

# **VOLUNTEERS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Office of Engagement



## **Handbook**

***SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PALM BEACH COUNTY***

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# **MISSION**

The School Board of Palm Beach County is committed to excellence in education and preparation of all our students with the knowledge, skills and ethics required for responsible citizenship and productive employment.

The School District of Palm Beach County has eight goals that are intended to establish the school system's educational priorities. They provide a direction or focus for achievement in our schools. The community involvement goal is key to the link between the Volunteers in Public Schools program and the District's focus on achievement.

## **COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT GOAL**

Increase involvement by parents, business and other community interests through partnerships designed to achieve both management and academic improvement and accountability.

# INTRODUCTION

The Volunteers in Public Schools (VIPS) Program began in Palm Beach County in 1972. Each year thousands of volunteers donate hours to our schools. This represents millions of dollars' worth of services that were donated to our schools by the community. And, our numbers continue to grow! This means that thousands of students have received the individual attention so vitally needed to help them find success, and hundreds of teachers have been offered that "extra pair of hands" that is so gratefully appreciated.

The volunteers in our schools are well trained, dependable community people who, in addition to providing a service to our teachers and students, are learning about our educational program. They are realizing the importance of early education, the emphasis on individualized programs, and how time-consuming teaching can be!

We welcome each and every person into our schools and heartily endorse your participation in our VIPS program.



# Palm Beach County School Board Policy

## Policy 2.53 Volunteers in Public Schools

1. **Purpose.** The purpose of this policy is to promote and encourage school volunteers in order to expand and enhance parental, community and civic involvement within schools while maintaining an adequate level of safety and security in the schools of the School District. This policy establishes the framework of volunteers serving in schools through the Palm Beach County Schools Volunteer Program known as VOLUNTEERS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS, hereafter referred to as VIPS.
2. **Applicability and Scope.**
  - a. This policy applies to all volunteers and prospective volunteers in Palm Beach County District Schools.
  - b. This policy shall not apply to: a person who visits a school for a one-time special event, such as guest speakers, celebrity readers, attending student performances, parents or family members who have lunch with their own child, career day special guests, and attendance at parent conferences. These people are considered school visitors. They must sign in as visitors in the main office and school staff should provide them with appropriate direction. Under no circumstances may visitors or volunteers be left alone with students.
3. **Policy.** The School Board believes that the use of volunteers in schools of the District enhances the educational process for students and promotes community involvement in education. The School Board of Palm Beach County encourages volunteer participation by individuals and groups in School Board sponsored programs in local schools, in district and area offices, and for School Board sponsored and supervised off-school campus activities before, during, and after regular school hours.
  - a. A volunteer is a non-paid person functioning under the sponsorship of the Palm Beach County School District.
  - b. The School Board of Palm Beach County authorizes the Superintendent or his/her designee to approve volunteers to assist in organized school programs following the submission of an application, completion of a background check as provided herein, and upon successful completion of a volunteer orientation and training program. in accordance with State Board of Education Rules and Laws of the State of Florida.
4. **Enrollment Procedures for Volunteers.** Prospective volunteers must complete all VIPS registration forms and volunteer release as provided by the Department of Public Affairs/Office of Engagement.
5. **Status of Volunteers.** Volunteers may be used to assist district personnel in local schools and district programs. However, the instructional personnel retains responsibility for supervising, diagnosing, prescribing, instructing and evaluating students.
  - a. The acceptance and utilization of the services of any person on a voluntary basis shall be at the discretion of the School District, and the utilization of such services may be discontinued by the School District at any time.
  - b. Volunteers shall not engage in political or religious activities while on district premises and while performing district duties.
6. **Criminal Background Investigation.** In order to protect the safety and security of students and staff, volunteers must submit to a background screening as required by § 943.04351, Florida Statutes, as now or hereafter amended.
7. **Responsibility.**
  - a. Principals and administrators are responsible for coordination and supervision of volunteers.
  - b. Principals and administrators are responsible for identifying appropriate tasks for volunteers.
  - c. The Department of Public Affairs/Office of Engagement is responsible for coordinating the background checks on volunteers.
  - d. The Superintendent shall issue directives concerning school volunteers included but not limited to more stringent guidelines for screening as deemed necessary.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: Fla. Stat. §§ 1001.41, 1001.42

LAWS IMPLEMENTED: Fla. Stat. §§ 110.504, 768.28, 1001.43, 1012.01, 440.02, 943.04351

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION RULE: Rule 6A-1.070 and 6A-1.0502

HISTORY: 4/23/86; 5/06/2009

# IMPORTANT INFORMATION

This handbook contains information that will help you in performing the service at your school that may be required of you. We hope you will find it helpful.

