

Volunteer Handbook



2024-25

Welcome

Welcome to another exciting year in the Platte County School District. You are a vital part of our district and we value the contributions you make. It is your involvement and availability that enables our mission to continue - to prepare individual learners for success in life, the Platte County School District provides meaningful experiences in a safe and caring environment.

This handbook has been prepared for you to provide the guidance necessary for program continuity and coordination with the regular teacher's assignment.

We appreciate your service to our district and its students, and extend our best wishes for an enjoyable and productive experience as a substitute in the Platte County School District.

If we can be of assistance, please call the district's central office at: 816.858.5420.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ashley Jones". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'A' and 'J'.

Ashley Jones, Executive Director of Human Resources



Goal of the Volunteer Program

The goal of the Platte County School District volunteer program is to assist schools in providing the best possible education for each student pursuant to Platte County Board of Education Policy. Volunteer services are utilized to accomplish the following objectives:

- Relieve teachers and support personnel of some of the non-instructional tasks
- Provide teachers with more time to work with students
- Enrich the curriculum and children's learning opportunities
- Provide individual attention to those children who need more one-on-one assistance than the classroom teacher is able to provide
- Promote a school-home-community partnership for quality education

Definitions & Process

Volunteers are important to the success of the Platte County School District, and we appreciate their service to our schools. In order to ensure our children are safe, all volunteers who have access to students will be screened prior to working with children. Volunteers who may be alone with children at times and/or have access to student records will go through a more rigorous type of screening through the Missouri Highway Patrol and FBI database.

Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteers can take on various roles to serve as an active partner within our school system.

The Platte County School District offers a wide variety of volunteer opportunities working with children as well as jobs for those who prefer not to work directly with students. Volunteers choose from the volunteer opportunities made available by the District that interest them and decide how many hours and days they wish to contribute.

Here is a sampling of volunteer opportunities:

Classroom Instructional Volunteer

Works directly with individual or small groups of students. Listens to students read, reinforces basic math skills, or assists students with written assignments.

Classroom Assistance Volunteer

Works with a teacher and performs tasks such as putting up bulletin boards, photocopying, and other jobs that will provide the teacher with more time to plan for and teach students.

Library-Media Volunteer

Works with the media specialist by repairing and shelving books, doing clerical work, or preparing bulletin boards and displays. Volunteers may choose to work directly with students helping them to locate and use library materials.

Watch D.O.G.S.

Watch D.O.G.S. (Dads Of Great Students) is an innovative father, grandfather, uncle and other father-figures involvement, educational initiative of the National Center For Fathering. There are two primary goals of the Watch D.O.G.S. program: 1) To provide positive male role models for the students, demonstrating by their presence that education is important, and 2) To provide extra sets of eyes and ears to enhance school security and reduce bullying.



Pirate Pals Mentor

A school-based mentoring program for students at all grade levels. Volunteers will meet on a regular basis and serve as a role model for students.

Difference in Volunteer Types

Volunteer Types	
Chaperone/Volunteer	Screened Volunteer
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Intermittent schedule• Supervised in a group setting activities (i.e. Classroom, Office, Lunchroom or Library)• Sign up at the building• Identification is scanned at the building level through Hall Pass	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Commitment to a full school year with regular attendance• 1:1 with student (i.e. Coach, Student Mentor)• Application is required as well as a complete background check

Volunteers/Chaperones

Volunteers/chaperones are parents, guardians, or other persons in the community who provide uncompensated service to the district. Such volunteers/chaperones are under the direct control of district staff and are never to be left alone with a student. Chaperones include room parents or persons who volunteer to assist with field days, field trips, class parties, or other special occasions.

Volunteers/chaperones do not include students participating in a district-sponsored program, such as tutoring or acting as an office or teaching assistant.

Screened Volunteer Must Register

Screened volunteers must complete an electronic application on our district website and have a cleared background check before she/he begins work in the schools. Initially, the screened volunteer will pay for the background check, but the district will reimburse the mentor for the expense afterwards.

It is imperative that you understand your responsibilities and limitations. You must be aware of and agree to abide by all district volunteer/mentor policies and regulations. Online training using the Vector Solutions software program will provide direct guidance on responsibilities of a school volunteer. Please read this handbook carefully before signing.

Visitors Must Sign In

Every volunteer/mentor must sign in and out at the school office each time s/he comes on school grounds to volunteer. The District will keep a record showing the days and hours each volunteer works. For security reasons and in case of an emergency, it is important for administrators to know who is on campus and why they are there, if they are not part of the faculty.

