



# Oracle School District Volunteer Handbook

## Governing Board

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## ORACLE SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Dear Community Volunteers,

Welcome to the Oracle School District! Our Governing Board, your fellow educators, and our students are delighted you have joined our team!

This handbook contains important information that will ensure your experience as a volunteer will be enriching and rewarding. Please take a few moments to become familiar with its contents and to ask any questions that arise.

Thank you in advance for your dedicated service to each child in our District. I am sure that your future contributions to our children, schools, and communities will be an outstanding addition to the fine work already taking place.

My best wishes to you for a very productive and successful school year.

Sincerely,

*Crystle Nehrmeyer*

Crystle Nehrmeyer  
Superintendent

## **DISTRICT MISSION, VISION AND VALUES:**

**What We Value:** Respect, Individuality, Family, Potential, Achievement, Culture, Community, Opportunity, Responsibility and Integrity.

**Our Vision:** A community dedicated to maximizing student achievement.

**Our Mission:** To expand expectations by providing an innovative and boundless educational environment that develops adventurous learners and responsible citizens.

## **Goals of the Volunteer Program:**

The goal of our volunteer program is to assist schools in providing the best possible education for each student. The services of volunteers are utilized to accomplish the following objectives:

- To increase student achievement which happens when parents, community and educators work as a team.
- Assist teachers and support personnel of some non-instructional tasks
- Provide teachers with more time to work with students
- Enrich the curriculum and children's learning opportunities
- Provide individual attention to those children who need more one-on-one assistance that the classroom teacher is able to provide
- Involve members of the community in active participation in the school system

## **The Ideal Volunteer:**

Volunteering in a school is a unique and exciting experience and a privilege for both the school and volunteer. Volunteer programs are designed to promote and maintain a supportive relationship for students, teachers, and school volunteers. **Oracle School District Volunteers represent many different ages, backgrounds and interests, but they all share important qualities. Our volunteers:**

- Are friendly, reliable, flexible
- Are caring and respectful of children
- Have a good professional attitude, interest, and enthusiasm for working with young people, and work cooperatively with school staff
- Recognize that well educated students are our greatest resource
- Know that all children can learn and be positive contributors to our society
- Appreciate the obligation as a citizen to support and help the schools educate each child to his or her fullest potential
- Already possess or are willing to get the skills that are needed in schools
- Have talents that can enrich the school program
- Have time and a willingness to serve
- Understand and appreciate the work of the school staff and the volunteer program
- Know that parents are the first and most important teachers of their children and assist them in working with their children

## Tips for Volunteers

### Working with Staff

The staff appreciates your willingness to be a part of the educational team. Teachers and support personnel will come to depend upon your assistance.

*Here are some tips for working effectively with the staff.*

**Getting to know you.** 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.

**A new experience for you, and perhaps for the teacher.** If you've never been a school volunteer before, you'll find that there are many new and exciting things to learn about the job. Please be aware that some staff members have never had an opportunity to work with volunteers before. This will be a new experience for them too, as they learn how to utilize the services of a volunteer.

**Be a good communicator.** The staff will welcome your questions and comments. If you don't understand something please ask. Volunteering should be an enjoyable and rewarding job. If you are unhappy or concerned about something discuss the situation with your supervisor.

**Routine tasks are important.** The staff often relies upon volunteers to do the "routine" jobs such as photocopying and organizing materials. Because volunteers are able to assist with these jobs, teachers are able to spend more time working with students or planning for quality instruction.

**We all have different ways of doing things.** When you are assigned a task, be sure you know exactly how the teacher wants the job done. Ask for clear directions and, if necessary, ask that the teacher give you samples or demonstrate how tasks are to be performed.

**Try something new.** The opportunity to learn new skills is one of the benefits of being a school volunteer. Be willing to try new tasks assigned by the staff, but accept only as much responsibility as you feel comfortable with.

**Be reliable.** Attend when you say you will. Give the office as much notice as possible when you won't be available at your scheduled time.

### Working with Students

**Observe the techniques used by the teacher.** Try to model these instructional methods when working with students.

**Accept children as they are.** Each child is unique and may be very different from your own child. Be ready to accept the differences in background, values and aspirations.

**Encourage and praise students.** Your positive words of encouragement will go a long way in helping students feel good about themselves even when they are having difficulty. Be ready to praise children for even the smallest successes! Let each child know that you care about him/her through the use of verbal affirmation. Younger children may also enjoy stars, stickers, stamps, etc. You and the teacher should discuss the use of these motivational materials.

