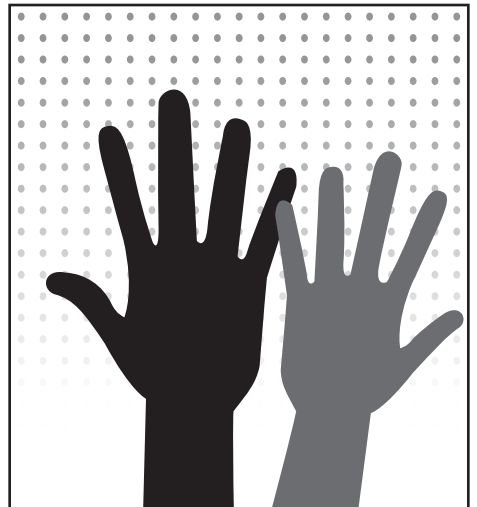
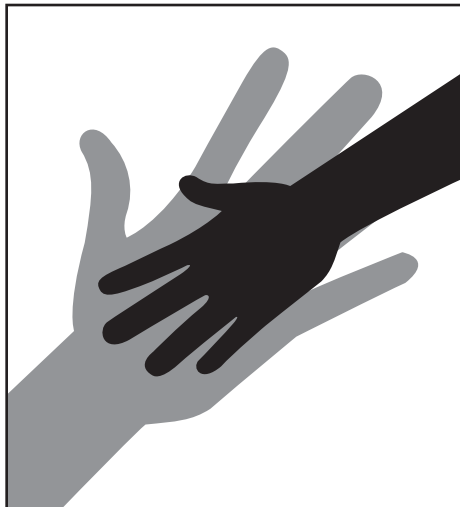


# VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

**A GUIDE TO SERVING IN SALEM-KEIZER PUBLIC SCHOOLS**



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logo here**



December 2022

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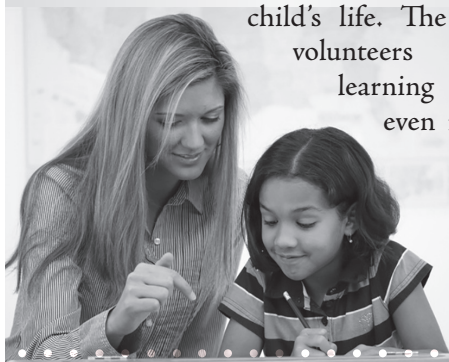
## About this handbook

This handbook is designed to help volunteers understand the important role they play in helping students achieve success. It includes information on volunteer dos and don'ts, important policies, practices and procedures that volunteers must follow to ensure students and adults in our schools are safe. It also answers common questions that often come up during volunteer service.



## Benefits of volunteering in Salem-Keizer Public Schools

Being a school volunteer benefits students, staff and volunteers alike! In fact, volunteers often report they gain more than they give through their volunteer experience. Each person who helps a child learn makes a difference in that child's life. The work of our volunteers makes the learning environment even more rich and meaningful.



### Benefits for the STUDENT:

- ▶ Increases student learning and success
- ▶ Builds confidence
- ▶ Sets a good example
- ▶ Provides students interaction with caring adults
- ▶ Students receive more attention

### Benefits for the SCHOOL & STAFF:

- ▶ Expands understanding of instruction and learning
- ▶ Builds outside support for schools and education
- ▶ Increases communication and trust with the community
- ▶ Allows the teacher more time to work with students
- ▶ Decreases discipline situations

### Benefits for the VOLUNTEER:

- ▶ Gains understanding of the school environment
- ▶ Provides experience & connections
- ▶ Builds community
- ▶ Knowledge that time contributed makes a difference!

## Volunteers help maintain an atmosphere of learning by:

- ▶ Silencing cell phones while in school
- ▶ Holding personal conversations outside the classroom
- ▶ Being mindful that students are observing you & you set an example
- ▶ Giving full attention to your tasks: please don't bring other children with you during your volunteer time
- ▶ Avoiding visiting other classrooms
- ▶ Being aware of limitations on staff time & schedules
- ▶ Wearing professional attire
- ▶ Expecting students to treat you with respect, just as you treat students with respect
- ▶ Asking students to call you "Mr." or "Mrs." rather than by first name
- ▶ Using good judgment
- ▶ Following all policies and procedures; if you aren't sure about something, ask a staff member

## Who is a school volunteer?

In accordance with District Policy PAP-A003 "School Volunteers", a volunteer is defined as any individual who is not an employee of the district and who donates their time for any school related activity. Volunteers receive no district remuneration other than reimbursement for expenses incurred at the direct request of the school administrator.

