SCHOOL VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

2026-2027



TABLE OF CONTENTS

SCHOOL VOLUNTEER PROGRAM FRAMEWORK 2

Who is a School Volunteer? 2

GETTING STARTED 3

School Procedures 3

Volunteer Applications 3

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES 4

IMPORTANT VOLUNTEER GUIDELINES 5

When Working with Students 5

Safety Guidelines 5

HELPING STUDENTS LEARN 6

Q's & A's 7

ADMINISTRATOR & VOLUNTEER CHECKLIST 8

VOLUNTEER APPLICATION 9

Remember to Complete the Application to Volunteer at the end of this document

School Volunteer Program Framework

So, you want to be a volunteer...

Thank you for your interest in volunteering in Glen Ellyn District 41. We are pleased to see that you have an interest in helping to support our district, school and students. Volunteers are an essential part of the ways in which we are able to foster the connection between home and school and offer additional support to many of our students throughout the school year.

Who is a School Volunteer?

A school volunteer helps to expand and enrich the students' learning experiences by working under the direction of teachers and school staff.

You should have a genuine interest in students, a commitment to your volunteer activity, regular attendance, a cooperative attitude, flexibility, and a willingness to attend training sessions as needed.

Frequently volunteers come into the school to repeatedly work with students, staff or the school as a whole. Some frequent ways in which parents volunteer are as follows:

- Guest readers/tutors
- Classroom helper
- Copying/bulletin boards
- Special programs assistance
- Art parents
- Lunchroom/recess helpers
- One-time volunteers

Volunteers who do not need to fill out the application, but still need to be screened through our security management system, would include the following:

- Occasional visitors to the school

Getting Started

If you are not yet a volunteer in our schools and would like to be, please contact your local school. You will be invited to complete the *Application to Volunteer (see Page 9/10)*; and be scanned and cleared to volunteer by Raptor, our district visitor management system. The principal or designee will make arrangements to provide an orientation on school policies and volunteer procedures.

School Procedures
Each school has specific information for the volunteer to learn. Volunteers need to know building emergency procedures, restroom locations, parking areas, absence procedures, the use of cell phones, and general regulations in the school.

Volunteer Applications
All adult volunteer applicants, including field trip chaperones, must complete an *Application to Volunteer* and wait for clearance via Raptor PRIOR to volunteering or chaperoning. The application needs to be completed accurately and in its entirety. You will be asked to renew this clearance process annually.

Health Regulations
Please do not come to the school if you are ill. This includes a general cold, fever, sore throat, or cough. Please call the school and leave a message for the teacher when you have an unforeseen absence. More notice is always appreciated. The additional time will allow the teacher to make alternate arrangements.

Attendance
Punctuality and reliability are appreciated since students are counting on you. Please inform teachers in advance of planned absences and call the school for unforeseen absences.

Appearance and Manner
Volunteers should set a good example to students by maintaining professional conduct, language and appearance.

Confidentiality
Volunteers must sign a confidentiality agreement and maintain strict confidentiality concerning information they learn about students or faculty. A misplaced comment can be devastating to a student, the family, and the volunteer program. If you have questions or concerns, talk with the teacher or principal.

Sign In/Out and Wear a Name Tag
Each time you volunteer, you will be asked to check into the office, need to be screened through our security management system and wear your name tag/ID badge, visibly, at all times.

Orientation and Training
Individual schools hold orientations early in the school year for new and returning volunteers. Volunteer opportunities will be reviewed, and school policies and procedures explained. If you are unable to attend this session, contact your school office. The school employee supervising you will provide training regarding your particular assignment.

Volunteer Opportunities

From preparing materials for a lab experiment to cleaning lunch tables or mentoring/ tutoring a student one-on-one, there is a volunteer job to suit every person's background and interest. The following is an overview of possible volunteer opportunities available within Glen Ellyn District 41. Not all of these positions are available on every school campus. Schools reserve the right to recruit volunteers only for job positions in need at their school. To help with the placement process, please consider the following:

- Would you like to work directly with students?
- Would you like to be a tutor, a classroom assistant, or an office worker?
- Do you have special talents and/or skills that would benefit music, art, drama, physical education, or an extra-curricular program?
- Would you prefer to help at school or do something from home (for example, some teachers greatly appreciate help with prepping materials/cutting things out)?
- Are you willing to help in a school other than where your child/children attend?
- How much time can you commit to volunteering?
- What days or hours do you prefer?
- Can you make a weekly commitment or are you only available occasionally?
- What experience do you have that would prepare you for your volunteer job?
- What is your motivation for volunteering?

Volunteer opportunities vary from school to school. Your school office staff can assist you with finding the right fit for you.

We thank you in advance for your interest in serving as a volunteer. Please know that there are some years where volunteers are plentiful and others when they are not. If you do not get called right away, please do not take offense. Our schools do their very best to make the volunteer process a positive one for everyone.

