

# VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK



## Expectations and Guidelines for Steilacoom Historical School District Volunteers

### Contact

Have questions  
about volunteering  
in SHSD?

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**STEILACOOM**  
Historical School District No. 1

## Expectations and Guidelines for Volunteering

Thank you for your interest in volunteering in Steilacoom Historical School District (SHSD). SHSD schools depend on volunteers and value their contributions. Your willingness to serve the students and staff of SHSD is greatly appreciated. This handbook outlines the guidelines and expectations that volunteers must follow to create safe and successful experiences for students, staff and volunteers. All volunteering relationships established through SHSD must take place with students on the school campus during school hours or at other authorized school activities only.

### **You Are Part of an Education Team**

Volunteers who are committed to helping students be successful are important members of the school team. These individuals are essential to bringing the outside world to the school. Students need contact with individuals who can share experiences and bring other perspectives into the classroom. They need adults who can guide them through the learning process.

### **Goals:**

- Enrich the curriculum
- Enrich student's learning opportunities
- Provide help for individual students
- Provide opportunities for meaningful service
- Relieve teachers of some non-instructional tasks
- Establish a school and community partnership for quality education
- Enhance all aspects of the educational process

### **Working closely with the classroom teacher and school staff includes:**

- Following the direction of a school staff member
- Accepting direction and suggestions from teachers
- Respecting the privacy of teachers and students by not discussing school matters away from the classroom
- Understanding that evaluation of a student's learning can only be done by the teacher
- Committing to working in a classroom to support and improve education for all students
- Seeking help from the teacher when you need additional information or instruction
- Sharing ideas and constructive comments with the teacher
- Acknowledging that teachers are responsible for discipline in the classroom
- Referring to the classroom teacher or regular school staff member for final solution of any student problem which arises, whether of an instructional, medical or operational nature

### **Enjoy working with students by:**

- Finding ways to establish a good rapport with students
- Providing help and assistance without doing the work for students
- Showing a genuine interest in each student
- Accepting each student and encouraging the best from him or her
- Using patience and kindness

Sometimes a volunteer placement may not be a fit for the volunteer, the teacher or the school. If your volunteer placement does not work for you, the teacher or the school for whatever reason, your volunteer assignment may be ended, modified or changed to a new assignment. You may request a different placement if you wish to continue volunteering.

### **Volunteer Expectations**

Volunteers are expected to:

- Be an approved volunteer
- Sign in and out at the office and always wear an ID badge while on school grounds
- Wear professional attire
- Show respect for all staff and students
- Share concerns regarding students with the school staff only
- If you cannot make your scheduled volunteer time, please call the school so the teacher and students will know you will not be there
- Please do not bring younger children to the school during your volunteer hours
- Please turn off your cell phone while you are volunteering in the classroom and refrain from making personal calls or texting while on the school campus

### **Ground Rules for School District Facilities**

- No smoking or tobacco allowed, including on athletic fields and in district vehicles
- No weapons allowed
- No drugs or alcohol allowed
- Do not use school equipment for personal purposes

### **Maintain Student Confidentiality**

Volunteers are expected and required to keep all 'student information' that they obtain while working as a volunteer for SHSD confidential. In fact, federal law strictly prohibits school districts and district volunteers from releasing any student information without parent/guardian permission. Student information includes all academic, medical and personal information. Volunteers cannot take photos of students during their volunteer activities and post them publicly without authorization from the school. Student work, like artwork or papers, is also protected by law and cannot be shared publicly without written permission.

Disclosure of student information by a volunteer is a violation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) and may subject the volunteer and SHSD to civil liability. It is very important that you keep information about students confidential. It is important that you do not discuss students or their progress with others—even their parents. Do not make references to student's abilities in front of other students. The only person who should be told about a student's work is their teacher. If parents ask about their student's progress, suggest in a friendly way that they contact the teacher.

