



North Thurston Public Schools Volunteer Handbook

Thank you for your interest in volunteering with North Thurston Public Schools! This handbook outlines the guidelines and expectations that volunteers must follow to create safe and successful experiences for students, staff, and volunteers.

All volunteers serve at the discretion of the building principal, volunteer coordinator, or teacher. Volunteers must adhere to our policies, procedures, and expectations outlined in this handbook and the [volunteer code of conduct](#).

North Thurston Public School District Policies and Regulations

Please read this handbook before your first volunteer experience.

- Volunteers (Policies [5630](#), [5630P](#))
- Employment and Volunteers (Policy [5005](#))
- Sexual Harassment of District Staff Prohibited (Policies [5011](#), [5011P](#))
- Maintaining Professional Staff/Student Boundaries (Policies [5253](#), [5253P](#))
- Harassment (Policies [5207](#), [3207P](#))
- Drug-Free Schools, Community, and Workplace (Policy [5201](#))
- Regulation of Dangerous Weapons on School Premises (Policy [4210](#))
- Non-Discrimination (Policy [5010P](#))
- Civility (Policy [5015](#))
- Maintaining Professional Staff/Student Boundaries (Policies [5253](#), [5253P](#))
- Private Vehicle Transportation (Policies [8131](#), [8131P](#))
- Gender Inclusive Schools (Policy [3211](#), [3211P](#))

North Thurston Public Schools volunteers should:

- Submit an official North Thurston Public Schools volunteer application.
- Sign in and out and always wear an ID badge while on school grounds.
- Follow the North Thurston Public Schools Volunteer Code of Conduct and all district policies and regulations.
- Follow the direction of all school and district staff.
- Seek help from the teacher when you need additional information or instruction.
- Refer to the classroom teacher or other school staff member for final solution of any student problem which arises.
- Find ways to establish a good rapport with students.
- Provide help and assistance without doing the work for students.
- Show a genuine interest in each student.
- Use patience and kindness.

Rules for School District Facilities

- No smoking or tobacco allowed, including on athletic fields and in district vehicles.
- No weapons allowed.
- No drugs or alcohol allowed.

Volunteer Expectations

Communication

You are a role model. Your conversations with students, staff, and other volunteers should demonstrate respect for others and avoid language that may be perceived as discriminatory, profane, sexist, or offensive. We expect all students, staff, and volunteers to be treated equally and respectfully regardless of race, religion, disability, age, national origin, marital status, gender identity or expression, or sexual orientation. School personnel or volunteers cannot encourage or promote religious beliefs through class activities, comments, or invitations to their place of worship.

Volunteers should not:

- Engage with students via any social networking website.
- Provide their personal phone number or email.
- Say or write things to a student that they would be uncomfortable sharing with the student's parents, district/school administrators or the teacher.
- Make comments that belittle or diminish another person.

Student Confidentiality

Volunteers are required to keep all student information that they obtain while working as a volunteer for the district confidential. Federal law strictly prohibits school districts and district volunteers from releasing any student information without parent/guardian permission.

Disclosure of student information by a volunteer is a violation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) and may subject the volunteer and the district to civil liability. It is very important that you keep information about students confidential. It is important that you do not discuss students or their progress with others, even their parents. Do not make references to student's abilities in front of other students. The only person with whom you should discuss a student's work is their teacher or other school staff. If parents ask about their student's progress, suggest in a friendly way that they contact the teacher.

Interactions with Students

All interactions with students should be professional and focused on teaching and learning. These guidelines protect both the student and the volunteer. Volunteers should not request or participate in out-of-school contact with a non-related student.

Harassment at School

The NTPS harassment policy calls for a commitment to an educational environment that is free from all types of discrimination and harassment, including sexual harassment, bullying and intimidation. Volunteers are expected and required to respect and uphold this policy and the NTPS volunteer code of conduct. Volunteers who engage in harassment, intimidation, or bullying on school property or at school activities will be restricted from school property and activities, as appropriate.

Gifts

In general, giving gifts to students is discouraged. If gifts are provided, they should be approved by the teacher or other staff member, be of nominal value, and be identical for every student.

Physical Contact with Students

It is the district's expectation that all physical contact between volunteers and students is professional and appropriate. In general, volunteers should avoid physical contact with students. Some students, especially at the elementary level, will naturally become attached and affectionate toward you. Front facing hugs should be avoided. Instead, carefully put your arm around a child's shoulder and turn it into a side hug. Use other signs of affection, such as high fives. In addition, regardless of age, students should never sit on your lap. The areas that are safest to touch are shoulder, upper back, arms, and hands.

Report Suspected Abuse or Neglect

As a volunteer, you are in a unique position to observe students. If you suspect that a student may be the victim of abuse or neglect, report it immediately to the teacher, principal, or school counselor.

Cellphone Use

NTPS has ["Off and Away" mobile device expectation](#) at all our schools. Volunteers should follow the lead of the teacher/other staff regarding mobile device use while volunteering.

Other Important Information

Field Trips and Off-Campus Activities

One of the most common activities for NTPS volunteers is chaperoning field trips. All field trip chaperones should be approved volunteers. Volunteer chaperones generally ride the bus with students or transport themselves to the field trip location. Opportunities to drive students are infrequent. Volunteers who are requested to drive students should be at least 25 years old and must have a valid Washington State driver's license. Volunteer drivers must also complete the required driving forms and file them with the school office before every field trip/off campus activity.

Volunteer Coaches

Individuals who wish to become volunteer coaches for any NTPS school must complete the volunteer application and be approved as a volunteer. (This process can take up to two weeks to complete, so volunteers are recommended to begin this process early).