School Volunteer Program Framework

When Working with Students

- Volunteers are assigned only to staff members who request their services.
- Staff members reserve the right to limit the frequency and duration of volunteer time, as well as the number of parent volunteers at any given time.
- Volunteers *may not* discipline students or provide "instruction" to students regarding behavior. Discipline problems or concerns should be reported to the teacher and/or the principal.
- Volunteers should not contact parents of students to share if student was upset, or seems to not feel well, etc
- Volunteers must always be supervised when working with students. They may not supervise a classroom or give permission for a student to leave a classroom.
- Volunteers may not diagnose student weaknesses and strengths, prescribe activities for students, or evaluate student progress.
- Volunteers' discussions with teachers should not interrupt class time.
- Cell phones should not be used in the school building.
- Volunteers should set a good example for students by their manner, appearance and behavior. They should be well- groomed, appropriately dressed, and maintain professional conduct/language.
- Volunteers may not give any medication to students.
- Volunteers may not write comments on student papers.
- Comparing and criticizing staff and students is not acceptable volunteer behavior.
- Volunteers may not hold informal parent/teacher conferences.
- Volunteers may not conduct personal business at school.
- Volunteers may not take photographs of students. Under no circumstances may volunteers post or share student photographs or information acquired in their capacity as a volunteer on social networks.
- Volunteers may never touch students in any way that is aggressive, disciplinary, or sexual in nature.
- All volunteers must sign in/out and be cleared via Raptor. District 41 will provide an identifying sticker/pass that is to be visible at all times while volunteering.

Safety Guidelines

- Be aware of and monitor students' compliance with school playground regulations.
- Supervise climbing and physical activities carefully.
- Volunteers may need to closely monitor students' use of certain materials and activities pursuant to the school playground regulations. These may vary at each school depending on the playground area and the playground equipment. Please check with your school's principal.

Remember:

- Know and follow all of the school's safety rules.
- If an accident occurs, *immediately* notify a staff member.
- Never move a child involved in an accident. A member of the school staff will initiate proper procedures.
- If you are hurt or involved in an accident while serving in your volunteer capacity, you should report the incident to the school office and complete an accident report immediately.

Helping Students Learn

- 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.
- Show that you are interested in each student as a person. Listen carefully to what the student has to say.
- Students make mistakes. Assure them that this is part of learning.
- Build the student's self-confidence. Praise your student honestly and frequently.
- Ask questions that may lead students to the answer instead of telling them the answer.
- Let students try new methods, even if you know an easier way.
- Give the students as much time as they need to understand new ideas. Be patient!
- Be reliable. Students will be disappointed when you are absent. Show you care by calling when you can't go to school when expected.

Students Learn By:

- Doing - not by passively observing
- Asking questions and searching for answers to their questions
- Discovering - using all their senses, whenever possible
- Experimenting - sorting and combining objects
- Building confidence in themselves

Communicating with Students:

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

- Be sure the students understand what you're saying. We sometimes use words they do not comprehend.
- Keep your voice as low as possible. The students will get louder as your voice increases in volume.
- Positive statements greatly influence students' attitudes about themselves and contribute to their success-building experiences.

Some expressions to boost a student's self-image:

"I like the way you're working."
"That's right! Good for you."
"Good thinking."
"I'm very proud of the way you worked today."
"It looks like you put a lot of thinking into this."
“That’s respectful behavior. Thank you!”
“Good job!”
“Awesome work!”

Questions & Answers

How do I become a volunteer?

Contact your school office or classroom teacher and inform them of your desire to volunteer. An application will need to be completed. Once your application is completed, approved and you pass the Raptor check, you will be ready to assist in the school.

I do not have teaching experience. Can I still volunteer?

Yes! A teaching background is not required because volunteers work under the direction of the professional staff. Qualifications for a school volunteer include a personal desire to help, sincere interest in students, ability to follow school procedures and policies, and a willingness to make a definite time commitment. The teacher or supervisor will provide any necessary training.

I'd like to volunteer, but I can't offer my services on a regular basis. Can I still volunteer?

Yes! Glen Ellyn District 41 values and appreciates any and all volunteers who dedicate their time to help.

What do I do about student discipline?

Disciplinary action is the sole responsibility of the school staff. Volunteers do not enforce discipline. While volunteers may request that students work according to the rules in the classroom they are not authorized to provide further instruction regarding behavior or discipline to the students, as they may not be aware of the full details regarding any situation. Immediately notify the teacher and/or supervisor if there is a discipline issue.

My friends and neighbors will ask me about my role as a volunteer in the school. What may I say?

We want you to talk about your child's school and your involvement. However, you may have access to information regarding other students that must be treated as confidential and not disclosed. Please refer to the confidentiality agreement for more information.

Administrator and Volunteer Checklist

I have or will:

- ❑ talked with the school office
- ❑ completed an *Application to Volunteer*
- ❑ waited for my application to be processed and cleared
- ❑ participated in an orientation/training session
- ❑ been assigned to a teacher or a supervisor of a project/activity
- ❑ a specific place and time to volunteer

I know:

- ❑ the school layout, parking, and facilities available
- ❑ the school and classroom discipline policies
- ❑ classroom policies, procedures, and rules
- ❑ emergency procedures
- ❑ where and when to report to volunteer
- ❑ that I must check in each time I volunteer and be cleared through the Raptor system
- ❑ what to do if I must be absent
- ❑ what to do if I am assigned to volunteer with a substitute teacher
- ❑ where instructional materials/tools are kept
- ❑ what is expected of me

Application to Volunteer - this link will take you to the required Application. Once submitted and approved, you will be contacted by the building principal with further instructions.