### **Community Service Hours**

SHSD strives to find volunteer opportunities that are mutually beneficial to both the volunteer and the students in our schools. We understand that people need community service hours for a variety of reasons, and ask that volunteers work with their direct supervisors at the school to arrange for signatures that confirm hours worked. However, SHSD cannot allow volunteers to complete court-ordered community service hours through our schools.

### **Prohibition against Harassment at School**

SHSD's Prohibition against Harassment policy calls for a commitment to an educational environment that is free from all types of discrimination and harassment, including sexual harassment, bullying and intimidation. Volunteers are specifically expected and required to respect and uphold the following SHSD policies, including; the Prohibition of Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying policy and the Sexual

Harassment policy. SHSD requires that you review each of these policies in detail prior to volunteering. These policies can be located under “Important School District Policies” at the end of this handbook.

Volunteers who violate these policies on school property or at school activities may be restricted from school property and activities, as appropriate.

### **Additional District Policies that Apply to Volunteers**

SHSD has policies in place to ensure a safe environment for all students, staff and volunteers. The Harassment of Staff policy, Sexual Harassment of District Staff Prohibited policy, Sexual Harassment of Students policy, and the Prohibition of Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying policy call for a commitment to an educational environment that is free from all types of discrimination and harassment, including sexual harassment, bullying and intimidation. SHSD requires you to review each of these policies in detail prior to volunteering. These policies can be located under “Important School District Policies” at the end of this handbook.

Volunteers who violate any of these policies on school property or at school activities may be restricted from school property and activities, as appropriate.

### **Volunteer Opportunities**

Volunteers can help in the school classroom, office, library and playground.

Volunteers can help with:

- classroom activities
- special school events/projects
- art docent program
- parties
- dances
- after school programs
- sports

Each school also has a PTA organization that can always use extra volunteers for its programs. Contact your school PTA directly for more information on these opportunities.

## **Important Guidelines**

### **Safe Interaction with Students**

The District expects that all staff and volunteers will strive to set the kind of example for students that will serve them well in their own conduct and behavior and contribute toward a school atmosphere that is friendly but has a degree of formality.

### **General Guidelines for Safe Interaction with Students:**

All interactions with students should be professional and focused on teaching and learning. These guidelines protect both the student and the volunteer.

### **Volunteers will not:**

- Take a student or students on private outings
- Initiate social activities with students
- Have a prolonged verbal exchange with students if you have an impromptu encounter at a

- public place
- Provide childcare for students
- Ask a student to baby-sit for your family
- Engage in Social Networking with students via Facebook, TikTok Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter or any other social networking platform to initiate or maintain relationship(s) or to communicate with any student that is not consistent with appropriate professional behavior and/or boundaries

### **Communication Protocols for Volunteers**

Do not:

- Say or write things to a student that you would be uncomfortable sharing with the student's parents, district/school administrators or the teacher you are working with
- Make any comments that are based on gender or could be construed as sexist
- Make any comments and/or innuendos that are sexual in nature or could be construed as sexual
- Make jokes that belittle or diminish another person
- Give students compliments that focus on physical attributes
- Initiate conversations or correspondence of a private and/or personal nature with students
- Email a student directly either through a student email account or a personal student account
- Initiate or accept or participate in any remote meetings (over any remote meeting software platforms like Zoom, Microsoft Teams, etc.) without a supervisor, or staff member fully aware of the meeting and included in the meeting

### **Working Alone with Students at School**

- Always keep the door open and lights on
- Do not post anything on class windows that would obstruct a clear view into the room

### **Gifts**

In general, giving gifts to students is not encouraged. If gifts are provided they should be:

- Of nominal value
- Identical for all students in the class
- Approved by the teacher or administrator in charge of the program

### **Physical Contact with Students**

It is the District's expectation that all physical contact between volunteers and students must be professional and appropriate.

