

Decatur Public Schools Volunteer Guidelines

School volunteers succeed when teachers and volunteers form an effective, cooperative education team and function as co-workers.

Purpose of Volunteers

- To increase the quality of education that our students receive.
- To increase the base of volunteers, to include community and business members, retired teachers, and those with special skills to enrich and broaden the experiences of students.
- To provide needed extra help to assist staff members and teachers in providing a superior education, and to stimulate community support for our students.
- To regularly recognize volunteers in a fashion that never leaves those with any doubt that volunteers do make a difference.

Confidentiality:

One of the most important considerations of a school-based volunteer program is the preservation of confidentiality.

As a matter of professional ethics, volunteers are expected not to discuss information concerning individual students with any other people. When dealing with our youthful student population, you will undoubtedly overhear, witness, or participate in seemingly unusual, amusing, or confusing incidents. You may be tempted to discuss these experiences with others—please don't.

As volunteers, you will not have access to information, which may help clarify a particular incident. School and/or student-based activities can be easily taken out of context, be misinterpreted or misunderstood. By sharing your experiences with others you may inadvertently compromise the privacy of our students. Accordingly, please do not discuss student information acquired during your service to the District with others.

Punctuality:

Volunteers should arrive on time for any activity. The school day and class periods are set for specific times to allow the schedule to run smoothly.

Dependability:

Teachers and staff members rely on the services performed by volunteers, if you are unable to volunteer on your scheduled day or time, it is extremely important that you contact Decatur Public Schools DPS61at (618)833-5148 so that other arrangements can be made.

Discipline:

The school and each classroom have an established discipline policy. Please talk with the teacher to see how you can fit into and support the program. When issues arise concerning appropriate student behavior, your responsibility is to call such matters to the attention of the teacher or other supervision

school personnel and to support students by encouraging them to make good choices and demonstrate appropriate behavior. We appreciate your efforts and help.

Emergency Drills:

If you are present during a drill, follow the lead of the nearest faculty or staff member.

Field Trips:

While many volunteer opportunities are available in Decatur Public Schools, serving as a chaperone is one of the most popular. When volunteering time as a field trip chaperone for the district, the following guidelines apply.

Chaperones must: 1) Sign in and out at the school office, 2) Wear the volunteer badge provided by the district, 3) Follow the bus to the field trip site, 4) Follow the itinerary provided by the teacher(s) in charge, 5) maintain contact with all students in the assigned group, 6) Report students not following rules to the teacher in charge, 7) See that students under your charge are obeying the rules. These rules should be enforced consistently, and 8) Contact the teacher immediately if any problems arise with a student.

Only individuals that have been designated by the district as approved volunteers are permitted to chaperone or accompany a class on a field trip. The volunteer's undivided attention is needed when serving as a chaperone, thus we recommend that chaperones attend the trip unaccompanied by other children.

All volunteers work under supervised conditions only:

When working in the building, please adhere to the volunteer schedule and try to keep your role as a volunteer and a parent separate. If your child has a problem, let your child work out the problem with others and the teacher, through established classroom routines and procedures. If you need to speak with a teacher about a situation involving your child, please make arrangements to do so at a time agreed upon with the teacher that does not interrupt instructional time.

Respect for Authority:

A volunteer shall respect the authority of all school personnel. If you have a problem, issue or disagreement, please bring it to the Principal's attention privately at an appropriate time.

Criminal Background Check:

At the discretion of Decatur Public Schools DPS61 Principals or Superintendent, a Criminal Background Check may be conducted through the Regional Office of Education (or similar State Agency) on any volunteer working with DPS61 students. The school district will pay for the cost of the Criminal Background Check up to a total of 10 classroom volunteers per school year.

Tobacco Products, Drugs and Alcohol:

Volunteers are prohibited from using or being under the influence of tobacco products, drugs, or alcohol.

Bloodborne Pathogens:

DPS61 staff members are trained in handling injuries to students and spills involving hazardous or infectious substances throughout the school day. Please notify them immediately if there is an incident.

They will make sure that they are following correct protocol in cleaning up the spill or otherwise addressing the situations.

Cell Phone Use:

Please refrain from using cell phones while volunteering and in the presence of the children.

Identification Badges:

Volunteers must wear a temporary name tag using an appropriate title (i.e. Mr., Mrs., and Ms.). These will be available at the sign-in area in the main office. All volunteers must sign-in and out each day they are at the school.

Entrances & Exits:

Doors are locked for the safety of all students and staff; please do not prop/block doors open. Always enter the building through the main office entrance.

Objectivity/Impartiality:

A volunteer shall not let his/her personal feelings enter into his or her work as a volunteer. A volunteer shall favor no one side or party more than another in all school situations.

Appearance:

A volunteer shall dress appropriately, always remembering that he/she is setting an example for the students. School guidelines for modesty, cleanliness, and no fads apply to all volunteers and school staff.

Volunteer Responsibilities:

Volunteers play a key role in the classroom and other school-related activities. Therefore, dependability and promptness are essential. Except in an emergency volunteers are requested to give at least 24 hour notice if they are unable to fulfill their responsibilities. Teachers and other staff will do the same, should their volunteer requirements change.