Please note: WIAA (Washington Interscholastic Activities Association) requires volunteer coaches must be at least 19 years old, with the exception that high school students may serve as middle-level volunteer assistant coaches during the designated middle school season when under the direct supervision of the middle-level coach. These high school students must meet WIAA coaches standards minimum requirements to hold a valid first aid certification and a valid CPR card. Volunteer coaches must be at least 21 years old to chaperone off-campus activities.

Community Service Hours

NTPS strives to find volunteer opportunities that are mutually beneficial to both the volunteers and the students in our schools. We understand that people need community service hours for a variety of reasons and ask that volunteers work with their direct supervisors at the school to arrange for signatures that confirm hours worked. NTPS does not allow volunteers to complete court-ordered community service hours through our schools.

In Case of Emergency

Volunteers are not expected to perform any type of first aid, but unexpected situations may happen while you are working with students. Below are a few universal precautions for dealing with illness and injuries at school.

Bleeding and body fluids

Whenever possible, avoid contact with body fluids. For example, have the student hold a cloth and apply pressure to his or her bloody nose or minor cut. In case of a serious injury, if a student cannot care for himself or herself, place a barrier between you and the body fluids. Use disposable gloves any time your hands could come in direct contact with blood, body fluids or body waste.

Always wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water immediately after helping an injured student.

Fractures and sprains

Keep the student warm and as comfortable as possible. Do not move them unless absolutely necessary. If it is necessary to move the student, give firm and gentle splinting support to the injured area. Call the school nurse or school office professional.

Back and neck injuries

Keep the student lying straight with head in line. Keep the student warm and quiet. **DO NOT MOVE THE STUDENT.** Call the school nurse or school office professional.

Emergency Drills

An emergency drill may occur while you are volunteering. In general, volunteers should follow the lead of staff.

Fire / Bomb Threat

1. A fire alarm will sound.
2. All students, employees and volunteers will follow the emergency evacuation plan, walking students out of the classroom to the emergency exit.
3. Everyone is to remain outside until notified to return to the building.

Lockdowns or lockouts

- A **lockdown** means all campus doors are locked, and students remain inside their classrooms.
- A **lockout** means all exterior doors are locked, and the school day proceeds inside the building.

1. An announcement over the speaker system will indicate an intruder alert or lock down. (Note: Lockdowns and lockouts can last an indeterminate amount of time. Once the doors are locked no persons are allowed to enter or leave until an all-clear announcement is given.)
2. All students, employees, volunteers will follow the plan, usher students into classrooms and lock all doors and windows, pull curtains, close blinds, and turn off lights.

Earthquake

1. If an actual earthquake occurs, no announcement will be made.
 2. When you feel the earth shaking, everyone is to “drop, cover, and hold.”
 3. When the shaking has subsided, wait for emergency instructions to leave the building in the regular evacuation route.
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Working with Culturally Diverse Students

NTPS represents a diverse community. Volunteers should treat all students, staff, and others with respect and dignity. When working with students from a different cultural background than their own, volunteers should:

- Use correct pronunciation of students’ names. If you are not sure of the pronunciation, say, “Would you pronounce your name for me?” Avoid comments that label the name as “unusual” or “funny.” Follow the student’s and teacher’s lead when giving students nicknames.
 - Be aware that you may represent a different culture and authority and that may be threatening to some students. Avoid judgments and let the students know that you value them.
 - Be aware and respect that cultural differences may affect student behavior, attendance, health, and acceptance of tutor assistance.
 - Respect every student and speak respectfully of all racial, ethnic, cultural, and religious groups.
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FAQs for Volunteers

Do I need to fill out a volunteer application for each school?

No. Your volunteer application is approved district-wide, and you will be able to sign in on any school kiosk in the district once approved.

You can customize which schools you receive volunteer-related email from by logging into your volunteer account and updating your information.

How do I renew my volunteer status?

Volunteers consent to automatic renewal of their background check every two years. You will be notified via email when your status has been renewed. We hope this makes it easy to have your volunteer status ready when you need it!

If you wish to deactivate your NTPS volunteer status, please email volunteersupport@ntps.org

How do I update my volunteer application information?

You can update any of your volunteer application information by logging into your NTPS volunteer account on the district or any school volunteer page. From the home menu, choose View or Update Volunteer Profile Information. This will bring up most fields from your original application where you can make any necessary updates. You can easily change the schools you get volunteer-related email from by updating the school checkboxes under "Volunteer Interests." Be sure to click the Update Volunteer Information button at the bottom of the page when your changes are complete.

How do I add a volunteer coach endorsement to my existing volunteer profile?

If you would like to begin volunteer coaching AFTER you already have an approved volunteer status, please update your volunteer profile with the additional required coach information by logging into your NTPS volunteer account. From the home menu, choose View or Update Volunteer Profile Information, and fill in the four Volunteer Coach questions. Be sure to click the Update Volunteer Information button at the bottom of the page when your changes are complete.

Then email volunteersupport@ntps.org and let us know - we'll submit your updates to the athletic director and head coach for approval and let you know the status of your application within two weeks.

Please make sure you have discussed your plan to volunteer with the head coach prior to updating your application.



North Thurston Public Schools does not discriminate in any programs or activities on the basis of sex, race, ethnicity, creed, religion, color, national origin, honorably discharged veteran or military status, sexual orientation, gender expression, gender identity, homelessness, immigration or citizenship status, the presence of any sensory, mental, or physical disability, neurodivergence, or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts of America and other designated youth groups. The following employees have been designated to handle questions and complaints of alleged discrimination: Civil Rights Coordinator: studentachievement@ntps.org, 360-412-4466; Title IX Officer: executivedirectorHR@ntps.org, 360-412-4457; Section 504 Coordinator: 504@ntps.org, 360-412-4465. Address: 305 College Street NE, Lacey, WA 98516.