Pathways for School Volunteers

BROWARD County Public Schools | Office of Strategic Partnerships

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To complete an online volunteer application or to learn more about volunteer opportunities in Broward County Public Schools, visit **browardschools.com/volunteer**

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Volunteer Services department at Broward County Public Schools (BCPS)!

For more than 25 years, volunteers have been instrumental to the success of BCPS students. We are happy that you have joined our team of dedicated and committed volunteers.

This handbook will help you have the best possible experience as a volunteer. Among other things, it details your job as a volunteer, ways to help students and important information about your role as a volunteer.

Thank you for volunteering and for choosing to make a difference, one student at a time.

WHO IS A BCPS SCHOOL VOLUNTEER?

A BCPS school volunteer is an individual with a sincere interest to contribute to the education of BCPS students. Volunteers actively serve during regular hours at one or more schools, several hours at a special one-time activity or event or work on school projects at home. Under the supervision of school personnel, a volunteer provides supportive assistance, which complements and enriches each school's volunteer program. Visit page 11 for more information about volunteer opportunities.

THE VOLUNTEER GAINS

- Personal satisfaction by helping children learn
- The opportunity to learn new skills or polish old ones
- Knowledge and understanding of BCPS
- Work experience that may lead to a future career

THE STUDENT GAINS

- Additional individual attention
- An accepting atmosphere for learning reinforcement
- A chance to succeed, thus building a better self-concept
- A good friend who is a warm and caring adult

THE SCHOOL GAINS

- Positive public relations with the community
- Improved student achievement and behavior
- Additional services without extra costs
- Increased community understanding and support

THE BROWARD COUNTY COMMUNITY GAINS

- Better educated students
- Greater confidence in the educational system

FRAMEWORK OF THE SCHOOL VOLUNTEER PROGRAM 2

AT THE SCHOOL

The School Volunteer Liaisons are a vital link to successful volunteer programs. In cooperation with the principal, they jointly coordinate and direct their school's program and many outstanding volunteer activities. Each school models its volunteer program to meet the needs of the students and teachers at the school.

THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SCHOOL INCLUDE:

- Presenting training to staff members on effective utilization of volunteers
- Surveying needs of teachers for volunteer assistance
- Recruiting and registering volunteers, especially parents
- Arranging for orientation and training
- Assigning volunteers to specific teachers
- Serving as a resource person and advisor to school volunteers
- Providing a welcoming environment for the community
- Keeping accurate records of volunteer services and hours
- Coordinating school recognition for volunteers

AT THE DISTRICT OFFICE

The Office of Strategic Partnerships provides district-wide support and coordination to the school-based volunteer programs in BCPS.

THE OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS IS RESPONSIBLE FOR:

- Developing and disseminating volunteer materials
- Presenting training workshops
- Working with School Volunteer Liaisons to develop and maintain school programs
- Networking with community involvement programs
- Sponsoring districtwide recognition events

Student records, also known as education records, created and/or maintained by The School Board of Broward County, Florida, are official and confidential documents protected by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the Health Insurance Portability Act (HIPAA), Florida Statutes, Public Records Law, School Board policy 5100.1 (Student Records: Confidentiality and Family Educational Rights), and other School Board policies.

School Board policy 5100.1 states that only school officials should have access to student information which may include students' grades, academic performance, and behavior during school hours (including but not limited to behavior observed in a classroom setting, cafeteria, etc.), disabilities, personal matters and family matters. **School official** is a person employed by the District as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health and medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the School Board; a person or company with whom the district has contracted to perform a special task that would normally be performed by SBBC personnel (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant or therapist); a clerical or paraprofessional staff member assisting another school official in performing his or her professional tasks. CAUTION: Volunteers (including parents assisting at the school) and students assisting teachers and other staff are not "school officials" and are not permitted to have access to other students' personally identifiable information.

Volunteers shall not disclose or share with anyone in any manner (written, electronic or verbal), any student information, obtained from any source (written records, verbal communications, or direct observation) without specific authorization from a school administrator or as required by law.

Volunteers must understand that even when no longer serving as a volunteer with The School Board of Broward County, Florida, any confidential information learned or observed must continue to be kept confidential indefinitely.

Any breach of these confidentiality requirements may result in immediate disqualification and termination as a volunteer and may result in legal action.

