

RPS RICHMOND
PUBLIC SCHOOLS
VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

Office of Engagement

Department of Community Partnerships

301 North Ninth Street, 13th Floor | Richmond, Virginia 23219
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Welcome!

Dear Valued Richmond Public Schools Volunteers:

Thank you for your interest in volunteering with Richmond Public Schools!

RPS believes that we will only achieve success through deep partnership with families and community, and volunteers are key to supporting our mission. Our goal is to ensure that all of our volunteers have a positive experience, and that all volunteers have the opportunity to work with us in a variety of ways. In pursuit of this goal, RPS has worked collaboratively with volunteers and partners to build a continuum of volunteer experiences that ranges from improving the appearance and function of school buildings through school beautification, to direct student support, such as Lunch Buddies, Reading Buddies, and/or mentorship, to district-level engagement like joining a Community Team or publicly advocating for RPS.



For more information about partnering, volunteering, or donating to RPS, please visit our [Department of Community Partnerships website](#) to learn more. To find out more about how community partnerships factor into our vision for Richmond Public Schools, please review our 2018-2023 [Strategic Plan, Dreams4RPS](#).

Thank you for supporting RPS!



Getting Started as a Volunteer

How to Apply to Volunteer

1. Complete the online [Volunteer Application](#), also located on the [Volunteer Experience webpage](#).
2. Once your application is received, the RPS Volunteer Coordinator will contact you within three business days regarding next steps, including background checks (if applicable).
3. Attend a scheduled orientation session, if applicable.

Approval of volunteers:

1. RPS encourages anyone interested in volunteering with RPS to apply.
2. RPS reserves the right, and has sole discretion, to determine whether a volunteer applicant is accepted as a volunteer.
3. RPS also reserves the right to end the volunteer relationship for any reason at any time or to not accept a volunteer applicant for any reason at any time.
4. At no time are volunteers considered employed by the School Board of the City of Richmond and/or Richmond Public Schools.



Important Information for Volunteers

Please refer to the School Board policy on volunteers, Policy 4-3.9 School Volunteers, for more information.

Volunteer Responsibilities

- ❖ Completing a [volunteer application](#), reviewing all volunteer information listed on the [Department of Community Partnerships website](#), and completing an orientation, when applicable.
- ❖ Being prompt and dependable.
- ❖ Following staff members' directions.
- ❖ Modeling good behavior and classroom standards, as children will look up to volunteers and copy behavior.
- ❖ Complying with district and school policies, rules, and guidelines, including dressing appropriately for volunteer work.
- ❖ Reading the Volunteer Handbook. All documents are located on the [Department of Community Partnerships website](#).
- ❖ Reporting information shared by a student that leads to a suspicion of child abuse or neglect to the Designated School Personnel (DSP). The DSP is always an administrator.
- ❖ Keeping all student records and personal information received in the course of volunteering confidential.

Keep us Updated!

- ❖ Update your contact information when changes occur.
- ❖ Communicate regularly with your supervising staff member and the school's volunteer liaison, as appropriate, via communication logs, phone, or email.
- ❖ Notify the District Volunteer Coordinator should you become involved in an incident that has the potential to change your clearance status for a criminal information background check.

Engagement Tips for Volunteers

- ❖ Be adaptable and flexible when working with children. Remember that school is a learning environment and that students will make mistakes!
- ❖ Remember that teachers are in charge of the instruction and discipline of each student. Report discipline concerns to the teacher or the DSP.
- ❖ Let your actions and words demonstrate respect for different views, identities, and expressions of RPS students and teachers, including diversity in cultures, religions, and family structure.
- ❖ All families have the ability to assist their child in their academic success and effective family engagement can happen in every home.

School Policies

- ❖ Volunteers must sign in and out at the school office for each visit and wear a "Visitor" badge at all times.
- ❖ Alcohol, tobacco (including vapors and/or electronic cigarettes), and firearms are prohibited on all school property.
- ❖ Volunteers must follow dress codes.
- ❖ Volunteers must follow all school district policies, procedures, and rules. If you have questions, please ask your school volunteer liaison.



Volunteer Attendance

- ❖ Please be on time. Punctuality is important so that the classroom and/or school schedule is not disrupted.
- ❖ If you volunteer on a regular basis, and you know in advance that you will miss a scheduled volunteering session (vacation, travel, work, etc.), please contact the school's volunteer liaison to share this information.
- ❖ If you are ill or feeling unwell, please do not volunteer. If your presence is expected on the day that you are ill, please contact your school's volunteer liaison to share this information.

Confidentiality, reporting, and boundaries

- ❖ Volunteers should not be left to supervise students without an RPS staff member present. If you are left alone with RPS students, report it immediately to the volunteer liaison.
- ❖ Do not be alone with a student behind closed doors.

- ❖ Alert the Designated School Personnel (DSP) promptly if you suspect child abuse or neglect. Do not talk to the child directly about these issues.
- ❖ Do not give out personal contact information such as your address, phone, or email address to students. Contact outside of your volunteer service at the school is not permitted.
- ❖ Do not engage students on any social media site, email, texts, and/or take or show pictures/videos of students on your phone or other media devices.
- ❖ Never go off-site with a student unless you are on a school authorized and sponsored field trip accompanied by an RPS employee (teacher, administrator, etc.).
- ❖ It is the teacher or principal's responsibility to discipline students.
- ❖ All student records and personal information must remain confidential.

District Policies Volunteers Should be Aware Of

❖ Harassment

The district does not tolerate harassment of any kind. Please contact a RPS staff member if you have a concern regarding any type of harassment. Reference Policy 7-1.2 Harassment- School Personnel.

❖ Tobacco Free and Drug Free Workplace

Smoking and the use of tobacco is prohibited at all times and under all circumstances in all Richmond Public School buildings as provided in federal, state and local law. Each principal shall post signs stating "No Smoking" as applicable within each school building. Reference Policy 7-3.18

Volunteers are not to be under the influence of alcohol, controlled substances, or illegal drugs while on RPS premises. Reference Policy 7.31

❖ Dress Code 7-3.4

Volunteers are considered professionals in the building and should always dress as such. Reference Policy 7-3.4

❖ Workplace Bullying 7-3.20 Student Bullying 8-3.3

Bullying of students or RPS employees, by students or adults, is prohibited on RPS premises. This also includes bullying through electronic means of communication. Reference Policy 7-3.20 and Policy 8-3.3

❖ Weapons in School 7-3.2

The School Board of the City of Richmond is committed to maintaining a safe and secure working and learning environment. Staff members are prohibited from carrying, bringing, using or possessing any weapon in any school building, on school grounds, in any school vehicle or at any school-sponsored activity without the authorization of the school or the school division. Reference Policy 7-3.2