



# Cleburne Independent School District

## Volunteers In Public Schools

### Policy Handbook 2024-2025

## Who is Eligible for the Cleburne ISD Volunteers in Public Schools Program?

A volunteer can be a parent, grandparent, retired person, or any community member. We are always looking for individuals who have some extra time and would like to spend it supporting our schools.

The main goal of VIPS is to aid our campuses in providing quality education for each student. Your help improves the quality of education on CISD campuses and often gives our teachers more time to focus on their students and their instruction.

## Why Should You Get Involved?

**Your child will benefit.** Even though you will not be in your child's classroom, he or she will know you are at school and that you think learning is important. Family engagement in schools is the number one indicator of your child's success.

**You will get to know your child's teachers and school staff.** Knowing the teacher often makes it easier to ask for help when your child may need it. It will also make a conference more effective and comfortable.

**Your child's school will benefit.** Any help you provide strengthens the campus as a whole.

**The community benefits.** Your involvement strengthens the link between school and parent, and school and the well being of our city.

**Volunteering is easy and doesn't require long time periods.** You can commit to as little as 30 minutes a week.

**Volunteering is rewarding.** You will meet new people and parents. You may learn some new skills. You may get to use your personal talents and skillset. Giving to others is always rewarding.

## The Volunteer's Commitment

*Yours is a voluntary service, but a professional commitment.*

Each volunteer is asked to commit to a specific time that is convenient to their personal schedule. Your commitment is very important. Each teacher plans work for you to complete and, if you choose to tutor, your students look forward to their time with you.

## Attributes of a CISD Volunteer

Honest, patient, flexible, friendly, respectful, dependable, responsible, supportive, professional, and  
**Most importantly, be a positive voice in the community about your campus and CISD!**

## Responsibilities of a CISD Volunteer

Members of Cleburne's Volunteers in Public Schools serve wherever they are needed at the invitation of the principal and the request of the teachers. Volunteers serve to reinforce and enrich the educational process. While their role lies **outside the classroom**, they can help their child's teacher or grade level with classroom needs. Volunteers are valued for their involvement and the commitment of their personal time to a specific teacher, grade level, student, or project. They are there to support the campus effort in educating students.

## All volunteers will:

- Attend the annual district-wide in-service AND their campus orientation, and complete the VIPS Information Sheet and other required paperwork.
- Be punctual, consistent, and sign in and out each time they are on duty utilizing the RAPTOR system.
- Wear their VIPS badge ONLY when they are on duty. VIPS badges must be kept at the campus in the area designated by the principal or campus coordinator.
- Inform their Campus VIPS Coordinator or School Office if they have an emergency or cannot volunteer at their regularly scheduled time.
- Keep communication open between themselves and the Campus VIPS Coordinator
- Share matters of concern with the Campus Coordinator, Principal, or District Coordinator
- Work within the rules of the VIPS program and the school. (Volunteers will not be asked to grade papers or tests. Volunteers do not discipline students.)
- Work together as a team with fellow volunteers, but avoid using the workroom as a visiting area.
- Avoid expressing dissatisfaction with school or staff in front of students or in public.
- Please remember no smoking is permitted on any CISD property.
- Due to insurance liability, we ask that volunteers not bring their pre-school children with them. Teachers often have tasks for volunteers that can be done from home.
- Dress comfortably, as you may be asked to sit in a student chair or serve snow cones. We ask that in keeping with student and staff dress codes, garments cannot feature or advertise tobacco, alcoholic beverages, weapons, obscene language, or drug references.
- When volunteering on campus, please join with staff in the event of a practice drill or safety procedure.
- Cleburne ISD students come from a variety of cultures and backgrounds. Please respect each student's rights and opinions, even when they are different from your own. Volunteers shall not promote a particular religious belief in their work with students.
- Under insurance and district liability guidelines, volunteers are never permitted to drive CISD vehicles or transport students, other than their own, in their own personal vehicles
- Above all: Keep any information about students confidential. Please be aware that any discussion of student information violates the Family Education Right and Privacy Act (FERPA) and could result in liability for the volunteer and the District.