EXCEPTIONS:

In a health or safety emergency, confidential information may be disclosed only if the disclosure is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals and only to limited individuals. Factors to be taken into account include the seriousness of the threat to health and safety, the need for information to meet the emergency, whether the parties to whom the information is disclosed are in a position to address the emergency, and the extent to which time is of the essence in dealing with the emergency.

Such situations include, but are not limited to:

- Disclosure or evidence of physical, sexual, or serious emotional abuse or neglect.
- Threatened or attempted suicide.
- Disclosure or evidence of serious self-harm, including drug or alcohol misuse that may be life-threatening.
- Statements or other evidence of the intent to harm others.
- The systematic and chronic bullying of a student shall be reported pursuant to District policy.

Volunteers shall inform the school administrator or designee in these situations.

The District is committed to protecting these records from unauthorized disclosure and honoring the privacy rights of our students and their families. For more information about the District's privacy standards, visit browardschools.com/privacyinformation.

IMPORTANCE OF SIGNING IN AND SIGNING OUT 5

Each time you go to school to volunteer, you must sign in, wear your name badge and sign out when your day's service is complete. These requirements are necessary for the following reasons:

- Safeguarding our students and maintaining campus security is of the utmost importance.
- In case you receive an emergency telephone call, you can be found.
- While volunteering at school for a specific purpose, individuals are covered by School Board insurance, provided they have completed a volunteer application form and have signed in.
- Verified volunteer service can be used as work experience for future employment.
- Individual volunteers are recognized for their dedication and service to our schools. Volunteer attendance records are used to determine award recipients.
- The Florida Department of Education presents awards to schools based on the number of volunteer hours recorded.
- Your school, and the school district, would like the opportunity to thank you for your service.

There are a variety of systems in place for volunteers to sign in and sign out. Some District schools use a computer system that electronically records all volunteer hours. This system may require you to show picture identification when you arrive and scan this picture identification with the scanner. This system normally prints a personal name badge for you to wear while on the school campus. A scan of your name badge is used to tell the school when you are signing out for the day. This computer equipment is usually installed in the front office. The friendly office staff members will be happy to help you learn the easy steps to signing in and out.

Other schools use a Volunteer Time Sheet that requires you to sign in and out on your specific paper log. At these schools, personal name badges are provided for you to wear while on campus. The time sheets and name badges are usually kept in the front office. Again, the staff members will be happy to help you learn this method for signing in and signing out.

**Turn in all your volunteer time sheets to your School Volunteer Liaison so that you will get full credit for all your hours of service.*

Your interest and concern for students have motivated you to volunteer in BCPS. To make your experience as a volunteer a beneficial one for the students and for you, please follow these guidelines as you assist in the schools:

- The main concern of volunteers while engaged in school activities must be the safety and education of students.
- Volunteers may not give students medication.
- Volunteers may not divulge individual student's grades, records and abilities, which are personal and confidential information. Students have a right to confidentiality under Florida Statute 228.093 that covers:
    - Academic work completed
    - Family background information
    - Standardized test scores
    - Attendance records
    - Health data
    - Grades
    - Interest inventory reports
    - Teacher or counselor ratings and observations
    - Reports of serious or recurrent behavior patterns
- Volunteers are not permitted to supervise a classroom or discipline students. These actions are the responsibilities of the teacher and school.
- Volunteers will be assigned only to staff members requesting assistance.
- Volunteers should set a good example for students by their manner, appearance and behavior.
- Volunteers are required to complete an online application form before helping in the school.
- Volunteers are required to sign in and out.
- For identification, volunteers are required to wear a name badge when helping with school activities.

HOW STUDENTS LEARN

- A welcome and relaxed atmosphere.
- Students learn by doing, not by passive observance.
- Students learn by asking questions and by searching for answers to their questions.
- Students learn by discovery.
- Students learn by using all their senses, whenever possible.
- Students learn by experimenting.
- Students learn by sorting and combining objects.
- Students learn by repeating experiences.
- Students learn by building their self-confidence.
- A student's name is very important. Make sure you say and spell it correctly.
- Make sure your student knows and can pronounce your name. You might give the student a card with your name written on it.
- Show that you are interested in the student as a person. Listen carefully to what the student has to say.
- Students make mistakes. Let them know that this is part of learning. Don't be afraid of making a few mistakes yourself.
- Build the student's self-confidence. Praise your student honestly and frequently.
- Encourage students to feel, smell, taste and listen as well as look at objects.
- Let students discover.
- Ask questions which may lead to the answer instead of providing the answer.
- Give the students as much time as they need to understand new ideas.
- Be reliable. Students will be disappointed if you are absent. Show you care by calling if you cannot be there as planned.
- If you are helping at your child's school, allow your own child room to grow. Volunteer in a location other than your child's classroom.
- Offer each student a chance to participate. Quiet students are sometimes ignored.
- Do not expect every student to enter into all activities in the beginning.

