

Rochester School District

Volunteer Handbook

Guidelines and expectations for
serving as a volunteer in our
district

Dr. Jennifer Bethman, Superintendent



Rochester School District

Volunteer Handbook

Thank you for volunteering!

Each person who helps a child learn is someone who makes a difference in that child's life. Schools are safe, nurturing places for students to grow and learn, and the work you do makes that environment even more rich and meaningful.

This handbook is designed as a partnership tool. It includes basic information and tips for working with students. It also includes some very important legal information that all school staff and volunteers must understand and abide by to ensure that students and adults in our schools are safe.

Be sure to say "hi" and introduce yourself when we meet in a school or office; I'd like to thank you personally for your gift of time. You are modeling generosity and involved citizenship for our students – qualities we know are important as they become citizen leaders in their communities.

Sincerely,

Dr. Jennifer Bethman, Superintendent

Mission Statement

***Preparing students for... Lifelong Learning, Rewarding Careers and Productive Citizenship
By embracing... Accountability, Adaptability and Academic Excellence***

Expectations and Guidelines for Volunteering

Thank you for your interest in volunteering in Rochester School District. Our district schools depend on volunteers and value their contributions. Your willingness to serve the students and staff of the district 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 Rochester School District must take place with students on the school campus during school hours or at other authorized school activities only.

All volunteers must complete the volunteer application form and Washington State Patrol criminal history information form before service can begin.

Please submit completed forms to the school office. The forms can be downloaded at www.rochester.wednet.edu.

You're Part of an Education Team

Volunteers who are committed to helping students be successful are important members of the school team.

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.
- Support teachers in their delivery of the district adopted curriculum.

Working closely with the classroom teacher and school staff includes

- Following the direction and suggestions of school staff members.
- Respecting the privacy of teachers and students by not discussing school matters away from the classroom.
- 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 an appropriate 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.

Tips for Sparking Curiosity and Learning

Encouraging students with words and gestures can help them explore and understand. Let them know you hear, accept and respect what they have to say. Encourage them to say more.

Samples of words of encouragement

- *I can tell that you worked really hard on that!*
- *You are getting so much better each time!*
- *I appreciate what you did.*
- *You did a great job of handling that situation.*
- *I see.*
- *Tell me more.*
- *How about that?*
- *I like the way you are working.*
- *Good thinking. Very creative. How impressive!*
- *Now you've got the hang of it!*
- *That's a great observation.*

Learn the names of the students and use them often. Get a child's attention before speaking to him/her. Communicate at eye level. Try not to interrupt children when they are telling you their stories. We communicate with looks, actions, silence, as well as with words. Remember to think before you speak.

Attitude

- Be enthusiastic. Your enthusiasm can go a long way toward overcoming obstacles and solving problems.
- Take the initiative. This means going the extra distance to finish a job or assist someone who needs your help.
- Have a sense of humor. A good sense of humor can light up a life and make everyone's job seem easier. Smile!
- Be sincere. Say what you mean and mean what you say.
- Take pride in your work. No matter what your job, you should take pride in the fact that you're doing your best to help others.
- Respect others. Recognize and appreciate the skills and qualities of the people around you.
- Respect the teacher's role.
- Learn from others. Be open to new ideas and suggestions. Be flexible enough to respond to changes in systems, policies and programs.
- Cooperate with others. A spirit of teamwork is essential to getting things done.
- Enjoy the students. Have a positive attitude and patience with students.

“Nothing you do for children is ever wasted. They seem not to notice us, hovering, averting our eyes, and they seldom offer thanks, but what we do for them is never wasted.”

Garrison Keillor

Volunteer Expectations

Volunteers are expected to

- Sign in and wear a name tag on school grounds at all time.
- Attire should be neat, clean, comfortable and appropriate for the school setting. Be familiar with the school dress code and follow it.
- Show respect for all staff and students.
- Share concerns regarding students with the school staff only.

Turn your cell phone to vibrate while you are volunteering in the classroom and make personal calls or texts while performing your volunteer duties only in emergency situations.

Schedule

- Be prompt and reliable. If you are volunteering, call the school if you are coming in late or will be absent.
- Leave preschoolers at home unless you have the principal’s approval beforehand to bring them.
- If you are volunteering from your home, let others who are depending on you know if you are going to be delayed or not able to complete assigned tasks.

