Volunteer Handbook

The School District of Lee County
2026-2027

Table of Contents

Welcome Letter 2

Goals of the Volunteer Program 3

Determine Your Volunteer Level 3

Application Process 4

Level 1 Volunteer: Steps to Apply 4

Level 2 Volunteer: Steps to Apply 5

Confidentiality 5

Duty to Report Child Neglect/Abuse 6

Legal Protection 6

Volunteer Assignments 6

Removal of Volunteers 7

Age Guidelines for Volunteering 7

Volunteer Health, Safety, and Appearance 7

Responsibilities of Volunteers 8

School Volunteer Opportunities 8

Frequently Asked Questions 9

Volunteer Hours and Reporting 9

Dress Code for Volunteers 9

Communication Protocol 9

Dismissal from Volunteer Service 10

Florida Retirement System Volunteers 10

Acknowledgment Form 11

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 Visitor Management System each time they enter campus or volunteer.

Level 1 volunteers must always be in the line of sight 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: Must be at least 21 years old (minimum age of 25 required for overnight or out-of-county field trips).

Fingerprinting is required to conduct a state and national background clearance. Duties assigned outside the immediate line of sight of an LCSD employee include, but are not limited to:

- Chaperoning field trips
- Mentoring or Tutoring outside the line of sight of an LCSD employee
- 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 activity.

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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 Visitor Management System each time they enter campus to 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. Review District Board Policies: Ethics Policy 3210.01 and Volunteers Policy 9200.
4. Participate in an orientation. (If offered.)
5. 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.

Level 1 Volunteer: Steps to Apply

1. **Complete the Online Volunteer Application online**

   Fill out the application form on the Lee County Schools Volunteering Portal.

2. **Connect with the School**
   Contact the school where you wish to volunteer to initiate the next steps.

   Note: The school's volunteer coordinator will invite you to the campus to verify your valid, U.S.-issued photo ID.

3. **Sign in When Visiting Campus**

   Whenever you are at the school, please check in using the Centegix Visitor Management System and scan your government-issued photo ID.

4. **Review Orientation and Begin Volunteering**
   You are cleared to start volunteering once your application is approved, you have attended the school-based Volunteer Orientation, and you have completed the acknowledgment form found at the bottom of this Volunteer Handbook.

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Level 2 Volunteer: Steps to Apply

1. **Complete the Online Volunteer Application**
   Fill out the application form on the Lee County Schools Volunteering Portal.

2. **Verify Your Fingerprint Status**
   Check to see if your fingerprints are already registered in the Florida Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) system:

   Step 1: Click **here** to search the AHCA Database

   Step 2: Enter your information to see if you have an active record

3. **Complete Level 2 Fingerprinting**
   If you do not have an active record in the AHCA system, please follow the Level 2 volunteer fingerprinting and clearance steps. Instructions are available in your preferred language:

   a. Fieldprint Fingerprinting Instructions: (English) (Spanish) (Creole)
   b. **Fieldprint Code:** FPSchoolLeeCoVol *(Note: This code is case-sensitive)*.

4. **Connect with the School**
   Contact the volunteer coordinator at the specific school where you plan to donate your time.

5. **Await Email Notification**

   Once your background check results are received and processed, you will receive an email notifying you of your eligibility status.

6. **Sign In When Visiting Campus**
   Whenever you are at the school, please check in using the Centegix Visitor Management System and scan your government-issued photo ID.

7. **Review Orientation and Begin Volunteering**
   You are cleared to start volunteering once your application is approved, you have attended the school-based Volunteer Orientation, and you have completed the acknowledgment form found at the bottom of this Volunteer Handbook.

Confidentiality

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

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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: **1-800-962-2873** 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).

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- Contact parents regarding the performance of students or writing 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 of the eighth grade. 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. (Eligibility is at the Principal's discretion.)

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.

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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

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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.

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Dismissal from Volunteer Service

Grounds for dismissal include:

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

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 prerequisites 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.

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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: _____

Location/Program: _____

Emergency Contact Name & Number: _____

Allergies: _____

Thank you for supporting our schools and students!