Screened Volunteer Requirements

1. Complete the online application and submit.
2. Review the Volunteer Handbook.
3. Undergo a criminal background check and fingerprinting before beginning duties. Human Resources will reimburse the volunteer for the cost of the background check.
4. Complete online training for volunteers.
5. Sign in at each visit and receive a volunteer badge.



6. Wear the volunteer badge, so it is visible at all times throughout each visit.
7. Sign out at the end of each visit and return the volunteer badge.

Volunteer/Chaperone Requirements

1. Sign up at the building or event for which you intend to volunteer.
2. Review the Volunteer Handbook.
3. Sign in at each visit and receive a volunteer badge.
4. Wear the volunteer badge, so it is visible at all times throughout each visit.
5. Sign out at the end of each visit and return the volunteer badge.

School Responsibility

1. Before allowing the individual to volunteer as a mentor volunteer, wait for Human Resources to notify that the volunteer has been cleared by a required background check.
1. Provide supervision and direction for the volunteer before they begin, so they know what is expected.
2. Ensure the volunteer signs in and out at each visit.
3. Ensure the volunteer receives and returns a volunteer badge at each visit.

Supervision

Volunteers shall work under the direct supervision of the professional staff at each site and only with those teachers who have requested the services of the volunteer. The district is responsible for the education, safety, and well-being of each student. For this reason, you can understand why the teacher, principal, or district official must dismiss any volunteer whose actions are not in the best interest of the school or students.

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. Like teachers, volunteers are bound by a code of ethics to keep confidential matters within the school.

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

Occasionally, a child might confide in you about family matters or personal problems. Any such information is confidential, unless Board Policy requires disclosure to another individual, the Children's Division, or law enforcement authorities. Volunteer's should report concerning information provided by the student's conversation in private with the teacher or principal.

Discipline

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. Volunteers shall not use student restrooms.

Dismissal of Students

Volunteers may never dismiss a student from school. Children 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 or drive students to their home.

Dress and Behavior

Dress appropriately for the volunteer opportunity. Casual clothing is fine, but shall be neat and conservative. Your appearance should attract no undue attention. Keep in mind you are in a position to set an example for students. Your speech and behavior should serve as good models for all students to follow.

Health

If you are not feeling well, do not try to keep up your volunteer duties in spite of an illness. You will accomplish more in the long run if you allow yourself time to recuperate. Please call to let the teachers know you will not be coming in at your scheduled time. Do not come to a school campus if you have a contagious illness.

Level of Commitment

Before you agree to volunteer, carefully consider the commitment you are making. The work volunteers do is important. Whether they work in the classroom, front office, media center or health office, the staff and students quickly become dependent upon volunteer assistance. Do not promise to volunteer more time than you will be able to comfortably give. It is better to start out with a few hours a week and gradually increase if you find you have additional time.

Dependability

We know there will be times when you will be ill, on vacation, or unable to volunteer. Please call the school office as far in advance as possible to leave a message for the teacher or staff member with whom you work when you are unable to volunteer.

School Rules

Become familiar with the rules and policies of the school where you volunteer. Read through the school's Parent-Student handbook and the Board of Education Policies. Ask your supervising teacher to explain the school's policy for use of telephones, cell phones, eating facilities, fire drills, and emergency procedures. 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 the supervising teacher for future guidance.

Volunteers Should NOT:

- Provide the curriculum or teaching plan
- Discipline students
- Grade or correct papers
- Take charge of the classroom for any length of time



- Access materials in the student’s permanent or electronic files (psychological records, grade cards, health history, etc.)
- Diagnose student needs
- Evaluate achievement
- Discuss student progress with parents
- Drive district vehicles
- Enter a restroom with a child
- Provide food to students
- Provide advertisements or fund solicitations to students or staff

Working Effectively with Staff

The staff appreciates your willingness to be a part of the educational team. Teachers and support personnel will come to depend upon your assistance. Below are some tips to help build good working relationships:

Getting to Know You

Let the staff know what types of volunteer opportunities you are interested in doing and what your special skills are so they can utilize your talents.

A New Experience for You and Perhaps for the Staff Member

If you have never been a school volunteer, you will find that there are many new and exciting things to learn about the job. Please be aware that some staff members have never had an opportunity to work with volunteers. This may be a new experience for staff, as they learn to utilize the services of a volunteer.

Be a Good Communicator

The staff will welcome your questions and comments. If you do not understand something, please ask. Volunteering should be an enjoyable and rewarding job. If you are unhappy or concerned about something, discuss the situation with your supervisor.