Ground Rules for School District Facilities

- No smoking, tobacco allowed, including on athletic fields and in district vehicles
- No weapons allowed
- No drugs or alcohol allowed
- Do not use school equipment for personal purposes

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is a Legal Requirement

- Federal law prohibits school districts from releasing non-directory student information without parent/guardian permission. Disclosing this information is a violation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA).
- All information concerning students and teachers is strictly confidential and should not be shared with others. Keep ALL student information confidential, including scholastic and health records, test scores and grades, discipline and classroom behavior, and children’s character traits.
- Don’t repeat stories and personal information that children share with you.

- Share concerns with school staff only – not with the child’s parents or others. Staff members are responsible for parent communications.

Exercising Good Judgment and Guidelines

Some Areas of Caution

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, MySpace, 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.

Some actions, even without improper motive, are common trouble areas. Do not:

- Ask a single student to come early to set up for a class or activity.
- Sign a yearbook with too-personal inscriptions or nickname.
- Make a request such as, “Give me a hug,” or “Come sit on my lap.”
- Touch in a lingering way, such as shoulder or neck massages.
- Comment on dress or appearance.
- Be alone with a student behind closed doors or other area that is not visible to passersby.
- Spend an overly long time with individual students or groups of students.
- Allow a student to develop a personal interest in you.
- Invite students for social activities outside of school.
- Make sexist or sexual comments or innuendos or jokes with double meaning.

School volunteers and staff must avoid touching students whenever possible. It is the District’s expectation that all physical contact between volunteers and students must be professional and appropriate. It is important to consider several factors.

Consider a student’s age

- **Grades K-3** It is virtually impossible to avoid all contact with students of this age. However, it is important to use caution and attempt to keep touches to arms, back and shoulders only.
- **Grades 4-9** Female students this age are very self-conscious. The most numerous accusations of improper touching occur with students of this age. Female students may view a touch on the shoulder or back as sexual in nature. They are extremely sensitive regarding remarks about clothing and physical appearance. Safeguard students’ personal boundaries by not patting knees, putting arms around shoulders, hands or waist. Girls this age may be very sensitive about being touched on the back over their bras.
- **Grades 10-12** Very little touching is acceptable with this group. Also avoid trying to counsel students of this age, especially about sexual, personal or romantic matters.

Before touching, consider these things

- Males should consider and monitor their behavior very carefully, as the majority of accusations are leveled against men.
- Some individuals and people from some cultures are uncomfortable with touch of any kind. If a student indicates discomfort by word or action, you should avoid physical contact, except in cases where touching is necessary for the student's safety.

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

Student Photos – Check Before Shooting

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) allows every public school parent the right to prevent photographs at school being taken of students in that family. School staff and volunteers are obligated to abide by the federal law. Please get permission before taking any student photos.

Volunteers are restricted from taking images for personal use of students at school, school-sponsored events or on field trips. Student images may not be posted on Facebook, using other social media, sent via email or distributed using other communication channels. If a volunteer is taking images for school-related use, appropriate district and school procedures must be followed.

Discipline Issues

- All schools have a discipline plan with clear-cut consequences for negative behavior and rewards for positive behavior. Many teachers add to the school-wide guidelines by making a more specific behavior plan for their classroom. Talk with the teacher about his/her discipline plan.
- Be familiar with school and classroom discipline plans and what role you will play in the plan.

Working with the Classroom Teacher

Working in the classroom has tremendous rewards. Classroom volunteers should establish a good working relationship with the classroom teacher to maximize the experience. Several topics should be discussed with the teacher prior to beginning a classroom volunteer experience:

- Days and times the volunteer will work.
- Procedures the volunteer will use to keep in touch, such as email or telephone.
- Alternate plans for days when the teacher is absent and a substitute is in the classroom.
- Procedures to follow if the volunteer will be absent.
- How the teacher will communicate assignments or duties to the volunteer, such as a folder, note, email or other means.
- Where materials and supplies are kept and the location of available workplaces.
- Teacher's classroom policies, procedures and rules, such as management style, discipline issues and where the volunteer can leave personal belongings.
- School procedures for volunteers to follow during fire and earthquake drills, as well as lockdown procedures.
- Special needs and strengths of the student(s) and skills that need to be developed.

- Tips for working with the student(s), such as learning styles and reinforcement techniques.
- Alternate plans if student(s) is/are absent.
- What to do if you have questions while the teacher is teaching (it is important not to interrupt instruction).
- Whether volunteers are welcome to use the lounge for breaks. Do not feel insulted or offended if parents or volunteers are not welcomed in the staff lounge. It is often the only place that staff members have to meet informally to discuss confidential issues.

Legal Rights and Requirements for Volunteers and Staff

School employees and volunteers help ensure student safety. When everyone is familiar with and abiding by the following legal requirements, the student safety net is stronger. District policies and procedures are in line with state and federal laws that protect students and adults. A summary of key policies are provided below. The complete policy is available on our district website at www.rochester.wednet.edu.

