

Sparta CUSD #140



Volunteer Handbook

You give but little when you
give of your possessions.

It is when you give of yourself
that you truly give.



Kahlil Gilbran

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Welcome

I would like to personally thank you for serving as a volunteer in Sparta CUSD #140. We are grateful for your commitment and interest in the lives of the young people in our community.

Your contributions enrich the student experience and help students to reach their full potential, while supporting our teachers and staff. The time that you spend volunteering with a young person has a huge impact on his or her self-esteem, behavior and academic achievement. Volunteers help us build a strong foundation for our students as they continue their education and select a career path.

This handbook will help you make a smooth transition into your volunteer job, sharing with you an overview of the school volunteer program and the variety of opportunities that you may choose to pursue.

Volunteering is evidence of strong community support. As a district, we feel privileged to enjoy such strong support. Your actions serve as a fine example of the positive contributions individuals can make to public education.

Sincerely,

Chris Miesner
Superintendent
Sparta CUSD #140

Who Can Volunteer?

We welcome and encourage anyone who cares about children and education to consider volunteering their time to our district.

Volunteers may include parents, grandparents, neighbors, community members, relatives, and friends. The school district utilizes volunteers in a variety of capacities including field trip chaperones, classroom helpers, office/administrative work, etc.

We encourage anyone interested in volunteering to contact the school district for more information.

Volunteer Qualities

Our district looks for volunteers who:

- ◆ Are of good moral character and will serve as a positive role model for our students
- ◆ Have a great personality that will get along with administration, staff members, students, and parents
- ◆ Possess the patience and understanding required to work with students
- ◆ Have a desire to motivate children and to help them succeed in school
- ◆ Are dependable and reliable



Volunteer Program

Below is a list of just a few of the volunteer program goals:

- ♦ Assist teachers and staff in providing more individualized and enriching instruction to students.
- ♦ Increase the student's motivation for learning
- ♦ Enrich the school district's children's experiences beyond what is normally available in schools through the unique resources that can be contributed by volunteers.
- ♦ Assist teachers with many non-teaching duties and tasks
- ♦ Provide an opportunity for interested community members to participate effectively in school volunteer programs.
- ♦ Strengthen school-community relations through positive participation
- ♦ Build an understanding of how schools work among the community, thus stimulating a large volume of involvement in the total educational process.



Rewards of Volunteering

We know you will enjoy your volunteer experience. By sharing your time with our students and staff, you will:

- ♦ Be given the opportunity to use your skills and talents
- ♦ Gain a better understanding of how children learn
- ♦ Know the work you are doing directly affects the quality of education for the children of our community
- ♦ Have the opportunity to learn valuable new skills that you might utilize in future endeavors.

Volunteering can be an exciting, growing, enjoyable experience. It is truly gratifying to serve a cause, practice one's ideals, work with people, solve problems, see benefits, and know one had a hand in them. -- *Harriet Naylor*

Jobs Available to

As a volunteer you may be qualified to volunteer for a variety of positions. The positions for which we accept volunteers include:

Tutors: A tutor may work one-on-one with a student, or with small groups of students, who need to have reinforcement work completed on basic skills in an academic subject.

Mentors: Mentors typically work one-on-one with a student. Their major task is to motivate the student to stay focused and stay in school. Through this process of setting short-term goals and serving as a role model, volunteers provide encouragement and friendship to a student needing to build his/her self-esteem.

Classroom Assistant: Volunteers work closely with classroom teachers and staff, assisting in various projects, keeping records, preparing instructional materials and interacting with students. Duties in the elementary school may include telling stories, reading with children, or preparing bulletin boards. Duties in the junior high and high school may include work on special projects, operating audio-visual equipment, performing clerical duties, or making instructional materials.

Office/Clerical Assistant: Clerical assistants help staff members at a school. Duties may include sorting mail, light typing, computer data entry, copying, or record keeping.

Media Center/Library Assistant: Volunteers in the school library/media center help fill teacher and student requests for services. They may also work at the circulation desk, catalogue and shelve books, use a computer, mend books, and operate audio-visual equipment.

