



VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

Welcome to FWISD

www.fwisd.org

WELCOME!

Thank you for joining our team of volunteers of the Fort Worth Independent School District. Your commitment provides our students with a valuable role model of citizenship and positively impacts student achievement.

Volunteers play a vital role in student learning, enriching school programs, and fostering a positive school community. This handbook is designed to provide guidance, policies, and resources to ensure a safe, effective, and rewarding volunteer experience.

We look forward to building a mutually beneficial relationship in which you use your talents, passion, and skills to benefit the students in our schools and positively enhance your own life. Together, working in partnership, we will succeed in preparing our children for college, career, and community leadership!

Respectfully,



Tierney Tinnin
Chief of Communications and Community Partnerships

Table of Contents

Welcome	2
Table of Contents	3
Mission and Vision	4
Volunteer Eligibility	5
Process	6
Volunteer Roles and Responsibilities	8
Liability and Insurance Policies	10
Policies and Procedures	11
• Check In and Out	11
• Attendance and Scheduling	12
• Dress Code	12
• Confidentiality and Student Privacy	12
• Health	13
• Supervision	13
• Professional Conduct	13
• Technology	14
• Safety and Emergency Procedures	14
• Transportation and Driving Policies	15
Intellectual Property	16
Working with Students	16
Media	17
• Social Media and Volunteers	17
• AI and Volunteers	18
• Media	18
Customer Service	20
Recognition	20
Contact Information	21

Mission and Vision

Education is essential to break the cycle of poverty, to achieve economic growth, and to sustain a healthy community. The Fort Worth ISD volunteer program is composed of great individuals like you who recognize the critical role education plays in the lives of our children and our community.

With nearly 70,000 students, Fort Worth ISD enjoys a diverse student population and strong community partnerships. Under the leadership of the superintendent and the Board of Education, the District is undergoing a series of initiatives that will redesign, transform, and revitalize Fort Worth ISD schools.

FWISD Mission:

Preparing ALL students for success in college, career, and community leadership.

Vision:

Igniting in every child a passion for learning.

Our Values:

- Student Achievement
- Stakeholder Collaboration
- Leadership Development
- Respect for Diversity
- Equity in Access
- Perseverance and Commitment
- Continuous Improvement

Volunteer Eligibility & Process

A “Volunteer” is an individual who freely offers their time, skills, and service without financial compensation to support the mission, programs, and activities of the organization.

Eligibility

To serve as a FWISD volunteer, individuals must:

- Be at least 18 years of age, or 21 years if applying to be a volunteer driver.
- Submit a completed online volunteer application with consent to a background check. Application is found at www.fwisd.org/volunteers
- Provide a current photo identification issued by any United States government agency.

ACCEPTABLE FORMS OF IDENTIFICATION FOR APPLICATION

- Driver’s license or photo ID issued by any state of the United States of America.
- U.S. military identification.
- U.S. passport.
- Student or work visa.
- Resident card.
- Any photo identification issued by a U.S. Government agency.

All identification documents must be current.

Process

1. Application

Visit www.fwisd.org/volunteers to complete an application. Applications may take two to five days to be processed.

A volunteer with an “approved” status will receive a confirmation email from Raptor Technologies with the results. Check your spam folder, or call 817-814-2973, Volunteer Specialist, if you do not get it.

A volunteer with non-clearance status will get an email from Raptor Technologies with a number to call to find out the reason for non-clearance and options .

2. Orientation

Volunteers must complete the online volunteer orientation before volunteering (www.fwisd.org/volunteers). Role-specific training may be required.

3. Placement

Please contact your school of choice to inquire about the current volunteer opportunities and availability.



Approved volunteers will be required to present their current photo identification at the school when they volunteer.

The main office will verify the information, scan the photo, and provide the volunteer with a Volunteer badge.



Background checks must be done annually

Background checks will expire on June 30th of the current school year. Volunteers must reapply annually starting July 1 to serve during the upcoming school year.

Considerations

Application does not guarantee placement.

Not all offenses prevent a parent or individual from volunteering. Considerations include the nature of the offense, how long ago it happened, and how many times it occurred. However, automatic disqualifiers include convictions for crimes against children, sex crimes, violent crimes, or drug-related offenses.

All criminal background checks and volunteer information provided are confidential. They will not be shared with any other party or used for any purpose other than those specified. Reasons for denial of volunteer clearance will not be discussed with teachers, principals, or other school staff.

Volunteers must report within two days any change in their legal status.

Volunteer Roles and Responsibilities

Our volunteers come from all walks of life. They may be members of a group that has a school partnership, parents or grandparents of children in school, or individuals who want to give back to the community.