## Orientation and training

Salem-Keizer Public Schools offers orientations and trainings for volunteers who spend regular, recurring time in the schools. For volunteers who serve only at special one-time events (such as field trips), formal orientation is not necessary. The classroom teacher will provide you with the information you need. At orientation sessions, volunteers receive a thorough introduction to district policies, expectations and protections for volunteers, staff, and students. Many of the topics covered in orientation are addressed briefly in this manual to serve as a handy reminder. Your school's volunteer coordinator will provide you with a schedule of available orientation sessions.

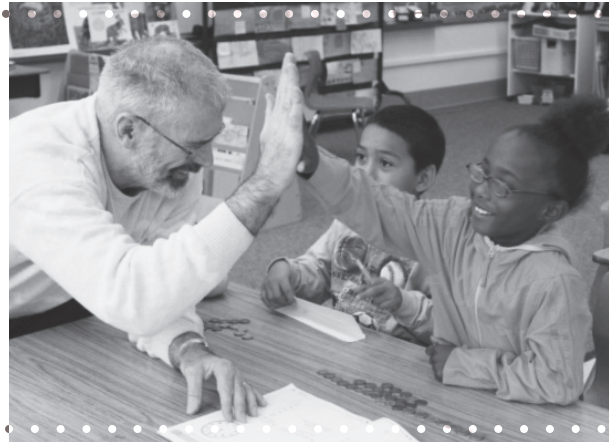
## Volunteering— beginning to end

The first step to getting started is the criminal history check. Any person volunteering in any capacity with Salem-Keizer Public Schools is required to complete the criminal history check process.



### Here are the steps:

1. **Contact the school/location** where you would like to offer your volunteer services. They will provide you with a Criminal History Check packet. Or, you can complete the form online on the district website at [www.salemkeizer.org](http://www.salemkeizer.org). Click the “Volunteer” link found at the top right of the home page.
2. **Complete the packet** and return it to the school or directly to our Human Resources Department. Please ensure that all sections of the form are accurate and complete. Incomplete forms will be returned, rejected or delayed in processing. If your application requires further evaluation, you will be mailed a letter explaining the next steps in the approval process.
3. **It can take up to two weeks during peak times for criminal history checks to be processed**, so you are encouraged to complete the paperwork early. You will only hear from the Human Resources department if there are questions about your application. To verify your application has been approved, please check with the school where you would like to volunteer.
4. **Volunteers must be approved by Human Resources PRIOR to beginning volunteer activities.** In order to maintain an effective and safe learning environment, the school administrator may decline to allow an individual to volunteer in the school despite having passed a criminal history check.



During the school year, you will work under the direct supervision of the professional staff and teachers. It is important that communication between you and staff members be clear, and that all expectations are understood by both staff and the volunteer. Since you are part of the educational environment, it is important that you take your commitment to the program seriously. The staff you work with will count on you to be there, so you’ll need to let them know if you are going to be gone. **Keeping track of your volunteer hours**, both at school and any activity outside of the school day, is important as well. Please be sure to sign in and out or report your hours in the method the school requests.

Volunteer service lasts for one school year. You can start at any time during the school year, but your volunteer term ends when school is out for summer. As the needs of the school may change from year to year, it’s important to realize that being a volunteer from year to year may also change.

If you would like to volunteer again the following school year, you do not need to complete another criminal history check (they expire after five years, and need to be repeated at that time). **Simply call the school or location and let them know you would like to help again next year.** They’ll get in touch with you when the time is right

## Safe and Welcoming Schools Resolution . . . . .

The Salem-Keizer School Board’s Safe and Welcoming Schools Resolution describes the district’s commitment to creating a culture that welcomes all. Everyone is welcome in our schools regardless of age, disability, national origin, immigration status, race, color, marital status, religion, gender, sexual orientation, financial ability or other factors. In addition, all students are entitled to academic success regardless of their background or family circumstances, and each student will be provided the necessary supports to ensure that success. The Salem-Keizer School District utilizes an [Equity Lens](#) in order to ensure that decisions are made that provide for each student’s needs, including those who are traditionally underserved. Our district also takes an anti-racist and anti-discriminatory stance when confronted with behaviors that conflict with our collective values around equity. For additional information, see the district’s Safe and Welcoming Schools webpage: <https://salkeiz.k12.or.us/parents/safe-welcoming/>.