Routine Tasks are Important

The staff often relies upon volunteers to do the “routine” tasks such as photocopying and organizing materials. Because volunteers are able to assist with these tasks, teachers are able to spend more time working with students or planning for quality instruction.

We All Have Different Ways of Doing Things

When you are assigned a task, be sure you know exactly how the teacher wants the job done. Ask for clear directions and, if necessary, ask the teacher to give you samples or demonstrate how tasks are to be performed.

Try Something New

The opportunity to learn new skills is one of the benefits of being a school volunteer. Be willing to try new tasks assigned by the staff, but accept only as much responsibility as you feel comfortable doing.

Be Reliable

Attend when you say you will. Give the office and/or your supervising teacher as much notice as possible when you will not be available for your scheduled time.



Working Effectively With Students

Call Students by Name at Each Opportunity

A child's name is very important. Make every effort to pronounce and spell each child's name correctly.

Observe the Techniques Used by the Teacher

Model the instructional methods used by the teacher when working with students.

Accept Children as They Are

Each child is unique and may be very different from your own child. Be ready to accept the differences in background, values, and aspirations.

Encourage and Praise Students

Your positive words of encouragement will go a long way in helping students feel good about themselves even when they are having difficulty. Be ready to praise children for even the smallest successes! Let each child know that you care about him/her through the use of verbal affirmations. Younger children may also enjoy stars, stickers, stamps, etc. You and the teacher should discuss the use of these motivational materials.

Children Never Forget

If you promise a student something, be prepared to keep the promise. Be careful not to make promises that you may not be able to keep.

Encourage Students to Do Their Own Thinking

Try not to give students the answers before they have had an opportunity to solve problems on their own. Give children plenty of time to answer your questions. Silence often means a child is thinking. Beware of the occasional student who may try to get you to do their work for them.

Follow the Teacher's Lead

Be consistent with the teacher's rules for classroom behavior. Remember, the teacher is always available and ready to handle discipline problems.

Reinforce Good Behavior

When children are behaving well, let them know how proud you are and how much you appreciate their effort. This will encourage the child to try even harder. If possible, ignore a child who shows minor misbehavior problems, but do reinforce and praise the child for appropriate behavior and good work.

It is OK if You Do not Know all the Answers

Admit to the children that you do not know the answer or are not sure what to do. Work the answers out together with students or feel free to ask the teacher for assistance.

Keep Students on Task

You will want the children to learn as much as possible during their time with you. Keep the lesson or activity moving; avoid letting anyone get the group off track by discussing topics that have nothing to do with the lesson.

Supervise Students Carefully

Under no circumstances should you leave students unsupervised. Be aware of what students are doing at all times.



Volunteer Guidelines

1. Follow the guidelines established for volunteers and the procedures and responsibilities specific to the level of service provided to the District as outlined in Platte County Board Administrative Procedure [IICC-AP\(1\)](#).
2. Volunteers must follow the same dress code applicable to students.
3. Volunteers will not lend money or bring gifts other than stickers and greeting cards to individual students unless authorized by the building administrator.
4. Volunteers will not transport students.
5. Volunteers will keep all information obtained from a student's educational record confidential.
6. Volunteers will not photograph or video record students unless authorized by the building administrator.
7. Volunteers will not date students, have sexual relationships or arrange to meet students outside the regular school day or during school-sponsored events.
8. Volunteers will not dress students, change diapers, provide personal hygiene assistance or supply medication to students.
9. Volunteers will use universal precautions to avoid contact with bodily fluids.
10. Volunteers will receive district policies and procedures on computer use and will sign an authorized user form prior to having access to the district's computers.
11. Volunteers will not discriminate against or harass any person and will immediately report all harassment, bullying or discriminating behavior observed, to an administrator in accordance to district policy.
12. Volunteers will not search students or student property.
13. Volunteers will not direct a student to remove an emblem, insignia or garment, including a religious emblem, insignia or garment. If the volunteer believes a student's clothing is disruptive or promotes disruptive behavior, the volunteer will contact the building administrator immediately.
14. Volunteers must sign in and out of the office when entering and leaving the school and must document the hours spent in the school.
15. Volunteers must report suspected cases of abuse or neglect to the building administrator and appropriate legal authorities.
16. Volunteers will follow all policies, procedures, laws and rules established in and followed by the district at all times.

This handbook and the content within is neither a contract nor a substitute for the official District Board Policy Manual. Rather, it is a guide to and a brief explanation of the District policies and procedures. District policies and procedures can change at any time; and any such changes shall supersede any handbook provisions that are not compatible. The master copy of the District's Board Policy Manual is available online at our District website <https://www.plattecountyschooldistrict.com>.

