

Risen Christ Lutheran School

Volunteer Handbook



Guidelines and expectations for serving as a volunteer



Expectations and Guidelines for Volunteering

Thank you for your interest in volunteering at Risen Christ Lutheran School (RCLS). Risen Christ depends on volunteers and values their contributions. Your willingness to serve the students and staff is greatly appreciated. This handbook outlines the guidelines and expectations that volunteers must follow to create safe and successful experiences for students, staff, and volunteers. All volunteering relationships established through Risen Christ must take place with students on the school campus during school hours or other authorized school activities only.

You Are Part of an Education Team

Volunteers who are committed to helping students be successful are important members of the school team. These individuals are essential to bringing the outside world to the school. Students need contact with individuals who can share experiences and bring other perspectives into the classroom. They need adults who can guide them through the learning process.

Goals:

- Enrich the curriculum
- Enrich student's learning opportunities
- Provide help for individual students
- Provide opportunities for meaningful service
- Relieve teachers of some non-instructional tasks
- Establish a school and community partnership for quality education
- Enhance all aspects of the educational process

Working closely with the classroom teacher and school staff includes:

- Following the direction of a school staff member
- Accepting direction and suggestions from teachers
- Respecting the privacy of teachers and students by not discussing school matters away from the classroom
- Understanding that evaluation of a student's learning can only be done by the teacher
- Committing to working in a classroom to support and improve education for all students
- Seeking help from the teacher when you need additional information or instruction
- Sharing ideas and constructive comments with the teacher
- Acknowledging that teachers are responsible for discipline in the classroom

- Referring to the classroom teacher or regular school staff member for final solution of any student problem which arises, whether of an instructional, medical or operational nature

Enjoy working with students by:

- Finding ways to establish a good rapport with students
- Providing help and assistance without doing the work for students
- Showing a genuine interest in each student
- Accepting each student and encouraging the best from him or her
- Using patience and kindness

Sometimes a volunteer placement may not be a fit for the volunteer, the teacher or the school. If your volunteer placement does not work for you, the teacher or the school for whatever reason, your volunteer assignment may be ended, modified or changed to a new assignment. You may request a different placement if you wish to continue volunteering.

Volunteer Expectations

Volunteers are expected to:

- Be an approved volunteer
- If you are not working under the direct supervision of a lead teacher, you must obtain a background check. The FBI/BCI background check must be on file in the office.
- Sign in and out at the office and always wear an ID badge while on school grounds
- Wear professional attire
- Show respect for all staff and students
- Share concerns regarding students with the school staff only
- If you cannot make your scheduled volunteer time, please call the school so the teacher and students will know you will not be there.
- Please do not bring younger children to the school during your volunteer hours, unless approved by the Administrator
- Please turn off your cell phone while you are volunteering in the classroom and refrain from making personal calls or texting while on the school campus.

Ground Rules for School District Facilities

- No smoking or tobacco allowed
- No weapons allowed
- No drugs or alcohol allowed
- Do not use school equipment for personal purposes

Maintain Student Confidentiality

Volunteers are expected and required to keep all student information that they obtain while working as a volunteer for the district confidential. In fact, federal law strictly prohibits schools and school volunteers from releasing any student information without parent/guardian permission. Student information includes all academic, medical and personal information. Volunteers cannot take photos of students during their volunteer activities and post them publicly without authorization from the school. Student work, like artwork or papers, is also protected by law and cannot be shared publicly without written permission.

Disclosure of student information by a volunteer is a violation of the **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA)** and may subject the volunteer and the district to civil liability. It is very important that you keep information about students confidential. It is important that you do not discuss students or their progress with others, even their parents. Do not make references about student ability in front of other students. The only person who should be told about a student's work is their teacher. If parents ask about their student's progress, suggest in a friendly way that they contact the teacher.

Community Service Hours

RCLS strives to find volunteer opportunities that are mutually beneficial to both the volunteer and the students in our schools. We understand that people need community service hours for a variety of reasons, and ask that volunteers work with their direct supervisors at the school to arrange for signatures that confirm hours worked. However, RCLS cannot allow volunteers to complete court-ordered community service hours through our schools.

