

# Fabens ISD



## Parent Volunteer Handbook

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# **PARENT VOLUNTEER MANUAL**

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***FABENS INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT  
HOME OF THE WILDCATS***

**Dear Volunteer,**

**You, our parent and community volunteers, are an integral part of our school. We are very pleased that you have decided to participate in the Fabens ISD Volunteer Program. As parents, grandparents, neighbors and community members, you have ideas, talents and time to share with our students and our schools. It is our belief that volunteer programs are beneficial to everyone involved. These programs also help foster stronger school/community relationships in creating a common ownership in the success of our schools. They also demonstrate the importance of community service to all involved in the program, especially students.**

**Please read through this handbook carefully. It is designed to give volunteers much of the information necessary to make your experience rewarding. We hope that these guidelines build your confidence and give you some direction so that you feel as if your time spent here has been worthwhile. If you have any questions, please direct them to the principal of the school.**

**Thank you for devoting your time to this service.**

**Sincerely**

**PonchoGarcia Jr.  
Superintendent**

## **INTRODUCTION**

- **We want to welcome you and help you make the most of your volunteer experience. There are so many different ways to participate; we hope this handbook will help guide you.**
- **As a parent and a volunteer, you are an important part of the Fabens community. When you become a volunteer, your work takes on special significance. Though you are not part of the staff, you share their responsibilities while working with students.**
- **When you volunteer you help your child, other children, teachers, administrators and the community.**
- **We also encourage you to take advantage of our volunteer training. It is a great way to meet people and get started on the right foot.**

## **BUILDING A STRONG VOLUNTEER COMMUNITY**

**Fabens Independent School District has a strong tradition of parent involvement. Because volunteers are such an integral part, it is important for all volunteers to remember the following:**

- **Be responsible and safe – always put children first.**
- **Respect confidentiality. Students and staff have a right to privacy.**
- **Be professional.**
- **Communicate**
- **Ask for help – don't suffer in silence.**
- **Share your experience with others and encourage new volunteers.**

**COMMITMENT – Once you become a volunteer, others depend on you!**

- **Try to pick what is manageable and interesting to you.**
- **Attend training sessions.**
- **Be prepared; communicate with teachers and staff ahead of time.**
- **Be on time.**

## **GETTING STARTED**

Before starting your first volunteer task, we ask all volunteers to be aware of the following points.

**SAFETY** – Act as a good role model for the children.

- Always sign in and out at the front office. It is important for staff to know that you are in the building and it makes it easier for locating you in case of an emergency.
- Always wear a “Volunteer” badge.
- As a courtesy to others, please turn off cell phones while in the school building.
- Always follow the correct fire safety procedures.

**SIGN-IN/OUT** (You are to sign in and out each time you volunteer at the school.)

For security reasons, and in case of an emergency, it is important for the school to have a record of who is in the building.

## **IDENTIFICATION**

**(YOU ARE ASKED TO WEAR IDENTIFICATION WHILE WORKING IN THE SCHOOL.)**

By wearing a volunteer name tag, you will be immediately recognized as a person who is here to help the staff and students. Name tags are in the school office and should be picked up at sign-in time. Permanent badges will be available if you work in the school on a regular basis.

## **PARKING**

Please use any parking that is available. Please enter the school building using the front doors.

## **TELEPHONE/PHONE CELL USE**

Please limit your use of the school phone to very important or emergency situations. As a courtesy to others, please turn off cell phones while in the school building.

## **RESTROOM USE**

Please use the restrooms designated for adult use.

### **IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

**Background Checks** – In the back of this booklet you will find three forms necessary to become a school volunteer. Please follow the directions for submitting each form. Please note that all district employees are subject to the same forms.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

All school volunteers are expected to maintain confidentiality while working in the school. All things that are seen and heard at school about children and their families should be considered privileged information. Trust must be established and maintained in order for this volunteer program to be successful. Volunteers can strengthen the bond between themselves and the school by following these guidelines:

- Treat all student information as personal and confidential regardless of source.
- Communicate relevant information about students to the respective classroom teacher or building principal.
- Seek clarification of unusual situations that occur in the school from the person(s) involved and avoid discussing such matters with non-school personnel.
- Retain a sense of perspective regarding comments heard and actions observed.
- Understand that not all information can and will be shared with volunteers, due to legal considerations.
- Deal impartially with students regardless of background, intelligence, physical or emotional maturity.
- Do not discuss student progress or behavior with the parent. All relevant information should be referred to the teacher or principal. Direct inquiries about students to the professional staff.
- Speak constructively of all school staff; however report difficulties involving the welfare of students or school to the principal.
- Do not discuss confidential information with anyone. This information includes, but is not limited to academic and health records, test scores and grades, discipline and classroom behavior and character traits of children.
- All volunteers are required to sign a statement of confidentiality.

### **DISCIPLINE**

Discipline of students is solely the responsibility of the teacher in charge. Volunteers should in NO way discipline students. Should students misbehave in your presence, you should report this immediately to the teacher in charge. The teacher will then determine the necessary course of action. Also note that we expect students to treat volunteers with the same level of respect given to other school personnel. If you feel that students are not being respectful towards you, do not hesitate to discuss the matter with the teacher or principal.

