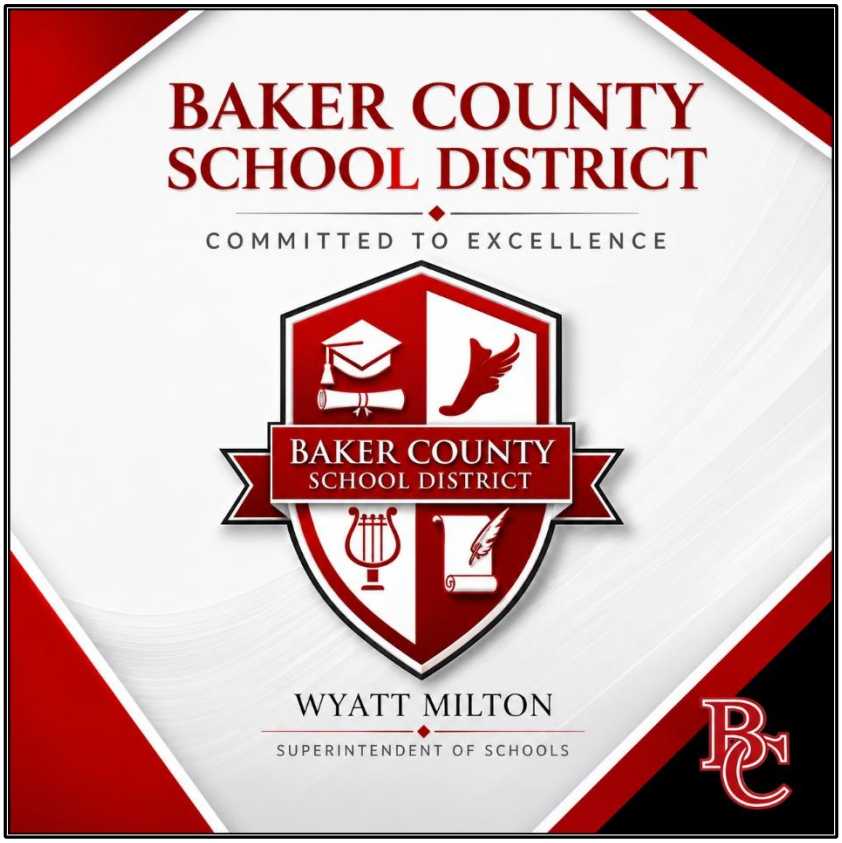
Volunteer Handbook
2026 – 2027 School Year



The Baker County School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, marital status or genetic information in its educational programs, services or activities or in its hiring or employment practices. The district also provides equal access to its facilities to the Boy Scouts and other patriotic youth groups as required by the Boy Scouts of America Equal Access Act.

The district prohibits discrimination in the terms and conditions of employment, and in access to educational programs and activities, and prohibits harassment of any individual or group on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, disability, marital status, sexual orientation or genetic information (and other protected classes included in the district's nondiscrimination policies).

Lack of English language skills will not be a barrier to admission and participation. The district may assess each student's ability to benefit from specific programs through placement tests and counseling, and if necessary, will provide services or referrals to better prepare students for successful participation.

If you have concerns regarding denial of admission to or participation in any of the above programs, please contact Thomas Hill, Equity Coordinator, at the Baker County School District Office, 392 South Boulevard East, Macclenny, Florida; Phone – (904) 259-0427; E-Mail address is equity-coordinator@bakerk12.org. Title IX Coordinator – Thomas Hill (904) 259-0427; Title II Coordinator – Carrie Dopson (904) 259-0406; Section 504 Coordinator – Alice Schmitges (904) 259-7825.

Purpose

This document has been created to facilitate the Baker County School District's implementation of SB 676 as well as other legislative revisions which govern the volunteer background screening process for school volunteers. Volunteers are generally considered any nonpaid person appointed by the Baker County School Board, including but not limited to parents, senior citizens, students, and other community members.

The following section of this handbook delineates three categories of participation for prospective volunteers: visitor, school volunteer working under the direct supervision of staff, and school volunteer who is cleared for the supervision of students. Volunteers should determine their level of participation in school activities in order to decide which, if any, background screening process to complete.

For additional information beyond the contents of this document, please contact Mr. Thomas Hill at thomas.hill@bakerk12.org or (904) 259-6251.