**Children never forget.** If you promise them something, be prepared to keep the promise. Be careful not to make promises that you will be unable to keep.

**Encourage students to do their own thinking.** Try not to give students the answers before they have had an opportunity to solve problems on their own. Give children plenty of time to answer your questions. Silence often means that a child is thinking. Beware of the occasional student who may try to get you to do their work for them.

**Follow the teacher's lead.** Be consistent with the teacher's rules for classroom behavior. Remember the teacher is always available and ready to handle discipline problems.

**Reinforce good behavior.** When children are behaving well, let them know how proud you are and how much you appreciate their effort. This will encourage them to try even harder. If possible, do not pay attention to a child who shows minor misbehavior problems, but do note things the child is doing well and praise him/her for it.

**It's OK if you don't know all the answers.** Admit to the children that you don't know the answer or aren't sure what to do. Work the answers out together with students or feel free to ask the teacher for assistance.

**Keep students on task.** You'll want the children to learn as much as possible during the time they spend with you. Keep the lesson or activity moving; avoid letting anyone get the group off the task by discussing topics that have nothing to do with the lesson.

**Supervise students carefully.** Under no circumstances should you leave students without supervision. Be aware of what students are doing at all times.

## **Volunteer Guidelines**

As a volunteer in the Oracle School District, you are an important member of our educational team. The following should help make your volunteer experience even more enjoyable and successful.

### **Application Process**

A Volunteer Application form must be filled out and turned in at your building or in the district office each year. **A copy of your driver's license must accompany the application.** Principal approval is required prior to any individual providing volunteer services.

### **Arizona State Patrol Check**

All volunteers are required to participate in a Arizona State background check.

### **Child Abuse/CPS**

Arizona State Law (ARS 13-3620) requires school personnel (any district employee or any other person who has responsibility for the care or treatment of a minor) to report any case of suspected child abuse to Child Protective Services (CPS) at 1-888-767-2445 or to the Pinal County Sherriff's Office at 1-800-420-8689. OSD guidelines recommend that both CPS and the local police be contacted. Volunteers should contact the principal and/or nurse for reporting procedures. Police officers or CPS caseworkers may interview students in the investigation of child abuse. They must present picture identification. The investigator should be provided a room or place that will insure privacy. The administrator need not be present unless the officer requests his/her presence for the comfort of the child. The investigator will be responsible for any notification of parents or victims or witnesses.

### **Children of Volunteers**

Children are not allowed to visit classrooms while their parents are volunteering. Additionally, they are not allowed to accompany volunteers on school buses for field trips.

Children of volunteers are welcome to attend functions during the school year, such as Open House, concerts and other events that vary from school to school. Please take advantage of these opportunities to introduce family members to the school community.

### **Commitment**

Before you agree to volunteer, carefully consider the commitment you are making. The work volunteers do is important. Whether they work in the classroom, front office, or health office, the staff and students quickly become dependent upon volunteer assistance. Don't promise to volunteer more time than you can. It's better to start out with a few hours a week and gradually increase if you find you have the additional time.

### **Communication**

Find out from the teacher or person for whom you are volunteering the times you are to volunteer and exactly what you are supposed to do. Follow the instructions given and be sure to ask questions. Sometimes it is very difficult to catch a teacher when he or she is not busy. Leave a message with the teacher and ask them to contact you when it is convenient for them. Be sure to let teachers know what tasks you are and are not comfortable performing.

### **Confidentiality**

In working with a school staff member or with individual students, it is extremely important to respect privacy and confidentiality. According to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, volunteers shall not have access to student records. For you as a volunteer, this means that if you hear or read personal, academic, or social information about a student, you do not share that information with anyone other than appropriate school staff. As you work with the staff and students, information of a confidential matter may be shared with you. The problems, abilities, relationships and confidences of students, their parents and the staff should never be discussed with anyone who does not have a professional right or need to know them. Like teachers, volunteers are bound by a code of ethics to keep confidential matters within the school. Please do not discuss a child's school progress or difficulties with his/her parents. This is the teacher's responsibility. Occasionally, a child might confide in you about family matters or personal problems. Keep this confidential. If you feel that it is vital for the school to have this information in order to help the student, discuss the child's conversation in private with the teacher or principal. Please do not photograph or record students.

