



LAKE STEVENS SCHOOL DISTRICT

VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

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The Starfish Story

Adapted from *The Star Thrower*
by Loren Eiseley. 1907-77.

Once upon a time, there was a wise man who used to go to the ocean to do his writing. He had a habit of walking on the beach before he began his work.

One day, as he was walking along the shore, he looked down the beach and saw a human figure moving like a dancer. He smiled to himself at the thought of someone who would dance to the day, and so, he walked faster to catch up.

As he got closer, he noticed that the figure was that of a young man, and that what he was doing was not dancing at all. The young man was reaching down to the shore, picking up small objects, and throwing them into the ocean.

He came closer still and called out, "Good morning! May I ask what it is that you are doing?"

The young man paused, looked up, and replied, "Throwing starfish into the ocean."

"I must ask, then, why are you throwing starfish into the ocean?" asked the somewhat startled wise man.

To this, the young man replied, "The sun is up and the tide is going out. If I don't throw them in, they'll die."

Upon hearing this, the wise man commented, "But, young man, do you not realize that there are miles and miles of beach and there are starfish all along every mile? You can't possibly make a difference!"

At this, the young man bent down, picked up yet another starfish, and threw it into the ocean. As it met the water, he said, "It made a difference for that one."



MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT



Dear Volunteer,

On behalf of the Lake Stevens School District, I want to welcome you to our schools and thank you for your commitment to our students.

Our mission is for our students to be contributing members of society and lifelong learners, pursuing their passions and interests in an ever-changing world. We cannot achieve this mission without the support and involvement of our entire community. Whether you read to a child, help prepare classroom materials, chaperone a field trip or lead an activity, you are contributing to our students' academic achievement.

Once again, thank you for sharing your time and energy with the students and staff of Lake Stevens School District. I look forward to seeing you in our schools.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ken Collins". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Ken Collins, Ed.D.
Superintendent





VOLUNTEER PROGRAM GOALS

Volunteer programs in Lake Stevens School District will:

- Provide a coordinated means of involvement that will help to raise student achievement;
- Enhance the learning experiences of students; and
- Create collaborative partnerships between schools and community members.



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

► Weekly/Long-Term Support

Literacy Tutoring

Work one-on-one or with small groups of students, providing them with individualized attention to help them strengthen their reading skills.

Math Tutoring

Work one-on-one or with small groups of students, providing them with individualized attention to help them strengthen their math skills. Improving math performance is a high priority for schools throughout the district.

Classroom Support

Support classroom teachers in a variety of tasks, including small group work with students, materials preparation and field trips.

Coaching

Lead or support afterschool sports programs.

Translations/Interpretations

Help schools communicate with non-English speaking families by translating documents and/or serving as an informal interpreter.

Library Assistance

Support the librarian with read-alouds, organization and other library tasks.

Office Support

Work outside of the classroom, supporting school staff and teachers with a range of office tasks, including copies, assembling materials for distribution and preparing for school events.

School and District Advisory Committees

Collaborate with school and district staff, parents and community members to support school and district initiatives.

► One-Time/Short-Term Opportunities

Event Support

Sample events include:

- Family Math/Reading/Science/Fitness Nights
- School concerts and plays
- Book Fairs
- Cultural Days

Job Shadowing

Invite high school students to participate in a job shadow at your company, enabling the students to learn about professionalism and career options. The job shadow is one element of the Culminating Project, required of all Lake Stevens students to graduate.

Presentations

Share your knowledge and skills with students during class presentations and assemblies and help create connections between what students are learning in school and the wider world.

School Beautification

Periodic workdays focusing on indoor and outdoor beautification projects.

VOLUNTEER RESPONSIBILITIES

Volunteers will:

- Be prompt, dependable and reliable.
- Check in at the main office before each shift and wear identification badges throughout their visit.
- Provide the volunteer coordinator or classroom teacher/district employee with as much advance notice as possible if unable to attend scheduled volunteer shift.
- Protect student privacy and maintain confidentiality related to student behavior and work (page 5).
- Know and understand all regulations and procedures in assigned school (i.e., fire drills, emergency response, accident reporting, student restroom privileges, inclement weather procedures, etc.).
- Understand and accept the backgrounds and values of all students.
- Serve as a positive role model in behavior, interactions and dress.
- Notify a school administrator if a student confides in the volunteer about an abusive situation. The appropriate staff person or people will manage the reporting and follow-up process.
- Discuss problems that arise with the appropriate teacher, staff person.
- Communicate regularly with the assigned teacher/staff person via agreed upon communication methods.
- Serve as an assistant rather than a replacement.

► Your Safety

Two things to do if you are injured:

1. Seek immediate first aid help and/or call 911. This might be your own action or the response of other adults or students with you.
2. Report the incident to a staff member as soon as possible. Your report should go either to the staff supervising your volunteer time or to a staff in charge of the school or program where you are volunteering.