Chaperone: Volunteer chaperones have the opportunity to enjoy many different types of activities as they accompany teachers and students on field trips. Any admission ticket that is not free must be paid by the volunteer in order to attend the event as a chaperone.

Extracurricular Coaches/Workers: This is a broad range of volunteers who work with activities such as drama, athletics, clubs, etc. who have direct contact with students.

Your Responsibility as a Volunteer

As a volunteer, you are responsible for maintaining a professional attitude of mutual respect and confidence. Your cooperative attitude, expressed in the willingness to provide needed services, is deeply valued.

You Should:

- Be punctual
- Notify the school in case of an absence
- Sign in and out on the time sheet provided in the office
- Wear your volunteer name tag while volunteering at school
- **Practice the professional ethics of confidentiality (Not discussing teachers, students or school affairs at any time.)**
- Be supportive and offer assistance under professional supervision and direction
- Be willing to have short conferences periodically with the teacher
- Set a good example of appearance and behavior for students
- Contact the principal if you are not satisfied with your placement or have any concerns
- Accept teachers' decisions not to utilize volunteers in their classroom



Remember That...

- The principal has the basic responsibility for the volunteer program.
- The teacher or staff member has responsibility for content and technique of instruction and discipline procedures.
- It is important to identify yourself at school by signing-in and wearing your name tag.

Accentuate the Positive

Students who feel accepted and liked can learn and be successful in school. Here are some ways in which school volunteers are able to help students have those feelings:

- Learn the students' names
- Let them know they are important
- Praise students for success
- Always be sincere and honest
- Listen carefully to what the students tell you
- Show a genuine interest in each student
- Accept the students as individuals



Screening & Registration

Any person interested in volunteering with the district must complete the entire application process including background and reference checks. We are concerned with the safety of our students and therefore, have developed a detailed process for approving volunteers. We will check the following for each person interested in volunteering with the school district:

- State and Federal Sex Offender Databases
- Nationwide Criminal Record Search
- Child Murderer and Violent Offender Against Youth Database
- Current and Previous Employer(s)

Upon approval from the district to volunteer, you will be required to abide by the following requirements regarding your presence on school district premises or while a chaperone on a field trip.

1. You must sign in with the building secretary upon entering the building.
2. You will be required to wear a "Volunteer" badge while you are volunteering with the district.
3. You must sign out with the building secretary when you are completed with your volunteering activity.

It is a rare and high privilege to be in a position to help people understand the differences that they can make not only in their own lives but in the lives of others by simply giving of themselves. -- Helen Boosalis

Volunteer Safety & Conduct Guidelines

These guidelines have been developed to provide our students with a safe environment as well as to protect our volunteers.

Open Door Rule: While working with students, volunteers should be in the open where others can see them.

Student Discipline: Volunteers should not take any disciplinary action. This is the teacher's responsibility. However, volunteers should make the teacher aware of any misbehavior.

Dismissal of Students: Volunteers may never dismiss a student from school. Under no circumstances may a volunteer take a student off campus. Volunteers may not walk or drive a student to their home unless the child's parent has notified the school office in advance and given written permission for the volunteer to do so.

Dress & Behavior: Volunteers are required to take the lead from the professional staff and dress appropriately for the job you are doing. Your appearance should attract no undue attention.

Reporting an Absence: Please notify the school office as soon as possible if you are not able to come at your regularly scheduled time. The teacher(s) are planning on you being at school during the specific times you agreed to. Please be on time for your assignment and make every effort to maintain consistent and regular attendance.

Smoking Policy: We are a smoke free campus.

Volunteer Safety & Conduct Guidelines

Medication Administration: A volunteer should never administer medication to a student. Have the student report to the district office.

Confidentiality: It is very important that matters relating to the students you are working with, information relayed by teachers concerning the student, all school records, and any related instances be kept confidential at all times. Names, instances and conversations should not be repeated to anyone who is not directly involved.

Emergency Action Plan: Volunteers should be familiar with the fire escape routes and disaster routines for the specific rooms in which they will be working. These should be posted in each of the classrooms.