### **Dependability**

We know there will be times when you will be ill, on vacation or unable to volunteer. Please telephone the school office and leave a message for the teacher or staff member with whom you work, as far in advance as possible when you are unable to volunteer.

### **Discipline**

Students rarely have behavior problems while working with volunteers. However, our schools have detailed discipline plans, and the responsibility for discipline rests with the professional staff. Volunteers may not discipline students. Please alert the teacher of any discipline problem that might arise while you are working with a student.

## **Dismissal of Students**

Volunteers may never dismiss a student from school. Children who must leave school early for any reason must receive permission from the school office and sign out before leaving. Under no circumstances may a volunteer take a student off campus. Volunteers may not walk or drive students to their homes unless the child's parent has notified the school office in advance and given permission for the volunteer to do so.

## **Dress and Behavior**

Take your lead from the professional staff and dress appropriately for the job you are doing. Casual clothing is fine, but we ask that attire be neat and conservative. Your appearance should attract no undue attention. Keep in mind you are in a position to set an example for students. Your speech, dress, and behavior should serve as good models for them to follow.

## **Fingerprinting and Background Checks**

Any volunteer who has regular contact with or direct control over students without supervision shall be fingerprinted as a condition of volunteering at the school. If a volunteer is present on campus for more than two days, in addition to a fingerprint check, a background check shall be made through human resources. Parent volunteers in their own child's classroom do not need to go through the fingerprinting process. However, if your role expands outside of the scope of your own child's classroom you will need to follow the "regular" volunteer protocol. If during your tenure as a volunteer you are accused or convicted of any criminal activity you must immediately notify a supervisor as such activity may affect your eligibility to volunteer in the District. The District does pay for fingerprint checks.

## **Health**

If you are not feeling well, don't try to keep up your volunteer duties in spite of an illness. You'll accomplish more in the long run if you allow yourself time to recuperate. Please call to let the teachers know you won't be coming in at your scheduled time. Schools are particularly concerned about keeping students and staff healthy.

## **Insurance Coverage**

Volunteers are covered by the District's liability insurance policy only while working under the supervision of an assigned teacher/staff member in an authorized District activity.

Neither health/accident insurance nor Worker's Compensation is available for volunteers through the District.

The following must be considered when making work assignments to volunteers:

- All voluntary services shall be used for non-hazardous activities where public services, special projects or school operations are improved and enhanced
- A volunteer shall not be required to perform any work which the volunteer is not adequately trained to do, does not feel comfortable doing, or is not willing to do
- A volunteer may not transport children
- A volunteer shall not assist or perform any activities that are hazardous or that may place them in a life-threatening situation



## Income Tax Deductions

Volunteers who itemize deductions when calculating income tax may deduct some of the out-of-pocket expenses of volunteer work. (Since tax laws change each year, you should be sure to check with the Internal Revenue Service and the Arizona Department of Revenue for an up-to-date list of deductions available to volunteers.)

By keeping track of mileage, volunteers can deduct mileage cost at a rate specified by the Internal Revenue Service each year, or can deduct the actual cost of gasoline and oil for a car used to travel between home and the site of volunteering. The value of time and cost of childcare or meals however, are not deductible.

## Qualifications

Family members and relatives of school employees may serve as volunteers if both the immediate supervisor and the school's representative signing the agreement are not related to the volunteer.

Volunteers must be physically able to perform the work they volunteer to do. If there is a question regarding the volunteer's ability to perform the assigned duties, the school administrator may deny the volunteers service or require a physical examination.

## Photo Identification

Photo I.D. pictures are taken in the technology office. Volunteers must wear I.D. at all times when volunteering on campus.

## Physical Setting and Physical Contact

You should not be in a situation where you are behind closed doors with a student. Students should not be on your lap, and there should be no frontal hugging, etc. A hand on the shoulder may be appropriate when giving praise. Volunteers must ensure they **Do Not:**

- Harass or have inappropriate physical contact with students
- Discuss sexual matters in a non-professional or unnecessary way (banter, innuendo, jokes, pornography, etc.)
- Single out a student for personal attention or friendship
- Socialize with students outside of school (especially if tobacco, alcohol or drugs are present)
- Share or ask a student to share personal problems
- Send students on personal errands
- Use pet names or nicknames with students
- Maintain personal contact with students out of school
- Give a personal gift to a student or exchange personal gifts with students
- Give a student a ride alone in a non-emergency situation
- Unnecessarily invade a student's privacy

