

Staying Connected

School _____

School's telephone number _____

PLACEMENT INFORMATION

Teacher _____

Grade Level _____ Room _____

Date to Begin _____

Day(s) _____ Times _____

Sign-In Log

[illegible]

Teacher Signature _____

If desired, hours can also be logged at bit.ly/ACPSHours

For general volunteer information, please contact the School Volunteer Office • (352) 955-7250 • volunteers@gm.sbac.edu.

School Board of Alachua County
School Volunteer Program



Connecting Community and Classrooms



2020-2021
School Volunteer
Handbook

Welcome and Introduction

We welcome you as a volunteer in the Alachua County Public Schools! The active participation of parents and community members in the classroom extends the effectiveness of teachers and staff. Volunteers also help the district to deliver valuable services to students and schools that would not be feasible without the support of the community.

The School Board of Alachua County is proud of the scope of community involvement in schools throughout the district. Last year all of our schools received the Florida Department of Education's Golden School Award for outstanding volunteer participation. During 2019-2020, more than 21,800 volunteers provided over 372,226 hours of service to our schools. This represents approximately \$9.5 million worth of donated services. This also means that thousands of students have received the individual attention so vitally needed to help them succeed and hundreds of teachers have received those "extra pairs of hands" that are so much appreciated.

Community involvement in our schools is so important! Last year, we had over 340 business partnerships with our schools. Resources shared were valued at over \$2.9 million. In addition, more than 2,031 enrichment presentations were provided to classrooms by resource speakers placed through the Community Resource Volunteer Program.

This handbook provides you with district standards and procedures regarding volunteers, as well as guidelines and tips to help you in your role of school volunteer.

School volunteers are vital to the success of our students and we greatly appreciate your participation. As a volunteer, you make a difference!



Alachua County School Volunteer Program 2802
NE 8th Avenue • Gainesville, FL 32641 (352)
955-7250 x 6412 Email: volunteers@gm.sbac.edu

<http://www.sbac.edu/Page/2827>

2020-2021 School Calendar

Mon., Aug. 24-Fri., Aug. 28
Monday, August 31
Monday, September 7
Friday, November 6th
Wednesday, November 11
Mon., Nov. 23-Fri., Nov. 24
Mon., Dec. 21-Fri., Jan. 1
Monday, January 4
Monday, January 20
Friday, January 29th
Monday, February 15

Pre-Planning for Teachers
First Day for Students
Holiday-Labor Day
Pupil Holiday/Teacher Workday
Holiday-Veteran's Day
Holidays -Thanksgiving
Winter Holidays
Classes Resume
Holiday-MLK Birthday Holiday
Pupil Holiday/Teacher Workday
President's Day

Monday, March 22-Fri., Mar. 26 Spring Holidays (5 Weekdays)

Friday, April 16 Teacher work day-student holiday
Monday, May 31 Memorial Day Holiday
Wednesday, June 16 Last Day for Students

Flex Days may be used to make up days cancelled due to hurricanes or other emergencies.

SCHOOL HOURS	GAINESVILLE		ALACHUA/HIGH SPRINGS	
	*Elementary	7:45 a.m. - 1:52 p.m.	*Elementary	7:45 a.m. - 1:52 p.m.
	Middle	9:20 a.m. - 3:37 p.m.	Middle	7:45 a.m. - 2:07 p.m.
	High	8:30 a.m. - 2:42 p.m.	High	8:47 a.m. - 3:12 p.m.
	*A.Q. Jones	9:15 a.m. - 3:28 p.m.	ARCHER/NEWBERRY	
	*Sidney Lanier	9:15 a.m. - 3:17 p.m.	*Elementary	7:45 a.m. - 1:52 p.m.
	HAWTHORNE		Middle	8:25 a.m. - 2:42 p.m.
	*Elementary	7:45 a.m. - 1:52 p.m.	High	8:35 a.m. - 2:52 p.m.
	Middle	7:55 a.m. - 2:02 p.m.	*Dismisses one hour & 15 minutes earlier on Wednesday.	
	High	7:55 a.m. - 2:02 p.m.		

COVID UPDATE

Like everyone, we at the volunteer program have made necessary adjustments to accommodate the safety of our students, staff and volunteers. In Fall of 2020, the majority of our volunteering occurred online as Digital Classroom Assistants. The use of DCA's is expected to continue through the spring.