Mandated Reporter

Any volunteer who suspects or receives knowledge that a student may be an abused or neglected child shall immediately report such a case to the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. The volunteer shall also promptly notify the school administrator that a report has been made.

All volunteers shall sign the "Acknowledgement of Mandated Reporter Status" form provided by the Illinois Department of Child and Family Services to be kept on file with the district. The school district shall provide staff development opportunities for all school personnel working with students, in the detection, reporting, and prevention of child abuse and neglect.

Guidelines for Safe Interaction with

All interaction with students, staff, and volunteers should be professional and focused on teaching and learning. The following guidelines are provided for the protection of everyone involved.

Physical Contact with Students

The school district encourages you to avoid physical contact with students. Volunteers should be sensitive to a student's personal space and comfort level. If you have physical contact with students, please limit its use to encouraging and acknowledging a student's efforts and accomplishments. Appropriate physical contact in these instances should be brief, should not linger, and should not differ from student to student. No face-to-face hugs are allowed.

- ♦ Do not make sexist or sexual comments.
- ♦ Avoid innuendo.
- ♦ Talk to and treat all students in the same manner.
- ♦ Avoid being alone with students.
- ♦ If alone with a student, be in a visible and open location.
- ♦ Do not spend too much time with one student or group of students.
- ♦ Maintain appropriate boundaries between adult and student.
- ♦ If you notice a student developing a personal interest, please see the principal immediately.

The school district does not encourage or sanction volunteer/student contact outside the structure of the school day, building, or school-related activities. This means that you:

- ♦ Do not provide your phone number to any student and do not ask for the phone number of any student.
- ♦ Do not provide your address to any student and do not ask for the address of any student.
- ♦ Do not offer or agree to transport any student at any time.
- ♦ Do not engage in private tutoring sessions outside of the school building, or days and hours of operation.
- ♦ Do not give any gifts to students or receive gifts from student.
- ♦ If working one-to-one with a student, always do so in a public area, i.e., a hallway, classroom, or library.

Working Effectively with School Staff

The staff appreciate your willingness to be a part of the educational team in the school district. They will come to depend upon your assistance. The following tips will help you as you begin your work without staff.

- ♦ Let the staff know what types of jobs you are interested in doing and what your special skills are so they can utilize your talents.
- ♦ If you have never volunteered in a school before, there are many new and exciting things to learn. Some staff members have never worked with volunteers before. This will be a new experience for them as they learn how to utilize volunteers.
- ♦ The staff often relies on volunteers to complete many of the “routine” jobs such as prepare learning aids and organizing materials. Teachers are able to spend more time with students or planning their instruction.
- ♦ Make sure you know exactly how the teacher wants the job done. If you are not sure, ask for clear directions and/or demonstration of how the task is to be performed.
- ♦ Be willing to try new tasks assigned by the staff, but only do as much as fits your schedule and interests.
- ♦ Come when you say you will come, if at all possible. Give the staff plenty of notices when you won’t be available at your scheduled time.



Working with Students

- ◆ Call students by name. Make every effort to pronounce and spell each name correctly.
- ◆ Observe techniques used by the teacher and model them when working with students.
- ◆ Accept children as they are even though their background, values, vocabulary, and aspirations may be different from your own.
- ◆ Encourage and praise students to make them feel good about themselves even when they are having difficulty. Let them know that you care and praise them for even the smallest success.
- ◆ Encourage students to do their own thinking. Give them plenty of time to answer your questions. Beware of the student who may try to get you to do their work for them.
- ◆ It is okay to admit that you do not know the answer or that you do not know what to do. Work on finding answers together or ask the teacher for assistance.
- ◆ Always be consistent with the teacher's rules for behavior. Do not allow them to do things that the teacher would not.
- ◆ Make sure the students with whom you are working do not disturb others.
- ◆ Reinforce good behavior by letting them know how proud you are and that you appreciate their effort.
- ◆ Keep students on task so that they can learn as much as possible in the short amount of time that they spend with you.
- ◆ Avoid letting one or more students get you off-track for long periods of time.
- ◆ Do not leave a student or small group of students without supervision.
- ◆ Positive encouragement goes a long way in helping students. If you would like to bring extra incentives, please discuss the use of them in advance with the classroom teacher.

