Volunteer Handbook

The School District of Lee County
June 2025

Table of Contents

Welcome Letter

Whether you are a parent, grandparent, retiree, or community member, we sincerely thank you for choosing to volunteer your time and talents with the students of The School District of Lee County (LCSD). With more than 90,000 students enrolled in our schools, we recognize the critical importance of preparing every learner for success—and your role as a volunteer is both valued and impactful in that mission.

Volunteers help enrich the educational experiences of our students in countless ways. From serving on School Advisory Councils and assisting in classrooms, to chaperoning field trips, supporting music and athletic programs, or lending a hand with school events and preparation tasks—your contributions help build stronger, more vibrant school communities. No matter how or where you choose to get involved, please know that your support is making a difference.

This handbook has been created to guide you through the expectations and procedures of volunteering in our schools. We hope it provides clear answers to your questions and helps you feel confident and supported in your role. Should you need additional information, please reach out to the volunteer coordinator at your school site.

We are truly grateful for your service and look forward to partnering with you throughout the year. Welcome to our team of dedicated LCSD volunteers!

Denise M. Carr.

Goals of the Volunteer Program

- To provide an opportunity for interested community members to become directly involved with the educational system and educational process of The School District of Lee County.
- To provide individualized educational assistance to students.
- To enrich students' curriculum, broadening their awareness and experience.
- To assist school personnel with non-instructional tasks and duties.
- To reinforce lessons taught at school.
- To strengthen school-community relations through direct volunteer participation.
- To reinforce the philosophy that learning is important.
- To enhance all aspects of the educational process.
- To stimulate community interest, concern, and support for the public education system.

Determine Your Volunteer Level

Level 1:

Level 1 volunteers must obtain clearance through the Centegix system each time they enter campus or volunteer.

Level 1 volunteers must always be in the presence of an LCSD employee. Examples include:

- Assisting in a classroom or at the school site
- Assisting with a district-level department or program

Level 2:

Fingerprinting is required in order to conduct a state and national background clearance.

Duties assigned outside the immediate presence of an LCSD employee include, but are not limited to:

- Chaperoning field trips to areas such as theme parks where volunteers are not in eyesight of LCSD employees and/or overnight field trips
- Mentoring
- Transporting students in a vehicle without an LCSD employee present
- Volunteer (non-paid) athletic coaches

Potential volunteers will be notified by the school if fingerprint registration is necessary based on the type of field trip or activity.

Fingerprinting is done at the cost of the volunteer and is only required every five years. To obtain or renew Level 2 clearance, please register as a volunteer and follow the Level 2 process.

Level 2 volunteers must obtain clearance through the Centegix system each time they enter campus or volunteer.

Application Process

To become an approved volunteer:

1. Complete the online LCSD Volunteer Application
2. Upload a valid U.S.-issued photo ID, Passport, or Green Card
3. Participate in a school-based orientation. (If offered.)
4. Receive notification of clearance to begin volunteering.

Volunteers are screened through the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) sexual predator/offender database. Depending on your assignment, a fingerprint-based Criminal History Records Check may be required.

Florida Retirement System Volunteers

Retirees seeking to provide civic, charitable, and humanitarian services to the District during the first 12 calendar months following their retirement must meet the following criteria:

A. Before the retiree's date of retirement, there was no agreement or understanding between the Board and the retiree that the retiree would provide any service for the Board.
B. The Board or a third party may not provide any form of compensation, including any cash equivalents, to a retiree volunteer for their volunteer service.
C. Except as otherwise provided in law, a retiree volunteer may not be provided any employee benefits, including health or life insurance benefits. However, a retiree volunteer may be provided certain perquisites necessary for, and for the limited purpose of, completing tasks associated with the Board's retiree volunteer program, such as an assigned uniform or the provision of equipment.
D. The number of volunteer hours per week, including training hours, that the retiree volunteer may provide is no more than 20% of the number of hours that the retiree volunteer was expected to work per week before their date of retirement.

E. There is a clear distinction between the duties of the retiree volunteer and the duties of a Board employee.
F. The schedule of a retiree volunteer, including the number of hours volunteered and the number and type of assignments for which they agree to volunteer, is controlled by the retiree volunteer.
G. The Board and the volunteer retiree are both required to maintain adequate records to document adherence to the criteria listed in this policy. These records must be made available upon request to the Department of Management Services (DMS) or State Board of Administration (SBA).

The principal or department supervisor, as applicable, shall be responsible for maintaining post-employment retiree volunteer records in accordance with this policy.

Steps to Become a Volunteer

1. Complete a volunteer application online at https://www.leeschools.net/parent_portal/volunteering.
2. Contact the school where you wish to volunteer.
3. The school's volunteer contact will invite you to verify your valid U.S.-issued photo ID.
4. While at the school, you will sign into the Centegix Visitor Management System and scan your ID.
5. You may begin volunteering once your application is approved and you have reviewed the Volunteer Orientation video and the Volunteer Handbook at https://www.leeschools.net/parent_portal/volunteering.

Steps to Volunteer for Overnight / Out-of-County Trips

1. You MUST be 25 years old and have an approved volunteer application on file to be considered for overnight or out-of-county trips.
2. Contact the school where you will be volunteering for overnight or out-of-county trips.
3. Be approved as Level II volunteers by undergoing fingerprint-based background checks.
4. The school's volunteer contact will complete a Volunteer Fingerprint Request Form and submit all three documents to Human Resources.
5. If the request is approved, the School Volunteer Program Specialist will email you instructions to schedule a fingerprinting appointment with our third-party vendor (Fieldprint).

