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 LWCharterSchools.com



Lake Wales Charter Schools Volunteer Program Guidelines & Procedures

Volunteers DO

Get Approval: Prospective volunteers must fill out a LWCS Volunteer Application (available online or at any LWCS school) and return it to the LWCS school where they wish to volunteer. The screening is \$24, but the school will pay for parents and/or legal guardians. For the safety of students and staff, LWCS conducts a national criminal background check on each volunteer applicant. School Volunteer Coordinators will be notified when applications are processed. No one may volunteer unless approved.

Teen volunteers are eligible for community service hours. Lake Wales High students do not need to fill out the application; however, home school/private school students must pay \$24, and undergo the background screening.

LWCS employees (including active substitute teachers) are automatically approved as LWCS volunteers.

*Volunteers
 help our
 students
 achieve BIG
 DREAMS!*

Lake Wales Charter Schools system reserves the right to deny or revoke volunteer privileges, and to recheck criminal histories as needed. LWCS does *not* participate in court-ordered volunteer/community service programs.

Learn The Rules: Each LWCS school has a Volunteer Coordinator who can answer questions and provide orientation for volunteers, including what to do during emergencies (like safety drills, weather events, lockdowns, etc.). In addition, each volunteer should carefully read and review these LWCS Volunteer Guidelines & Procedures.

Continued on Next Page



Volunteers fill important roles:

- Working one-on-one & in small groups with students to improve skills
- Serving as mentors & tutors
- Organizing celebrations, special events, holiday activities, book fairs, etc.
- Helping in offices, libraries, computer labs, etc.
- Assisting with performance groups (band, orchestra, drama), clubs & organizations
- Chaperoning field trips
- Meeting regularly as part of a School Advisory Council
- Volunteering with PTO/PTA, Booster Clubs, Band Boosters, and other organizations
- Speaking about careers, hobbies, travel, etc.
- Reading to students, or listening to students read out loud
- And much more!



LWCS Volunteers DO

Wear ID: Always wear a visitor badge or School Volunteer badge on campus. Please check with your specific LWCS school for information about badges/ID.

Record Volunteer Hours: Volunteers and schools are eligible for awards based on total number of volunteer hours, so help us keep track! The School Volunteer Coordinator will show you how to record your hours.

Dress & Act Appropriately: Positive adult role models are important. Students are always watching and listening. Set a great example with your dress, grooming, and behavior. Please use appropriate language and grammar. (Remember that adults may not talk to or teach students about anything that would influence or criticize religious beliefs.)

Report Abuse or Neglect: If you suspect child abuse or neglect, you *must* call the Florida Hotline 1-800-962-2873 (1-800-96-ABUSE). School staff can help with reporting. If a student threatens harm themselves or others, report the conversation immediately to school staff.

Respect Confidentiality: Please respect the confidential nature of things you hear and see at school, including information about student grades, family background, academic achievement, behavior or school-related incidents. This information is protected by state and federal law. If you have concerns or criticisms, please talk to school administrators. When friends and neighbors ask about your experience, please speak positively about your involvement.

Chaperone Responsibly: Field trips are hard work for chaperones and staff. The Principal determines how many chaperones are needed, and who they will be. Field trip sites are extensions of the campus, and all procedures/guidelines apply. Chaperones are responsible for all children assigned to their care. Avoid the temptation to buy things for students in your group, or loan money to students. Please turn off cell phones except for emergency use.

Volunteers DO NOT

Use Cell Phones: Personal phone calls and/or texting while volunteering is inappropriate and disruptive. Please turn off phones, and give students your undivided attention.

Use Tobacco, Alcohol or Illegal Substances: Tobacco products and alcohol are not allowed at our schools (or school-sponsored events, including field trips). This rule extends to your personal vehicle if you are using it for a field trip or a school-sponsored activity. Absolutely no drugs!

Discipline or Handle Emergencies: Allow school staff to step in to handle discipline and emergencies, including medical issues. Discipline is the legal responsibility of teachers and school staff; so is dispensing over-the-counter or prescription medicine, and first aid.

Problems or concerns should be reported immediately to the classroom teacher, School Volunteer Coordinator, or the school administration. Remember: if you see bullying, or other incidents (including property destruction or theft), you must contact a staff member immediately.

As a volunteer, be alert and report anything that could impact the safety of the school campus. School safety is everyone's responsibility.

In the event of a serious or catastrophic event, volunteers must remain calm and follow directions from school staff. Our staff is trained to provide clear instructions and follow specific guidelines to keep everyone safe.

Work Alone With Students: Volunteers should never be left alone supervising a student or a group of students. When working with students, volunteers must always be in the presence of school staff member(s). This is for your protection and the protection of students.

Bring Preschoolers or Babies: Volunteers may not bring babies or preschool children

to volunteer assignments at school or on field trips. This creates a distraction for students, and a potentially unsafe environment for babies/preschool children. (If you are unable to volunteer at school because of young children, ask if schools/teachers have volunteer work you can help with at home.)

Skip Assignments: If you are sick or have a conflict, please call the school. Teachers and students are counting on you. Our students need dependable, reliable adults in their lives, and they miss you when you aren't there.