

Pine-Richland Volunteer Handbook



Dear Volunteers,

You have taken a step towards making a significant impact on the excellent education programs offered in the Pine-Richland School District. Volunteers provide enrichment opportunities that enhance the educational experience for students while supporting our teachers and staff. Volunteers also help us build a strong foundation for students as they explore their personal strengths at such a pivotal point in their development.

As you enhance and support the our program, it is important to also help students be excited about life - to have a positive attitude that will get them through challenging times as they grow and learn. By modeling for students the kinds of expectations they need to succeed, you help them develop into productive citizens of the community. We urge you to become a strong advocate by sharing your positive experiences with others and encouraging them to become involved.

This handbook will help you make a smooth transition into your volunteer job, giving you an overview of the school volunteer program. Our hope is that you will find personal satisfaction in what you do. There has never been a more exciting time to be part of the education experience in the Pine-Richland School District. Thank you for joining us.

Volunteer Categories

1. Assistive Volunteer

An assistive volunteer works directly under the supervision of a teacher or administrator. The volunteer does not provide direct services to students and does not have unsupervised contact with students.

Examples: Homeroom parents, parents who attend or conduct classroom celebrations, parents who are guest readers, classroom tutors (during the regular school day), cafeteria volunteers, talent show volunteers, day-time field trip chaperones (who must stay within sight of teacher), parents who help with Market Day, parents who help with clerical tasks, etc.

***No clearances are needed to be an assistive volunteer**

*** Assistive volunteers should attend the orientation given by the counselors**

2. Independent Volunteer

An independent volunteer works under the general direction and supervision of a teacher or administrator. This type of volunteer does provide direct services to students on behalf of the school and may have unsupervised contact with students.

Examples: Volunteer tutors (before or after the regular school day), daytime field trip chaperones (who may be out of sight of teacher), overnight field trip chaperones, and after-school program volunteers.

3. Volunteer Coaches/Sponsors

A volunteer coach or sponsor works under the general direction and supervision of a coach or student activity sponsor. The volunteer directly supervises or instructs students and may have unsupervised contact with the students.

Examples: Volunteers on a coaching staff of an athletic team, athletic trainers or equipment managers, choreographers, musicians, or other individuals who provide instruction to students in the marching band or the school musical.

Independent Volunteer, Coach, or Sponsor Application Process

- A. Completed **Independent Volunteer Application**
- B. Complete The Sexual Misconduct/Abuse Disclosure Release
- C. Complete **Mandated Reporter Training**
(www.reportabusepa.pitt.edu)
- D. Completed **Original Criminal History Report** from the PA state Police.

This Clearances Is Currently Free For Volunteers

Criminal Reports May Be Obtained Electronically From the Pennsylvania State Police at:

<https://epatch.state.pa.us/>

- Click on “Submit a New Record Check (Volunteers Only)
- At the bottom of the page click to accept the terms and conditions
- Complete the fields
- Click next
- Verify the information by clicking proceed
- Complete the fields and click on enter the request
- Click finished
- Once the search results page appears, click on the Control Number to open the details page
- Click Certification Page to access your official clearance and print

- E. Completed **Original Child Abuse History Report** from the PA Department of Child Welfare.

This Clearance Is Currently Free For Volunteers.

The Child Abuse Report Application May Be Obtained Electronically At:

<https://www.compass.state.pa.us/CWIS>

- Create a new account – you will need an email address
- Click on next
- Keystone ID: create a username
- Complete the fields and click on finish
- Follow the prompts for creating a password
- Log in
- Click through the continue and next prompts
- Click on “Create a Clearance Application”
- Read through and click “Begin” at the bottom of the page

Application Purpose: Volunteer Having Contact With Children

- Click Next
- Enter in your name, birthday, gender, “yes” for Social Security Number, email address
- Complete the remaining sheets by clicking on the “+” to add and then complete the fields
- Click on next at the bottom of each page

F. Completed Original Federal Criminal History Report from the PDE.

This Clearance Currently Costs \$27.00

Federal (FBI) Criminal Reports May Be Obtained Electronically from the Pennsylvania State Police
At: https://www.pa.cogentid.com/index_pdeNew.htm

- Click on “Register Online” on the right side of the screen
- Click the check box to accept the terms
- Click continue
- You will be required to enter a valid credit card, which will be charged \$27.00.
- Complete the fields for credit card information.
- Once registered online, print the receipt. You will need to bring the receipt and photo id to an approved fingerprinting site.