Volunteers can serve as tutors, mentors, readers, interpreters, support staff, assist with events, beautification, playgrounds, engage with parent groups, participate in committees, perform pro-bono work, or other roles.

The Fort Worth ISD Volunteer Program role is to enhance, enrich, and support the efforts of the staff as they work towards fulfilling the District's goals, mission, and vision.

The volunteer's role in this framework is to complement and supplement the work of the staff and leadership, and they serve under the direct supervision and guidance of the principal and staff.

The school principal leads all stakeholders, including volunteers, to ensure all efforts remain centered on and aligned with the school's goals and the fulfillment of the District's mission.

The school staff is responsible for creating a welcoming environment by providing meaningful assignments, guidance, consultation, feedback, and recognition to volunteers.

Volunteer Partnership Expectations

Understanding the expectations of one's role is essential to being an effective volunteer. Together, all groups work in alignment toward a common purpose—providing the highest quality educational experience and supporting the academic success of every child.

Volunteers should:

- Have a genuine appreciation for children and be sensitive to their needs.
- Be friendly, cooperative, and professional.
- Be punctual and dependable.
- Be flexible and patient.
- Use discretion.
- Be trustworthy.

Liability and Insurance Policies for Volunteers

Legal Protections and Limitations

Under the Texas Charitable Immunity and Liability Act and the Federal Volunteer Protection Act, volunteers may be protected from certain civil liabilities when acting in good faith and within the scope of their assigned duties. These protections do not apply in cases of gross negligence, willful or wanton misconduct, or when operating a motor vehicle.

Liability

While Fort Worth ISD takes every reasonable precaution to ensure a safe environment, the District cannot accept responsibility for personal injury, illness, or property damage that may occur during volunteer service, except as provided by law. Volunteers are expected to exercise reasonable care and comply with all District policies, procedures, and staff instructions.

Insurance Coverage

Volunteers are not employees of the District and are therefore not covered under workers' compensation insurance. The District does not provide health, accident, or personal liability insurance for volunteers.

Use of Personal Vehicles

Volunteers are not permitted to transport students or other volunteers in personal vehicles unless expressly authorized in advance and after meeting all District requirements, including verification of a valid driver's license and automobile liability insurance. Any use of a personal vehicle for volunteer activities is at the sole risk and responsibility of the volunteer.

Emergency Medical Care

In the event of a medical emergency, the District will act promptly to seek appropriate medical assistance. Volunteers are responsible for all costs associated with their medical treatment, including ambulance services, hospitalization, and follow-up care.

Policies and Procedures

Your service supports students, staff, and school programs across Fort Worth ISD. All volunteers must adhere to the following policies and procedures to ensure safety, professionalism, and a positive environment.

Checking In and Out

- All volunteers will check in and check out at the main office each time they volunteer.
- Approved volunteers will be required to present a current photo identification issued by any U.S. government agency at the school when they volunteer.
- Volunteers must wear their official Volunteer badge provided by the main office at all times while on campus. It is important to make sure it is not a Visitor badge. Please return it to the main section if it has Visitors listed at the top instead of Volunteer.
- Return the Volunteer badge at the end of your shift.
- Volunteer hours will be tracked automatically by the volunteer database when the volunteer checks in and out. If service is done outside the school hours or school premises, the volunteer must submit the hours to the volunteer coordinator or log them through a Raptor's Virtual Volunteer Portal.
- The Raptor Volunteer Portal is offered to the volunteer as an option in the volunteer's confirmation email. A Raptor Volunteer Portal account will allow the volunteer to:
 - * Regularly update the volunteer's personal information.
 - * Receive updates on volunteer opportunities or special events.
 - * Log volunteer hours if the service was not done at the school.
 - * Help the volunteer communicate with other volunteers.

It is not mandatory to create a Volunteer Portal account, but it is highly recommended.

Reason why it is important:

- **Safety:** Checking in and out ensures we know who is on campus at all times, and it is especially important in the event of an emergency.
- **Planning and Recognition:** Tracking volunteer time on campus helps us plan future activities more effectively and ensures volunteers are recognized for their valuable contributions.
- **Grants:** Volunteer data is sometimes required for school awards and grant applications.

Attendance and Scheduling

- Volunteers should pre-register for shifts to ensure proper staffing.
- Volunteers shall report to assignments at least 15 minutes ahead of time.
- When expecting to be absent from a scheduled shift, volunteers should inform their school supervisor and volunteer coordinator as far in advance as possible, if possible, no less than 24 hours. Note that consistent participation helps support students effectively.
- Volunteers should work their entire volunteer shift and let the principal or point-of-contact know when they are leaving.

