Eastern Lebanon County School District

VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

Last edited October 2026

Welcome!

Thank you for your interest in serving the ELCO School District as a volunteer. We appreciate your decision to volunteer your time and talents to the students of ELCO.

School volunteers enhance the educational experience in so many ways:

- By helping to ensure that vital programs like music, sports and the arts are available in the school
- By working as the extra hands, ears, and hearts of teachers whose responsibilities extend to many students
- By working to ensure student safety during educational field trips
- By working to ensure the smooth operation of many school activities, we sometimes take for granted – for example, concessions at sporting events, or equipment management and band competitions.
- By listening, caring, and supporting the most important person in any school – the student.

This booklet is designed to help ensure that your volunteer experience at ELCO School District is positive. It contains a lot of information about district procedures and policies that affect you in your volunteer role, as well as tips and ideas that might make your experience more valuable.

Please let us know if there is anything we can do to help you as you give of yourself to our number one priority – our students!

Who is a Volunteer?

Volunteers fall into two categories. If you have any questions about whether or not you are considered a volunteer, please contact the building principal. A volunteer must be at least eighteen years of age.

DIRECT CONTACT:

Direct contact volunteers include any volunteer who has direct contact with students. **Direct contact is defined as the care, supervision, guidance, or control of children**. Even if a volunteer is asked to have direct contact with a student(s) one time, he/she must meet the volunteer requirements.

Examples: Field Trip Chaperone, Parent/Guardian who rides with an athletic team as a group chaperone, Overnight camping trip or field trips, Coaching Volunteer.

ROUTINE CONTACT:

Routine Volunteers may or may not be having direct contact with students, but this person volunteers in the district more than once each year.

Examples: Parent/Guardian who volunteers in his/her child's classroom a few times each year, Musical or Band volunteers, Office volunteers.

NOT A VOLUNTEER:

A parent/Guardian who spends one day at the school to help with an activity but does not have direct contact with the students (not responsible for care, supervision, guidance, or control).

Examples: Career Day Speaker, Classroom visit (1X/year), Veteran's Day Lunch (or similar), attending an athletic event or performance.

PROCEDURES FOR BECOMING AN APPROVED ELCO VOLUNTEER

All information below can be found on the ELCO Volunteering Page

1. Complete and sign the "Volunteer Application Form" and submit with your completed volunteer packet.

2. Submit requests for the following clearances to the appropriate agencies - Links to all resources and forms can be found on the ELCO Volunteer Website:
    - **Act 34** - Pennsylvania Criminal History Background Check
    - **Act 151** - Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance
    - **Act 114** - Federal Criminal History Fingerprint Check - INDIVIDUALS WHO **HAVE NOT** RESIDED IN THE STATE OF PENNSYLVANIA CONTINUOUSLY FOR A PERIOD OF 10 CONSECUTIVE YEARS BEFORE REGISTERING WILL NEED TO OBTAIN AN FBI CRIMINAL HISTORY RECORD (select Pennsylvania Dept. of Education).
    - **Volunteer Disclosure Statement Form** - Those who **HAVE** resided in the State of Pennsylvania for a period of 10 consecutive years or more at the time of registration DO NOT need to obtain an FBI Fingerprint Check but must instead complete and submit the Volunteer Disclosure Statement Form.
    - **Act 126** - Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse - On-Line Training. Submit Certificate of Completion.
    - **PLEASE NOTE**: Per Policy 916: All clearances must be less than sixty (60) months old when submitted. The volunteer shall pay the costs for all clearances, if any costs are incurred.

3. Beginning September 1, 2019, all new applications for volunteers require approval by the Board of School Directors. Once your paperwork has been received by the District, the Board of School Directors will need to approve your request to be a volunteer in the ELCO School District.

4. Once approved, please bring your valid PA driver's license to the building you will be volunteering in to get your Volunteer Lanyard. At the beginning of each new school year, please bring your PA driver's license to be re-scanned in order that a current school year badge can be produced.