6. Once results are received, the School Volunteer Program Specialist will notify the volunteer.

Confidentiality

Volunteers shall maintain strict confidentiality of all school, classroom, or student information to which they have access while performing their volunteer activities.

Volunteers shall be allowed access to personally identifiable student information only:

- With the approval of the Principal, and
- To the extent necessary to fulfill an assigned activity that would otherwise be performed by a District employee.

Volunteers must have a legitimate educational interest to access student information. Disclosure of student information to unauthorized persons is strictly prohibited and may result in dismissal from volunteer service.

Duty to Report Child Neglect/Abuse

Volunteers are required by law to report any known or suspected cases of child abuse, neglect, or abandonment.

Call the Florida Abuse Hotline: 1-800-96-ABUSE or report online at: www.myflfamilies.com

Legal Protection

Florida law protects approved volunteers from civil liability for actions performed in good faith within the scope of their duties, provided there is no gross negligence or willful misconduct.

Volunteer Assignments

Duties assigned to volunteers shall be consistent with, but not limited to, Florida statutes, State Board of Education rules/Florida Administrative Code, and LCSD Board policies. As such, volunteers shall NOT:

- Assume responsibility for the supervision of a class in the absence of a certified teacher.
- Assume responsibility for the discipline of students.
- Establish instructional objectives.

- Make decisions regarding the relevancy of certain activities or procedures to the attainment of instructional objectives.
- Provide the initial instruction for accomplishing the instructional objectives.
- Make decisions regarding the appropriateness of certain teaching material for accomplishing instructional objectives.
- Make judgments regarding the attainment of instructional objectives unless these achievements are based upon clear objective criteria (e.g., specific achievement standards on a true/false test).
- Contact parents regarding the performance of students or write comments on papers that go home.

Removal of Volunteers

Volunteers may be removed for:

- Breach of confidentiality
- Unprofessional conduct
- Safety violations
- Noncompliance with Florida laws and school or district policies

School administrators have final authority regarding volunteer status.

Age Guidelines for Volunteering

These guidelines will be used when determining the eligibility of student volunteers within The School District of Lee County:

- Students who have recently completed the eighth grade and/or are rising high school freshmen will not be eligible to volunteer at any LCSD middle school for one full school year following completion. Eligibility to volunteer within middle schools will be granted once they are academically classified as sophomores. (Eligibility is at the Principal's discretion)
- Students who have recently completed high school and/or graduated will not be eligible to volunteer at any LCSD high school for one full school year following graduation. Eligibility to volunteer within high schools will be granted once they have completed this waiting period.

Volunteer Health, Safety, and Appearance

- Do not volunteer if ill.
- Know safety procedures and emergency exits.
- Dress appropriately (no revealing or offensive clothing).
- Use only designated restrooms for adults.

Responsibilities of Volunteers

We realize that you are serving voluntarily, and we consider your commitment to the program a valuable one. The volunteer, along with the staff member, should maintain professional attitudes and mutual respect. As a member of the educational team, the volunteer is reminded of the following:

- **DEPENDABILITY** – Teachers have planned and scheduled student activities around your attendance. Please notify the volunteer contact at the school if you will be absent.
- **CONFIDENTIALITY** – Never discuss or repeat any information about a child with anyone other than the appropriate staff member.
- **COMMUNICATION** – Discuss any ideas, questions, or concerns with your assigned staff member.
- **SCHOOL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES** – Familiarize yourself with the school's rules, plans, and procedures.
- **HONESTY** – Be honest in your approach and attitude; it will aid in developing trust with staff and students.
- **PATIENCE** – Be patient and positive when working with students. Encourage and expect students to succeed.
- **FLEXIBILITY** – Be flexible when responding to the needs of the staff and students. Everyone has on/off days.
- **CONSISTENCY** – Be consistent when dealing with students. They come to rely on those who are steady and true.

REMINDER: Volunteers should never be put in the position of having to enforce discipline. That is the responsibility of the teacher or administrator. Immediately notify a staff member if you are encountering a situation that may result in a disciplinary action.

School Volunteer Opportunities

- Classroom assistance
- Front office support

- Media center help
- Mentoring/tutoring
- School events/fundraisers
- School Advisory Committees or PTA/PTO

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Where do I check in?
   At the front office using the visitor management system.
2. Can I bring my young child with me?
   No. Volunteers may not bring children due to safety and liability.
3. Can I discuss what I observe?
   Only with appropriate school staff. Confidentiality is required.
4. What if I need to cancel a volunteer shift?
   Contact the school's volunteer coordinator in advance.
5. Can I address student misbehavior?
   No. Report concerns to a staff member.

Volunteer Hours and Reporting

Logging volunteer hours:

- Helps schools apply for awards and grants.
- Recognizes your contributions.
- Is required by some programs for compliance.

Sign in at each visit and check out when leaving.

Dress Code for Volunteers

- Follow the school dress code.
- No midriffs, halter tops, or offensive imagery.
- Closed-toe shoes are recommended.

Communication Protocol

- Direct concerns to your site's volunteer coordinator.
- Maintain respectful, professional communication at all times.

- Avoid social media interactions with students.

Dismissal from Volunteer Service

Grounds for dismissal include:

- Repeated tardiness or absence
- Breach of student confidentiality
- Inappropriate behavior or language
- Safety violations

Acknowledgment Form

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have received, read, and understood the contents of The School District of Lee County Volunteer Handbook. I agree to abide by the policies, procedures, and expectations outlined in the handbook.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

School/Program: _____

Contact Information

Community Support & Volunteer Programs
The School District of Lee County

Kevin Beckman
Phone: (239) 939-6617
Email: kevinb@leeschools.net
Website: www.leeschools.net/volunteer

Thank you for supporting our schools and students!