Dress Code

Volunteers' dress and grooming shall be clean, neat, and suitable to their assignment, and appropriate for a school or professional environment.

Confidentiality and Student Privacy

Volunteers should not discuss problems, criticisms, or grievances in public areas or the presence of students and families. Instead, concerns should be respectfully directed to the appropriate staff member, campus volunteer coordinator, or principal. Whenever possible, differences are encouraged to be resolved informally at the school level. If a satisfactory resolution is not reached, volunteers may contact the District Volunteer Specialist at 817-814-2973.

Volunteers must respect and protect the privacy of all students and their families. Under federal law (FERPA – Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) and District policy, personally identifiable information about students—including grades, medical information, or disciplinary records—must never be shared outside of authorized school personnel.

Volunteers are expected to:

- Keep all student information confidential. Volunteers are not allowed to share any student information they see or hear while volunteering. This includes conversations.
- Only access student information when necessary for assigned duties.
- Report any concerns about privacy or breaches immediately to a staff member or school administrator.

Health

- Following school board policy, volunteers are not permitted to give medical treatment or medication to students, staff or other volunteers. If someone is sick or injured, immediately alert a school staff member or nurse. If it's a serious emergency and no staff member is available, call 911 right away. Stay with the person until help arrives, but limit your role to offering comfort and reassurance—do not transport or treat.
- Volunteers should know the location of the nurse's office and the first aid kit.

Supervision

- The responsibility for discipline rests with the school staff. Volunteers should consult with a teacher or staff member for assistance with student discipline.
- Volunteers should ensure that they are never alone with a child or that there is more than one adult present during activities with youth.
- Volunteers can take on leadership roles. A volunteer may supervise other volunteers, provided the volunteer is under the direct supervision of a paid staff member.

Professional Conduct

- In compliance with school board policy, individuals cannot volunteer in positions that require a license or certification.
- Using phones or texting is not permitted while volunteering, nor is smoking or eating.
- Do not lend money or give monetary gifts to students.
- Be careful not to make comments based on gender that could be construed as sexist.
- Use professional language; profanity or inappropriate language is prohibited.
- Do not share your personal, political, or religious beliefs with students.
- Treat everyone with respect.
- Volunteers are role models for positive adult relationships. Make sure that your tone and demeanor convey respect and a cooperative disposition.

Technology

As a volunteer, you may have access to school devices, the internet, or digital platforms. To protect students and ensure a safe learning environment, volunteers are expected to use technology responsibly and in alignment with District policies.

- Volunteers cannot use District Internet resources for any purpose perceived as a conflict with District policy.
- Use school computers, tablets, or other devices only for your assigned volunteer duties. Personal use is not allowed.
- All volunteers must follow the District's Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) and campus technology rules.

Safety and Emergency Procedures

- Know the emergency exits, lockdown procedures, first aid locations, and the nurse's office.
- It is important to learn procedures for fire, weather, and other emergencies. Safety and security information is available on the District's Volunteer webpage.
- During bad weather or emergencies, volunteers should follow Fort Worth ISD through its app, website, social media, school volunteer coordinator, or their volunteer organization to get current information on school closures. Using the app on your phone is the best and easiest way to receive notifications.
- Volunteers may not bring children to their volunteer assignment. This is for the protection of the children.
- For student safety and privacy, volunteers may not take photos of students without a signed consent form from parents on file.
- In compliance with state law, no alcohol or drugs are allowed in the school district
- property. Volunteers must report any injury, accident, or unsafe conditions to the school office; in case of an emergency, call 911 immediately.
- Never move a child involved in an accident. Members of the staff will initiate proper procedures.

Transportation and Driving Policies

Volunteers cannot transport students, staff, or other volunteers during District activities unless they have prior approval. To get approval, volunteers must fill out the District's Volunteer Driver Application, which requires them to be at least 21 years old, hold a valid U.S. driver's license, show proof of current auto insurance, consent to a motor vehicle record check, and pass a background check. The District is not liable for any injuries that occur while volunteers ride in vehicles that the school does not provide.

Intellectual Property

- Volunteers may help create materials, activities, or resources while serving at a school.
- To respect ownership rights, volunteers are expected to follow these guidelines:
- Any lesson plans, presentations, handouts, or resources you create for use at the school or District while volunteering are considered the property of the District.
- Do not copy, share, or distribute copyrighted materials (such as books, articles, music, or videos) without permission or proper licensing.
- If you bring in materials you created, you still own them—but by sharing, you give the District permission to use them for educational purposes.
- Do not download, install, or use software, images, or media on school devices without approval from staff.
- Student projects, writing, art, and performances remain the intellectual property of the student.

