



DAVENPORT Community Schools

G R O W I N G E X C E L L E N C E

VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

Davenport Community Schools wants you to carry out your volunteer responsibilities in a caring and appropriate manner. We want you to feel comfortable volunteering and want you and the students to feel safe. We offer these guidelines to assist you in creating and maintaining safe working environments for all.



Superintendent's Message

Schools are safe, nurturing places for students to learn and grow. Your service makes that environment even more rich and meaningful. Individuals like you can help make a difference in a child's life.

This document is designed as a partnership tool. It includes basic information and tips for working with students. It also includes some important information that all school staff and volunteers must understand and abide by to ensure that students and adults in our schools are safe.

Thank you, sincerely, for your gift of time.

TJ Schneckloth
DCSD Superintendent

Davenport Community School District (DCSD)

Our Vision

Education that challenges conventional thinking, prepares all students to compete in a global society, and inspires our students, parents, staff, and community to answer the question, "What if?"

Our Mission

To enhance each student's abilities by providing a quality education enriched by our diverse community.

Goals of DCSD Volunteer Office

- Provide opportunities for our diverse community to engage with our schools.
- Offer support for individualized educational assistance to students.
- Create opportunities for meaningful service.
- Support school staff with non-instructional tasks (family fun nights, field days, etc.).
- Promote good will in the community for the schools and families served.

General Principles of the DCSD Volunteer Office

The DCS Volunteer Office is a program of DCS and is at all times guided by the policies of the Davenport Community School Board and the regulations of the school district.

A volunteer is not a substitute for a member of the school staff, but does provide supplemental and supportive services.

The relationship between volunteers and the school staff should be one of mutual respect and confidence.

Volunteers, like an employee, are under the supervision of the building Principal or other authorized school employees.

Getting Started!

We encourage all volunteers to get to know the school staff. Volunteers may provide service once, periodically, or at a regularly scheduled time and day each week.

Helpful Tip!

Top Characteristics of Successful Volunteers

Enjoy students and have patience with young people and adults

Dependability

Flexibility

Confidentiality

Pride in volunteering

Enthusiasm and optimism

Respect for others and the wide array of school roles and responsibilities others have

Volunteer Support

Volunteers can expect schools to:

- Provide adequate preparation for successful volunteer service.
- Be respectful in working with volunteers, offering appropriate feedback as needed.
- Be prepared and organized when volunteers arrive. This includes providing proper supervision, instruction, supplies, and work space.
- Be accessible and open to timely discussions regarding volunteer concerns and issues.
- Keep volunteers informed of any changes in policies or procedures.
- When possible, find projects or assignments that are worthwhile and challenging, and utilize a volunteer's current skills or provide opportunities to develop new ones.
- Provide opportunities for volunteers to see the impact of their efforts.

Volunteer Opportunities

A sincere effort will be made to place volunteers in assignments that best match their interests and/or talents. Here are just a few opportunities DCS may offer:

- Help in classrooms, library, office or on the playground
- Work with small groups – for example, in reading, writing, math or spelling
- Set up or take down projects for science, history, art or writing displays
- Help with field trips, parties or special events

- First Day School Supplies Drive
- Chaperone field trips or school events
- Help elementary staff welcome new parents for Kindergarten Round-Up

Volunteer Program Guidelines and Expectations

- For the purposes of application and screening, we refer to a volunteer as any unpaid person who performs duties, tasks, and functions giving them responsibility over and/or putting them in direct contact with child(ren) other than their own during school hours and at school-sponsored events.
- Volunteers serve as helpers and shall conduct volunteer activities under the supervision of school staff. All instructional service is to be rendered under the control and supervision of staff. Volunteers understand that the volunteer relationship is terminable at-will.
- Volunteers shall confirm assigned responsibilities and expectations with the supervising staff member before beginning any activity. Volunteers will follow the building procedures for signing in and out each and every time of service and wear an identification badge required by the school.
- Volunteers will perform to the best of their abilities the volunteer assignment. Volunteers understand that there may be certain risks associated with volunteer assignments.
- Volunteers give consent for photographs, videotapes, or audiotapes to be taken during the course of the assignment for use by DCSD for publicity purposes.
- Volunteers authorize DCSD staff to administer basic first aid or appropriate emergency medical treatment in the event of an accident, injury, or illness as the circumstances warrant.
- Volunteers will not use computer systems, logins, or accounts that have been assigned to someone else. If authorized to use a DCS computer, volunteers will sign and abide by the DCS Learning Information Services technology user guidelines.