DCA Tips:

1. Make sure to introduce yourself to the class; be aware of what they see you doing... if you look distracted, then the kids will be too!
2. Engage students with Zoom reactions and by interacting with them in the chat
3. Pay attention to the status of your microphone, background noise can be distracting and mutes other speakers.
4. Don't be afraid to ask the teacher a question-the more you know the more you can help them!
5. You may monitor when students enter and exit the Zoom, if they have connection difficulties, let the teacher know so that he/she is aware.
6. Remember that affirmation and praise goes a long way even in a virtual environment.
7. DCA's are always expected to be in a video call with students; you should never be in a breakout room without a teacher present.
8. Talk to the teacher before/after class to see how you can better help them AND to provide feedback from your experience.
9. Remember to smile and enjoy!

VOLUNTEER CODE OF CONDUCT

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

1. I will complete a new Volunteer Application every year.
2. I will sign **IN** and **OUT** at the front office every visit.
3. I will wear a volunteer name badge at all times while on campus.
4. I agree never to be alone with individual students who are not under the supervision of teachers or school authorities.
5. I will maintain confidentiality of all school or classroom information.
6. I will share with teachers and/or school administrators any concerns that I may have related to student welfare or safety.
7. I will not supervise a class in the absence of a certified teacher.
8. I will not discipline or directly teach students.
9. I will not establish or make decisions about instructional objectives.
10. I will abide by District Policy 8660, Transporting Students by Private Vehicles, when transporting students.
11. As a role model for the students, I will dress and act appropriately.
12. I agree only to do what is in the best interest of every child with whom I come into contact.

I agree to follow the Volunteer Code of Conduct at all times or risk being dismissed from my volunteer placement.

Guidelines and Information

As a volunteer you will be assisting the staff at the school to provide an enhanced educational experience for the students. Your contribution is a vital one and will become an important part of the total instructional effort. Be sure that you take seriously your responsibilities as a member of the educational team.

In Alachua County, school volunteers must always work under the supervision of school staff members. Make sure that you are working in an open, visible area and do not allow yourself to be in a situation where your actions might be misconstrued. All volunteer activities take place on the school grounds during school hours under general supervision of school staff. Exceptions can include chaperoned field trips and “away-from-school” volunteer activities such as projects done at home, booster club activities, and district-level activities. Pre-school siblings should not accompany volunteers. Young children in a classroom can interrupt the learning environment. **Volunteers are required to follow staff directions in the event of a fire drill, lockdown or evacuation.**

Volunteer Application

Individuals must submit a completed the volunteer application every school year. Applications are available online. Registered volunteers are covered by the Alachua County Public Schools’ worker’s comp insurance program. In case of accident, please notify the school-level volunteer coordinator, the school secretary, or the principal immediately. Statements found to be false will be immediate cause for dismissal. The Alachua County Public Schools reserves the right to refuse volunteer placement to individuals with disqualifying criminal convictions. All volunteers are screened through the FDLE Sexual Predator web site and other websites as warranted. The application is available at bit.ly/ACPSapp.

School Volunteer Coordinators

There is a district level coordinator for the overall school volunteer program. In addition, each school has a designated volunteer coordinator.

Discipline

It is the teacher’s responsibility to discipline the students, not the volunteer’s. Discuss any discipline problems with the supervising teacher before they escalate.

Working with Individual Students

- Volunteers must always work under the supervision of school staff members. Make sure that you are working in an open, visible area and do not allow yourself to be in a situation where your actions might be misconstrued. There should be no contact outside of school hours.

- Introduce yourself and tell the student why you are here and when you’ll be volunteering. Learn the student’s name and how to pronounce and spell it. It’s a good idea to exchange names in writing.

- Get acquainted. Find out what interests the student has; tell him some things about you. Try to establish rapport, but be patient. It may take time for you both to feel comfortable. By your words and actions, let the student know that you care.

- Be dependable. You are modeling responsible behavior for the student. If you must be absent, call the school and ask that the student be told you cannot come that day. The student will be disappointed but reassured that you care enough to call.

- Build the student’s self-confidence. Praise your student honestly and frequently. Attentiveness and effort can be as important as performance. Accentuate the positive; minimize the negative. Everyone makes mistakes. Let the student know that making mistakes is a normal part of learning. Don’t be afraid of making mistakes yourself. We can learn from mistakes!

- Listen attentively, but keep the student focused on task.

- Set specific goals that the student can achieve. Break down long-range goals into achievable increments.

- Keep your explanations and expectations few, short, and clear.

- Rather than giving her the answer automatically, direct her thinking so she can discover the answer herself.

- Do not get discouraged if you do not see immediate, significant changes in the student’s attitude or academic achievement. His present situation has probably been building over time, and it will take time to change it. Believe that you ARE making a difference, even though you may not even be around to see the positive results.

Emergencies

In case of emergency or when you have concerns for students' safety, please report immediately to a school staff member.

If you need help

If you need more instruction in order to perform a task, just ask. Establish a method of communication with the teacher, either written or verbal. If you need to change your assignment, contact the school-level or district volunteer coordinator.

