

VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

Why Volunteer?

Because you make the difference
for every child, every day,
every opportunity!



Dear Community Member,

Thank you for choosing to volunteer in the Washington Elementary School District. We know you had choices as to where you wanted to volunteer, and we appreciate you choosing to support our students.

In today's environment, it takes volunteers to make our schools and district function. It really does take a village to raise a child.

The mission of our district is focused on student achievement and preparing all students to become responsible, successful contributors to our diverse society. We cannot accomplish this mission without you sharing your talents, experiences and abilities.

Thank you again for serving the children of the Washington Elementary School District. If we can be of service or you wish to share a success story or an area we can improve, please let us know.

Again, thank you for your service to our students.

Sincerely,

Dr. Paul Stanton
Superintendent

Volunteer Services

WESD volunteers represent many facets of our community, including:

- parents/legal guardians of a student;
- relatives of a student;
- community members;
- business partners; and /or
- volunteer agencies.

There are varieties of ways volunteers support student achievement in the Washington Elementary School District. For example, volunteers work directly with students in classrooms, assist teachers, assist with clerical responsibilities, assist in school libraries,

chaperon during field trips, and share their unique talents and skills with students.

Volunteers work under the supervision of district principals, teachers and staff. We hope you will share your areas of interest with the principal or school volunteer coordinator, so you can have a rewarding experience as you help support the education of all students.

All persons who volunteer in the WESD must apply and receive approval according to the requirements explained in the Volunteer Handbook before beginning to volunteer.

In the following pages, you will find detailed information about the roles, responsibilities and requirements for WESD volunteers; and how to apply to be a volunteer.

The Four Most Important Volunteer Qualities

Professionalism – Although the job is voluntary, the commitment is professional. Besides being responsible for maintaining an attitude of mutual respect and confidence, you should also become familiar with school and classroom policies and practices.

Dependability – Students, teachers and staff members count on you and rely on the services performed by you as a volunteer. It is essential that you contact the school if you are unable to volunteer on your scheduled day so that other arrangements can be made.

Confidentiality – Volunteers must protect the teachers' and students' right to privacy. You may encounter personal and school information while volunteering; you are not to disclose this information outside of the school setting. If student problems arise, it is appropriate to discuss them with the teacher in that particular classroom. Any other problems may be directed to a teacher, volunteer coordinator and/or the principal.

Punctuality – Always arrive on time for any volunteer activity. The school day and class periods are set for specific times. If you are late, the activity may be over when you arrive and/or your arrival may be disruptive.

Volunteer Guidelines

We truly appreciate the services provided by our volunteers. As a school district, there are certain guidelines we must all follow to ensure the district stays in compliance with applicable laws and district policies and procedures. If you are asked to do something that makes you feel uncomfortable, please see the principal or appropriate administrator for guidance. Since the district is responsible for the education and well-being of all students while at school and staff while at work, it has the discretion to dismiss a volunteer whose actions are not in the best interest of the district. A volunteer is never considered a substitute for a member of the school staff.

The following are guidelines that are meant for the protection of students, staff, and volunteers:

- **Supervision** – School volunteers who are working with students should always work under the direct supervision of the appropriate staff member and only with those teachers and/or staff members to whom the volunteer is assigned. “Direct Supervision” means under the direction of and, except for brief periods of time during a school day or a school activity, within sight of an employee. School volunteers who are not working with students should always work under the general supervision of the appropriate staff member and only with those teachers and/or staff members to whom the volunteer is assigned. An Agreement to Supervise Volunteer Form must be completed by any employee who supervises a volunteer. The form must be completed each school year for each volunteer the employee may supervise.

Student Instruction – Volunteers are an important part of the educational process. The suggestions and opinions of volunteers are welcome. However, the staff is responsible by law for the decisions that are made regarding the instruction of students and the management of the school. A volunteer is never considered a substitute for a member of the school staff. Consequently, volunteers should not provide the curriculum or teaching plan, take charge of the

classroom, diagnose student needs, evaluate achievement, or counsel students.