If you are injured while volunteering, district staff will:

- Give you immediate assistance, and may call 911 as a precaution.
- Fill out a district injury report form. Staff will get your signature and forward it to the district risk management staff.

You should know:

- We value your volunteer time and experience and the difference you make for students.
- The district does not have specific insurance coverage for volunteers should you be injured while supporting student activities or programs.
- Before you volunteer, please review your health care policy and/or homeowner's policy to determine what coverage is available if you are injured while volunteering.

BUILDING A RELATIONSHIP WITH STUDENTS

Building a supportive relationship with students takes time. Consider these tips when volunteering with youth.

- Be patient when working with students. Give yourself time to find your niche.
- Names are important. Make sure you say and spell the student's name the way they want it to be said and spelled. Likewise, make sure the student knows your name and can correctly pronounce it.
- Be sure to use, and understand, a student's pronouns.
- Treat individuals with respect and courtesy and expect the same in return.
- Show you are interested in the student as a person by listening carefully to what they say and using caring words and actions.
- Encourage and support student success. Build self-confidence by praising the student honestly and frequently. Remember that attentiveness and effort can be as important as performance.
- Avoid making comparisons between students, between teachers and between schools.



- Be fair, consistent, trustworthy and honest in your approach, attitude and interactions with students.
- Students, staff and volunteers make mistakes. Reinforce for students that mistakes are a part of learning, and show that you are not afraid to make mistakes yourself.
- If you know in advance that you will be unable to attend your next session with a student, make sure to inform the student and the classroom teacher/district employee.

APPROPRIATE INTERACTIONS WITH STUDENTS



Review and understand Policy 4900: Maintaining Professional Staff / Student Boundaries. These guidelines are provided to volunteers in order to assist them in creating a safe working environment for themselves as well as for the students with whom they work.

Location of Work with Students

The location where volunteers meet with students will vary depending on the task, the size of the student group and the needs of the staff member. However, in general, volunteers should meet in areas with limited distractions.

If a staff member asks you to work with a student or students in an empty room, leave the door open and sit in an area with the student(s) that is clearly visible to passers-by.

Physical Contact

It is natural for some students, particularly in the younger grades, to seek affection, attention and contact with volunteers. In contrast, culture, beliefs and personal history may cause other students to feel uncomfortable with physical contact and seek more physical space. All of these situations must be handled with respect and sensitivity.

Appropriate signs of affection (with approval from student):

- Praise focused on effort, performance, etc. (rather than appearance);
- High-fives; and
- Side hugs: if a student approaches you for a front hug, carefully put your arm around their shoulder and turn it into a side hug.

Inappropriate signs of affection (this is not a complete list):

- Front hugs;
- Allowing a student to sit on your lap; and
- Any contact that causes a student to feel uncomfortable or unsafe.

Confidentiality

Although volunteers are expected to maintain confidentiality regarding student behavior and work, volunteers are required to notify a school staff member if the student reveals, or you suspect, that:

- The student plans to harm themselves or others;
- The student is currently harming themselves or others; and/or
- The student is being harmed by others.

If a student does confide in you regarding such a situation, please listen respectfully, but do not promise to keep this information confidential. Tell the student that in order to help, you must share this information with a staff member. When your session with the student is over, immediately contact an appropriate staff person to report your conversation.

INTERRUPTING HATE SPEECH

Lake Stevens School District employees and students are working together to develop and practice common language to address hate speech at school so that our district can be a place where all of our students know they belong, and can focus on achieving educational goals. As a volunteer, you are an important part of this work as well.

When you hear hate speech, prepare yourself to act:

- Be firm
- Be confident
- Do your best to remain calm and thoughtful

Interrupt

- Every comment.
- Every time.
- In the moment.
- Without exception.

Then, notify the staff member you are supporting, or a school administrator. They will question and educate the student(s).

Question

Find out why the speaker said it:

- "Why did you say that?"
- "What do you mean?"
- "Tell me more."
- "Tell me what you mean by that."

Educate

- Explain why the term is offensive.
- Give the speaker the benefit of the doubt.
- Allow that person to make a change.

Remember: Hate isn't behind all hate speech.

► What is hate speech?

Insults: Disrespectful or scornfully abusive remark

Dehumanizes: Denial of full humanness

Vilifies: Make slanderous and abusive statements

Humiliates: To make someone ashamed or embarrassed

Hate speech is based on sexual orientation; ability; religion; race; ethnicity or gender-identity.

PROHIBITION OF HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION AND BULLYING

Lake Stevens School District is committed to a safe and civil educational environment for all students, employees, parents/legal guardians, volunteers and patrons that is free from harassment, intimidation or bullying. These actions are forms of violence and may be direct or indirect.