Checklist

Find out about:

- ✓ Days and times you're expected
- ✓ Volunteer procedures and practices of your school
- ✓ Building layout and parking facilities
- ✓ What is expected of you as a volunteer
- ✓ What to expect of the student(s)
- ✓ Discipline and classroom policies
- ✓ What to do if you are absent or student is absent
- ✓ What to do if supervising teacher is absent
- ✓ Fire drills and safety policies

What does the teacher expect of the volunteer?

Promptness	Courtesy
Dependability	Positive attitude
Enthusiasm	Creativity
Initiative	Support
Flexibility	Tact
Patience	Non-disruptive influence
Discretion	Cooperative attitude
Concern for children	Sensitivity

Signing In-Out/Name Tags

All volunteers must provide their Drivers License the first time they sign in at a school. Volunteers are also required to sign-in and sign-out each time they come to the school. Records are maintained for security purposes as well as documentation of community involvement hours which may be used for recognition as well as data for grant proposals. **We recommend that you keep track of your hours in a personal log for future reference.** All volunteers will be required to wear a name tag/name badge while on campus. Name badges are issued when you sign in and must be returned when you sign out.

Confidentiality

Work with students is always confidential. We don't mind your sharing your experiences with others, but it is very important not to use full names of students outside of school. A misplaced comment can be devastating to a student, a family, and the volunteer program. If you have questions or concerns, talk with the teacher, the school-level coordinator, or call the district volunteer coordinator.

Reporting

Any volunteer who believes bullying or harassment has occurred should immediately report it to the school principal as per Board Policy 5517.01-Bullying and Harassment. Volunteers must also report suspected child abuse to the Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-962-2873.

Attendance/Punctuality

It is imperative that you be prompt, dependable and regular in attendance. Reliability is expected because teachers and staff plan for volunteer assistance. If you must be absent, call the school as soon as possible and ask that the teacher or your supervisor be told of your absence.

Conduct/Dress Code

As a volunteer, you are considered to be a "paraprofessional." You are a role model for the students and should dress and act appropriately. Cell phones should not be visible or in use during your volunteer work. Never take pictures of students with your cell phone or show students pictures or videos on your phone. Do not engage our students on any social media sites, email or texts. **The district's Code of Student Conduct prohibits dress (including accessories such as jewelry and body piercings/body art) which would be a distraction to learning.** Ask your supervising teacher or staff member what attire will be appropriate for your assignment.



What do school volunteers do?

- Reinforce skills taught by the teachers.
- Help teachers give students more individual attention.
- Provide added enrichment to the curriculum.
- Assist with career awareness, exploration, and preparation.
- Assist teachers with instructional-related duties.
- Help students develop a more positive attitude about themselves, school, and academic achievement.
- Help prepare students to be productive citizens and lifelong learners.
- Provide many support services to schools and school programs.

Classroom Assistants work closely with classroom teachers and staff, assisting in various projects, keeping records, preparing instructional materials and interacting with students. Duties in elementary schools may include reading/telling stories, listening to children read, and preparing instructional materials. Duties in middle and high schools and adult education centers may include working on special projects, operating AV equipment, performing clerical duties, making instructional materials, reviewing homework and assisting with testing.

Tutors work one-on-one with a student or with small groups of students who need help in academic subjects through reinforcement of basic skills.

Support Service Volunteers perform a variety of school duties assigned by staff members such as working in the office, monitoring hallways, assisting in the media center, clinic or classrooms.

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. The SAC functions as a resource to the principal and members work as a team to develop the school improvement plan.

Mentors are needed to work with discouraged students on a regular basis. The main goal is to motivate the students to achieve and stay in school. Through establishing a one-on-one relationship, tutoring, setting short-term goals, and serving as a positive role model, mentors can provide encouragement and friendship to a student.

Activities Volunteers give important support as needed for special groups and/or projects. This may include serving on the PTA Board, booster clubs, Ad Hoc committees, field trips, career fairs, science fairs, fine arts activities, and other school sponsored activities.

Business Partners is a broad-based program which promotes business involvement in schools. It is an exchange of resources between a business/organization and a school: one-to-one tutoring, classroom presentations, student and/or teacher recognition, field trips, displaying student work, judging student competition, donating materials/money, or implementing a unique program designed by the business and the partner school.

Resource Speakers provide curriculum enrichment by sharing information on careers, hobbies, travel, and other areas of expertise with students in area classrooms.

Teen Trendsetters Reading Mentors is an award-winning program that recruits and trains high school students to mentor 1-3 graders in reading. Teens are asked to commit to one hour each week and are matched with elementary students at at partnered school.