## **Role of the Volunteer**

**Volunteers in the classroom can assist teachers in a variety of ways, thereby freeing the teacher to focus more time on the teaching/learning process. An organized program of volunteer assistance can provide a unique contribution to the educational program by helping assume some of the many roles of the teacher.**

**Volunteers should arrange to meet with the teacher before beginning as a classroom volunteer. The first visit or two should be spent observing the classroom, getting to know the students and the style and routines of the teacher. This will help the children to become familiar with you before you begin.**

**The teacher is in charge of all phases of classroom activity and the volunteers will take directions from the teacher. Your activities should support the efforts of staff members but not replace them or exceed their authority.**

**It is not in the best interest of the child to have a parent, grandparent, guardian, etc. volunteer in their child's classroom; therefore volunteers will be utilized in classrooms other than those in which their children are enrolled. Exception(s): Field trips, Field Day and Campus special events.**

**Try to match your interest, abilities and time availability with the school needs. Contact the building principal for specific details regarding school need, requirements and scheduling option.**

**Maintain good communication especially in the event of an absence or schedule change. If you cannot fulfill your commitment for any period of time, please contact the school or classroom teacher as soon as possible so other arrangements can be made.**

**Follow school and district procedures regarding signing in and out, wearing badges, using school materials and maintaining health/security standards. Know emergency procedures for fire, illness, etc.**

**Seek advice from those directly in charge, including teachers, secretaries, aides, or other school personnel who are trained and responsible for the tasks. Maintain a spirit of partnership and cooperation with school staff.**

**If you have concerns about something you see or hear, please talk to the class teacher or principal if appropriate.**



***When students tell you about their family, pet, vacation, etc....***

**As students become comfortable working with you, they might decide to share something personal. You need to keep this information private, even if you know the child and their family outside of school.**

***When you have a concern.....*** If a student tells you something that causes you concern, tell the classroom teacher. If you observe something that troubles you, tell the classroom teacher. The teacher is in the best position to deal with the issue appropriately.

***Approach – Be professional and be positive!***

- **Strive to give each child the best you can and know that other volunteers do the same when working with your child.**
- **Respect each child as an individual.**
- **Respect your co-workers and all school employees.**
- **Don't distract teachers while they are teaching. If you have questions, wait until there is an appropriate moment.**
- **Honor your commitment and be on time.**
- **Find ways to be positive and notice things that are working well.**
- **Try to make any criticism constructive.**

**Remember your time and energy is helping to make Fabens Independent School District a great place to learn. "All students of the District will be prepared to be successful, lifelong, global learners."**

## ***Ways to Assist the Teacher***

- **Assist with teacher – planned activities**
- **Read teacher prepared instructions to students**
- **Read stories**
- **Check to see if seatwork is completed**
- **Prepare students for daily program changes**
- **Take lunch count**
- **Operate audio/visual equipment**
- **Review previously taught materials/instruction**
- **Help children to understand and follow directions**
- **Listen to children read**
- **Share a hobby, talent or experience**
- **Help with field trips**
- **Assist with school parties and special days**
- **Help with assemblies**
- **Keep classroom materials in order**
- **Help inventory and maintaining records for ordering supplies**
- **Maintain the blackboard**
- **Collect papers for evaluation by the teacher**
- **Assist with displays throughout the school**
- **Assist with children practicing skills**

## **The DOs and DON'Ts of Volunteering**

**To capably assist the school with additional services, all volunteers are requested to keep in mind the following:**

- **DO take a personal interest in helping and working with teachers, staff and students.**
- **DO be willing to learn more about fostering the process of growth and development in children.**
- **DO participate in training programs offered to volunteers.**
- **DO be willing and able to follow directions from teachers and staff.**
- **DO be adaptable and flexible when working with children.**
- **DO have a cooperative attitude in working with school personnel.**
- **DO be imaginative, creative and optimistic.**
- **DO be consistent and dependable.**
- **DO keep all student information strictly confidential.**
- **DO have a sense of humor as well as patience and understanding.**
- **DO accept each child for who they are.**
- **DO let the teacher be responsible for discipline.**

## **The DON'TS.....**

- **DON'T forget to sign in and out of the office every time you're in the building.**
- **DON'T scold when pointing out errors. Use a positive approach.**
- **DON'T become annoyed when students don't understand something the first time.**
- **DON'T be afraid to laugh at yourself.**
- **DON'T lose your temper.**
- **DON'T do a student's work for them.**
- **DON'T discuss student's work with anyone but the teacher.**
- **DON'T ask teachers or others for personal information about students.**
- **DON'T threaten or punish students.**
- **DON'T intervene or contradict a teacher once a problem has been handled.**
- **DON'T forget to contact the teacher or school if you can't fulfill your commitment.**