## Harassment and bullying .....

The district is committed to providing a safe and effective environment for students and employees to learn and work. Acts of hazing, harassment, sexual harassment, intimidation, discrimination, bullying, cyber bullying, and/or menacing will not be tolerated. Volunteers play a valuable role in helping to create and maintain this safe environment. It is crucial that you immediately report suspected bullying or harassment to the school administrator or another staff member at the school. As required by district policy, all reports will be investigated by the school administrator. Additional information and training materials are available on the district website: <https://salkeiz.k12.or.us/volunteering/>.

## Child abuse and neglect .....

If you become aware of suspected child abuse through your volunteer activities with the district, **immediately report your concerns to an administrator, school counselor or teacher**. Keep the information confidential and do not discuss it with anyone else. Remember, it is not your role to question the child or to investigate; leave that to the authorities. Everyone, including volunteers, is encouraged to report the suspected abuse to law enforcement or the ODHS Child Abuse Hotline (1-855-503-SAFE (7233)). Individuals in some professions, including all school district employees, are mandated by law to report suspected child abuse and neglect to law enforcement or the ODHS Child Abuse Hotline.

## Use of tobacco, alcohol and drugs .....

The use of tobacco, tobacco products, tobacco look-alikes, electronic cigarettes, alcohol and other drugs, (exclusive of those prescribed by a medical provider and over the counter medication) by staff and the public in district buildings, on district property, including in personal and district vehicles, is prohibited.



### MAINTAINING APPROPRIATE VOLUNTEER / CONTRACTOR & STUDENT BOUNDARIES

IN 2019, THE OREGON LEGISLATURE PASSED AND THE GOVERNOR SIGNED INTO LAW SENATE BILL 155, which helps ensure the safety of K-12 students. This legislation prohibits child abuse and sexual conduct of students by adults within the K-12 system, describes the requirements for reporting, and outlines the steps school districts and other agencies must take when responding to concerns. Senate Bill 155 expanded the definition of sexual conduct to not only include inappropriate conduct by school employees but also conduct by volunteers, contractors and agents of the District. As outlined in Salem-Keizer School District Administrative Policy PAP-A001, child abuse and sexual conduct by District employees, contractors, agents, or volunteers is not tolerated.

THE SALEM-KEIZER SCHOOL DISTRICT IS COMMITTED to providing an educational environment that is free from harassment, misconduct and abuse. The involvement of caring adults in the school setting is important to the success of schools and the safety and wellbeing of students. This document is intended to provide information to individuals who volunteer, contract or provide services within the District for developing positive relationships with a focus on the academic needs of the student and avoiding interactions that could be misinterpreted.

*If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out to the school administrator or department supervisor, or contact Debbie Joa, the District's Prevention and Protection Coordinator, at 503-399-3061 or [joa\\_debbie@salkeiz.k12.or.us](mailto:joa_debbie@salkeiz.k12.or.us).*

#### REPORTING

CHILD ABUSE

If you become aware of possible child abuse or neglect through your volunteer activities with the District, or if you have concerns about a district employee, volunteer, contractor or agent abusing a child, immediately report your concerns to the school administrator, school counselor, or call the District's Human Resources Department at 503-399-3061. Everyone, including volunteers and contractors, are encouraged to report suspected child abuse to the Oregon Department of Human Services/Child Abuse Hotline (1-855-503-7233) or a law enforcement agency. Individuals in some professions, including all school district employees, are mandated by law to report suspected child abuse and neglect to the Oregon Department of Human Services or law enforcement.

*Additional information about child abuse prevention and reporting is available on the Salem-Keizer School District volunteer and contractor training pages and the Oregon Department of Human Services website.*

CHILD ABUSE INCLUDES: PHYSICAL ABUSE, SEXUAL ABUSE AND EXPLOITATION, EMOTIONAL ABUSE, NEGLECT, AND THREAT OF HARM.

AS DEFINED IN OREGON REVISED STATUTE 339.370, sexual conduct includes any verbal or physical conduct or verbal, written, or electronic communications by a school district employee, a contractor, an agent, or a volunteer that involve a student and that are: sexual advances or requests for sexual favors directed toward the student or; of a sexual nature that are directed toward the student or that have the effect of unreasonably interfering with the student’s educational performance, or of creating an intimidating, hostile educational environment.