Recognition

Volunteers are essential to the DCSD mission. Many schools plan an annual recognition event for volunteers. Additionally, DCSD employees recognize and show appreciation for the contributions of volunteers through the district's Helping Us Grow (H.U.G.) Award.

Volunteer Attire

Attire —Volunteers are expected to maintain a personal appearance that is compatible with school climate and culture. Volunteers are expected to use good judgment in selecting appropriate attire. Appropriate dress may vary depending on the service/work environment.

Safety Information

Schools are to be safe, nurturing places for adults and students to learn and grow. To safeguard that environment, school staff and volunteers are asked to be aware and report activities that threaten the safety and well-being of others to appropriate personnel, such as teachers and principals.

No Tolerance - Harassment

Prohibited harassment includes written or verbal abuse, slurs, jokes, threats, pranks or comments that stereotype individuals because of their race, color, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, disability or other legally protected status. Regardless of its form, Davenport Community Schools has a NO TOLERANCE policy. Visit our web page at www.davenportschools.org and scroll down to Policies.

Confidentiality is a Legal Requirement

Any information you learn at school about students or adults is confidential. A good rule of thumb is to treat information about others at school in the same way you would want them to handle that information if it was about you or your family, and report to a staff member if you see or hear actions or disclosures that concern you.

Volunteers shall not discuss the performance, actions, or any other information about any student except with the student's teacher, school counselor or principal. This is not only Davenport Community Schools policy but is also mandated by federal statute, The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 34 CFR Part 99. Confidentiality pertains to both written records and verbal statements.

Student Photos – FERPA Violations

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) allows every public school parent the right to refuse photographs at school taken of students in that family. School staff and volunteers are obligated to abide by the federal law. If your volunteer assignment is photography, you must review all procedures with staff prior to taking any photos. Each student must have a DCSD photo release form on file.

Transportation

Transportation of students will be provided by district authorized transportation personnel. Student transportation in personal vehicles is strictly prohibited unless authorized by the school district and/or written authorization is provided by the parent of the student and agreed to by the direct supervisor or principal in advance.

Other Information You Need to 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. Therefore, 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.

If you are injured while operating in an approved volunteer capacity:

- 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.
- 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.
- School staff will fill out a district injury report form, secure your signature, and forward it to the district HR office.

Guidelines for Safe Interactions with Students

These guidelines for school volunteers may err on the side of caution. We believe you should do the same and be sure to ask questions of a school principal or supervising teacher whenever you need more information or have a concern.

Some actions, even without improper motive, are common trouble areas.

- Do not ask an individual student to come early or stay late to set up for a class or activity.
- Do not give a gift to a student at school.
- Do not allow a student to develop a personal interest in you. If you feel uncomfortable, report it to your supervising teacher or school principal.
- Do not invite students to social activities outside of school.

Where Should I Work with a Student?

Locations will vary depending upon space availability and the preference of the supervising staff member. Try to find a quiet space with limited distractions. Always work in a public area, on site.

What Are My Confidentiality Responsibilities?

As your volunteer relationship with a student develops, he or she may begin to trust and confide in you. It is appropriate to take the time to listen and show that you care. If a student shares sensitive information relating to potentially abusive situations, let the student know that you are required to pass the information on to a teacher, supervisor, or principal who can offer them help. Personal information about yourself should be shared only when it is relevant to work you are doing with the student. Avoid giving personal contact information such as your address, phone number, or e-mail.

May I Hug a Student?

Some students, particularly younger children, may express affection toward you. Children should never sit on your lap. Use “high fives” or handshakes. Remember to be aware of cultural perspectives regarding personal boundaries.

Communication & Feedback

To ensure continued success of the volunteer program and volunteers, we feel it is very important to maintain ongoing communication between volunteers and school staff. We encourage you to share your thoughts, ideas and feedback regarding the program, volunteer assignments, problems, concerns, etc.

Furthermore, when volunteers make a decision to no longer serve, they are encouraged to share the reason. We encourage complete and honest feedback, suggestions/recommendations, etc. This information is helpful to us in evaluating the program, ensuring volunteer satisfaction, and to ascertain that the program continues to be successful and efficient.

Thank you!

Davenport Community School District
Achievement Service Center
1702 Main Street
Davenport, IA 52803
563-445-5000