### **Volunteers should:**

- Notify the principle if you see another volunteer or employee involved with a student or students that makes you uncomfortable or seems to be a violation of this policy
- Avoid even the appearance of impropriety
- Ask any questions you might have about your work with students or this policy

## **Procedures and Rules**

Sign in on the Volunteer Sheet at the school office each day that you volunteer and record your service hours. Wear your volunteer badge whenever you are volunteering. Students and staff are very aware of strangers around the building and may ask why you are here if you aren't wearing a badge. When you leave, don't forget to check out on the volunteer sheet and return your badge. Arrive and depart the building as scheduled. If you need to miss your regular volunteer day, notify the building volunteer coordinator and your teacher that you will be unable to attend with as much notice as possible. The students will be disappointed that you cannot come, but they will be reassured that you cared enough to call.

## **Professionalism and Respect**

Follow the professional example set by the school staff relating to action and appearance. Acceptable attire for volunteers is the same as for regular employees. Have students address you by your proper name. Be businesslike but friendly and relaxed. Treat all students, staff, and parents with kindness and respect. If you have problems with any adult individual, talk privately and respectfully with that person. If you are unsure what their response will be or do not know the person well, talk with the teacher, principal, or volunteer coordinator. When talking to children or in front of children, refer to adults by Mr., Mrs., Ms., or Miss.

## **Prohibitions – volunteers may not:**

- Provide the curriculum or teaching plan
- Discipline students
- Take charge of the classroom for any length of time
- Access materials in the student's permanent or electronic records files (psychological records, grade cards, health history, etc.)
- Diagnose student needs
- Evaluate achievement
- Counsel students
- Discuss student progress with parents
- Drive district vehicles
- Ever be considered a substitute for a member of the school staff
- Give any food to students
- Give advertisements or fund solicitations

## **Required Documents**

Prior to service, all volunteers shall fill out an application and fingerprint card. The above-completed documents shall be retained in the individual volunteer's folder for three (3) years after the completion of the voluntary service. If you should choose to terminate your position as a volunteer please Human Resource coordinator Toni Parkhurst at (520) 896-3071

## **School Rules**

Become familiar with the rules and policies of the school where you volunteer. It's a good idea to read through the school's handbook. Ask your supervising teacher to explain the school's policy for use of telephones, cell phones, eating facilities, fire drills and emergency procedures. Use reasonable judgment in making decisions when there appears to be no policy or when the policy is not communicated. As soon as possible, consult with the supervising teacher for future guidance.

## **Supervision of Volunteers**

Volunteers always work under the direct supervision of the professional staff at each site and only with those teachers who have requested the services of the volunteer. The district is responsible for the education, safety and well-being of each student. The principal or district official must dismiss any volunteer whose actions are not in the best interest of the school or students.

## **Student Discipline**

Refer all problems with student behavior to the teacher or the office. Do not confront students yourself; particularly, if you do not know them or are new to the school.

## **Signing in/out and Tracking Hours Worked**

We encourage volunteers to keep records of the number of hours they devote to the school/office. Recording volunteer hours may serve the following purposes:

- Documented volunteer work can be listed as work experience on job applications if you apply for paid positions
- A record of each volunteer's hours helps the District evaluate how it is meeting the needs for volunteers. It also aids the school District, and the community in recognizing volunteer contributions
- The District and its volunteers belong to a cost-saving partnership. Volunteer service saves public funds and, thus, taxpayer dollars
- Please sign in and out each day in the front office at the school you are working at. Please wear your volunteer identification badge. If you are a regular volunteer we will provide for you a photo identification badge. Please make arrangements with our technology director located in the same building as the office to obtain your photo ID badge.

## **Volunteer Opportunities**

The Oracle School District offers a wide variety of volunteer opportunities working with children as well as opportunities for those who prefer not to work directly with students. Volunteers choose the jobs that interest them and decide how many hours and days they wish to contribute. Here is a sampling of volunteer opportunities:

- **Classroom Instructional Volunteer.** Works directly with individual or small groups of students. Listens to students read, reinforces basic math skills, or assists students with written assignments.
- **Classroom Assistant.** Works with a teacher and performs tasks such as putting up bulletin boards, correcting papers, photocopying and other jobs that will provide the teacher with more time to plan for and teach students.
- **Department Assistant for Art, and Physical Education**
  - Intramural sports
  - Set up athletic equipment
- **Guest speakers with special knowledge/interests:** geography, careers, craft or hobby demonstrations
- **Office Clerical Assistance.** Works with the school office staff to provide support and assistance with duties such as sorting mail, answering the phone and photocopying.