An orientation and training session may be offered by the school volunteer program. The session is designed to help you feel more comfortable in your volunteer setting and provide you with additional information which will enhance the success of your volunteer work. Training sessions will provide you with the “tools of the trade”.

We wish for each of you a successful, rewarding, and satisfying experience. Should you have any questions or need additional information, please feel free to call your volunteer coordinator, consult with the teacher to whom you are assigned, or contact the district school volunteer coordinator at (561) 738-2780 .

Name of School \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Principal \_\_\_\_\_

School Volunteer Coordinator \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Grade Level \_\_\_\_\_ Room Number \_\_\_\_\_

School Hours \_\_\_\_\_

Day(s) and Hour(s) to work \_\_\_\_\_

**ALWAYS REMEMBER TO SIGN IN AT THE OFFICE  
WHEN YOU ARRIVE AND SIGN OUT WHEN YOU LEAVE.  
REMEMBER TO WEAR YOUR VIPS ID WHILE ON SCHOOL GROUNDS.**

## **VOLUNTEERS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**505 South Congress Avenue  
Boynton Beach, Florida 33426**

**Phone (561) 738-2780**

**Fax (561) 434-8651**







*Criticizing school personnel and practices is not acceptable. Your job in school is as a professional working with other professionals.*

**5. May I choose the teacher with whom I wish to work?**

*Volunteers are only placed in classrooms where teachers have specifically requested their assistance. The School Volunteer Coordinator and the Principal at the individual school make the decisions about placement of volunteers.*

**6. What if I am not happy with the job assigned to me?**

*Feel free to say so. Communicate with the School Volunteer Coordinator. Every effort is made to place volunteers in a situation which matches the needs of both the volunteer and the job. There are a variety of jobs for everyone to feel comfortable. Teachers also have the opportunity to ask for a different assignment for a volunteer.*

**7. What do I do about discipline?**

*Disciplinary action is the legal responsibility of teachers. Volunteers should never be put in a position of having to enforce discipline. If you are having a problem with a student, immediately inform the teacher.*

**8. What should I do if I am unable to be at the school at my assigned time?**

*As soon as you are aware that you will be unable to be at the school at your assigned time, call school personnel to let them know. The teacher has planned his/her schedule according to the time that you have agreed upon to help. If possible, please keep your assigned schedule.*

**9. Why is it important for me to sign in and out each time I volunteer at a school?**

*There are many reasons this requirement is necessary, such as maintaining school security; verification of volunteer service which can be used as work experience for future employment; liability purposes; in the event you receive an emergency telephone call; and so volunteers can be recognized for their dedication and service. The school may also be eligible for awards presented each year by the Florida Department of Education for outstanding volunteer programs.*



**SPECIAL ENRICHMENT VOLUNTEERS** speak to classes or groups on topics related to occupations or community interests. These volunteers may be professional business people or retirees who, based on their careers, hobbies or interests, may provide enriching experiences for students.

**LISTENERS** are volunteers who communicate with children in ways that are not academic. They may talk with students, read stories to them, or listen to them. The Listen to Children program requires special training through the Mental Health Association.

**GENERAL SCHOOL AIDES** perform a variety of school duties assigned by staff members such as monitoring of hallways, working in the office or bookstore, assisting in the media center, clinic or classroom. General school-aides are not assigned to a single station.

**SCHOOL LUNCHROOM AIDES** supervise lunchroom based on rules established at the school center. During lunch periods, volunteers help maintain order, assist children as needed, and work with the school staff to improve procedures.

**MENTORS** are recruited to work with discouraged students. The major task is to motivate the student to stay in school. Through tutoring, setting short-term goals, and serving as a role model, volunteers can provide encouragement and friendship to a student who needs to build self-esteem. New mentors must attend a mentor workshop.

**BUSINESS PARTNERS** is a broad-based program which promotes business involvement in our schools. It is an exchange of human resources between a business and a school: one-to-one tutoring, classroom presentations, student and/or teacher recognition, field trips, displaying student work, judging student competition, or implementing a unique program designed by a company and the partner school.

**SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCILS (SAC)** elect members to represent a broad cross section of the school's student population and the area in which the school is located. Volunteers from the community can express an interest in becoming a member of a council. The SAC functions as a resource to the principal. Members work as a team to develop the school improvement plan.







# CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILDREN KINDERGARTEN THROUGH ADOLESCENCE

## *A five-year-old...*

- is helpful around the house
- prefers mother as parent
- needs some assistance with coats, etc.
- is close-mouthed at home about school activities
- has short bursts of energy
- changes from one activity to another with relative ease
- has vague concepts of time
- is not fearful
- asks many questions about how things work
- enjoys cutting and pasting
- loves to play dress-up

## *A six-year-old...*

- handles and attempts to use tools and materials
- is self-centered, domineering, stubborn, and aggressive
- wants and needs to be first, to be loved best, to be praised
- most, and to win
- is usually better-behaved away from home
- is very domineering and bossy
- is interested in simple games
- carries on long conversations
- enjoys father
- is restless, overactive, exuberant
- usually likes his teacher

### ***A seven-year-old...***

- does not respond promptly
- may forget easily
- fights with playmates
- plays in pairs or in groups
- is interested in magic, puzzles, collecting and exchanging baseball cards, etc.
- girl likes dress-up, paper dolls, jump rope
- is concerned about being good
- is easier to discipline, sensitive to praise
- complains and sulks
- thinks teacher is really paramount in school

### ***An eight-year-old...***

- is money-mad
- makes fewer complaints about teacher
- is expansive and speedy
- has a longer attention span
- is alert, friendly, and interested in people but sometimes careless, noisy, and argumentative
- has feelings easily hurt by careless remarks
- understands time and money concepts
- likes team games
- is critical of brothers and sisters
- needs frequent reminders about responsibilities
- is demanding of mother
- is sensitive to criticism
- needs adult praise and encouragement



### *A nine-year-old...*

- has new forms of self-independence
- has increasing self-motivation
- resents interruptions
- likes secret codes and languages
- has a strong sense of right and wrong
- is easily discouraged
- is competitive in work and in play, and is afraid of failure
- cries only when emotions are overtaxed
- is a great worrier
- is anxious to please
- makes fewer demands on parents
- is a loyal and devoted friend
- is more interested in talking and listening than in working

### *A ten-year-old...*

- is relaxed, casual, and alert
- is in one of the happiest ages
- has a strong sense of justice
- truly enjoys friends
- needs schedules
- loves the outdoors
- is a hero worshipper
- is critical of teachers
- wants teacher to be fair

### **PRE-ADOLESCENTS ARE (*ELEVEN AND TWELVE YEARS OLD*)**

- in need of a feeling of belonging and acceptance
- in need of increasing opportunities for independence
- in need of warm affection and a sense of humor from adults
- turned off by nagging, condemnation, and being talked down to or disrespected
- antagonistic and teasing toward the opposite sex
- over-critical, rebellious, and uncooperative
- awkward, lazy, and restless because of rapid and uneven growth

### **ADOLESCENTS ARE (*THIRTEEN AND OVER*)**

- having tremendous variations in attainment of physical maturity
- acquiring adult capacity for abstract thinking
- using aggressiveness in seeking independence
- resenting conditions that make him dependent on adults
- has difficulty adjusting to the inconsistencies and hypocrisies of adult society
- oversensitive; indulging in self-pity and having intense fear of ridicule
- concerned about popularity
- going to extremes in activities, thinking, and emotional reactions
- becoming attached to worthy causes, and are idealistic in value judgments
- showing an acute sense of injustice
- tending to oversimplify
- very interested in philosophical, ethical, and religious problems
- a step toward adulthood by asserting independence
- in need of acceptance by peer group
- in need of adult guidance that is kindly, and does not threaten freedom
- seeking both dependence and independence
- in need of provision of constructive recreation, possible a “worthy cause”

**YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!**

# NOTES



I have received the Volunteers in Public School orientation and read the VIPS Handbook

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

Please clip and return to the volunteer coordinator at your school center.

**For More Information**  
please call:  
**Office of Engagement**  
**(561) 738-2780**

*The School District of Palm Beach County, Florida is dedicated to the concept of equal access. The Board will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, age, national origin, nor handicaps in the admission and treatment of students in any activity or program.*