### **Field Trips and Off-Campus Activities**

It is the general policy of SHSD that all off-campus field trip and activity chaperones must be at least 21 years of age. Volunteers who wish to drive students should be at least 25 years of age and must have a valid Washington State driver's license. Volunteer drivers must also complete the required driving forms and file them with the school office.

### **What is the difference between a chaperone and a volunteer?**

For the purpose of volunteering in SHSD, a chaperone is a volunteer who is over the age of 21 who has the responsibility of supervising students during an off-campus field trip or activity. During these types of activities, teachers are expected to maintain specific chaperone-to-student ratios. (The exact ratio varies based upon age of students and type of activity).

### **Extracurricular and Enrichment Activities**

Schools often provide before and after-school programs. All extracurricular and enrichment activities must be organized under the authority of SHSD or its PTA partners and comply with all applicable rules and regulations.

### **Volunteer Coaches**

Individuals who wish to become volunteer coaches for any school in SHSD must complete the following steps:

- Complete the SHSD Volunteer Application and be approved as a volunteer. (This process can take up to two weeks to complete, so volunteers are strongly encouraged to begin this process early).
- Provide proof of a current First Aid and current CPR card to the school's athletic director. Classes are available through SHSD if the volunteer does not have current certifications necessary to be a volunteer coach.
- Complete fingerprinting and background requirement (contact Human Resources at 253-983-2220 for an appointment).
- Complete Safe Schools Training.

Please note: Volunteer coaches must be at least 21 years of age to chaperone off-campus activities.

### **Report Suspected Abuse or Neglect**

As a volunteer, you are in a unique position to observe students. If you suspect that a student may be the victim of abuse or neglect, report it immediately to the teacher, principal, school counselor or another school district employee.

### **Volunteering is a Privilege**

Volunteering is a privilege, not a right. All volunteers serve at the sole discretion of the school's principal, Volunteer Supervisor or teacher. Permission to volunteer in a school may be revoked at any time by the school's principal or the district Human Resources department.

## Important School District Policies

### Sexual Harassment

The District is committed to a positive and productive education free from discrimination, including sexual harassment. This commitment extends to all students involved in academic, educational, extracurricular, athletic, and other programs or activities of the school.

For the purpose of this policy, sexual harassment means unwelcome conduct or communication of a sexual nature.

- Demands for sexual favors in exchange for preferential treatment or something of value;
- Stating or implying that a person will lose something if he or she does not submit to a sexual request;
- Penalizing a person for refusing to submit to a sexual advance, or providing a benefit to someone who does;
- Making unwelcome, offensive or inappropriate sexually suggestive remarks comments, gestures, or jokes; or remarks of a sexual nature about a person's appearance, gender or conduct;
- Using derogatory sexual terms for a person;
- Standing too close, inappropriately touching, cornering or stalking a person; or
- Displaying offensive or inappropriate sexual illustrations on school property.

Sexual harassment can occur adult to student, student to student or can be carried out by a group of students or adults and will be investigated by the District even if the alleged harasser is not part of the school staff or student body. Retaliation against any person who makes or is a witness in a sexual harassment complaint is prohibited and will result in appropriate discipline. It is a violation of this policy to knowingly report false allegations.

Reports can be made to any school staff member or to the District's Title IX Compliance Coordinator, Gudrun Sullivan at 253-983-2238 or [gusullivan@steilacoom.k12.wa.us](mailto:gusullivan@steilacoom.k12.wa.us). See Policy and Procedure 3205 for more information.

### Nondiscrimination

The District provides equal educational opportunity and treatment for all students in all aspects of the academic and activities program without discrimination based on race, religion, creed, color, national origin, age, honorably-discharged veteran or military status, sex, sexual orientation, gender expression or identity, marital status, the presence of any sensory, mental or physical disability, or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal by a person with a disability. The District also provides equal access to school facilities to the Boy Scouts of America and all other designated youth groups listed in Title 36 of the United States Code. Conduct against any student that is based on one of the categories listed above that is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive as to limit or deny the student's ability to participate in or benefit from the District's course offerings, educational programming or any activity will not be tolerated.

