so they will know exactly how to do the jobs they have been asked to perform?
- ☐ Do I/we continually let our volunteers know how much they are appreciated and how much the students benefit from their contributions?

FORMS

The link on this page provides access to the following volunteer forms:

- Volunteer Application
- Volunteer Approval List Form
- Field Trip Form (Non-volunteer)

https://BIT.LY/2Z7juJL