Level of Participation

Visitor

A visitor is considered a family or community member who:

- is attending a school event, presentation, party, etc.
- is eating lunch with their own child or family member.
- is attending a parent conference.

The previous examples are not intended to be a comprehensive list of activities.

School Volunteer Working under the Direct Supervision of Staff (Level 1 Volunteer)

School Volunteer Working under the Direct Supervision of Staff (Level 1 Volunteer) is a family or community member who:

- attends a field trip with his/her child.
- listens to individual students or small groups read aloud to practice fluency and comprehension. The teacher would provide the reading materials and specific goals for the session.
- works with a small group of students on a specific task assigned by the teacher, such as practicing math facts with flashcards, completing a worksheet, or working on a writing prompt.
- provides extra help to a student who may be struggling with a particular concept, as directed by the teacher.
- oversees a station or center in the classroom where students are engaged in a specific activity, ensuring they stay on task and understand the directions.

- assists the teacher with tasks like making photocopies, laminating, cutting out materials for a craft, or assembling learning packets.
- helps to organize the classroom library, sort student work into folders, or tidy up learning areas.
- assists the teacher in creating or putting up classroom displays and bulletin boards.
- helps to set up, serve food, and supervise activities during classroom celebrations or special events, all under the teacher's guidance.
- assists staff in the cafeteria by helping students open containers, cleaning up spills, and encouraging positive behavior.
- assists the librarian or media specialist during the school's book fair with tasks like setting up displays, helping students find books, and processing payments.
- helps to organize students, ensure they are ready for their photos, and assisting the photographers as needed.
- mans a station at an event like a field day, school carnival, or fun run. This could involve explaining the rules of a game, keeping score, or handing out water, all while under the supervision of school staff.

The previous examples are not intended to be a comprehensive list of activities. The key criteria is that the volunteer work of Level 1 individuals does not constitute providing supervision or being alone with students.

School Volunteer Who Is Cleared for the Supervision of Students (Level 2 Volunteer)

School Volunteer Who Is Cleared for the Supervision of Students (Level 2 Volunteer) is a family member or community member who:

- chaperones a field trip. This means that the volunteer is providing supervision for a group of children on the trip.
- volunteers to coach or assist in the coaching of District athletic teams. This includes helping with practices, traveling with the team, and supervising student-athletes before, during, and after games.
- has been assigned to lead a small group of students through a museum, theme park, or other field trip location without a teacher being present with their specific group at all times.
- chaperones multi-day trips, such as band competitions, academic team events, or trips to destinations like St. Augustine or Washington D.C. All volunteer chaperones must have Level 2 clearance. They assume 24-hour responsibility for student safety and conduct.
- mentors and/or tutors one-on-one with a student in a designated but potentially less public space, such as a breakout room, a corner of the library, or a guidance office. This allows for focused academic help or mentorship without the constant presence of a teacher.
- leads or assists with an after-school club (e.g., Beta Club, Youth Power, First Lego Robotics Club) where they may be the sole adult supervisor for periods of time.
- monitors a specific area during a school event without direct faculty oversight. For example, supervising a station at a school carnival or field day, monitoring a hallway during a school dance, or overseeing the student section at a football game.

- helps with drama, band, or chorus programs in roles that might take them away from the direct supervision of the teacher, such as managing a group of students backstage during a performance or overseeing a sectional practice in a separate room.
- manages a concession stand or ticket booth where student helpers are involved, which includes overseeing both the students and the handling of cash.
- performs duties in the front office or library that could potentially place them in unsupervised contact with students who are also in that area.

The previous examples are not intended to be a comprehensive list of activities. In every case, while direct supervision by a teacher may not be required, the Level 2 volunteer is still acting under the authority of the school principal and must adhere to all Board policies and procedures. They are chosen for these roles because they have passed the rigorous screening necessary to be entrusted with greater responsibility for student safety and well-being.

Policies and Procedures

Volunteers are valuable assets to our schools. Volunteers might be parents, grandparents, students, retired educators, business partners, or other community members. They can share their expertise with students, provide an extra set of eyes and hands for teachers, assist students with academics, chaperone field trips, answer phones, and convey to students that everybody cares about their education.