- **Restrooms** – For your convenience, staff restrooms are available for volunteers. Volunteers are not permitted to use student restrooms.
- **Discipline** – Students may occasionally have a behavior problem while working with a volunteer. The district has detailed discipline plans. The responsibility for discipline rests with the school’s principal and teachers. Please report any discipline issues to these individuals for them to handle.
- **Dismissal of Students** – Students leaving school must have permission from the school and must follow established school procedures. Students must be dismissed from school by appropriate staff. Volunteers must work with students only during regular school hours at the location designated by the supervising staff member. Volunteers cannot take a student off campus and cannot drive students in their vehicles except, of course, if the student is the volunteer’s child.
- **Student Contact** – Volunteers should not telephone students or visit them off campus. If you are interested in working with students off campus and outside of school hours, we encourage you to contact local organizations that arrange these types of situations.
- **Dress and Behavior** – We ask that your dress and actions do not detract from the educational process. As a role model to students, we ask that you help us set an appropriate example.
- **Confidentiality** – We ask that you respect the confidentiality of information that students or staff share with you. If a student shares problems or family matters with you and you feel it is important for the school to know this information in order to assist the

student, please share the information with the principal or teacher. Please be aware that certain laws prevent you from having access to specific types of student information.

- **Badges** – Please receive and wear the school’s volunteer badge at all times while on campus, so students and staff know who you are and why you are on campus. **Please return the badge at the end of each day.** When a school is having a special event that may involve 50 or more visitors and/or volunteers, the school may use a temporary badge for that event.
- **Health** – Please do not report to your school for volunteer duties if you are currently sick or if you are waiting on test results for an illness. Please contact the appropriate staff member to tell them that you will not be coming in, so he or she can make alternative arrangements.
- **Sign In and Out** – Please sign in and out of the school office as you come and go from the school. It is important to have a record showing the days and hours each volunteer works on campus for security reasons and so we can recognize and thank volunteers for their contribution of time.
- **School Rules** – A Parent/Student Handbook is available in the office for your use. Please refer to it if you have any questions.
- **Commitment** – Before you agree to volunteer, please consider your commitment. Whether you will be working in the office, classroom, or playground, the work you do is important. Please be prompt and consistent. In those instances where you cannot fulfill your commitment, please let us know ahead of time.

Volunteer Benefits

Volunteers provide a tremendous service for the students and staff of the WESD. The varied talents and expertise of our students’ families and our community members greatly support the

success of all students. When students see a strong connection between their home life, their community and their school, it strengthens their sense of belonging and motivation. The primary benefit of serving as a WESD volunteer is a sense of satisfaction from knowing you are making a difference that supports our students’ academic and social-emotional success.

Volunteer Protections

As a volunteer, you will not receive compensation from the district for your services. If you are injured while engaging in volunteer activities approved by the school or department you are working with, you may be eligible to receive coverage in accordance with the provisions of the District’s Volunteer Accident Policy as a supplement to your own personal insurance coverage. If injured while performing your volunteer assignment, please contact your principal or administrator immediately.

Some of your out-of-pocket expenses incurred while volunteering may be able to be deducted from your income tax. Please consult with your tax advisor.

Volunteer Agencies

WESD partners with community volunteer agencies to place their volunteers in our schools. Our community volunteer partnerships include agencies such as Valley of the Sun United Way and Hands On Greater Phoenix. Volunteer agencies work with the District Volunteer Coordinator to establish a partnership with the district, which may include Governing Board approval of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

Definitions

The WESD identifies clear definitions for volunteer roles, responsibilities and requirements with the intent of welcoming visitors and volunteers to our schools and ensuring the safety and security of students, teachers, staff and families.

Visitors

Definition of a WESD Visitor: Not every visitor to a school is a volunteer. A visitor is an individual who attends a school on sporadic occasions and for small increments of time. A visitor typically visits a school to meet with staff, pick up students during the school day, or perform temporary, contractual, and/or substitute service in which they receive payment.