- **Health Office Assistant.** Works in the health office with the school nurse, providing clerical assistance and helping with health screenings, such as vision tests.
- **Equine education.** Works with horsemanship instructors in basic horsemanship, trail riding etc.
- **Science Fair:** We always need help judging projects and setting up for our annual fair!
- **Maintenance and Operations**
- **Parent Teachers Organization (PTO):** Help with book fairs, snack bar and other special events...no need to be a parent.
- **Reading**
- **School Office**
- **School Student Store**
- **Special Projects – field trips**
- **Summer Programs**
- **Playground or school bus/school bus stop monitor**
- **Special and remedial education – assist students in special programs with practice on academic tasks**
- **Technology**

## **Contacts:**

**Superintendent: Crystle Nehrmeyer email: [cnehrmeyer@osd2.org](mailto:cnehrmeyer@osd2.org) (520) 896-3074**

**Athletic Director: Tara Garcia email: [tgarcia@osd2.org](mailto:tgarcia@osd2.org)**

**Health Office: Lydia Smith email: [ismith@osd2.org](mailto:ismith@osd2.org)**

**Science Fair: Verdean Smith email: [vsmith@osd2.org](mailto:vsmith@osd2.org)**

**Summer Programs: Corrie Guerrero email: [cguerrero@osd2.org](mailto:cguerrero@osd2.org)**

**Technology: Carlos Velasquez email: [cvelasquez@osd2.org](mailto:cvelasquez@osd2.org)**

**Equine Education: Karen Small (520) 548-7219**

## **Volunteer Applications and Fingerprints**

- All volunteers must submit a volunteer application to the District Office. Volunteer applications can be printed from our website or obtained from both the District and Mountain Vista offices.
- All volunteers must be in possession of a Fingerprint Clearance Card or submit fingerprints on a fingerprint card to the District Office for processing through DPS (cards for fingerprints can be obtained through the District Office)

**I have signed and therefore acknowledged that I have received a copy of the Oracle Elementary School District Volunteer Handbook and that I have read and will abide by its contents.**

I understand that, as a volunteer, I am not compensated for any services, including wages and insurance. I further understand that I have the right to terminate my arrangement at any time with or without cause, and the Oracle Unified School District has a similar right.

**I make this Agreement in order to provide and to be authorized to perform the following uncompensated services to the Oracle School District:**

- I am 18 years of age or older and know of no reason which would prevent me from performing the tasks required as detailed in the Volunteer Job Description, or that I am presently a student enrolled in the Oracle School District system.
- I have acquainted myself with what is required to perform those tasks, and I represent that I have the skill and ability to perform them.
- I assume full responsibility for my own safety and the safety of others.
- That I will perform the volunteer service in compliance with the standards and specifications established, or approved, by the District, and will honor the direction of District official, to suspend or terminate service.

**As a volunteer, I agree to abide by the following code of conduct:**

- Immediately upon arrival I will sign in at the front office or designated sign in station.
- I will wear a volunteer identification badge at all times.
- I agree to never be alone with individual students without authorization of teachers and/or school authorities.
- I will not solicit outside contact with students.
- I agree not to exchange telephone numbers, home address, e-mail address (including social network information) with students for any purpose.
- I will maintain confidentiality outside of school and will share any concerns that I may have with teachers or school administrators.
- I agree not to transport students.
- I will not disclose, use or disseminate student photographs or personal information about students, self or others.
- I agree not to post, transmit, publish or display harmful or inappropriate matter that is threatening, obscene, disruptive or sexually explicit or that could be construed as any form of harassment.
- I agree not to photograph students.
- I agree only to do what is in the best personal and educational interest of every child with whom I come into contact.

All school district personnel are required by law (A.R.S 13-3620) to report suspected child abuse. Failure to do so is a crime. This applies to all employees and volunteers when acting in the scope of their work with Oracle School District. If abuse is suspected, contact the principal and or nurse for reporting procedures.

***Thank you for choosing to volunteer in the Oracle School District! We appreciate your support.***

Volunteer Name \_\_\_\_\_

Volunteer Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_