What Should I Do If...

A student is injured: No matter how minor the injury is, you should immediately notify a teacher or staff member in charge. Do not attempt to administer any type of first aid.

A student becomes ill: If a student complains of not feeling well, you should notify the teacher or staff member in charge immediately. You should never administer any form of medication to the student.

You are asked to take the class alone: Because you are not a paid school employee, you are not legally permitted to supervise a class alone. If the teacher *must* leave the room, arrangements should be made to have a paid staff member present.

Someone asks to see a student: If any person asks to speak to or take a student, you must direct that individual to the teacher. Under no circumstances should you grant such a request.

A problem arises with your supervisor: If you should encounter any type of problem with your role, please discuss it with the school principal.

Someone asks you how a student is doing: As it becomes known that you are working in the school, you may be asked questions concerning specific students. If a parent or friend inquires as to the student's progress, you should say, "I enjoy working with that student and I am sure if you schedule an appointment, the teacher would be happy to talk with you."



When Inappropriate Behavior Occurs

Remember that discipline is ultimately the teacher's responsibility; however, some suggestions may help when inappropriate behaviors occur:

- ◆ Follow the classroom rules and the teacher's lead in discipline matters. Only do what your teacher will allow you to do.
- ◆ Expect cooperation and indicate your confidence in the student that a behavior will improve, or misbehavior will not occur.
- ◆ Remain calm and objective; control your own temper.
- ◆ Do not embarrass students in front of their peers.
- ◆ Speak in private about misbehavior. Avoid power struggles. Never threaten students.
- ◆ Do not punish an entire group because of the actions of one.

The goal of the volunteer program is to help students develop a positive self-image that will be strong enough in order for them to control their own behavior.

Volunteers must keep information you learn about students between yourself and your assigned supervisor. A misplaced comment can be devastating to a student, a family, and the school volunteer program. If you do have questions or concerns, talk with the building principal. Any volunteers that breach this confidentiality will be dismissed.

Drug & Alcohol Free Campus

All District workplaces are drug-and alcohol-free workplaces. All volunteers shall be prohibited from:

1. The unlawful manufacture, dispensing, use, sale, possession, distribution or transportation of drugs, controlled substances, or alcohol while on district premises or while performing work for the district are strictly prohibited and may result in discipline up to and including termination of assignment.
2. Drugs and alcohol may not be bought, consumed, transported or stored on any district-owned or leased property (including vehicles).
3. Any volunteer who is using prescription or over-the-counter drugs that may impair their ability to safely perform the job, or affect the safety or well being of others, must notify a supervisor of such use immediately before starting or resuming work.
4. Volunteers will not be permitted to work while under the influence of alcohol or prohibited drugs in their systems. Prohibited drugs include illegal substances, alcohol, or prescription drugs that may affect the ability to safely perform the job. We require all volunteers to report to work in a condition that allows them to perform their duties and not impair the safety of fellow volunteers, district employees and students. Individuals who appear to be unfit for work may be subject to a fitness-for-duty examination at a designated medical facility, shall be subject to reasonable suspicion and/or random drug and/or alcohol testing, and shall be subject to discipline up to and including termination of employment.
5. Any volunteer who is involved with on-the-job or off-the-job illegal drug use, sale, possession, dispensation, unlawful manufacture, transportation, or distribution may be considered in violation of this policy. In deciding what action to take, the district will take into consideration the nature of the charges including arrest, conviction, plea bargains and employee's assignment and record with the district. In addition, the district will consider any adverse effect the volunteer's actions may have on its students, other employees, the public, or the district's reputation and image.
6. The district reserves the right to authorize searches for illegal drugs, alcohol, or contraband, including searches of lockers, desks, vehicles, or personal effects on the district's property.



Sexual Harassment Policy

The Sparta CUSD #140 shall provide an environment free of unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct, or communications constituting sexual harassment as defined and otherwise prohibited by State and Federal law.