Sexual conduct does not include touching or other physical contact that is necessitated by the nature of the school district employee’s job duties or by the services required to be provided by the contractor, agent or volunteer and for which there is no sexual intent; or verbal, written or electronic communications that are provided as part of the education program that meets state educational standards or District policy.

The definition of sexual conduct does not apply to conduct or communications by current K-12 students who work, contract or volunteer for the Salem-Keizer School District and are in a consensual relationship with another K-12 student as long as the conduct does not create an intimidating or hostile education environment, and is not prohibited by law, District policies, or any applicable employment agreements.

“Student” is defined as any person who is: in any grade from prekindergarten through grade 12; or twenty-one years of age or younger and receiving educational or related services from an education provider that is not a post-secondary institution of education; or who was previously known as a student by the person engaging in sexual conduct and who left school or graduated from high school within 90 days prior to the sexual conduct.

## REPORTING

If you become aware of possible sexual conduct or inappropriate boundaries by a district employee, volunteer, contractor or agent towards a student, immediately report your concerns to the school administrator, school counselor, or call the District’s Human Resources Department at 503-399-3061.

**APPROPRIATE INTERACTIONS CREATE A SAFE ENVIRONMENT** for students to learn, grow, seek help in problem solving and conflicts, and develop social skills.

It is important that everyone take an active role in helping to ensure a safe and healthy environment for students. If you observe questionable behavior between an adult and child or between children immediately notify the school administrator, counselor or classroom teacher.

Inappropriate interactions cross the boundaries separating student from adult needs and create relationships that become peer-to-peer rather than adult-to-child.

## TIPS for VOLUNTEERS & CONTRACTORS

- Focus conversations on academics, school events and school activities; refer personal issues to the school administrator, counselor or classroom teacher; refrain from making comments that may have sexual overtones; avoid dialogue that makes the student feel uncomfortable or makes the student a confidant.
- Stay in a group or a public part of the school; avoid being alone with a student.
- Treat students fairly and equally; avoid favoritism such as special privileges or gifts.
- Limit interactions to the school environment; don’t meet with students outside of school, transport students, or communicate with students electronically (text messaging, social networking sites, online gaming, etc).
- Maintain personal space and reasonable eye contact.
- Be cautious about physical contact with students; contact including but not limited to: lap sitting, tickling, frontal hugs and shoulder massages are not appropriate.
- Ensure that interactions with students are as transparent as possible; don’t engage in conversations or interactions with students that are secretive or hidden.

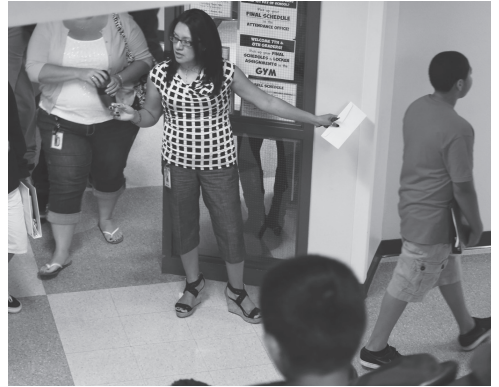
*Additional examples of appropriate and inappropriate interactions are available through the District communication, “Maintaining Appropriate Staff-Student Interactions” (PAP-W006) and the volunteer and contractor training pages.*

## **Dispensing medication** .....

In order to help ensure the health and safety of students, volunteers may not provide medication to students. This includes prescription medication as well as over-the-counter products such as ibuprofen or cough drops. Please refer all questions regarding medication to the teacher or another staff member.

## **Dismissal of students** .....

Only school staff may dismiss students from school. Children who must leave school early for any reason must receive permission from the school office and sign out before leaving.



## **Religious Expression** .....

Schools must maintain the separation of church and state pursuant to Oregon law (ORS 327.109). Therefore, schools and school staff must not encourage or discourage any religion and promotion or inhibition of religion in any form by a volunteer is prohibited. Volunteers whose purpose is to influence or solicit students in a religious viewpoint will be denied entry to the school during the instructional day. Invitations to meetings or events sponsored by any ministry are prohibited while the volunteer is on school grounds during instructional hours, including lunchtime.