  The teacher will tell you at what point they all should be involved.
- Allow each student to grow in independence by letting him/her do as much as possible without your help.

The following suggestions are provided to help you communicate with students in order to get positive results.

- Be sure the students understand what you're saying. We sometimes use words that they do not comprehend.
- Keep your voice as low as possible. The students will get louder as your voice increases in volume.
- Instruct students as though you expect them to comply. Give sufficient warnings and time. Example: "Jimmy, in five minutes you will need to stop painting and put your apron away".
- If students gain your attention and praise only when they behave, they will soon learn your expectations of proper conduct.

Remember, "All children smile in the same language."

COMMENDING STUDENTS

Praising students for excellence, improvement or effort is very important to their success in school and in life. Honest praise helps students to assess their personal value and build their self-esteem. Mounting research shows that high self-esteem is important for academic success.

All children have the potential for liking themselves and having high self-esteem. This is not conceit, but rather the children's quiet comfort about themselves.

Positive statements greatly influence students' attitudes about themselves and their success-building experiences. Be creative. Praise is a stronger motivator than gifts of candy. Think of the many ways you can boost a student's self-image by using words of encouragement and kindness.

HERE ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF WAYS TO PRAISE:

- "I like the way you're working."
- "That's right! Good for you."
- "That's quite an improvement."
- "I'm very proud of the way you worked today."
- "It looks like you put a lot of work into this."
- "I'm happy to be around you."

1

HOW DO I BECOME A SCHOOL VOLUNTEER?

To become a volunteer:

1. Complete a volunteer application online at browardschools.com/volunteerapplication.
2. Wait three (3) days and contact the school you selected to check your approval status.
3. Visit the school to begin serving our students.

2

I AM A BCPS EMPLOYEE. DO I NEED TO COMPLETE THE VOLUNTEER APPLICATION?

No! A teaching background is not required because a volunteer works under the direction of the professional staff and always assists in a supervised setting. The qualifications needed to be a school volunteer are a personal desire to help, sincere interest in students, ability to follow school procedures and policies and a willingness to make a defi nite time commitment (three hours per week is the average amount). Any needed training will be provided by the teacher or at a special orientation workshop.

3

HOW DO I FIND OUT WHAT VOLUNTEER SERVICES ARE NEEDED?

Volunteers must attend an orientation workshop at the preferred school location. At this workshop, the School Volunteer Liaison will discuss volunteer opportunities.

4

CAN VOLUNTEERS HAVE ACCESS STUDENT INFORMATION?

School Board policy 5100.1 states that only school officials* should have access to student information which may include students' grades, academic performance, and behavior during school hours (including but not limited to behavior observed in a classroom setting, cafeteria, etc.), disabilities, personal matters and family matters.

*A school official is a person employed by the District as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health and medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the School Board; a person or company with whom the district has contracted to perform a special task that would normally be performed by SBBC personnel (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant or therapist); a clerical or paraprofessional staff member assisting another school official in performing his or her professional tasks.

5

DO I NEED TO COMPLETE THE LEVEL 2 SCREENING PROCESS?

Level 2 screening is ONLY required for volunteers serving as overnight field trip chaperones (excluding Grad Night), and athletic and band coaches.

6

CAN I BE ALONE WITH STUDENTS IN A CLASSROOM?

Volunteers should not be left alone with students at any time.

7

DO I NEED TO SIGN IN AND OUT EACH TIME I VISIT A SCHOOL?

The safety of our students is our number one priority. Therefore, we ask all volunteers to sign in when entering a school campus. Additionally, the Raptor system is used to track your volunteer hours, so scanning out is equally as important.

8

I AM RETIRED. CAN I STILL VOLUNTEER?

BCPS welcomes experienced individuals to serve as volunteers. Many retired and senior citizens currently volunteer in our schools.

9

I WOULD LIKE TO VOLUNTEER, BUT I HAVE A PRE-SCHOOL CHILD. CAN I BRING MY CHILD WITH ME?

No, having a very young child in a classroom interrupts class procedures, disrupts the students, and prevents the volunteer from giving full attention to the work. However, you can still help the school by making arrangements to do work at home.