Direct or identifiable actions may include:

- Tripping, shoving or physically harming another person;
- Verbal threats, name calling, racial slurs and insults; and/or
- Demanding money, property, or some service to be performed.

Indirect actions may be more difficult to detect and may include:

- Rejecting, excluding or isolating target(s);
- Humiliating target(s) in front of friends;
- Manipulating friends and relationships;
- Sending hurtful or threatening emails, text messages, instant messages or written notes;
- Blackmailing, terrorizing or posing dangerous dares; and/or
- Using the Internet to taunt or degrade a target and inviting others to join in posting humiliating notes or messages.

Any volunteer who observes, overhears or otherwise witnesses harassment, intimidation or bullying, or to whom such actions have been reported is urged to promptly make a report to any school staff member. Reports of harassment, intimidation and bullying may be made verbally or in writing.

For questions or more information about the district's harassment, intimidation and bullying policy, please call 425-335-1500.

GENDER-INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS

Lake Stevens School District believes in fostering an educational environment that is safe and free of discrimination for all students, regardless of gender expression, gender identity, or sex. Our district recognizes the importance of an inclusive approach toward transgender and gender-expansive students with regard to key terms, communication and the use of names and pronouns, student records, confidential health and education information, communication, restroom and locker room use and accessibility, sports and physical education, dress codes, and other school activities in order to provide these students with an equal opportunity for learning and achievement.



As a volunteer, it will be essential that you learn and honor students' pronouns and preferred names. Please review Board Policy 5590 and its respective procedure to learn more.

STUDENT PRIVACY

As a school district, our utmost priority is the safety and well-being of our students. As a volunteer, this also becomes your responsibility. **You are prohibited from taking photos or videos of our students or their work.** At school and school events students have an expectation of privacy. This is governed by the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). This also includes field trips. You are, of course, welcome to photograph your own child(ren).

- *Exception for Yearbook Committee & Classroom Photographers:* You must obtain a list from the classroom teacher indicating which students cannot be photographed. Photos should not be used for other purposes and cannot be posted to the Internet.
- *After school sporting events and high school graduation are considered public events and photographs are allowed.*

VOLUNTEER CHECKLIST

Complete a Volunteer Application form through SafeVisitor (this includes a Washington State Patrol Criminal History Request). Volunteers who work one-on-one with students must undergo a federal background check, which includes fingerprinting.

- Review Volunteer Handbook and Policies 4900 Maintaining Professional Student / Staff Boundaries and 5500 Sexual Harassment of Students
- Tour the school
- Meet with teacher/staff member with whom you will be volunteering
- Visit area of school in which you will be volunteering
- Review responsibilities and expectations with teacher/staff member
- Confirm date, time and location of volunteer session
- Scan in and out at the school's front desk
- While onsite, wear a visitor identification badge or lanyard provided by the main office

VOLUNTEER RESOURCES

Assigned Volunteer Site

Site Address

Site Telephone

Principal

Secretary

Teacher(s)

Phone

Email

Phone

Email

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF UNDERSTANDING

By accepting this Volunteer Handbook, I understand that it is my responsibility to read and familiarize myself with the policies and procedures contained within.

I recognize that this handbook is designed to provide a comprehensive overview of the expectations and responsibilities associated with my role as a volunteer within the Lake Stevens School District.

My receipt of this handbook and subsequent volunteer service is an acknowledgment of my understanding and agreement to comply with the Lake Stevens School District's policies and procedures.

For emergency school closure information, please visit www.lkstevens.wednet.edu

NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

The Lake Stevens School District does not discriminate in any programs or activities on the basis of sex, race, creed, religion, color, national origin, age, veteran or military status, sexual orientation, gender expression, gender identity, disability, or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The following employee(s) has been designated to handle questions and complaints of alleged discrimination:

Civil Rights Coordinator:

John Balmer | 425-335-1592
john_balmer@lkstevens.wednet.edu
12309 22nd St NE, Lake Stevens, WA 98258

Title IX Coordinator:

John Balmer | 425-335-1592
john_balmer@lkstevens.wednet.edu
12309 22nd St NE, Lake Stevens, WA 98258

Section 504 Coordinator:

Miriam Tencate | 425-335-1504
miriam_tencate@lkstevens.wednet.edu
12309 22nd St NE, Lake Stevens, WA 98258

You can report discrimination and discriminatory harassment to any school staff member or to the district's Civil Rights Coordinator, listed above. You also have the right to file a complaint (see below). For a copy of your district's nondiscrimination policy and procedure, contact your school or district office or view it online here:

- [Policy No. 4800 - Sexual Harassment of Personnel Prohibited](#)
- [Policy No. 5090 - Student Discrimination](#)