

Portland Public Schools Volunteer Handbook



Thank you for your willingness to volunteer with Portland Public Schools. This handbook is intended to provide clear, simple expectations for volunteering in our schools. Volunteers play an important role in supporting students, staff, programs, and school activities.

Thank you for helping Portland Public Schools support our students. Your time and effort help strengthen our schools and provide additional support for students.

Purpose of Volunteers

The District determines volunteer placements based on school needs, volunteer availability, and the nature of the activity. Volunteers work under the direction of District staff, the district staff member responsible for coordinating the volunteer opportunity will be referred to as the Point of Contact (POC).

Volunteers may support the following:

- School programs
- Classroom activities
- Events
- Field trips
- Athletics
- Clubs
- Mentoring
- Lunch
- Recess activities
- Classroom support
- Other approved school activities

Volunteer Approval and Screening

All volunteers are required to complete the District's volunteer approval process before volunteering. Approval to volunteer is not automatic. The District may deny, limit, suspend, or revoke a volunteer placement when the District determines that the placement is not appropriate, does not meet District needs, or creates a concern for student safety or school operations.

The District will complete an ICHAT background check for volunteers at a minimum of three times per year: fall, winter, and spring. If information is returned through ICHAT that requires further review, the District may also review the Sex Offender Registry, OTIS, or other appropriate sources before determining whether the individual may volunteer.

- An approved ICHAT is only valid until the next volunteer screening season: A prior approval does not carry forward beyond the current screening season.
- Volunteers who wish to continue volunteering after the next screening season begins must complete the ICHAT process again.
- Volunteers must have a current approved ICHAT on file before participating in any volunteer activity.

Volunteers must notify the District if any information submitted as part of the volunteer approval process changes, including name, contact information, or any criminal history information.

Before You Volunteer

Before volunteering, please make sure you have done the following requirements:

- Completed the District's volunteer approval process
- Been approved through the District's current seasonal ICHAT process
- Reviewed this Volunteer Handbook
- Signed and returned the acknowledgment form
- Confirm your volunteer assignment with the building or supervising staff member
- Know where to park, where to check in, and who to report to when you arrive

Check-In and Identification

All volunteers must check in and out at the main office when arriving and leaving the school or a school activity. Volunteers must follow building procedures, wear any required visitor or volunteer identification, and remain only in approved areas. For volunteer opportunities outside of the school day, volunteers must check in and out with the POC for the activity. This includes volunteer support for athletic programs.

Attendance and Dependability

Volunteers are expected to be dependable and arrive at the agreed-upon time. If you are unable to volunteer as scheduled, please notify the supervising staff member or building office as soon as possible. Staff and students rely on volunteers being present when scheduled.

Role of the Volunteer

- Volunteers are here to support staff and students.
- Volunteers should follow the directions of the teacher, administrator, coach, supervisor, or staff member (POC) responsible for the activity.

- Volunteers should not take over staff responsibilities, make independent decisions about students, or change the activity unless directed by District staff.
- Volunteers shall not use their volunteer role to promote personal, political, religious, commercial, or organizational interests unless the activity has been specifically approved by the District as part of the volunteer assignment
- Volunteers shall not initiate or engage students in discussions involving controversial topics, religious beliefs, political issues, political candidates, or personal viewpoints on divisive social issues unless specifically authorized by the District as part of an approved instructional activity, program, or assignment.
- Volunteers are expected to keep conversations with students appropriate to the approved activity and the school setting.

Working With Students

- Volunteers should be positive, patient, and encouraging with students. Students respond best when adults are respectful, consistent, and calm.
- Volunteers should remember that there is a difference between being friendly and being a student's friend.
- Volunteers are role models and should maintain appropriate adult-student boundaries at all times.
- Volunteers should encourage students, listen appropriately, keep students focused on the activity, and ask District staff for help when needed.

Student Confidentiality

Volunteers are required to protect student confidentiality at all times. While volunteering, individuals may see or hear information about students, including student behavior, discipline, grades, health information, disability status, family circumstances, attendance, academic needs, or other personal information. This information is confidential and may not be shared with others.

- Volunteers shall not discuss student information with other parents, students, community members, family members, or on social media. Volunteers shall not use student information for any purpose outside of their approved volunteer role.
- Improper disclosure of student information may violate federal and state privacy laws, including FERPA and, when applicable, HIPAA. A violation of student confidentiality may result in removal from the volunteer role and will impact future volunteer approval.

- If a volunteer has a concern about a student, the volunteer should report the concern directly to the supervising staff member (POC) or building administrator.
- Volunteers should not investigate, question students, contact families, or attempt to resolve student concerns independently.

Appropriate Boundaries with Students

- Volunteers must maintain appropriate boundaries with students at all times.
- Volunteers shall never exchange personal phone numbers, personal email addresses, private messages, social media contacts, or other personal communication with students.
- Volunteers shall not contact students outside of the approved school activity unless specifically authorized by the District as part of an approved program.
- Volunteers shall not be alone with an individual student unless specifically approved and supervised according to District procedures.
- Volunteers shall not transport students, give gifts to individual students, meet with students outside of school, or create a personal relationship with a student outside of the approved volunteer role unless specifically approved by the District.
- Volunteers shall not initiate or engage students in discussions involving controversial topics, religious beliefs, political issues, political candidates, or personal viewpoints on divisive social issues unless specifically authorized by the District.

Student Behavior, Seclusion, and Restraint

District staff are responsible for student supervision, behavior management, and discipline. If a student is not following expectations or if a volunteer has a concern about student behavior or safety, the volunteer must notify the supervising staff member or building administrator immediately. In an emergency, volunteers should follow the direction of District staff.