CAREER SHADOWING/INTERNSHIP

Description: Help secondary students learn about various jobs and careers.
Time Commitment: During the school day, amount of time varies
School(s): Middle and High
Training: Provided by location

CLASSROOM PRESENTATIONS

Description: Discuss personal areas of expertise in a classroom setting. Topics might include careers, hobbies and travel.
Time Commitment: During the school day, amount of time will vary
School(s): Elementary, Middle and High
Training: Provided by location

CLASSROOM ASSISTANCE

Description: Work regularly with a classroom teacher. They help students and assist with projects and field trips.
Time Commitment: During the school day, average of one hour per week, regularly scheduled
School(s): Elementary, Middle and Centers
Training: Provided by location

CLERICAL AID

Description: Help with typing, photo copying, and clerical duties in schools and offices.
Time Commitment: During the school day, at least one hour per week
School(s): Elementary, Middle, High and Centers
Training: Provided by location
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COACHING*

Description: Work regularly with students participating in athletic or arts programs to achieve their potential.
Time Commitment: During the school day and after school hours, two or three hours per week, may include off-campus activities
School(s): Elementary, Middle, High and Centers
Training: Provided by location

CONCIERGE ASSISTANT

Description: Greet parents and students during drop-off and pick-up times, and in the schools' front offices.
Time Commitment: During the school day
School(s): Elementary, Middle, High and Centers
Training: Provided by the Volunteer Services department and location

EXCEPTIONAL EDUCATION SUPPORT

Description: Work with students with special learning needs at schools and special centers.
Time Commitment: During the school day, at least one hour per week
School(s): Elementary, Middle, High and Centers
Training: Provided by location

HEALTH ROOM AID*

Description: Help with the management of a school's health room with a focus of providing comfort to students and helping with student health screenings.
Time Commitment: During the school day, one or two hours per week
School(s): Elementary
Training: Provided by Broward County Health Department

LITERACY COACHING*

Description: Tutor adults and children who are learning to read.
Time Commitment: Time of day at least, one hour per week
School(s): Adult Centers
Training: Provided by Vocational Adult and Community Education Department

LISTENING PARTNER*

Description: Act as supportive adult friends to students identified by guidance counselors.
**Parents or grandparents cannot be Listener Volunteers in their own child's school.*
Time Commitment: Weekly, during the school day
School(s): Elementary and Middle
Training: Provided by the Mental Health Association of South Florida

MEDIA CENTER/LIBRARY

Description: Help students select books, work at the circulation desk and shelve books.
Time Commitment: During the school day, average of one or two hours per week
School(s): Elementary, Middle and High
Training: Provided by Media Specialist

READ ALOUD

Description: Inspire students to be readers by helping them learn to appreciate stories and books.
Time Commitment: During the school day, at least one hour per week, on regular basis
School(s): Elementary
Training: Provided by location

SPECIAL PROJECTS

Description: Help with a specific project at a school or at a District office. Projects include; curriculum fairs, student competitions, screenings and productions.
Time Commitment: Depends on the activity, usually short-term and intensive
School(s): Elementary, Middle and High
Training: Depends on the activity

TRANSLATOR

Description: Facilitate effective communication between students and teachers or staff by listening to, understanding, and translating spoken or written statements from one language to another.
Time Commitment: During the school day
School(s): Elementary, Middle, High and Centers
Training: Provided by location

TUTORING*

Description: Give students extra help with academic subjects.
Time Commitment: During the school day, at least one hour per week
School(s): Elementary, Middle and High
Training: Provided by the teacher

*Volunteers serving in this capacity need Level 2 clearance. For more information about the Level 2 process, speak with your School Volunteer Liaison.

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The School Board of Broward County, Florida, prohibits any policy or procedure which results in discrimination on the basis of age, color, disability, gender identity, gender expression, genetic information, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex or sexual orientation. The School Board also provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. Individuals who wish to file a discrimination and/or harassment complaint may call the Director, Equal Educational Opportunities Benefits/ADA Compliance Department & Dsitrict's Equity Coordinator/Title IX Coordinator at 754-321-2150 or Teletype Machine (TTY) 754-321-2158.

Individuals with disabilities requesting accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA), may contact the Equal Educational Opportunities/ADA Compliance Department at 754-321-2150 or Teletype Machine (TTY) 754-321-2158.

browardschools.com