Volunteers *are* representatives of the school and the Board. The following guidelines have been established by the Superintendent and should be shared with volunteers and staff working with volunteers:

- School volunteers work only at the request/discretion of the school principal.
- The Raptor and/or Centegix system will be used to screen volunteers and log their time on campus. Therefore, ALL volunteers must log in AND out with each visit. All visitors on any District school site will be scanned using a government-issued identification.
- The school retains the right to accept or reject the services of a volunteer.
- All volunteers must complete a yearly volunteer form.
- Level 2 volunteers will be required by the principal to complete the volunteer application form that includes fingerprinting.
- Volunteers who work one-on-one with students or who may not be under the direct supervision of an employee are subject to background checks in compliance with the Jessica Lunsford Act and will need to obtain Level 2 clearance.
- Florida Retirement System retirees should see the following section, “Florida Retirement System (FRS) Retiree Volunteer Program.” The obligation for Florida Retirement System retirees to verify their eligibility to serve as a volunteer is on each individual volunteer.
- The school volunteer coordinator should maintain records of volunteer service hours, duties, and training for the annual report to the Florida DOE.

Approval/Non-approval information will be given to the site for which you have applied to volunteer. They will contact you with the information.

The Baker County School Board reserves the right to deny volunteer privileges to individuals and to re-check criminal history as necessary.

Florida Retirement System (FRS) Retiree Volunteer Program

The Baker County School District supports the participation of eligible Florida Retirement System (FRS) retirees as volunteers in accordance with Section 121.091(15), Florida Statutes. During the first twelve (12) calendar months following retirement, an FRS retiree may volunteer for the District only if all statutory requirements are satisfied.

To participate in the Retiree Volunteer Program, the following conditions must be met:

- The retiree must have fully terminated employment before beginning volunteer service.
- Prior to retirement, there must not have been any agreement, understanding, or expectation that the retiree would return to provide volunteer services for the District.
- Volunteer service must be civic, charitable, or humanitarian in nature and may not replace the duties of a paid employee.
- The retiree may not receive compensation of any kind for volunteer service, including salary, stipends, bonuses, gift cards, cash equivalents, or any other form of remuneration.
- Volunteers are not eligible to receive employee benefits. However, the District may provide items necessary to perform volunteer duties, such as identification badges, safety equipment, uniforms, or other required materials.
- During the first twelve (12) months following retirement, volunteer service may not exceed twenty percent (20%) of the number of hours the retiree was expected to work each week immediately prior to retirement.
- The volunteer controls his or her own schedule, including the number of hours volunteered and the assignments accepted.
- Volunteer duties must remain clearly distinguishable from the responsibilities of District employees and may not be used to circumvent reemployment restrictions.
- The District and the retiree shall maintain documentation demonstrating compliance with all applicable statutory requirements. Such records shall be made available upon request by the Florida Retirement System or other authorized governmental agency.

Participation in the Retiree Volunteer Program does not exempt an individual from any Baker County School District volunteer requirements. FRS retirees must complete the applicable Florida Department of Revenue Retiree Volunteer Application (https://floridarevenue.com/Documents/1_Volunteer%20Application.pdf), District volunteer application process, satisfy all required background screening requirements for the level of volunteer service they will perform, comply with all School Board policies and administrative

procedures, and sign in and out through the District's visitor management system each time they volunteer.

The responsibility for ensuring compliance with Florida Retirement System reemployment and volunteer restrictions rests with the individual retiree. Any retiree with questions regarding eligibility should consult the Florida Retirement System or the District's Office of Human Resources before beginning volunteer service.

Determine Your Volunteer Level

The District has created the three classifications to help clarify who needs a background check, what type of background check is required, and whether the individual must be monitored by a staff member:

- **Visitors** — No volunteer form required. Visitors must be monitored by a staff member at all times and follow the process to sign in and sign out through the school's front office.
    - This process includes being screened through the Raptor VisitorSafe and/or Centegix Visitor Management System.
- **Volunteer (Level 1)** — A background check of Level 1 and an approved volunteer application are required every year.
    - Volunteer (Level 1) MUST always be under the direct supervision or line-of-sight of a BCSD employee.*
    - Level 1 volunteers must obtain clearance through the Raptor VisitorSafe and/or Centegix Visitor Management System each time they enter the campus or volunteer.
    - Approval will be given to the school/site from the District's Office of Human Resources.
- **Volunteer (Level 2)** — An annual approved volunteer application is required. In addition, upon initial application and every five years after, a Level 2 fingerprinting background check is required to conduct a State and National background clearance. Fingerprints are valid for five years.
    - Volunteers (Level 2) are NOT required to be under the direct supervision or line-of-sight of a Board employee at all times.
    - Potential volunteers will be notified by the school if fingerprint registration is necessary based on the type of field trip or activity.
    - **Fingerprinting is done at the cost of the volunteer**. Fingerprints are only required every five years. To obtain and renew the Level 2 clearance, please register as a volunteer and follow directions for the Level 2 process.
    - Level 2 volunteers must obtain clearance through the Raptor VisitorSafe and/or Centegix Visitor Management System each time they enter the campus or volunteer.