When a District employee knows, or reasonably should know, that such discriminatory harassment is occurring or has occurred, the District will take prompt and effective steps reasonably calculated to end the harassment, prevent its recurrence and remedy its effects.

Anyone with an allegation of discrimination may request an informal meeting with the compliance officer, Gudrun Sullivan at 253-983-2239 or [gusullivan@steilacoom.k12.wa.us](mailto:gusullivan@steilacoom.k12.wa.us).

## **Bullying Prevention**

All students and staff deserve a safe and supportive environment in which to learn and teach. The District is committed to a safe and civil educational environment for all students, employees, volunteers and patrons that is free from harassment, intimidation or bullying. District Policy 3207 defines harassment, intimidation, or bullying as “any intentional electronic, written, verbal, or physical act including but not limited to, one shown to be motivated by race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, including gender expression or identity, sensory, mental or physical disability, or other distinguishing characteristics, when the act:

- Physically harms a student or damages the student’s property; or
- Has the effect of substantially interfering with a student’s education; or
- Is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating or threatening educational environment; or
- Has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

All staff are responsible for receiving both oral and written reports. Whenever possible, staff who initially receive the report will attempt to resolve the incident immediately. Upon receiving a report, the school will conduct an investigation. Students may:

- Complete the [SHSD Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying \(HIB\) Incident Reporting Form](#) and return it to the school front office.
- Report the incident to 1-855-745-3674.
- Use [Safe Schools Alert](#) to report your concern via the internet. Click on the bullying/harassment link and fill out the web- based form.
- Send an email to [1341@alert1.us](mailto:1341@alert1.us). The concern will be forwarded to the appropriate person and school for investigation and follow-up. Any unresolved issue may be reported to the compliance officer, Gudrun Sullivan at 253-983-2239 or [gusullivan@steilacoom.k12.wa.us](mailto:gusullivan@steilacoom.k12.wa.us).

## **Maintaining Professional Staff/Student Boundaries**

Many educators or volunteers who cross the line of professional boundaries may not consciously begin with predatory motivation in mind. Instead, they allow themselves to develop a special relationship with a student that results in situations where their professionalism is compromised. Sometimes, this leads to sexual misconduct. All of this can be prevented by maintaining professional boundaries with students. Educators, volunteers, students, parents, and other concerned adults are the key to stopping unprofessional conduct against students. Hence, the following information will help you to help protect students, your school, and the profession.

## **Reporting Violations**

All school staff members or volunteers must promptly notify the supervisor of a staff member or volunteer suspected of engaging in a boundary invasion toward a student.

Staff members and volunteers should:

- Not wait before reporting suspicious behavior or try to determine whether there is an innocent explanation;
- Not confront or discuss the matter with the staff member at issue or with anyone else, but maintain confidentiality to protect privacy and avoid rumors; and
- Document for their own records that they notified an administrator, including to whom and what they reported.

Students and their parents/guardians are strongly encouraged to notify the principal (or other administrator) if they believe a staff member or volunteer may be engaging in inappropriate boundary invasion conduct with a student.



