

2016-2017

Lake Wales Charter Schools



Volunteer Handbook

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www.LWCharterSchools.com

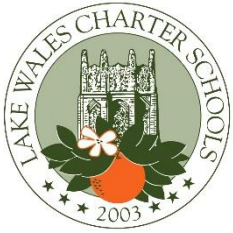
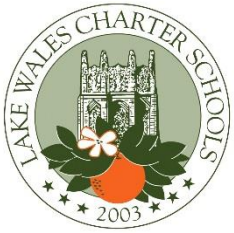


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WELCOME

As a volunteer in Lake Wales Charter Schools, your commitment to education offers students an opportunity to have the individual attention critical to their success in school.

Volunteers are a vital part of Lake Wales Charter Schools. School volunteers enhance the quality of our children's education by:

- Reinforcing skills taught by teachers
- Giving students individual attention
- Helping students develop confidence and competence
- Preparing students to be engaged citizens

The Lake Wales Charter Schools is proud of the community involvement in our schools. Last year, volunteers donated thousands of service hours to our schools, representing a generous investment to our System.

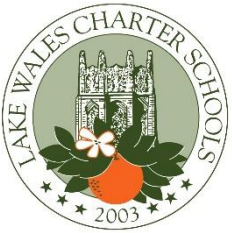
Each school individualizes its volunteer program to meet the needs of the students and teachers. Under the leadership of the Principal, the volunteer coordinator provides training and direction that will enable you to support the academic needs of our students.

As an approved volunteer, you are a role model for students. You serve at the discretion of the local school and are expected to operate within the boundaries of school board policy.

You will find your volunteer experience rewarding. We are counting on you to become an advocate for schools by sharing your positive experiences and encouraging others to become involved.

Our Mission: Our mission is to bring the best of public education to our community by providing innovation and choice within a continuous pre-school through postsecondary curriculum so that each child recognizes the benefits of life-long learning, constructive citizenship and personal happiness.





PROCEDURES

Qualifications

All volunteer applicants are required to undergo a level 1 background check.



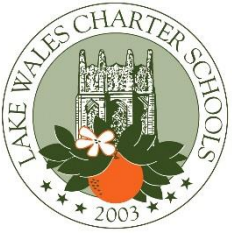
NOT ELIGIBLE TO VOLUNTEER

- If a person has been found guilty of any felony offense, regardless of adjudication, or entered a plea of nolo contendere or guilty to any offense constituting a felony under Florida law or the jurisdiction in which the offense occurred.
- Has been found guilty of any misdemeanor offense within the past 5 years.
- Misdemeanor convictions of more than 5 years old related to the offenses specified in or subject to:
 - Florida Statute 787.025 Relating to Luring or Enticing a Child
 - Florida Statute 796.07 Prostitution
 - Florida Statute 800.03 Exposure of Sexual Organs
 - Florida Statute 810.145 Voyeurism

MAY BE CONSIDERED

- If conviction or judicial action of any misdemeanor offense is more than 5 years old.





PROCEDURES

Approval

Prior to volunteer service, volunteer applicants can obtain an application by:

- requesting an application at any school site
- visiting www.LWCharterschools.com, keyword: Volunteer

The Lake Wales Charter Schools will pay the \$24 application fee for parents and/or legal guardians of current students that attend our schools. Everyone else, **EXCLUDING:** Sworn law enforcement officers and LWCS employees/teachers/substitutes/students, are subject to the \$24 application fee.

A personal check or money order made payable to the Lake Wales Charter Schools in the amount of \$24 to cover the background check, is required for all applicants if applicable.

Please review the qualifications, sign the application, and return the \$24 non-refundable payment and application to the school site. Please allow 2 to 3 weeks to complete the application process.

Schools will be notified when screening is completed and will have access to the database. If you have questions about your approval status, please contact your local school or Lake Wales Charter Schools Central Office.

The Lake Wales Charter Schools reserves the right to deny volunteer privileges to individuals and to re-check criminal history as necessary.

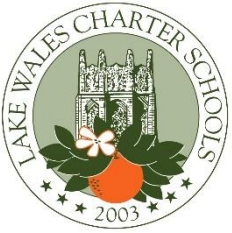
Identification

Volunteers will need to identify themselves at the school. Every school has their own identification procedure and will assist volunteers with this. Identification is to be worn at all times while volunteering.

Orientation

Volunteers are required to attend a school volunteer orientation before the first volunteer assignment. If you have not attended orientation, notify your school's volunteer coordinator.