## **Emergency closures** .....

Volunteers are not expected to report for service when school is closed due to an emergency or inclement weather. If school should close due to an emergency that occurs during your volunteer service time, please follow the direction of your building administrator. More information on emergency closures is available on the district website at [www.salemkeizer.org](http://www.salemkeizer.org).

## **Discipline** .....

Students rarely have behavior problems while working with volunteers. However, the district has a discipline plan in place should a situation arise. The responsibility of discipline rests with the 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.

## **Supervision of volunteers** .....

Volunteers are an important part of the educational team. The suggestions and opinions of volunteers are always welcome. It is the employees, however, who are held responsible by law for decisions that are made regarding the instruction of students and the management of the school. For this reason, volunteers always work under the direct supervision of teachers, administrators, and education support staff.

Volunteers and employees typically build positive and professional relationships. Should a minor conflict arise, the volunteer and employee are encouraged to work together to resolve the issue. Should a volunteer have concerns regarding an employee's conduct, the volunteer should bring the concern to the attention of the school administrator. The district is responsible for the safety and well being of students and employees. For this reason, the school administrator or the district Prevention and Protection Coordinator may dismiss any volunteer whose actions are not in the best interest of the school or students.

## **Volunteer safety** .....

The district recognizes that the work and physical surroundings volunteers encounter may be unfamiliar. The district will provide training and proper tools to safely perform tasks, but also ask that all volunteers only perform tasks after receiving the necessary safety training. If a volunteer is injured while performing assigned duties, the supervisor and Risk Management must be informed immediately. The district has volunteer insurance coverage available to approved volunteers that have sustained a bona fide injury while serving in an approved capacity as a volunteer for the district.

It is important that volunteers immediately report any unsafe or discriminatory conduct to a school employee.

For emergency procedures regarding fire, earthquakes, and lockdowns, please consult with the teacher or school administrator.

## Dress code

Appropriate attire at school is an important way to help establish a productive learning environment. Students, staff and volunteers alike are expected to follow the school's dress code.

A volunteer's attire should be professional and not a distraction from learning. The district honors all viewpoints, so long as they do not promote violence, hate, racism or discrimination. Clothing that contains information about social justice is permitted; political messaging is not permitted while volunteering. It is important that volunteers set an example for students by modeling appropriate dress while volunteering.

Dress code may vary slightly at each school or program. Please check with the school office or teacher for details about dress code.

## Protecting student privacy

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law that protects student privacy. School staff and volunteers must abide by FERPA regulations. Some examples of information protected by FERPA include details about a student's:

- ▶ Health
- ▶ Behavior
- ▶ Discipline
- ▶ Academic performance
- ▶ Family or living situation
- ▶ More

It is appropriate and expected that volunteers will share private information gained about students with the right school staff. However, such information must not be shared with anyone outside the school unless the principal has authorized you to do so.

There is one important exception to this rule: Illegal activity, such as suspected child abuse, needs to be reported to law enforcement, even if it means sharing information that would normally be protected.

A good way to ensure you are staying within legal requirements is to remember that, "what happens at school, stays at school." Meaning, **personal details about students that you gain while volunteering should not be shared with anyone but school staff.**

Here are some examples of situations where you might gain protected information:

- ▶ While tutoring a student in math, you observe he is not learning the concept as quickly as other students.
- ▶ A student tells you her parents are fighting a lot and she's concerned they may get divorced.
- ▶ You witness a fight at school and learn the students involved will be suspended.
- ▶ While helping in a classroom, you learn a student is hearing impaired.
- ▶ A student tells you his or her GPA.

## Taking photos of students

FERPA also protects parents' and guardians' rights to prevent photographs of their students from being taken while at school or while involved in school activities. Here are the steps to take before taking pictures of students:

5. Check with the school office to see if a parent has denied permission to photograph their child.
6. Get parent permission if you will post photos of students on any website or social media account page, send them to the newspaper, or otherwise share them publicly. This is in addition to making sure permission to photograph has not been denied (ask your school's office manager for more information).
7. Even if permission is granted, never identify students in photos (online or in print) by full name.
8. Get the principal's permission before taking photographs of students.



**We appreciate you!**

*The work of district staff is amplified by our many helpful volunteers. On behalf of all district staff and students, thank you for being part of student success in Salem-Keizer Public Schools. We value you and all you contribute to our schools.*