## Boundary Invasion

A boundary invasion is an act or pattern of behavior by a staff member or volunteer that does not have a bone fide health, safety, or educational purpose for the student. Such situations are the opposite of maintaining professional boundaries with students. Staff members and volunteers shall not engage in boundary invasions of students, which include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Any type of inappropriate physical or sexual conduct with a student or any other conduct that violates the board's policies regarding student welfare, the educational environment, or conduct toward current or former students. Inappropriate physical conduct includes hugging, kissing, or being "overly touchy" with students without any legitimate educational or professional purpose;
- Showing intimate or unduly revealing photos to a student or asking a student to provide intimate or unduly revealing photos; taking inappropriate photographs of a student, or taking an inordinate number of photographs of a student.
- Any kind of flirtatious or sexual communications with a student;
- Singling out a particular student or students for personal attention and friendship beyond the professional staff/student relationship. This includes, but is not limited to, favoring 5253P Personnel Page 2 of 3 one or more students with special privileges, allowing them to remain in the classroom during non-class times, unilaterally removing a student from another class or activity, or engaging in "peer like" behavior with one or more students;
- Providing alcohol, drugs, or tobacco to students or failing to report their use of these substances;
- For non-guidance/counseling staff, allowing or encouraging students to confide their personal or family problems and/or relationships. If a student initiates such discussions, staff members shall refer the student to appropriate guidance/counseling staff. In either case, staff involvement should be limited to a direct connection to the student's school performance;
- Sending students on personal errands unrelated to any educational purpose; H. Banter, allusions, jokes, or innuendos of a sexual nature with students;
- Favorably commenting on a student's appearance if it is unduly revealing or if the comments have no educational value;
- Disclosing personal, sexual, family, employment concerns or other private matters to one or more students;
- Addressing students or permitting students to address staff members or volunteers with personalized terms of endearment, pet names, or otherwise in an overly familiar manner;
- Maintaining personal contact (including "friending" or "following") a student on any social networking application or device;
- Sending phone, e-mail, text, instant messenger, or other forms of written or electronic communication to students when the communication is unrelated to school work or other legitimate school business. If staff members have educational or legitimate school business to conduct, they shall include a parent/guardian and a school administrator on the communication. If staff members receive a student's communication, the staff member shall reply by including the student's parent/guardian and an administrator. Staff members should use school e-mail addresses and phone numbers and the parents' phone numbers for communications with students, except in an emergency situation;
- Exchanging or providing personal gifts, cards, or personal letters with an individual student;
- Socializing or spending time with students (including but not limited to activities such as going out for beverages, meals or movies, shopping, traveling and recreational activities) outside of school-sponsored events, except as participants in organized community activities;
- Giving a student a ride alone in a vehicle in a non-emergency situation or failing to timely report

that occurrence;

- Providing a student with information or views about other students or staff members without a legitimate professional purpose;
- Asking a student to keep a secret or not to disclose any inappropriate communications or conduct; S. Unnecessarily invading a student's privacy, (e.g. walking in on the student in the bathroom or a hotel room on a field trip); T. Being alone with an individual student out of the view of others; and/or U. Any home visits unless other adults are present, the student(s) are invited for an activity related to school, and the student's parent/guardian and an administrator are informed and have consented.

### **Investigation and Documentation**

When an administrator receives information that a boundary invasion has occurred or might have occurred, the administrator must document, in writing, the concern and provide a copy of the documentation to the Executive Director in Human Resources. The human resources department will see that the matter is investigated and documented, and if a boundary invasions have occurred without a legitimate educational or safety purpose, that appropriate action is taken and documented. The human resources department will maintain a file documenting reports, letters of direction, and discipline relating to professional boundary investigations.

### **Reporting Sexual Abuse**

In some situations, the person engaging in boundary invasions with a student may also have engaged in child abuse or sexual abuse, which is defined in [Board Policy 3421](#) - Child Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation Prevention. Remember that according to law (RCW 26.44.020) and Board Policy 3421, all school personnel who have reasonable cause to believe that a student has experienced sexual abuse by an adult or student are required to make a report to Child Protective Services and/or law enforcement. (See Board Policy 3421.) Reporting suspected abuse to the building principal or supervisor does not relieve professional school personnel from their reporting responsibilities and timelines.

### **Disciplinary Action**

Staff member or volunteer violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. Violations of this policy may occur by ignoring professional boundaries as well as failing to report another staff member or volunteer who is ignoring professional boundaries. In any disciplinary situation, the Superintendent should consider whether the conduct violates the Code of Professional Conduct in Chpt. WAC 181-87 and whether a report to the Office of Professional Practices is warranted.