Your Volunteer Application, and all required clearances and trainings are valid for sixty (60) months from the issue or verification date of the clearance or training. You, the volunteer, are responsible for the renewal of all required volunteer paperwork, clearances, and trainings. Non-compliance with the law requires that we do not permit volunteers to work in our buildings. In the event a volunteer does not keep any or all required volunteer documentation current, the volunteer will be removed from the database, beginning on the due date of the earliest clearances due. **Volunteers who require renewal must be approved by the Board.**

ONLY COMPLETED PACKETS WILL BE ACCEPTED

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General District Policies Concerning Volunteers

ELCO Volunteer Requirements:

1. The ELCO School District School Board shall approve all volunteers.
2. If, under the pertinent laws or regulations, a criminal history/child abuse report would preclude a person from being hired as an employee, that person may not be a volunteer.
3. Volunteers shall not be asked to assume the professional responsibilities of the school staff. Volunteers may provide assistance that is supportive, when under the direction of a staff member.
4. Volunteers will not be permitted to directly administer student discipline, nor will they be permitted to administer first aid, except in the case of an emergency.
5. The building administrator or designee shall assume general authority and responsibility over all volunteers serving at the site.
6. Under no circumstances shall a volunteer be considered an employee of the district. A volunteer shall receive no wages from the district.

EXEMPTION:

Volunteers exempted from this requirement would include members of Booster and Parent Organizations who are exclusively involved in fund-raising efforts off the school property.

THE VOLUNTEER POSITION IS NOT A RIGHT, BUT RATHER A PRIVILEDGE THAT IS CONFERRED BY THE BOARD AND THE ADMINISTRATION. AS SUCH, ANY VOLUNTEER POSITION MAY BE ELIMINATED AT ANY TIME FOR ANY REASON. IN ADDITION, ANY VOLUNTEER MAY BE REMOVED FROM A VOLUNTEER POSITION FOR ANY REASON.

Adherence to Laws and ELCO Policies and Regulations:

Volunteers shall meet any standard that may be established by federal, state, or local government, or by the board or administration, from time to time. The volunteer must agree to be bound by all applicable privacy laws and regulations. In addition, the volunteer shall adhere to all rules and regulations and administrative guidelines governing the conduct of the district's professional employees.

Please familiarize yourself with the following school board policies. These policies will also apply to district approved volunteers when participating in volunteer activities.

- Policy 916– Volunteers
- Policy 323 – Tobacco and Vaping Products
- Policy 824 – Maintaining Professional Adult/Student Boundaries
- Policy 351 – Controlled Substance Abuse

Note: All policies can be found on the school district website.

Act 191 of the Pennsylvania Legislature of 1988 24 P.S. 5-527 requires that any employee of the ELCO School District who is convicted of the delivery of a controlled substance or convicted of the possession of a controlled substance with the intent to deliver shall be terminated from his or her employment with the district (no matter when the violation occurred). The same policy will be applied to volunteers.

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GENERAL VOLUNTEER INFORMATION

Confidentiality:
It is expected that matters of confidential information or materials about students, staff, or other volunteers or school district business will be maintained as confidential by anyone who may become aware of such information.

Accident Reports:
Any accident involving a student, employee or volunteer that occurs on school property must be reported to the school office using the appropriate district accident report forms. Such forms are needed for prevention of future accidents, regardless of insurance coverage or liability issues. Accident report forms can be secured from the building secretaries.

Transportation:
District insurance does not cover volunteers transporting students in their own vehicles. In the interest of student safety, volunteers may not transport students in their own vehicles.

Fire and Emergency Procedures:
In case of fire, use the following guidelines for reporting the fire:

1. Ring the emergency fire bell by pulling the lever in the fire alarm box located nearest you.
2. Follow the direction of the staff liaison concerning fire drill evacuation rules and procedures.
3. Individuals with limited mobility (crutches, wheelchairs, etc.) may require individual attention. If necessary, you may be in a position to assist. ASK for extra help if needed!
4. Building re-entry – everyone must remain outside the building until notified by the authorities to re-enter.

Threats or Other Emergencies:
In the event of other emergencies, the district has established certain procedures to be followed by the administration and staff. Follow the direction of the district employees regarding your actions during these emergencies. In the absence of a district employee, you may be in a situation to take actions to protect students and staff. Become familiar with the emergency procedures for each school building in which you will volunteer.

