

Russellville

Independent Schools



Volunteer Handbook

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Russellville Independent Schools

355 South Summer Street
Russellville, Kentucky 42276

Phone: 270-726-8405

Fax: 270-726-4036

Leon Smith, Superintendent

Every Child, Every Day

Dear Volunteer:

Congratulations on your decision to serve as a volunteer for Russellville Independent Schools. Our mission is “At Russellville Independent Schools, we are committed to insuring that all students achieve at their highest potential, all teachers teach with relevance and rigor, and all teachers establish meaningful relationships with students, parents, and the community—Every Child, Every Day.” To fulfill this mission, we must have a strong volunteer program.

We believe in the power of parent and community involvement and feel it is an essential part of an effective educational program. Volunteers not only strengthen the quality of school programs, but also provide many students with opportunities to positively interact one-on-one with adult role models.

We appreciate the time you are giving and we want to thank you for caring about and investing in the lives of our students---our community’s future.

Sincerely,

Leon Smith
Superintendent

As required by law, the Board of Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, religion, sex, genetic information or disability in its programs and activities and provides equal access to its facilities to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups.
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**Russellville Independent Schools
Contact Information**

District:

**Leon Smith, Superintendent
Russellville Independent Schools
355 South Summer Street
Russellville, KY 42276
Telephone 270-726-8405
Fax: 270-726-4036**

Schools:

**R.E. Stevenson Elementary School, Grades PreK-5
1000 North Main Street
Russellville, KY 42276
Telephone: 270 726-8425
Fax: 270- 726-1109
Contact: Carol Kees, Family Resource Center Coordinator**

**Russellville High School, Grades 6-12
1101 West Ninth Street
Russellville, KY 42276
Phone: 270 726-8421
Fax: 270 726-3685
Contact: Debbie Browder, Youth Service Center Coordinator**

GOALS OF THE VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

The goal of Russellville Independent School District's Volunteer Program is to enable citizens from the community to assist administrators, teachers, and other school personnel in helping young people fully develop their skills and potential as individuals.

Trained, supervised volunteers assist school personnel in four ways:

Helping students through activities that enhance their self-concept, provide successful experiences in learning, and motivate them to learn

Helping teachers by enabling them to provide effective reinforcement activities, enrich the curriculum, and perform other tasks

Strengthening school-community relations by increasing opportunities for communication, learning more about school programs, and sharing time and talent with the school

Safe learning environment—continuing assurance of a safe learning environment



WE
CARE
ABOUT
OUR
STUDENTS

A CHECKLIST FOR CONSISTENT VOLUNTEERING

(Those who consistently volunteer in school buildings throughout the year)

- ✓ Complete Application Form
- ✓ Sign Participation Statement
- ✓ Agree to a Background Check
- ✓ Provide Information for Background Check
- ✓ Attend Orientation and Training*
- ✓ Determine Your Interest Areas
- ✓ Wear a Name Tag
- ✓ Sign In and Out Each Time You Volunteer

*Note: Those wishing to volunteer after the Volunteer Training has been completed will attend a one-on-one training session with an appropriate school staff person.

A CHECKLIST FOR SINGLE EVENT VOLUNTEERING

(Single-event volunteers are those who volunteer for field trips, dances, school events, etc.)

- ✓ Agree to a Background Check
- ✓ Provide Information for Background Check

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Volunteers have the right to be:

- Treated as a co-worker
- Given a suitable assignment
- Supplied with as much information about school as necessary to complete assigned tasks
- Offered training for the job
- Given sound guidance and direction
- Heard and recognized

Guidelines for Volunteers

Supervision:

Volunteers work under the supervision of the professional staff at each school and only with teachers who have requested services of a volunteer. The school system is responsible for the education, safety, and well being of each student. For this reason, you can understand why the teacher, principal, or volunteer coordinator may request reassignment of a volunteer in the best interest of the school or students.

Confidentiality:

As you work with staff and students, information of a confidential matter may be shared with you. Students' problems, abilities, relationships or confidences should never be discussed with anyone. Teachers and volunteers are bound by a code of ethics to keep confidential matters within the school. Staff and students need to know they can trust you. Please do not discuss a child's school progress or difficulties with his or her parents. This is the teacher's responsibility. Occasionally, a child may confide in you about family matters or personal problems. Keep this confidential, unless you feel the student's teacher or school counselor should have this information. Discuss any matters privately with the appropriate staff. *If the child shares with you any type of abuse, you are bound by law to share that information. First you must contact the principal and/or guidance counselor and then, with their assistance, contact the proper authorities.*

School Rules:

Become familiar with the rules and policies of the school where you work. Ask your school volunteer coordinator or school principal to explain procedures for fire drills or any emergency situation.

Please avoid:

The staff at the school is responsible for everything that goes on in your building. Volunteers supplement and support the system. Volunteers should not:

- Provide curriculum or teaching plans
- Discipline students
- Have access to materials in students' permanent records
- Evaluate achievement
- Counsel students

Guidelines for Volunteers
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Sign in and out:

Each volunteer must sign in and out, to help ensure a safe school environment and for record-keeping purposes. Please wear the nametag made available to you whenever you are volunteering in the school.

Dress Code:

Volunteers should always dress appropriately for classroom or project activities. Remember you are a role model for our students. School specific dress code will be reviewed at the each school's volunteer orientation.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF VOLUNTEER PROGRAM MEMBERS

The Board of Education and the Superintendent of Schools:

- Supports the concept of community involvement in schools, particularly of parents.
- Conducts and shares background check records with appropriate school personnel.

The Principal:

- Determines guidelines such as volunteers in child's classroom, use of lounge, etc.
- Assesses the school's needs.
- Makes resources available such as materials, space, etc.
- Provides support to all persons involved in the program.
- Assigns, schedules, re-assigns, or dismisses volunteers as needed.