District volunteers shall not make unwelcome sexual advances or request sexual favors or engage in any unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature when: (1) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's ability to volunteer; (2) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for volunteer decisions affecting such individual; or (3) such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment. Sexual harassment prohibited by this policy includes verbal or physical conduct. The terms intimidating, hostile, or offensive include, but are not limited to, conduct that has the effect of humiliation, embarrassment, or discomfort. Sexual harassment will be evaluated in light of all the circumstances.

A violation of this policy may result in discipline, up to and including discharge. Any person making a knowingly false accusation regarding sexual harassment will likewise be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

Aggrieved persons, who feel comfortable doing so, should directly inform the person engaging in sexually harassing conduct or communication that such conduct or communication is offensive and must stop.

Volunteers should report claims of sexual harassment to any Administrator and/or School Board Member. Volunteers may choose to report to a person of the same sex. Initiating a complaint of sexual harassment shall not adversely affect the complainant's employment or assignments.

There are no express time limits for initiating complaints and grievances under this policy; however, every effort should be made to file such complaints as soon as possible, while facts are known, and potential witnesses are available.

Whom to Contact with a Report or Complaint

Nondiscrimination Coordinator
Chris Miesner
Sparta CUSD #140
203 B Dean Avenue
Sparta, IL. 62286
(618) 443-5331

Sexual Misconduct Policy

The school district will not tolerate and will seek to eradicate any behavior by its employees, volunteers, or others which constitutes Sexual Misconduct toward another employee, volunteer, or other. "Sexual Misconduct" means any actual, attempted or alleged sexual molestation, assault, abuse, sexual exploitation or sexual injury. "Sexual Misconduct" does not include "sexual harassment."

Reporting Procedures and Designated Child Abuse Counselor

It is the express policy of the district to encourage victims of Sexual Misconduct, and their parents or guardians in the case of minors, to come forward with such claims. The district has a Designated Child Abuse Counselor who shall remain accountable for implementation and monitoring of this policy. The identity of the Designated Child Abuse Counselor shall remain on file with the district. In order to conduct an immediate investigation, any incident of Sexual Misconduct must be reported as quickly as possible in confidence, as follows:

Employees and Volunteers

Employees and volunteers are required to report any known or suspected incidents of sexual misconduct according to the Illinois mandatory reporting guidelines. They must also report to their direct supervisor, the district administrator or the Designated Child Abuse Counselor. If the report is made to the supervisor or district administrator, that individual shall immediately notify the Designated Child Abuse Counselor. If the person to whom an employee or volunteer is directed to report is the offending person, the report should be made to the next higher level of administration or supervision.

Children

Each year, parents or legal guardians of children shall be advised of the contents of this Sexual Misconduct Policy and be instructed to report any incident of known or suspected sexual misconduct to a supervisor, the school administrator or the Designated Child Abuse Counselor, unless that individual is the offending person. If the complaint is made to the supervisor or the school administrator, that individual shall follow Illinois mandatory reporting policy and immediately notify the Designated Child Abuse Counselor.

Investigation & Confidentiality

All formal complaints will be given a full, impartial and timely investigation. During such investigation, while every effort will be made to protect the privacy rights of all parties' confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

Discipline

Any district employee or volunteer who is determined, after an investigation, to have engaged in sexual misconduct in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment. False accusations regarding sexual misconduct will not be tolerated, and any person knowingly making a false accusation will likewise be subject to disciplinary action up to and including discharge, with regard to employees or volunteers.

The district will discipline any individual who retaliates against any person who reports alleged sexual misconduct or who retaliates against any person who testifies, assists or participates in an investigation, a proceeding or a hearing relating to a sexual harassment complaint. Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, any form of intimidation, reprisal or harassment.

We would like to express our sincere appreciation to every volunteer who helps to make our district successful. The wealth of knowledge and passionate personality that each of you brings with you when you volunteer makes a difference to our children.



Acknowledgement, Agreement & Receipt of Volunteer Handbook

The undersigned hereby acknowledges receipt of a copy of the
Volunteer Handbook.

Volunteer Signature

Witness Signature

Date

(This acknowledgement and agreement will be retained in the volunteer's file)