PROCEDURES

Sign In

All school visitors and volunteers ***must sign in and out*** at the school. A government issued ID, such as a driver's license, passport, military ID or alien registration card is required. Your cooperation enables us to locate you in case of an emergency and provides Workers' Compensation coverage if you are injured.

Absences

Schools rely on you to be prompt and dependable. Please call the school office if you will be absent or late.

If your assigned teacher is absent, check with the substitute. If the substitute is not prepared for you, report to your volunteer coordinator who will reassign you.

Cell Phones

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

Children Not Registered at the School

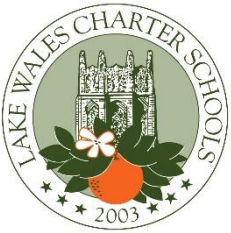
Volunteers may not bring non-registered nor non-school aged children with them on volunteer assignments. The school cannot assure their safety while the volunteer is giving undivided attention to their assigned tasks.

Conduct

You are a role model for students. Your appearance and manner must be appropriate. Be respectful, positive and cooperative.

Volunteer privileges will be suspended or revoked for failure to abide by Lake Wales Charter Schools policies.





PROCEDURES

Discipline

Any discipline of students is the responsibility of school staff. Any problems should be reported to those in authority at the school site.

Faith-Based Beliefs

Volunteers may not engage in any communication or teaching of students that would influence religious beliefs.

Protecting Our Students

If child abuse and/or neglect is suspected, report your concerns to school staff. If a student talks about harming themselves or others, report the conversation **immediately** to school staff. You may be required to provide information to the Florida Abuse Hotline (1-800- 962-2873). School staff will help you follow proper procedures established by state law and school board policies.

School volunteers who witness bullying (teasing, social exclusion, threats, stalking, physical violence, theft, sexual, religious, or racial harassment, public humiliation, destruction of property) must report the incident to a staff member **immediately** (Florida Statute 1006.147)

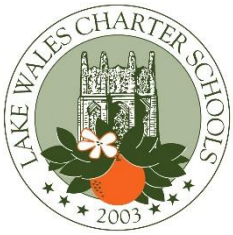
Volunteers may not have individual contact with students outside of school hours.

Volunteers do not take pictures or videos of students without the appropriate staff permission.

Protecting Our Volunteers

Please stay in sight of school staff when working with students. Make sure you are working in an open, visible area and do not allow yourself to be in a situation where your actions might be misconstrued. Avoid physical contact beyond handshakes and hands on shoulders.

Florida law offers some protection for volunteers acting in good faith.



PROCEDURES

Student Confidentiality

Volunteers are expected to respect the confidential nature of anything seen or heard at school. Any information about a student's academic progress, behavior or a school-related incident is strictly confidential and protected by Florida law. Failure to respect the privacy rights of students has legal consequences.

Student Emergencies

It is the responsibility of school staff to care for sick or injured students. Volunteers must not administer medication to students. Volunteers do not move injured students. Contact school staff who will initiate proper procedures.

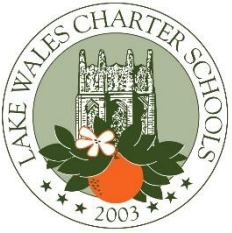
School Safety & Security

School safety is everyone's responsibility. In your role as a volunteer, we ask you to be vigilant and report anything you witness that could affect the safety of the school campus. In the unlikely event of a catastrophic incident, stay calm, and follow the directions of school staff.

Tobacco, Alcohol & Illegal Drug Free Schools

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!





PROCEDURES

Updating Your Information

When your name, address, phone number or schools change, ask your school volunteer coordinator to update your records.

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.

Volunteer hours performed off site are also important. Report hours upon completion of your service to your School Volunteer Coordinator.

Volunteer Tax Benefits

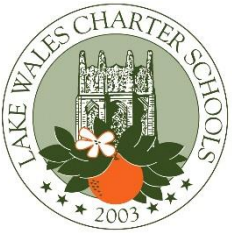
The background check fee of \$24 is tax deductible.

Workers' Compensation Protection

Approved school volunteers are eligible for workers' compensation benefits while serving as a volunteer on school grounds.

Volunteers are to report injuries immediately to the work site supervisor or designated representative who will comply with procedures.

Booster and parent organizations must carry liability insurance for volunteers who serve. When volunteering for these activities, volunteers are not covered by the Workers' Compensation benefits of the District.



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Adult Education

Volunteers are assigned to adult centers where students are preparing for their GED exams or learning basic skills.