G. Completed PDE-6004 Arrest and Conviction Form (Act 24 of 2011).

H. Proof of a TB Test is now required for all Independent Volunteers. I

I. Submit the completed application, Sexual Misconduct Form, proof of Mandated Reporter Training, the Arrest and Conviction form, the three approved clearances, and proof of the TB test to your school office. We will need the original copy of the clearances. You will get the clearances back after they are reviewed by administration. The building principal will forward the completed packet, with his completed form to our Human Resources Office.

J. Attend a Volunteer Orientation (one-time only) presented by the school counselor.

Accessing Volunteer Application and Clearances

Please Go To:

www.pinerichland.org/volunteers.

***Volunteer Clearances Must Be Renewed Every 60 Months.**

**Pine Richland School District
Volunteer Program
Policies**

Volunteer Assignment

You will be assigned to a job according to the needs of the teacher as well as the skills you have to offer. IF you feel you will not be able to fulfill the tasks of that job assignment, please contact the teacher or staff person who you are working with.

Absence

Your willingness to donate time to our school is greatly appreciated. Because teachers plan with the expectation that you will be there, not showing up can cause real problems. If an emergency arises and you will not be able to keep your commitment, please cancel as soon as possible. Do this by calling the teacher or staff person with whom you will be working.

Younger Children

Because it is essential that you give your full attention to your assignment, we ask that younger children not accompany you to school while volunteering.

Cell Phones

As a courtesy to the staff and students, please turn off your cell phone before entering the classroom.

Procedures

Upon arrival at the school building, all visitors must register in the building office before proceeding to any other part of the building.

As part of the registration process in the front office, all visitors will be asked to sign in and provide their driver's license or other state-issued photo-identification, which will be held by the building office for the duration of the visit. Car keys may be accepted in lieu of a driver's license or photo ID at the discretion of the building office.

Once registered, the visitor will be issued a Visitor Identification Badge, which must be displayed at all times while the visitor remains in the school building or on school premises. **Independent Volunteers will already have badges issued.**

Visitors must remain in approved areas only and at all times act in a manner appropriate to the safe functioning of the school environment. Any individual who engages in uncooperative or disruptive behavior will be required to leave the premises.

Upon conclusion of the visit, the visitor must return to the building office, sign out on the Visitor Register and return the visitor badge. Once the visitor has checked out, the building office will return the visitor's driver's license, ID or keys, as applicable.

Personal Boundaries

Before you start your volunteer experience, have a clear idea of what your personal boundaries are. Are you comfortable having the students refer to you by your first name, or would you prefer to be called Mr. or Mrs.? Are you willing to discuss aspects of your personal life such as your spouse and children? Children ask adults a lot of personal questions in an attempt to bond. Because children are developing social skills, they are still learning the difference between appropriate and inappropriate questions. Answer personal questions that are within your own comfort level as long as they are asked during appropriate times. If a child asks a question that you do not want to answer, let him know in a polite way.

Confidentiality and the School Volunteer

Confidentiality has its roots in the Latin words “cum” and “fides” which translate as “with faith”. This is how the school volunteer and teacher should view one another; with faith, belief, and trust in personal integrity. As a school volunteer, you will become aware of information that demands confidentiality. You can strengthen the bond between yourself and the school by being certain to do the following:

1. Treat all students’ personal information as confidential. This includes *observed* behavior along with academic, personal, and social information.
2. Please only share relevant information about a student with the classroom teacher, counselor, or building principal.
3. Information regarding a student should NEVER be discussed outside of the school setting.
4. If you are concerned or need a better understanding of a situation please speak with the school personnel involved. Please avoid discussion about these concerns with non-school personnel. *Never* leave the building with a serious concern—please take the time to talk to the secretaries, the counselor or principal.
5. Channel friends’ or neighbors’ questions about confidential issues that are directed to you to the school principal, teacher, or counselor.
6. Recognize that you see only a small part of the big picture and try to avoid generalizations.
7. Respect ALL students’ right to privacy.