VOLUNTEERING WITH STUDENTS

- Be sure the student knows your name – establish in the beginning how they are to address you. (You may want to check with the classroom teacher as to what is normally done in the school)
- A student's name is VERY important. Make every effort to remember the names of the students you work with.
- Remember that you are volunteering to support ALL students, not just your student.
- Demonstrate your interest in the students by asking them about their activities and LISTENING!
- Help build students self-confidence by pointing out the improvement you see in their work, etc...
- Even when helping to correct a student's work, try to start the conversation by praising their hard work.
- Discuss student behavior and/or progress ONLY with the teacher.
- Make sure you always leave the students on a positive and friendly note.
- Keep in mind that students will model the behaviors they see adults displaying- whether that adult is a staff person or volunteer.
- Common sense and cool heads are always the best in any situation.

VOLUNTEERS MUST:

- Visit the main office when you arrive and when you leave. Be sure to follow all sign-in and sign-out procedures established by the building.
- ALWAYS wear the volunteer lanyard while serving as a volunteer.
- Follow the direction of district staff and administration.
- Wear appropriate attire.
- Be reliable. Call if you cannot be at the school.
- Maintain confidentiality. Remember that anything overheard concerning students or staff should never leave the building.
- Keep in mind that you are here to support teachers, not replace them. Please refer to the classroom teacher for his/her preferred method of dealing with day-to-day situations.
- Remember – if you don't know – ASK! We will be glad to help you.
- Maintain professional boundaries with students and staff.
- Refrain from being alone with a student in a location that is out of sight from other students or adults.
- Report suspected child abuse or neglect to ChildLine.

VOLUNTEERS MAY NOT:

- Discipline a student.
- Evaluate a student's learning.
- Discuss school matters away from the classroom.
- Conduct activities for which they are not adequately trained by school district staff.
- Use foul language or speak in a way that is disrespectful to students or staff.
- Possess tobacco products, weapons, alcohol, or drugs while on school property.
- Use ELCO School District property for personal purposes.
- Transport students in personal vehicles.
- Promote political parties, candidates, religious doctrines, or beliefs.
- Engage in behaviors that are inappropriate with students, including engaging with students on social media.

RECOGNIZING AND REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE

Recognizing and Reporting Suspected Child Abuse Training

All persons having direct contact with school children should be trained as mandated reporters and understand the procedure to report reasonable suspicion of child abuse. For ELCO Volunteers, the district is required to offer this training.

Free Training Certification

- The online training takes approximately **three (3) hours** to complete. Individuals do not need to complete the training in one sitting. The system is designed to allow you the option of competing the training over multiple periods of time.

- To register for a free online training, go to the Pennsylvania Child Resource Center website (https://www.reportabusepa.pitt.edu/) and click the registration button. This will take you to a New User registration page. Please select "NO" when you are asked if you are licensed or applying for a license through one of the following boards. After submitting your information, the Pennsylvania Child Resource Center will send you an email with your Username and Password.
- It is best to close your browser after registration is complete. Then restart your browser to login. Google Chrome and Firefox browsers work the best. This training must be done on a computer and will not work on a tablet or mobile device.
- After you have completed the training, print the certificate that is available on the last page.

Volunteer Procedures for Reporting Suspected Child Abuse

If child abuse is suspected and/or a student discloses abuse, it must immediately be reported to ChildLine. There are two methods for reporting. The steps for each are outlined below:

VERBAL REPORTING VIA CALL TO CHILDLINE:

1. Obtain blank copies of forms CY-47 and WSSD Child Abuse Reporting Cover Sheet, which can be obtained from a school nurse, counselor, or building administrator.
2. Complete form CY-47 in its entirety, taking special care when completing the section describing the injuries and documenting where marks are observed.
3. Building administration will assist you in calling ChildLine at 800-932-0313 and making a report. Ensure that all blanks in the "submitted via telephone" section of the WSSD Child Abuse Reporting Cover Sheet are completely filled in.
4. Fax form CY-47 to the county where suspected abuse occurred. If suspected abuse occurred in another county, ask the ChildLine representative the county's fax number.
5. Give the completed form CY-47 and any notes related to the report to building administration.

ELECTRONIC REPORTING VIA CHILD WELFARE PORTAL:

1. Log onto https://www.compass.dhs.pa.gov/cwis/ - /public. Prior to submitting an online report, the person making the report must set up an account. Once an account is set up and the user is logged in, directions for "Create Abuse Referral" should be followed.
2. The ChildLine Report of Suspected Abuse and Neglect template should be completed and submitted. Print a copy of this form.
3. Submission of referral generates a confirmation email that should be printed.
4. The completed Childline Report of Suspected Abuse and Neglect template and any notes and confirmation email are to be given to the building administration.