Chaperones

Approved volunteers may be asked by classroom teachers to accompany students on classroom field trips. Prior volunteering at the school site is strongly suggested. Additional information regarding field trips can be found on the LWCS website (www.LWCharterSchools.com) under LWCS Programs.

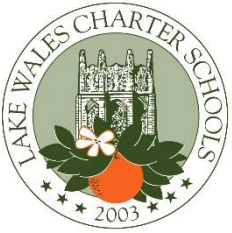
Classroom Assistant

Volunteers work with classroom teachers to assist students with instructional centers, tutoring in academic subjects, and various projects. Volunteers assist teachers with clerical work and are engaged in classroom activities.

ESOL – English for Speakers of Other Languages

Volunteers can help non-English speaking students increase their skills in understanding, speaking, reading and writing English. Volunteers do not need to speak the student's native language.





VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Mentoring

Mentors are caring adults and older youth who are willing to provide the necessary ongoing support, guidance and friendship to our youth facing challenges in school. Mentors must undergo additional training in order to provide these services and must remain in a supervised area when mentoring students. All mentoring takes place on school campuses.

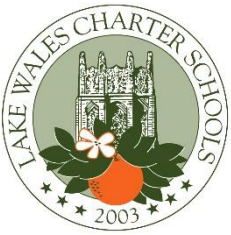
Parent Organizations (PTO/PTA, Athletics, Boosters)

Parent organizations exist at the discretion of the Principal. They are responsible for complying with District policies and procedures. They support the school through various activities that raise funds and community involvement.

Tutors

Tutors work one-on-one or with small groups who need help in academic subjects (Reading, Math, English, Science, Social Studies) to reinforce basic skills with students. Tutors are always supervised and are never left alone with students.





FIELD TRIPS

Field Trips

Field trip sites become an extension of the school site. All policies and procedures governing volunteers at the school site extend to field trips.

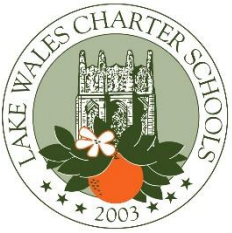
Chaperones are approved volunteers and are expected to have volunteered at the school site **before** serving on field trips.

The number of chaperones that are needed for a trip is the decision of the teacher and the school administrator. The school administrator may limit the number of adults accompanying students on any given field trip.

Chaperones are responsible for the students that the teacher has placed in their care. If chaperones must leave their group of students for some reason, they should make arrangements with the teacher. Chaperones do not neglect their obligation to students to visit with other adults.

- All chaperones must be at least 21 years of age.
- Family members who must accompany their own child for medical purposes do not have to be approved volunteers. They may not supervise other children, nor ride in a district vehicle where other students are present. Unapproved family members always report to school staff.
- Do not use profane or inappropriate language.
- Tobacco, alcohol, and illegal drug use is prohibited in cars, on buses and at field trip locations for all volunteer chaperones.
- Wear appropriate clothing. The school may designate specific attire.
- Do not use cell phones except for emergency purposes. Your attention must be on the students at all times.
- Chaperones assume duties at the school site prior to the trip and complete duties at the school upon return. Any other arrangements must be cleared prior to the trip with school administration.
- Preschoolers or children not registered in the school may not attend field trips.
- Failure to comply with field trip guidelines will result in revocation of volunteer privileges.





FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Do I have to pay for a background check if I already had one completed through my employer?

Yes. Only parents of child attending a Lake Wales Charter School, sworn law enforcement officers, current or retiring LWCS employees, active LWCS substitute teachers, registered LWCS students, and college education major students are exempt.

I am an approved volunteer with another county. Do I pay for another background check?

Lake Wales Charter Schools *may* be able to access your information if you have been previously screened by PCSB. But if you have volunteered out of the Polk County District or Lake Wales Charter Schools you will need to fill out an application and pay the \$24 fee.

Do I have to pay for a background check if I am an approved vendor?

Yes. A level 1 background check will be required.

I want to volunteer at my child's school during their school carnival/festival. Do I have to be an approved volunteer?

Yes. School carnivals and/or festivals held on school grounds will require volunteers to undergo a level 1 background check and be approved.

I am a parent of a special needs child who will be attending a field trip. May I ride the bus to accompany my child?

No. Unapproved volunteers may not ride the bus. Lake Wales Charter Schools is committed to providing safety and security for all students; therefore, only staff members and approved volunteers are able to ride a school bus on field trips.

My volunteer privileges were revoked. May I volunteer at another school?

No. If a volunteer's privileges are revoked, it applies district wide.

Thanks for volunteering!

Please see our website for all additional information and updates!

www.LWCharterSchools.com



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