*In the event of a "field trip" or off-campus activity, it is understood that due to the size and nature of certain venues that Level 1 Volunteers may not always be under the direct supervision of an employee. In these cases, the volunteer should only be providing supervision for their own family member.

Identification & Sign In

Volunteers are provided name tags upon checking in at the front office of the school. The identification must be worn at all times when volunteering. Volunteers are required to sign in and out through Raptor and/or Centegix at the front desk in the main school/site office. A government-issued ID is required (driver's license, passport, military ID, etc.). Your cooperation enables us to locate you in case of an emergency.

Volunteer Responsibilities

Volunteers Must:

- Be screened through the Raptor and/or Centegix system each time they enter campus or volunteer.
- Always work under the supervision of a teacher or administrator unless the volunteer has received Level 2 clearance.
- Show a government-issued photo ID and sign in and out in the school's front office for each visit/event. This is important for the following reasons:
    - Our students' safety and campus security are of the utmost importance. This supports knowing who is on campus at all times.
    - Individual volunteers may be recognized for their dedication and service to our schools.
    - Schools are eligible for annual state awards based on their volunteer hours.
    - Your school and the District would like the opportunity to thank you for your service.
- Maintain strict confidentiality with all school or classroom information to which they may have access.
- Follow School Board policy on personal communication devices and the use of Social Media (BCSD Board Policy 6.430).
- Serve as positive role models.
- Dress professionally and appropriately for the work environment.
- Work within all guidelines and policies established by the Superintendent and School Board.
- Have a clear understanding of all state and District instructional practices and policies relevant to volunteer responsibilities.
- Follow staff directions in the event of a fire drill, lockdown, or evacuation.

Volunteers May NOT:

- Establish educational objectives or evaluate student progress.
- Discuss students or teachers, or classroom information outside of the school setting or in the school setting with people whom the information does not pertain.
- Be left alone with a child or with a class unless they have Level 2 clearance.
- Take pictures or video of students (other than their own) or BCSD employees.
- Have individual contact with students outside of school hours. This includes social media contact.
- Give medication to students.
- Discipline students. The volunteer should refer the matter to the supervising teacher.
- Engage in communication with students regarding personal religious or political beliefs.
- Have access to the files or permanent records of students.
- Make decisions regarding the relevance of certain activities or procedures to the attainment of instructional objectives.
- Have access to permanent student records, student grades, or any other confidential materials or information.
- Conduct duties or tasks that belong to teachers, such as grading papers.
- Bring preschool or other children who are not registered at the school where they volunteer.
- Use cell phones except in case of emergency or urgent need. Your attention should be on students at all times unless otherwise directed.

Protecting Our Students & Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse

Section 39.201 (1)(a), Florida Statutes, states: A person is required to report immediately to the central abuse hotline established in s. 39.101, in writing, through a call to the toll-free telephone number, or through electronic reporting, if he or she knows, or has reasonable cause to suspect, that any of the following has occurred:

a. Child abuse, abandonment, or neglect by a parent or caregiver, which includes, but is not limited to, when a child is abused, abandoned, or neglected by a parent, legal custodian, caregiver, or other person responsible for the child's welfare or when a child is in need of supervision and care and has no parent, legal custodian, or responsible adult relative immediately known and available to provide such supervision and care.

b. Child abuse by an adult other than a parent, legal custodian, caregiver, or other person responsible for the child's welfare. The central abuse hotline must immediately electronically transfer such reports to the appropriate county sheriff's office.

Any person who knows, or has reasonable cause to suspect, that a child is the victim of sexual abuse or juvenile sexual abuse shall report such knowledge or suspicion to the central abuse hotline, including if the alleged incident involves a child who is in the custody of or under the protective supervision of the department.