Examples of a visitor include, but are not limited to: a district employee from another location, substitute and temporary employees, third-party contracted personnel, parents picking up students or meeting with a teacher, and community members meeting with school personnel.

Visitor's Responsibility

1. Sign in and receive a visitor badge upon each visit. (District employees must sign in upon each visit, but should wear their employee badges.)
2. Sign out and return the visitor badge at the end of each visit.
3. Wear the visitor badge, so it is visible, at all times throughout each visit.
4. Do not perform volunteer services.

Exception: Parents or legal guardians who are picking up their students at the end of the school day do not have to sign in and out unless they enter the school campus beyond the parent/student designated areas of the school.

School's Responsibility

1. Ensure visitor signs in and out upon each visit.

2. Ensure visitor receives and returns a visitor badge upon each visit. (With the exception of district employees who must be wearing employee badge.)
3. Ensure visitor does not perform volunteer services.

Volunteers

Definition of a WESD Volunteer: An adult (at least 18 years of age) approved according to the WESD Volunteer Program requirements as stated in the Volunteer Handbook to provide service as part of a school community and in support of student academic and social emotional success.

WESD defines two, main categories of volunteers: legal guardian and not a legal guardian. We also include the definition and requirements for high school student volunteers.

1. **Legal Guardian:** WESD defines legal guardian as the biological parent or legal guardian (court-appointed and documented in Synergy) of a child enrolled in the school/volunteer site.
 - o Includes Foster Parent (legal custodian) **with the written approval of the school principal.**
2. **Not a Legal Guardian:** WESD defines 'not a legal guardian' as all other volunteers, including grandparents and other relatives of a student enrolled in the school/volunteer site.
 - **High School Student Volunteers:** WESD defines high school student volunteers as a student enrolled in a bona fide high school program that encourages volunteering at a particular school. High School Student Volunteers must be under direct supervision of a WESD employee at all times. Requests regarding high school student volunteers start with the WESD School Principal. The High School Volunteer Program must provide the WESD school principal with:
 - A written reference from the high school teacher-sponsor of volunteer program at the high school, verifying that this is a

bona fide volunteer program and vouching for the student's ability to volunteer;

- Contact information for high school teacher-sponsor;
- Contact information for the high school student's parents; and
- Written parent permission to serve as a volunteer.

Definitions of Field Trip Participant and Field Trip Chaperone

Field Trip Participant: WESD teachers may invite their students' parents to participate in class field trips. **A parent or legal guardian who participates as a guest in their student's field trip is not a volunteer.**

- The only requirement for a legal guardian to be a Field Trip Participant is the classroom teacher's permission.
 - Field Trip Participants are not responsible for the supervision of children at any time during the field trip
 - They may not be able to ride the field trip bus due to space limits
- In order to participate in a class field trip, those who are not a legal guardian must have completed all Volunteer Program requirements (**including background clearance**) before participating in a field trip.

Field Trip Chaperone: A Field Trip Chaperone is a volunteer designated by the teacher to help with supervision of students for the entire duration of the field trip.

A Field Trip Chaperone is a volunteer.

- The requirements for a legal guardian of a child in the class to be a Field Trip Chaperone include completion of all Volunteer Program requirements, **plus written approval by the school principal.**
- The requirements for those who are not a legal guardian to be a Field Trip Chaperone include completion of all Volunteer Program requirements, written approval of the principal **and background clearance.**

- WESD strongly recommends an adult to child ratio of 1:8 for student supervision on field trips. It is preferred that either a WESD employee directly supervises Field Trip Chaperones or that two or more Field Trip Chaperones supervise a group of students. (A group of students should consist of two or more students.) However, the district recognizes that there may be instances in which there are limited employees and Field Trip Chaperones. If this is the case, the WESD employee should develop checkpoints and a process for obtaining student counts throughout the field trip.
 - At no time should a Field Trip Chaperone supervise only one child unless the volunteer is a parent or legal guardian of the student.