Harassment at School/Human Dignity

RCLS is committed to an educational environment that is free from all types of discrimination and harassment, including sexual harassment, bullying and intimidation.

Volunteers and parents who engage in harassment, intimidation or bullying on school property or at school activities will be restricted from school property and activities, as appropriate.

Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteers can help in the school:

- Classroom
- Office
- Lunch room
- Library

Volunteers can help with:

- Classroom activities
- Special school events/projects
- Parties
- Dances
- After school programs

RCLS also has a PTO that can always use extra volunteers for its programs. Contact the Administrator for more information.

Important Guidelines

Safe Interaction with Students

The school board expects that all staff and volunteers will strive to set the kind of example for students that will serve them well in their own conduct and behavior and contribute toward a school atmosphere that is friendly but has a degree of formality.

General Guidelines for Safe Interaction with Students:

All interactions with students should be professional and focused on teaching and learning. These guidelines protect both the student and the volunteer.

Do not:

- Take a student or students on private outings
- Initiate social activities with students
- Have a prolonged verbal exchange with students if you have an impromptu encounter at a public place
- Provide childcare for students
- Ask a student to baby-sit for your family

- Engage in Social Networking with students via Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Vine or Twitter or any other social networking website to initiate or maintain relationship(s) with any student that is not consistent with appropriate professional behavior and /or boundaries

Communication

Do not:

- Say or write things to a student that you would be uncomfortable sharing with the student's parents, school administrators or the teacher you are working with.
- Make any comments that are based on gender or could be construed as sexist
- Make any comments and/or innuendos that are sexual in nature or could be construed as sexual
- Make jokes that belittle or diminish another person
- Give students compliments that focus on physical attributes
- Initiate conversations or correspondence of a private and/or personal nature with students

Working Alone with Students at School

- Always keep the door open and lights on
- Do not post anything on class windows that would obstruct a clear view into the room

Gifts

In general, giving gifts to students is not encouraged. If gifts are provided they should be:

- Of nominal value
- Identical for all students in the class
- Approved by the teacher or administrator in charge of the program

Physical Contact with Students

All physical contact between volunteers and students must be professional and appropriate.

Field Trips and Off-Campus Activities

All off-campus field trip and activity chaperones must be at least 21 years of age. Volunteers who wish to drive students should be at least 25 years of age and must have a valid Ohio State driver's license. Volunteer drivers must provide proof of liability insurance to the school office.

What is the difference between a chaperone and a volunteer?

A chaperone is a volunteer who is over the age of 21 who has the responsibility of supervising students during an off-campus field trip or activity. During these types of activities, teachers are expected to

maintain specific chaperone-to-student ratios. (The exact ratio varies based upon age of students and type of activity).

Extracurricular and Enrichment Activities

Schools often provide before and after-school programs. All extracurricular and enrichment activities must be organized under the authority of RCLS or FTF and comply with all applicable rules and regulations.

Volunteer Coaches

Individuals who wish to become volunteer coaches must complete the following steps:

1. Obtain the appropriate student activity permit through ODE
2. Provide proof of valid First Aid and CPR card to school office.
3. Review and agree to comply with mandatory reporting information.
4. Review and agree to comply with social media policy and procedure.

Please note: Volunteer coaches must be at least 21 years of age to chaperone off-campus activities.

Report Suspected Abuse or Neglect

As a volunteer, you are in a unique position to observe students. If you suspect that a student may be the victim of abuse or neglect, report it immediately to the principal, school counselor or another school employee.

Volunteering is a privilege

Volunteering is a privilege, not a right. All volunteers serve at the sole discretion of the building principal, volunteer coordinator or teacher. Permission to volunteer may be revoked at any time by the building principal or the RCLS School Board.

Nondiscriminatory

Risen Christ Lutheran School recruits and admits students of any race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, gender and sex to all its rights, privileges and activities. In addition, the school will not discriminate based on race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, gender or sex in the administration of its educational programs, athletics/extracurricular activities or in the hiring of its certified or non-certified personnel. Furthermore, the school is not intended to be an alternative to court or administrative agency ordered, or public-school district-initiated desegregation.