Child abuse and neglect (Procedure 3421)

- If you are concerned that a student may be the victim of physical or sexual abuse, share your concerns with a school or district administrator.
- If you become aware of possible adult-student, student-adult or student-student misconduct, it is mandatory to report this information.
- These are situations known as ones with mandatory reporting requirements.
- 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 district employee.

Preventing harassment, intimidation and bullying (Procedure 3207)

The Rochester School District Harassment Policy calls for a commitment to an educational environment that is free from all types of discrimination and harassment, including sexual harassment, bullying and intimidation. Volunteers are expected and required to respect and uphold both the Rochester School District Harassment Policy.

- Harassment, intimidation and bullying (HIB) means any intentional electronic, written, verbal or physical act including but not limited to one shown to be motivated by race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, including gender expression or identity, mental, sensory, or physical disability or other distinguishing characteristics, when the intentional electronic, written, verbal or physical act:
 - physically harms a student or damages the student's property; or
 - has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's education;
 - is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, embarrassing or threatening educational environment; or
 - has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

This can take many forms including but not limited to, slurs, rumors, name-calling, jokes, innuendoes, demeaning comments, drawings, cartoons, pranks, gestures and hazing.

Preventing sexual harassment (Procedures 5011)

Students and staff are protected against sexual harassment by anyone in any school program or activity, including on the school campus, on the school bus, or off-campus during a school-sponsored activity.

Sexual harassment is unwelcome behavior or communication that is sexual in nature when:

- A student or employee is led to believe that he or she must submit to unwelcome sexual conduct or communications in order to gain something in return, such as a grade, a promotion, a place on a sports team, or any educational or employment decision, or
- The conduct substantially interferes with a student's educational performance, or creates an intimidating or hostile educational or employment environment.

Examples of Sexual Harassment:

- Pressuring a person for sexual favors
- Unwelcome touching of a sexual nature
- Writing graffiti of a sexual nature
- Distributing sexually explicit texts, e-mails, or pictures
- Making sexual jokes, rumors, or suggestive remarks
- Physical violence, including rape and sexual assault

Preventing all types of harassment and discrimination

Schools are to be safe, nurturing places for adults and students to learn and to grow. To safeguard that environment, school staff and volunteers are asked to be aware of and to report any activities that threaten the safety or well-being of others.

Examples of other types of prohibited harassment include written or verbal abuse, slurs, jokes, threats, pranks or comments that stereotype individuals because of their race, color, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, disability or other legally protected status.

Reporting

You can report sexual harassment, discrimination, intimidation, bullying, weapons, drugs or other concerns to any school staff member or to the district's Title IX Officer, who is listed below. You also have the right to file a complaint (see below). For a copy of your district's sexual harassment policy and procedure, contact your school or district office, or view it online at www.rochester.wednet.edu.

The following employees have been designated to handle questions and complaints of alleged discrimination: Civil Rights Coordinator: Jennifer Bethman (360) 273-9242, jbethman@rochester.wednet.edu; Title IX Coordinator: Will Maus (360) 273-5958, wmaus@rochester.wednet.edu; 504/ADA Coordinator: Laura Staley (360) 273-5536, lstaley@rochester.wednet.edu. Address: 10140 Highway 12 SW, Rochester, WA 98579.

You can also chose to report discrimination and sexual harassment anonymously on our tip line. Our tip line can be accessed in four easy ways:

Call 360-972-3617

Text #1040 to ALERT1 (253781)

Visit the website <http://1049.alert1.us>

Email 1049@alert1.us

COMPLAINT OPTIONS: DISCRIMINATION AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT

If you believe that you or your child have experienced unlawful discrimination, discriminatory

harassment, or sexual harassment at school, you have the right to file a complaint.

Before filing a complaint, you can discuss your concerns with your child's principal or with the school district's Section 504 Coordinator, Title IX Officer, or Civil Rights Coordinator, who are listed above. This is often the fastest way to revolve your concerns.

Complaint to the School District

Step 1. Write Our Your Complaint

In most cases, complaints must be filed within one year from the date of the incident or conduct that is the subject of the complaint. A complaint must be in writing. Be sure to describe the conduct or incident, explain why you believe discrimination, discriminatory harassment, or sexual harassment has taken place, and describe what actions you believe the district should take to resolve the problem. Send your written complaint—by mail, fax, email, or hand delivery—to the district superintendent or civil rights compliance coordinator.