Overnight Field Trips:

- All non-WESD staff who chaperone an overnight field trip must complete all Volunteer Program requirements **and background clearance.** This requirement applies for legal guardians and for chaperones who are not legal guardians.
- The school principal must develop a plan to ensure proper supervision of students during overnight field trips. The plan must be submitted and approved by the Assistant Superintendent for Administrative Services prior to the overnight field trip.

Definition of Requirements to be a WESD Volunteer

Requirements for All WESD Volunteers

Including legal guardians serving as a Field Trip Chaperone and High School Student Volunteers.

Legal guardians **and** those who are not a legal guardian of a student enrolled in the school/volunteer site are required to:

1. Complete a Volunteer Application each year
2. Sign the Volunteer Agreement and Code of Conduct each year

3. Agree to volunteer for a teacher/staff person who signs the Agreement to Supervise a WESD Volunteer form each year
4. Read and comply with all guidelines in the Volunteer Handbook
5. Complete the WESD Volunteer Training prior to filling in the volunteer application.
6. Sign in and sign out in the school front office each time volunteering
7. Wear Volunteer Badge when on campus

Additional Requirement for Volunteers Who are Not a Legal Guardian

All volunteer applicants who are **not a Legal Guardian** of a student enrolled in the school/volunteer site **must complete background clearance process with WESD Human Resources (at no cost to the volunteer).**

- WESD requires a background clearance every year.
- Note: Legal guardians will be required to complete background clearance process if they are applying to volunteer at a WESD location other than their student's school.

Head Start Volunteers

Parents or legal guardians of a student in a Head Start classroom who wish to volunteer three or more days or have volunteered three days must provide:

- Current proof of freedom from pulmonary tuberculosis
- Must always be under the direct supervision of a WESD employee (never alone with students)

Individuals who are not the parent or legal guardian of a student in the Head Start classroom must provide **prior to volunteering:**

- Current proof of freedom from pulmonary tuberculosis
- Must always be under the direct supervision of a WESD employee (never alone with students)

Definition of Volunteer Levels of Responsibility

Definition of a Level 1 Volunteer: Volunteer has direct or indirect contact with students during the school day and is under the immediate supervision and/or in close proximity with a WESD employee.

- Examples: Volunteering in classroom, library, school office, cafeteria, high school students

Definition of a Level 2 Volunteer: Volunteer has direct contact with students during the school day and is **not** under the immediate supervision and/or always in close proximity with a WESD employee.

- Examples: Tutoring students during school day (out of classroom and either in a public place, such as school library, or in separate classroom or office), Field Trip Chaperone

Additional Requirement for All Level 2 Volunteers: School Principal's written approval each year.

Definition of Level 3 Volunteer: Direct contact with students without a WESD employee present or in close proximity.

- Examples: Volunteer Athletic Coaches, Mentors, Overnight Field Trip Chaperones

All Level 3 Volunteers (including legal guardians) must complete the background clearance process prior to the overnight field trip.

How to Apply for the WESD Volunteer Program

1. Go to the Volunteer Opportunities page (<https://www.wesdschools.org/Domain/53>) on the district website.
2. Go over the Volunteer Training slideshow. It is available in English and Spanish.
3. Use the link for the WESD Volunteer Application.

4. Contact the school where you would like to volunteer.
5. The school will provide you with support to complete and submit the required documents, including:

For a Legal Guardian of a Student

Enrolled in the School/Volunteer Site:

- Volunteer Application
- Volunteer Agreement and Code of Conduct
- Teacher or Staff Agreement to Supervise the Volunteer

For Those Who are Not a Legal Guardian of a Student Enrolled in the School/Volunteer Site:

- Go to the Volunteer Opportunities page (<https://www.wesdschools.org/Domain/53>) on the district website.
- Go over the Volunteer Training slideshow. It is available in English and Spanish.
- Use the link for the WESD Volunteer Application to fill out the volunteer application.
- Volunteer Agreement and Code of Conduct
- Teacher or Staff Agreement to Supervise the Volunteer
- School Verification of Need for the Volunteer
- Reference Form

6. The school will support you to make an appointment to:

- Complete the background clearance process, if required. (No cost to the volunteer applicant.)