WORKING WITH STUDENTS

All procedures and policies are essential for ensuring the safety and quality of students' learning. However, there are a few that are especially crucial when working with youth, which volunteers should keep in mind.

KEY VOLUNTEER GUIDELINES



DIVERSITY

Respect students' backgrounds, families, values, and beliefs. Be aware of your own values and stay open to new ideas. Model respect and understanding for differences in ethics, religion, politics, and social behavior.



BOUNDARIES

Respect personal space and avoid unnecessary physical contact. Use verbal praise instead of hugs or pats. Do not share personal issues or contact information. Keep volunteer-student interactions limited to school.



GIFTS

Giving or receiving gifts is discouraged. If gifts are given, they should be nominal, identical for all students, and approved by staff. Avoid candy or food gifts.



HARASSMENT

Be aware of and report any threatening, abusive, or discriminatory behavior. Examples: slurs, jokes, threats, pranks, or comments stereotyping individuals by race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, etc.



ABUSE

Report suspected abuse or neglect immediately as required by law, Contact: Texas Dept. of Family & Protective Services - 800-262-5400 or www.txabusehotline.org. Notify the principal

MEDIA

Protecting student privacy and upholding District values come first in every form of communication—digital or otherwise.

Social Media and Volunteers

- Please don't post about students, classrooms, or school activities on personal social media. Share pictures or student info only on Fort Worth ISD sites or with the school's/parents' permission.
- Avoid posting negative or critical comments about the school, staff, students, or families. Concerns should be addressed directly with the campus volunteer coordinator, principal, or District Volunteer Specialist.
- Volunteers are encouraged to promote FWISD initiatives, programs, news, and to share or retweet FWISD social media posts on their pages. However, if you publish any opinions on personal pages related to FWISD, you will need to say that they are personal.
- Volunteers are discouraged from initiating or accepting friend requests for social networking with minors they meet through volunteering with FWISD. The only allowed social media interaction with students is through the FWISD-managed platforms and with the consent of the students' parents.
- Always use social media in a way that is positive, respectful, and aligned with District values.

AI and Volunteers

- Volunteers may not use AI tools during live tutoring sessions, meetings, or when communicating with students. This includes the use of AI-based note-taking applications that record, transcribe, or process conversations.
- For data security and confidentiality, volunteers must not input any student information into AI tools.
- Do not use AI to create or share student-related images, videos, or documents.
- Always follow staff direction before using AI in volunteer tasks.
- Do not input student information (names, grades, photos, or other identifying details) into any AI tool.
- Please don't rely on AI tools for guidance about students or classroom needs; always follow staff directions.
- Use only District-approved platforms when supporting school projects that may involve AI.
- Ask staff before using AI tools for any volunteer task.

Media and Volunteers

In order to maintain professionalism, protect privacy, and ensure consistent messaging, volunteers shall refer any news or media representative to the principal or the District's Communications department, 817-814-1930.

Customer Service

- Customer service is the intentional effort to understand and exceed a customer's needs in a responsive and positive manner. In a school setting, everyone is a potential customer, including students, teachers, administrators, other campus staff, parents, and fellow volunteers.
- To maintain a high level of customer service throughout the District, volunteers should interact with students, staff, and visitors in a courteous, helpful, and professional manner, responding promptly and respectfully to questions, concerns, or requests.

Recognition

Fort Worth ISD recognizes volunteers year-round through campus recognitions, social media features, and award nominations. During National Volunteer Week in April, volunteers are celebrated daily online, and those contributing 100+ hours annually receive special certificates.

BENEFITS OF VOLUNTEERING

Benefits for Student



Increases academic achievement.
Increases students' confidence, self-esteem, and motivation to learn.
Provides positive role models.

Benefits for Parents

Reinforces the importance of education and becomes a source of pride to the child.

Increases communication and parental bonding.



Benefits for Volunteer

Practice or gain skills.

Way to meet new people and make friends.

Inspire, motivate, and educate future generations.



Promotes and enhances mental, emotional and physical health.

Enhances positive relationships with the school.

Benefits for the School

Increases individual attention for students.

Improves school performance, student behavior.



Supports efficient and effective operations.

Increase capacity to better serve a wider variety of youth needs.

Higher level of parental engagement.

Deepens school ties to the community.

Benefits for the Community

Enriches the community's quality of life through education.

Creates a higher community with skilled workforce that attracts business.



Builds higher morale, productivity and profitability.

Highlights image and strengthens relationship with community.

CONTACT INFORMATION

COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS DEPARTMENT



817-814-2973



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www.fwisd.org/volunteer