## **Guidelines for Success**

### **Working with Staff Members**

- **Be prompt and dependable**
- **Tell staff members what your skills are so they can use your talents.**
- **If this is your first volunteer position in a school, you'll find there are many exciting things to learn. Please be aware that some staff members have never worked with volunteers before. This could be a new experience for them, too.**
- **Communicate your questions and comments. If you don't understand something, always ask for clear directions. If you are unhappy or concerned about something, discuss the situation with the staff involved. If you still have concerns, see the principal.**
- **Remember that routine tasks are important. Because volunteers are able to assist with these jobs, teachers are free to spend more time working with students or planning instruction.**
- **The opportunity to learn new skills is one of the benefits of being a school volunteer. Be willing to try new tasks assigned by staff, but accept only the amount of responsibility with which you feel comfortable.**

### **Working in the Classroom**

- **Always arrive on time.**
- **Learn the names of students in your assigned classroom and call students by name whenever possible.**
- **Observe the teacher carefully to see how he/she works with students.**
- **Divide your attention equally among all students with whom you work.**
- **Be positive, reassuring, and patient.**
- **Show interest and enthusiasm.**
- **Help the students see their successes.**
- **Help the teacher pick up when projects are completed.**
- **Leave promptly when your work is done.**

### **Reminders from Staff and Coordinators/Facilitators**

- **Sign in and out each time you volunteer.**
- **Always wear a name tag in the school.**
- **Call the office if you are going to be late for an assignment.**
- **Remember that confidentiality is a MUST!**
- **Ask questions! No question is inappropriate if you don't know the answer.**

- **If you have constructive criticism....tell us! We welcome your comments.**
- **REMEMBER THAT YOU ARE AN IMPORTANT PART OF OUR EDUCATIONAL TEAM! Your efforts are greatly appreciated.**

### **When working with Students**

- **The most valuable thing you have to offer as volunteer is friendliness and caring.**
- **Accept children as they are. Be ready to accept differences in background, values, and vocabulary.**
- **Be enthusiastic. It's contagious!**
- **Closely observe the techniques used by the teacher and try to model them.**
- **If you don't know something, don't be afraid to say so to students.**
- **Be caring, but firm. Patiently allow the students to think and to formulate answers, but keep them on task.**
- **Encourage and affirm the students. Use positive comments that will allow the students to feel good about themselves. Praise even the smallest effort or success.**
- **Call the student by name at every opportunity.**
- **Be patient. Everyone has good and bad days.**
- **Do not give students any materials, including food, without first discussing it with the teachers.**
- **Talk in a quiet controlled voice. Avoid talking down to students.**
- **Start with the work the students can get right and proceed slowly into what he/she needs to learn. End every session with something positive.**
- **Be comfortable with silences. Allow the student time to think.**
- **Above all, keep your sense of humor and enjoy your volunteer experience.**



## Fabens Independent School District

Application Form  
School Volunteer

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

School/Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number(s): \_\_\_\_\_

I am the parent/guardian/grandparent of:

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Check for completed forms:

\_\_\_\_\_ Criminal Record Check

\_\_\_\_\_ Confidentiality form



## Fabens Independent School District

### Volunteer Personnel Directory

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Physical Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate with a check mark which campus(es) you will be volunteering at:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Fabens Elementary
- \_\_\_\_\_ O'Donnell Intermediate
- \_\_\_\_\_ Fabens Middle School
- \_\_\_\_\_ Fabens High School
- \_\_\_\_\_ Cotton Valley Early College High School

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



**Fabens Independent School District**  
Volunteer Acknowledgement Form

I have read this handbook and understand my responsibilities as a school volunteer.

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Signature

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Date





**FABENS INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT  
VOLUNTEER RELEASE AND WAIVER OF LIABILITY**

BE IT REMEMBERED that \_\_\_\_\_

(hereinafter referred to as "Volunteer"), who desires to volunteer his/her services to the Fabens Independent School District (Fabens ISD), has been advised that, under the doctrine of sovereign immunity, if he/she sustains any injury, illness or death resulting from volunteering such services, he/she, and his/her estate if applicable, will not receive any compensation of any nature from the Fabens Independent School District. Notwithstanding the foregoing, Volunteer still desires to volunteer his/her services to the Fabens ISD. In consideration for being allowed to volunteer his/her services, Volunteer agrees on his/her behalf, and on behalf of his/her estate and survivors, not to seek any type of damages or compensation of any nature whatsoever from the Fabens ISD in the event Volunteer sustains an injury, illness or death resulting directly or indirectly from volunteering such services; hereby RELEASES the Fabens ISD from any liability whatsoever resulting from any such injury, illness or death; hereby voluntarily and knowingly ASSUMES ALL OF THE RISKS attendant to performing such voluntary services; and hereby WAIVES, and agrees to INDEMNIFY the Fabens ISD from, any claims he/she may have and/or that his/her estate or survivors may have, against the Fabens ISD relating in any way to any injury, illness or death that may be sustained by virtue of volunteering such services, INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, ANY CLAIM RELATING DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY TO ANY NEGLIGENCE ATTRIBUTABLE TO THE FABENS ISD OR TO ANY OF ITS TRUSTEES, EMPLOYEES OR OTHER VOLUNTEERS.

SIGNED this \_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Volunteer's Signature