7. After Background Clearance (if required), the school will contact you to begin to volunteer.

School Responsibilities

1. Designate a School Volunteer Coordinator
2. Create a welcoming and supportive application process.
3. Verify parent/legal guardian status per Synergy.
4. Provide support for completion of all required documents
5. Submit documents to WESD Human Resources (HR), as needed (see final pages of Volunteer Handbook for these forms)
6. Provide support for scheduling Volunteer Training and, if needed, the HR Appointment for background clearance.
7. Provide timely and clear communication with the volunteer applicant about the process.
8. Facilitate communication with the volunteer's supervising teacher or staff person.
9. Ensure that all volunteers sign-in and sign-out and wear the school's volunteer badge.
10. Provide school volunteers with relevant information about school policies and procedures, including emergency procedures.

Volunteer Responsibilities

1. Read the Volunteer Handbook, go over the training (available on the district website under Volunteer Opportunities page) prior to filling in the volunteer application.
2. Comply with all Volunteer Program guidelines and requirements.

Form 1a

**WESD Volunteer Application for _____
(Name of WESD School)**

Dear Volunteer Applicant: Thank you for your interest in volunteering at our district. We appreciate your time to complete this application. You can find this application on the district website under Volunteer Opportunities link. You are welcome to submit it electronically. Alternatively, you can use this hard copy to submit the completed application to the office manager of the site you wish to volunteer at.

Date: _____

First Name Last Name

Address City State Zip Code

Home Phone Cell Phone Email Address

1. Are you bilingual or multilingual? Yes _____ No _____
If yes, please specify the language and the proficiency level in the area of expertise.

Language	Read	Write	Speak
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

2. Do you have children attending this school? Yes _____ No _____
If yes, please list student(s) name, grade level and homeroom teacher:

Student's First Name Last Name Grade Level Homeroom Teacher

Student's First Name Last Name Grade Level Homeroom Teacher

3. What is your relationship with the student(s)?

- Not Applicable (no children enrolled in this school) ___ I am a high school student volunteer ___
- Parent _____
- Legal Guardian (Court Appointed and Documented in Synergy) _____
- Stepparent _____
- Foster Parent (Legal Custodian) _____
- Other Relative _____ Please specify: _____

4. Please check your preferences for where you would like to volunteer.

- My child's classroom _____ Please specify: _____
- Library _____ Front Office _____ Cafeteria _____
- Daytime Field Trip Chaperone _____ Overnight Field Trip Chaperone _____
- Other _____ Please specify: _____

<p>For School Volunteer Coordinator: Verified Parent/Legal Guardian in Synergy: Yes _____ No, not a Parent/Legal Guardian for this School _____ Verified Teacher/Staff Agreement to Supervise Volunteer: Yes _____ Name of Teacher/Staff _____ Verified Principal Approval as a Field Trip Chaperone: Yes _____ Principal Signature: _____ Verified Completion of Volunteer Training on this Date: _____ Verified Completion of WESD HR Background Clearance on this Date: _____ or N/A _____</p>
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Form 1b

WESD VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT

I hereby acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Washington Elementary School District's Volunteer Handbook and that I have read and will abide by its contents and all other applicable Washington Elementary School District policies and procedures. I am committed to take Volunteer Training prior to starting my work if I am approved to work as a volunteer.

I understand that as a volunteer, I am not compensated for any services including wages and insurance. I further understand that I have the right to terminate my arrangement at any time, with or without cause, and that the Washington Elementary School District has a similar right.

I understand that each child is entitled to his or her privacy and agree to treat information regarding each child and teacher as confidential. I understand the importance of **CONFIDENTIALITY** and will keep all **confidential matters confidential**.

