



# Pike County Volunteer Handbook

## Welcome!

Volunteers play an important and valuable role at Pike County Schools. Students, teachers, staff, parents and the community benefit from the work of individuals like you who freely share their talents and resources. We also know that as a volunteer, you, too, will be rewarded. This handbook is directed to all volunteers, parents/families, grandparents, college, high, or middle school students, retired persons, former teachers and administrators, persons from the business and faith communities, persons of every educational level -in short, to anyone wishing to devote a portion of her or his time to our students and school community. Because we want you to get the most out of your volunteer experience, we want to make sure you are an informed volunteer. One hour a week, one day a week, one day on a special project -your efforts make a difference for students."

## You Are Appreciated

Teachers and staff know they are fortunate to work with so many committed volunteers. Volunteers in schools help in many different ways: tutor, classrooms, offices, field trips, team sports, and special projects. We shudder to think what a single day without volunteers in our schools would be like! On behalf of the teachers, staff, and students, -"Thank you, we can't do it without your help."

## Our Commitment to You

While there are certain expectations from volunteers to help things run smoothly, we realize you also have expectations from school staff. We are committed to working with you to make sure volunteering is rewarding for everyone.

Be a professional. As a school volunteer, you are a role model for students. Behave toward students and school staff in a respectful manner that sets an example of professionalism and good citizenship.

## Who Does the Teaching?

If you are volunteering in a classroom, make sure you and the teacher are clear on your responsibilities and that you are both comfortable with your duties. The real value for a teacher in having a volunteer is that it frees the teacher to teach. If you are spending more time making copies or prepping for activities than is satisfying to you, then talk with the teacher about other ways you can help as well.

## Language

Just as we expect students to refrain from using inappropriate language while at school, we also expect the same from teachers, staff and volunteers. Most adults realize how easily children pick up



on what we say. But, keep in mind that what is a harmless slang term to you may be offensive to another adult or student.

## **Communicate**

As a school volunteer, it is crucial that the lines of communication stay open and clear. Remember the saying "no question is a dumb question?" Believe it! If you are unsure about what's expected of you, or how to use certain office equipment, please ask someone for direction.

## **Commitment**

Whether you are volunteering on a regular basis or for a one-time project or event, arrive a little early so there is time for communication and direction. Also, be sure to let the teacher, coach, or whoever is supervising your work as a volunteer know when your schedule changes or if you can't make it when you are expected. We recommend you check our school calendar, so you know when school is not in session.

## **What to Wear**

Wearing appropriate, practical, and comfortable clothing when you volunteer is one more way you can be a role model. If you have a question, feel free to ask about the school's dress code or to talk with the supervising teacher, athletic director or a classroom teacher.

## **Efficiency**

We respect your time commitment and will make every effort to utilize your time efficiently. If you have any questions or suggestions to help us, please share them.

## **Volunteer Hours**

School volunteers help in schools during regular school hours, namely the same hours that the school office is open. If volunteering after school, the school office must be accessible or school personnel must be present who have access to it. It is essential that there is access to the first aid kit, a phone, and emergency contact information.

## **Discipline or Behavior Problems**

As a school volunteer you may notice students disobeying school or classroom rules. Your responsibility is to call such matters to the attention of the teacher or other supervising school personnel. Never take corrective measures into your own hands. There are many ways in which schools are alike; but because schools must fulfill educational needs of students from many diverse backgrounds, each school has a personality or culture of its own. Volunteers should be informed about the school's general disciplinary procedures to avoid any misunderstanding.



## **Sign-In Procedure and Security**

Volunteers are required to be on the approved volunteer list. To become a school volunteer you must submit application which includes a background check and attend orientation. When volunteering at the school, you must: enter the front door, submit to an I.D. check, sign in, and secure an ID badge which must be visible while you are volunteering. Signing in each time you volunteer also allows school personnel to locate you immediately in case of an emergency. For everyone's safety, it's important to know who you are and why you are at school.

## **Screening**

For the safety of students, all perspective volunteers will be asked to complete a School Volunteer Application and provide a picture I.D. All prospective volunteers will be subject to a background check and the Pike County School System, in its discretion and without a statement of reasons, may require a complete background check on any volunteer at any time. In programs where a volunteer is an overnight chaperone or has less supervised time with a student (s) fingerprinting checks are required. Pike County Schools will cover the costs for background and fingerprinting checks.

## **Supervision**

All volunteers perform under the direction and supervision of school personnel. Volunteers should know and follow school policies and rules. Pike County Schools, in its discretion and without a statement of reasons, may suspend any volunteer from further volunteer activities pending any background check. No statement by Pike County Schools establishes a property right to perform volunteer work.

## **Communication**

If you are unable to make it to school when you are expected, please call the school and leave a message. Similarly, school staff will contact you if your time is canceled or changed for any unforeseen reason.

## **Student / Volunteer Relationships**

Volunteers function in a position of trust and Pike County Schools does not extend that volunteer/student trust relationship outside of the supervised school environment. It is the responsibility of the volunteer to notify the site administrator immediately if he/she becomes involved with a student/family outside the Pike County Schools environment.

## **Interests & Talents**

We want to make the best match we can between volunteer opportunities and your interests and talents. Let the athletic director or supervising teacher know how you can best contribute. Your input may lead to the development of additional volunteer opportunities.



### **To be a Volunteer, You Must:**

1. Fill out an application and submit it to the school by mail or in-person.
2. Gain acceptance into the program after a review of your application.
3. Attend orientation as organized by your school Counselor.
4. Attend training for “Mandated Reporter”, usually done with orientation.
5. Adhere to child confidentiality law - FERPA

### **Important Notice**

Beginning July 1, 2012, volunteers who work with children will be required by law to report suspected child abuse. The new mandatory reporting requirement is a provision in HB 1176, the criminal justice reform bill signed by Governor Nathan Deal on May 2, 2012.

Specifically, HB 1176 changes the definition of "child service organization personnel" to include volunteers. The new law defines "child service organization personnel" as follows:

'Child service organization personnel' means persons employed by or volunteering at a business or an organization, whether public, private, for profit, not for profit, or voluntary, that provides care, treatment, education, training, supervision, coaching, counseling, recreational programs, or shelter to children.