- Volunteers shall exercise mature judgment in supervising children and shall in all instances respect each student's rights and privacy. Volunteers should discuss any concerns directly and exclusively with the supervising teacher/staff.
- Volunteers should be willing to perform a wide range of assigned tasks. This includes activities such as copying, cutting, sorting, collating, shelving books, laminating, putting up or taking down bulletin boards, and working directly with students. Other areas of volunteer use could be reading stories to students, assisting with fundraisers, assisting in the computer lab, libraries, mentoring/tutoring, and serving on the school's advisory councils. Each of these activities makes a contribution to the school. All are valuable to teachers, staff, and students.
- Volunteers are responsible for understanding and using the specific approach demonstrated by the teacher/staff so that children are dealt with consistently and fundamental concepts are followed.
- Volunteers should make outside arrangements for child care of non-school age children instead of bringing them to school during volunteer time.

Teachers and DPS61 Staff

In all activities, the volunteer is an extension of the DPS61 professional staff. Be aware of each student's right to privacy and to ensure confidentiality, share only necessary information.

Teachers and administration will determine how to most effectively use volunteers. In some cases a decision may be made to use volunteers in classrooms other than that of a volunteer's child.

Teachers will provide written and/or oral directions for activities they want volunteers to execute. If a volunteer doesn't understand the activity assigned, he/she should ask for a demonstration and/or clarification at an appropriate break.

Under no circumstances should ongoing instruction be interrupted. Time on task is another prerequisite for quality academic performance in a school. One interruption can cause a loss of up to 15 minutes of quality thinking time if you consider the time it takes to build up to a teachable moment.

Discontinuation of Services

Although Decatur Public Schools DPS61 is not limited to the reasons below, a volunteer can be asked to discontinue their services for the following:

- Breach of confidentiality
- Sexual misconduct
- Unlawful conduct or violation of DPS61 School's rules, policies, and regulations
- Physical or emotional stress which incapacitates the volunteer
- Inability to cooperate and work effectively with school staff and students
- Erratic or unreliable attendance or behavior
- Criminal charges or criminal conviction
- Establishing inappropriate relations with any student

Decatur Public Schools DPS61

Thank you for expressing an interest in volunteering in Decatur Public Schools. Students, teachers, staff, parents, and the community benefit from the work of individuals like you who freely share their talents, time and resources. We also know that as a volunteer, you too will be rewarded. One hour, one day a week, one day on a special project or a field trip-your efforts make a difference for students. Please be sure to carefully read the Volunteer Information and Guidelines included with this packet. These guidelines have been established for the safety of both students and volunteers. Upon completion, simply fill out the attached form and submit it to the Principals' Office for processing.

Volunteer Process

Decatur Public Schools DPS61 welcomes volunteers but we need to know who is in the building while school is in session. For the safety of our students, a completed Volunteer Form must be submitted to and approved by the Principals' Office prior to volunteering.

For the safety of our students, all prospective volunteers may be subject to a background check. In most cases, background checks will not be required for activities such as Grandparents' Day, Class Parties, Fall Festival, Book Fair, PTO Events, and other similar activities.

Background checks will be required on all prospective volunteers who will be working with a student or a group of students for an extended period of time during a school day or for several days throughout the school year.

After you have received volunteer approval you will remain on the approved status list until you ask to have your name removed. We do ask that you complete and submit to the Principals' Office the Volunteer Sign-Up Sheet each year.

Once your application has been processed and your volunteer status is determined, the building Principal will notify you of your status. This process may take approximately two weeks.

If you do not receive feedback regarding your volunteer status within four weeks of submitting your paperwork, please contact Human Resources at 424-3051

Volunteer Procedures

Always report to the main office first to sign in and get a visitor pass. Please wear identification badge provided by the school while you are participating in volunteer activities.

Upon departure, make a final stop in the main office to sign out and return the visitor badge. Adhere to the Decatur Public Schools DPS61 volunteer guidelines.

Decatur Public Schools Volunteer Record Check

(Please return this sheet to the Principals' Office.)

All volunteers in Decatur Public schools must complete the volunteer record check form each year in which they plan to volunteer. The form should be completed and returned to a building principal and approved by the district office before the volunteer should be allowed to work with or accompany students on field trips. It takes about 2 weeks for record checks to be completed and approved. Please plan to return the form in sufficient time so that approval can be secured before any planned event. **Only one form needs to be completed for each volunteer. It will be good for all children that you have in the district and for all school buildings in the district.**

A Police Record Check and child sex offender list check is requested on the following individual who has indicated a desire to participate as a volunteer in one of our schools. Our district requires that a background check be made to provide for the most positive influence upon our students.

Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Phone# (H) _____ (C) _____ E-Mail _____

Address: _____

Have you ever been convicted of a crime, misdemeanor and/or felony? _____ Yes _____ No

Explain: _____

Provide the following information for any children or grandchildren that are attending school at DPS61:

Students' Name	Grade	Teacher	School

I hereby consent to the release of any public record information requested by the Decatur Public Schools.

Volunteer Signature _____

Date _____

Principal's Signature _____

Date _____

District Office Approval _____

Date _____