Abuse Hotline: 1-800-962-2873

Report Online: ABUSE ONLINE REPORT LINK

Other Important Information

- School volunteers who witness bullying (teasing, social exclusion, threats, stalking, physical violence, sexual, religious, or racial harassment, public humiliation) or destruction of property must report the incident immediately to school staff.
- Volunteers may NOT have individual contact with students outside of school hours including social media contact.
- Volunteers do NOT take pictures or videos of students without appropriate staff permission.
- Tobacco, Vaping, Alcohol & Illegal Drug use are prohibited anywhere, anytime, by anyone on campus during all school-sponsored events, whether they occur before, after or during regular school hours
- If a potential volunteer is uncomfortable providing his/her Social Security Number electronically or in print form, the volunteer may print and complete the volunteer form and submit it in person to the Baker County School District Title I Office, located at 523 West Minnesota Avenue, Macclenny, Florida. This option allows a volunteer to provide information directly to a single staff member rather than submitting it online or in print form.
- **IMPORTANT NOTE:** There are certain individuals who are classified as "exempt volunteers" because they have already undergone a Level 2 background screening. Exempt volunteers include: District staff, law enforcement officers, college students screened through the District's Office of Human Resources, and any individual currently screened through the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) Clearinghouse.

Required Fees

- **Visitors** = No Cost.
- **Volunteer (Level 1)** = No Cost. Annual Application Required.
- **Volunteer (Level 2)** = $80 (Approximate and subject to change costs are $80 for the state and company fingerprint fees to complete the required background checks via Fast Fingerprint and AHCA online clearinghouse). Fingerprints are valid for five years. Annual Volunteer Application Form is required yearly at no charge. Volunteers are only charged for fingerprinting or badge replacement.

School Board Policy 3.130

School volunteers shall be subject to background screenings before volunteering that may include a criminal history background check and fingerprinting with the costs paid as determined by the District. Volunteers who will be working with students without direct supervision from school personnel, whether on or off campus—including during day trips or overnight trips—must meet Level 2 screening requirements found in Section 435.04, Florida Statutes. All volunteer athletic coaches are required to have a Level 2 screening.

Volunteers working under the direct supervision of school personnel shall, at a minimum, undergo background screenings to include:

(1) a search of the volunteer's name and/or other identifying information through databases approved by the Superintendent, which may include, but are not limited to, the Dru Sjodin National Sex Offender Public Website and the registration information regarding sexual predators and sexual offenders maintained by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE), and

(2) a search of the (CCIS) Comprehensive Case Information System database for any criminal history.

Additional Volunteer Program Stipulations

- No person registered as a sexual predator or sexual offender on the FDLE database shall be allowed to volunteer in any school or at any school function.
- No person registered on CCIS who has an open criminal case shall be allowed to volunteer in any school or at any school function.
- In the event of a “field trip” or off-campus activity, it is understood that due to the size and nature of certain venues that Level 1 Volunteers may not always be under the direct supervision of an employee. In these cases, the volunteer should only be providing supervision for their own family member.
- A person who has been arrested for and is awaiting final disposition of, has been found guilty of, regardless of adjudication, or entered a plea of nolo contendere or guilty to, or has been adjudicated delinquent and the record has not been sealed or expunged for, any offense listed in Section 435.04(2) or (3), Florida Statutes, shall not be eligible to be a school volunteer.
- A school volunteer is any nonpaid individual who gives his/her time to a school or school staff member while performing assigned duties. Duties assigned to school volunteers shall be consistent with Florida Statutes and State Board of Education rules.
- The school principal and each staff member who is assigned a school volunteer shall be responsible for assigning duties to school volunteers that are consistent with Florida Statutes, State Board of Education Rules, and School Board rules.
- Pursuant to 1012.315 F.S., applicants having been convicted of a crime involving moral turpitude shall not be employed (volunteer) in any position requiring direct contact with students. Otherwise, an applicant shall not be disqualified from employment (volunteering) solely because of a prior conviction for a crime. Nevertheless, a person

may be denied employment (volunteering) pursuant to 1012.32(2)(a) and 1012.465 F.S., by reason of a prior conviction if the crime was a felony or first-degree misdemeanor and directly related to the position of employment (volunteering) sought.

- As provided by Florida State School Board Rules, the principal of the school shall ensure that each volunteer and the supervising teacher or coordinator possess a clear understanding of state and Board rules and policies relevant to volunteer responsibilities.