The exception to the last point is any situation in which there is a suspicion or indication of child abuse or neglect, bullying, or any suspicion or indication that a child is considering or has attempted suicide.

# Responsibilities

## District Responsibilities:

- Provide a District Coordinator to oversee and support the VIPs program. CISD's District Coordinator is Debbie Reynolds, CISD Coordinator of Community Relations, 817-202-1183.

## District Coordinator Responsibilities:

- Inform parents and the community of the VIPs program.
- Provide an in-service to be attended by all volunteers
- Provide handbook and documents for volunteer training
- Keep staff and volunteers informed regarding specific issues
- Coordinate the selection of a Campus Coordinator for all VIPs campuses
- Instruct and support Campus Coordinators in their responsibilities
- Maintain an "open door" policy for all participants in the VIPs program
- Recognize, promote, and honor contributions of the VIPs program and participants
- Provide the CISD Board of Trustees with an end-of-year report assessing the VIPs program

## Campus Coordinator Responsibilities:

- Host a campus orientation meeting, which includes the principal. The meeting will cover duties and needs specific to the campus, a tour of the building, training on equipment which may be operated by volunteers, information on where volunteers should park, etc.
- Schedule and place volunteers according to their available time, interest, and skills
- Meet with volunteers regularly
- Maintain communication with District Coordinator
- Make sure District Coordinator has documentation on all participants in the VIPs program

## Teacher Responsibilities:

- Utilize the volunteers as tutors, Reading Buddies, to help motivate and encourage students, to reinforce concepts and enrich classroom instruction
- Communicate with the Campus VIPs Coordinator, informing her of specific needs, projects concerns, or issues
- Make volunteers feel appreciated

## Principal/Campus Responsibilities:

- Give permission for the VIPs program to be at their campus and support the program
- Inform the Campus Coordinator of the school's objectives and priorities for the VIPs program
- Participate in the campus-level orientation meeting to ensure that volunteers have an understanding of campus policies, procedures, and rules of confidentiality
- Enlist the cooperation of the entire staff in working with school volunteers
- Suggest effective ways to use volunteers
- Discuss the volunteer program at faculty and PTA meetings
- Give the Campus Coordinator effective and useful feedback and support
- Greet and thank volunteers for their service and dedication
- Ensures VIPs hours are logged through RAPTOR and file monthly reports of those hours with District Coordinator

## Freedom From Discrimination

The District believes that all students learn best in an environment free from harassment and that their welfare is best served when they can work free from discrimination. Students are expected to treat other students and distinct employees with courtesy and respect; to avoid any behaviors known to be offensive; and to stop those behaviors when asked or told to stop. District employees are expected to treat students with courtesy and respect.

The Cleburne ISD Board of Trustees has established policies and procedures to prohibit and promptly respond to inappropriate and offensive behaviors that are based on a person's race, religion, color, national origin, gender, sex, age or disability. Prohibited harassment in general terms, is conduct so severe, persistent or pervasive that it affects the student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity; or substantially interferes with the student's academic performance. **A copy of the District's policy is available in the principal's office and in the Superintendent's office.**

Examples of prohibited discrimination may include, but are not limited to, derogatory language directed at a person's religious beliefs or practices, accent, skin color, or need for accomodation; bullying, threatening, or intimidating conduct; name-calling or slurs, teasing (even when presented as "jokes"), or rumors; aggression or assault; graffiti or printed material promoting racial, ethnic or other negative stereotypes; or aggressive conduct such as theft or damage to property. Examples of prohibited sexual harassment may include touching private body parts or coercing physical contact that is sexual in nature; sexual advances; jokes or conversations of a sexual nature; and other sexually motivated conduct, communications or contact.

Sexual harassment of a student by an employee or volunteer does not include necessary or permissible physical contact not reasonably construed as sexual in nature. However, all romantic and inappropriate social relationships, as well as all sexual relationships, between students and district employees are prohibited, even if consensual.

For more information, please contact the CISD Director of Human Resources, 817-202-1100.