Step 2: School District Investigates Your Complaint

Once the district receives your written complaint, the coordinator will give you a copy of the complaint procedure and make sure a prompt and thorough investigation takes place. The superintendent or designee will respond to you in writing within 30 calendar days—unless you agree on a different time period. If your complaint involves exceptional circumstances that demand a lengthier investigation, the district will notify you in writing to explain why staff need a time extension and the new date for their written response.

Step 3: School District Responds to Your Complaint

In its written response, the district will include a summary of the results of the investigation, a determination of whether or not the district failed to comply with civil rights laws, notification that you can appeal this determination, and any measures necessary to bring the district into compliance with civil rights laws. Corrective measures will be put into effect within 30 calendar days after this written response—unless you agree to a different time period.

Appeal to the School District

If you disagree with the school district's decision, you may appeal to the school district's board of directors. You must file a notice of appeal in writing to the secretary of the school board within 10 calendar days after you received the school district's response to your complaint. The school board will schedule a hearing within 20 calendar days after they received your appeal, unless you agree on a different timeline. The school board will send you a written decision within 30 calendar days after the district received your notice of appeal. The school board's decision will include information about how to file a complaint with the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI).

Complaint to OSPI

If you do not agree with the school district's appeal decision, state law provides the option to file a formal complaint with the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). This is a separate complaint process that can take place if one of these two conditions has occurred: (1) you have completed the district's complaint and appeal process, or (2) the district has not followed the complaint and appeal process correctly.

You have 20 calendar days to file a complaint to OSPI from the day you received the decision on your appeal. You can send your written complaint to the Equity and Civil Rights Office at OSPI:

Email: Equity@k12.wa.us | **Fax:** 360-664-2967

Mail or hand deliver: PO Box 47200, 600 Washington St. S.E., Olympia, WA 98504-7200

For more information, visit our website, or contact OSPI's Equity and Civil Rights Office at 360-725-6162/TTY: 360-664-3631 or by e-mail at equity@k12.wa.us.

Other Discrimination Complaint Options

Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education

206-607-1600 | TDD: 1-800-877-8339 | OCR.Seattle@ed.gov | OCR Website

Washington State Human Rights Commission

1-800-233-3247 | TTY: 1-800-300-7525 | Human Rights Commission Website

Your Safety – Two things to do if you are injured while volunteering

The district's safety program helps ensure that students, staff, visitors and volunteers are as safe as possible when in schools or in school-related activities off-campus.

1. Seek immediate first aid help and/or call 911. This might be your own action or the response of other adults or students with you.
2. Report the incident to a staff member as soon as possible. Your report should go either to the staff supervising your volunteer time or to a staff in charge of the school or program where you are volunteering.

If you are injured while volunteering, district staff will:

- Give you immediate assistance, and call 911 as a precaution.
- Fill out a district injury report form. Staff will get your signature and forward it to the district risk management staff.

You should know:

- We value your volunteer time and experience and the difference you make for students.
- The district does not have specific insurance coverage for volunteers should you be injured while supporting student activities or programs.
- Therefore, before you volunteer, please review your health care policy and/or homeowner's policy to determine what coverage is available if you are injured while volunteering.

Nondiscrimination

Rochester School District does not discriminate in any programs or activities on the basis of sex, race, creed, religion, color, national origin, age, veteran or military status, sexual orientation, gender expression or identify, disability, the use of a trained guide dog or service animal, or any other basis prohibited by law. We also provide equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The following employees have been designated to handle questions and complaints of alleged discrimination: Civil Rights Coordinator: Jennifer Bethman (360) 273-9242, jbethman@rochester.wednet.edu; Title IX Coordinator: Will Maus (360) 273-5958, wmaus@rochester.wednet.edu; 504/ADA Coordinator: Laura Staley (360) 273-5536, lstaley@rochester.wednet.edu. Address: 10140 Highway 12 SW, Rochester, WA 98579.

You can report discrimination and discriminatory harassment to any school staff member or to the district's Civil Rights Coordinator, listed above. You also have the right to file a complaint (see Section 24 – Complaint Options: Discrimination and Sexual Harassment). For a copy of your district's

nondiscrimination policy and procedure, contact your school or district office or view it online at www.rochester.wednet.edu.

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I have read and understand the expectations and confidentiality of being a classroom/coach volunteer outlined in this handbook. I understand that if confidentiality or expectations are violated, I may not be able to continue to offer my time as a classroom/coach volunteer.

By signing this agreement, I am stating that I will not divulge information about any student or family to any person outside the school setting.

Classroom Volunteer

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Coach Volunteer Student Name: _____

Signature: _____
Teacher: _____

Date: _____

Sport: _____

Building: _____