As a volunteer, I agree to abide by the following Code of Volunteer Conduct:

1. Immediately upon arrival, I will sign in at the principal's office or the designated sign-in station.
2. I will wear or show a volunteer identification whenever required by the school to do so.
3. I will use only adult bathroom facilities.
4. I agree to never be alone with individual students without the authorization of teachers and/or school authorities.
5. I will not solicit outside contact with students.
6. I agree not to exchange telephone numbers, home address, e-mail addresses or other home directory information with students for any purpose.
7. I will maintain confidentiality outside of school and will share any concerns that I may have with teachers and school administrators.
8. I agree to not transport students.
9. I will not disclose, use or disseminate student photographs or personal information about students, self or others.
10. I agree not to post, transmit, publish or display harmful or inappropriate matter that is threatening, obscene, disruptive or sexually explicit or that could be construed as any form of harassment.
11. I agree only to do what is in the best personal and educational interest of every child with whom I come into contact.
12. I agree to immediately report to the volunteer coordinator if I am arrested for or charged with any non-appealable offense listed in A.R.S. §41-1758.03(B). Failure to do so shall result in the immediate revocation of the right to volunteer in the District. I understand that an arrest for or charge with any non-appealable offense may result in suspension or dismissal of services.

My signature certifies that all statements made on this application are true, complete and correct to the best of my knowledge. I understand these statements are subject to verification.

My signature gives authorization for Washington Elementary School District to perform driver, criminal and reference checks, as needed.

Printed First and Last Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Return completed form to the school office manager or school volunteer coordinator.

Form 2

REFERENCE INFORMATION (*This section to be completed by Volunteer Applicant*)

If your application requires a background clearance, please complete this information:

Your Name (please print): _____

Name of Company Where You are Currently Employed (or Your Most Recent Employer)

Your Current or Most Recent Supervisor's Contact Information:

Name	Phone Number	Email Address
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WESD VOLUNTEER REFERENCE CHECK FORM

This section to be completed by WESD Staff

Person checking references _____ Date _____

Name of Volunteer _____ Contacted Employer _____

Name of Reference and Title _____ Phone number _____

How do you know applicant (personally or professionally)? _____

How long have you known applicant? _____

Dates of applicant's employment _____

Describe applicant's primary job duties _____

What are applicant's strengths? _____

What, if any, are applicant's weaknesses? _____

Taking into consideration that the applicant might be working around children, is there anything in your experience or knowledge of this applicant that we should take into consideration before allowing this individual to volunteer?

Other Comments _____

ATTACH ADDITIONAL SHEETS AS NECESSARY

Include this form in packet sent to HR for background clearance.

Form 3

VERIFICATION OF NEED TO USE WESD VOLUNTEER

School: _____

Volunteer's Name: _____

I verify that our school needs to use the above individual as a volunteer before a background check can be completed for the following reason(s):

I also verify that the following steps have or will be completed:

- Obtained references in accordance with the Volunteer Handbook.
- Provide direct supervision for the volunteer.

Principal/Administrator Signature: _____

Include this form in packet sent to HR for background clearance.

Form 4

AGREEMENT TO SUPERVISE WESD VOLUNTEER

I, _____, (employee's name)
understand that _____ (name of volunteer) is a
volunteer who will provide services to _____ (name of school). I
agree to ensure that while this volunteer is providing services with direct or indirect contact with
students at our school, he/she will be under my direct supervision. "Direct supervision" means
that the volunteer will be under the direction of and, except for brief periods during a school day
or a school activity, within sight of a WESD employee. I also agree that while this volunteer is
not providing services to students he/she will be under my general supervision. I agree to ensure
the volunteer follows all guidelines in the Volunteer Handbook.

Supervising Employee's Signature: _____ Date: _____

School Principal's Signature: _____ Date: _____

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***School Volunteer Coordinator: Keep this agreement form on file in the school  
office while the volunteer's service to WESD is active and for one year after  
discontinuing volunteer service.***