Volunteers shall not do the following:

- Discipline students
- Assign consequences
- Physically redirect students
- Restrain students
- Seclude students
- Block exits
- Remove students from an area
- Use physical contact to manage student behavior

Student Safety Concerns

If a volunteer becomes aware of a concern involving suspected abuse or neglect, self-harm, threats of harm, bullying, harassment, or any other serious student safety concern, the volunteer must report the concern immediately to the supervising staff member or building administrator. Volunteers should not investigate the concern, question students, contact families, or attempt to handle the matter independently.

Safety and Emergencies

Volunteers must follow all safety procedures and directions from District staff immediately.

If a volunteer sees a safety concern, injury, threat, or inappropriate behavior, the volunteer should report it to the supervising staff member or building office right away. Volunteers should not be providing medical attention except in an immediate emergency and only to the extent necessary until District staff or emergency responders take over.

Photos, Videos, and Social Media

- Volunteers shall not take photos or videos of students unless specifically approved by District staff for the activity.
- Volunteers shall not post student photos, videos, names, personal information, schoolwork, behavior, or other student-related information on social media.
- Volunteers shall not share student images or information through text messages, email, group chats, private messages, or any other personal communication.
- If photos or videos are needed for a school activity, they must be handled by District staff or by an individual specifically approved by the District.

Technology

Volunteers may only use District technology if approved by staff and consistent with District expectations.

Volunteers must comply with the District Acceptable Use Policy if technology access is needed for the volunteer role.

Dress and Conduct

- Volunteers should dress and conduct themselves in a manner appropriate for the school setting and the assigned activity.
- Volunteers are expected to serve as positive adult role models for students.

- Volunteers shall not use electronic smoking devices, tobacco, alcohol, marijuana, or other controlled substances while volunteering or while on school property.

Health, Injury, and Liability

Volunteers are covered under the District's liability policy while serving in an approved volunteer role. However, the District does not provide the following volunteers:

- Health insurance
- Accident coverage
- Workers' compensation

Volunteers are responsible for their own personal property while volunteering. If a volunteer becomes ill or injured while volunteering, the volunteer is responsible for any medical or related expenses, except as otherwise required by law. Volunteers must sign the form below acknowledging this before serving.

If You Have a Concern

If you have a concern about a student, staff member, parent, safety issue, or activity, please report it to the supervising staff member or building administrator. Volunteers should not attempt to investigate concerns or resolve conflicts on their own.

Final Reminder

Volunteers are valued members of our school community. The most important expectations are simple:

- Be safe
- Be respectful
- Protect student privacy
- Follow staff direction
- Support students in a positive way
- And most importantly... Have fun!

Volunteer Do's and Don'ts

Do

- Complete the District's approval process and have a current ICHAT before volunteering.
- Check in and out at the office and stay in your assigned area.
- Follow the direction of District staff.
- Treat students, staff, and families with respect.

- Keep all student information confidential.
- Report any safety, behavior, bullying, harassment, self-harm, or other student concern to staff.
- Ask for help when you are unsure what to do.
- Have fun and have a great Raider Day!

Don't

- Be alone with an individual student unless specifically approved and supervised.
- Discipline, physically redirect, restrain, seclude, block, or remove students.
- Discuss student information with others or post about students on social media.
- Take photos or videos of students unless specifically approved by District staff.
- Exchange personal contact information, private messages, or social media contacts with students.
- Transport, give gifts to, or contact students outside of the approved activity unless specifically authorized.
- Use your volunteer role to promote personal, political, religious, commercial, or organizational interests.
- Discuss controversial topics, religious beliefs, political issues, candidates, parties, or divisive social issues with students unless specifically authorized.
- Ignore a concern. If something does not seem right, report it to staff.

Please Sign the Volunteer Acknowledgement Form below and return to the schools main office.

Portland Public Schools

Volunteer Acknowledgment Form

1. I acknowledge that I have received and reviewed the Portland Public Schools Volunteer Handbook.
2. I understand that I am expected to follow Board policies, District guidelines, building procedures, and the direction of District staff while serving as a volunteer.
3. I understand that I must complete the District's volunteer approval process and have a current seasonal approved ICHAT on file before volunteering. I understand that ICHAT approval is only valid until the next volunteer screening season and that I must complete the process again if I wish to continue volunteering after that point.
4. I understand that student information is confidential. I agree not to share student information with others, including in conversations, text messages, email, group chats, private messages, or on social media.
5. I understand that improper disclosure of student information may violate federal and state privacy laws, including FERPA and, when applicable, HIPAA.
6. I understand that I may not take photos or videos of students unless specifically approved by District staff.
7. I understand that I may not exchange personal contact information, private messages, social media contacts, or other personal communication with students.
8. I understand that I may not initiate or engage students in discussions involving controversial topics, religious beliefs, political issues, political candidates, or personal viewpoints on divisive social issues unless specifically authorized by the District.
9. I understand that District staff are responsible for student supervision, and discipline, and that I may not discipline, restrain, seclude, physically redirect, block, or remove students.
10. I understand that I must immediately report student safety concerns, including suspected abuse or neglect, self-harm, threats of harm, bullying, harassment, or other serious concerns, to the supervising staff member or building administrator.
11. I understand that volunteer placement is determined by District needs and that the District may deny, limit, suspend, or revoke volunteer approval.
12. I understand that I am serving as a volunteer and am not an employee of the District. I am not entitled to wages, benefits, workers' compensation, health insurance, or other employee benefits.

13. I understand that I am responsible for my own personal property while volunteering.

14. I understand that if I become ill or injured while volunteering, I am responsible for any medical or related expenses, except as otherwise required by law.

Date: _____

Volunteers First & Last Name: _____

Signature: _____