The confidentiality regarding students’ social behavior, academic achievement, health information, student records, and other legal documents is a serious matter. PA law prohibits volunteers from actually recording grades in teacher’s permanent record books and taking and/or recording attendance records. In addition the school volunteer must have no contact with the home regarding the child’s progress or behavior. You may discuss any ideas you have with the teacher, but the teacher must be the one to formally communicate with home. You, the volunteer, may not actually assign class work or homework for the child. Your job is to implement work prescribed by the teacher.

Tips for Volunteers

Use eye contact, it's powerful.

Use a seating chart to refer to children by name.

Tell students that you are glad to be there!

Treat students and yourself with dignity.

Always speak to students as if another person was standing right beside them.

Don't take misbehavior personally; students can be duty-bound to challenge authority, no matter who it is.

Make one of your first tasks to clearly state your expectations to students.

Use humor, never sarcasm.

Don't make a mountain out of a molehill, yet don't wait until you have a major out-of-control meltdown before seeking help.

Provide as much positive feedback to students as possible.

Use praise and encouragement--it goes a long way.

DO'S and DON'TS When Using Reinforcements

Do let a child know, when he/she is really trying, that what he/she is doing is acknowledged and appreciated.

Don't be insincere or praise a child for things that are easy for him/her and take little or no effort on his/her part.

Do let a child know he/she is making progress even though the work is not perfect.

Do reinforce a child for the part she/he does, when a child is learning something new or something that is hard for her/him.

Don't wait until she/he is completely finished with a difficult task before you give her/him encouragement.

Do vary the words you use.

Don't use the same word for everything.

Do be specific about behavior when reinforcing a child.

“Good job, you finished on time!” or “I liked the way you...”

Don't be so general that the reinforcement is ineffective or ignored.

“Good”

“Great”

Source: **Reinforcement Theory** by Madeline Hunter

How to Encourage Students

Use Phrases to Demonstrate ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: Help students learn to evaluate their own progress, and make their own decisions. Do not focus on having students please you. Be specific in your comments.

Examples of *encouraging* statements:

- **“Way to go!” or “Thumbs up!”**
- **“It looks like you enjoyed that.”**
- **“Those are neat colors that you chose for your picture.”**
- **“Your whole team seemed to have a blast at that game.”**

Common times to use these phrases: *almost anytime, in response to artwork, athletics, homework, school projects, or any time you used to say “good job”.*

Use Phrases that Show CONFIDENCE: Help students develop a willingness to try things and be responsible for their own behavior. Teach them to have the courage to be imperfect.

- **“You can do it!” or “You’ll make it!”**
- **“You can do hard things.”**
- **“Knowing you, I’m sure you’ll do fine.”**
- **“I trust your judgment.”**

Common times used: *joining new activity or group, facing peer conflicts, when going off and trying a new job responsibility.*

Use Phrases of APPRECIATION: Help students feel that their contributions count, and that their talents and efforts can be used for the good of all, not just personal gain. Help the children learn to feel glad for successes of others as well as for their own personal success.

- **“Thanks, you helped a lot.”**
- **“I really appreciated your cooperation.”**
- **“I really enjoyed today. Thanks.”**
- **“I could really use your help on _____.”**

Common times used: *After completing a difficult task, after seeing positive interaction with other students, during field trips, during a time when cooperation is needed.*

Use Phrases that Recognize EFFORT: Help students focus on what they can do. Help them recognize improvements in their work and develop persistence on difficult tasks.

- **“Look at the progress you’ve made.”**
- **“You spent a lot of time thinking that through.”**
- **“You’re really improving in these ways: _____.”**

Common times used: *in response to homework, report card.*

Valuable is the work you do

Outstanding is how you always come through

Loyal, sincere, and full of good cheer

Untiring in your efforts throughout the year

Notable are the contributions you make

Trustworthy in every project you take

Eager to reach every goal

Effective in the way you fill your role

Ready with a smile like a shining star

Special and wonderful that's what you are

**Thank you for volunteering with the
Pine-Richland School District!**