The School Volunteer Coordinator:

- Orients school personnel to the goals of the program.
- Coordinates the overall school volunteer program so that each participating school is aware of the services volunteers can provide in helping to educate the students.
- Attends to administrative and clerical details such as letters, manuals, and paperwork for their particular school.
- Publicizes the program to the community.
- Serves as a resource to the principal, staff, teachers, and volunteers.
- Provides materials for recruitment and recognition.
- Acts as the school volunteers' voice in matters that affect volunteers.
- Recruits volunteers.
- Works with the staff on how to utilize volunteers.
- Assists in assigning volunteers to various tasks.
- Develops a positive relationship between volunteers and faculty.
- Meets with volunteers.
- Assists in recognition activities at school.
- Meets with individual students and volunteers to assess progress and the program.

The Teachers:

- Assesses the need for volunteers in their classroom.
- Assists the school volunteer coordinator in the placement of volunteers.
- Provides meaningful tasks for volunteers.
- Provides supervision to their volunteers.
- Plans for the use of volunteers in their classroom.
- Gets to know their volunteers.
- Orients volunteers to their classroom.
- Recognizes volunteers and shows their appreciation.
- Evaluates volunteers and the volunteer program.

Responsibilities of Volunteer Program Members

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The Consistent Volunteer:

- Attends the volunteer orientation and training sessions.
- Follows all school and volunteer program rules and guidelines.
- Wears volunteer identification.
- Signs in and out at every session.
- Is regular and punctual in attendance.
- Assists in resolving problems.
- Maintains an appropriate appearance.
- Accepts direction and supervision from school staff.
- Maintains confidentiality about anything they see or hear.
- Asks questions about anything not understood and provides feedback.

Russellville Independent Schools Background Check Policy

WRITTEN APPLICATION

An adult who wishes to volunteer at a school or school-sponsored activity where he/she will have: (1) contact with students on a regularly scheduled or continuing basis; or (2) supervisory responsibility for children at a school site or on a school-sponsored trip, shall complete a background check application form, which will be used for the state-mandated background records check. Applications may be obtained and returned to the school contact person. *{School employees wishing to volunteer or attend field trips with their child (ren) need to refer first to their employee background check policy}*

PROCESSING

1. The volunteer's required information will be submitted to the Administrative Office of the Courts by district personnel.
2. After receipt of the processed records check from AOC, the District shall review the information provided based upon the following criteria:

Applicants with the following convictions **shall not be authorized** to volunteer:

- a. All sex-related offense convictions
 - b. All offense convictions against minors
 - c. All felony offense convictions against persons or property
 - d. All alcohol violation convictions within two (2) years from date of check
 - e. All drug-related offense convictions within four (4) years from date of check
 - f. All deadly weapon-related offense convictions
 - g. All violence (not identified above), theft related issues, or any questionable convictions shall be automatically reviewed by appropriate personnel.
*Please note this may delay approval timeline listed below.
3. The Principal shall notify the volunteer applicant in writing if he/she is not approved. Approval/non-approval status shall be determined within a period of one month from date of application.
 4. Notification of volunteer status for each volunteer shall be made available to all principals. A current list of all volunteers shall be maintained by the school volunteer contacts.
 5. An applicant who has questions regarding the status determination may contact the Principal for clarification.

RUSSELLVILLE INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

BACKGROUND CHECK POLICY

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DISTRICT'S BACKGROUND CHECK REVIEW COMMITTEE

The Superintendent shall appoint a committee of a minimum of three (3) school personnel to review the processed background checks from AOC.

APPLICABILITY

- a. Volunteer status is approved or disapproved for the entire District, not an individual school. Potential volunteers need only submit one (1) application, even if they intend to volunteer at more than one (1) school or school-sponsored activity.
- b. A background check application must be resubmitted and status reviewed every school year.
- c. The Russellville Independent Board of Education reserves the right to resubmit background checks to the AOC on questionable applicants as deemed necessary by the District Review Committee.

APPEAL

An applicant who has been denied volunteer status may submit a written appeal of the decision to the Superintendent. The Superintendent and District Background Check Review Committee shall review and respond in a timely manner.

An ACT relating to public school volunteers

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky:

SECTION 1. A NEW SECTION OF KRS CHAPTER 11 IS CREATED TO READ AS FOLLOWS:

1. As used in this section, “volunteers” mean adults who assist teachers, administrators, or other staff in public school classrooms, schools, or school district programs, and who do not receive compensation for their work.
2. Local school districts may utilize adult volunteers in supplementary instructional and non-instructional activities with pupils under the direction and supervision of the professional administrative and teaching staff.
3. Each board of education shall develop policies and procedures that encourage volunteers to assist in school or district programs.
4. Each local board of education shall develop and adopt a policy requiring a state criminal records check on all volunteers who have contact with students on a regularly scheduled or continuing basis, or who have supervisory responsibility for children at a school site or on school-sponsored trips. The request for records may be from the Justice Cabinet or the Administrative Office of the Courts, or both, and shall include records of all available convictions as described in KRS 17.160(1). Any request for a criminal records check of a volunteer under this subsection shall be on a form or through a process approved by the Justice Cabinet or the Administrative Office of the Courts. If the cabinet or the Administrative Office of the Courts charges fees, the local board of education shall arrange to pay the cost which may be from local funds or donations from any source including volunteers.
5. The local board of education shall provide orientation materials to all volunteers who have contact with students on a regularly scheduled or continuing basis, including school policies, safety and emergency procedures, and other information deemed appropriate by the local board of education.
6. Volunteers who assist in the district on a scheduled or continuing basis shall be provided with the same liability insurance coverage as a district employee.

When Talking Isn't Gossiping

When you're creating, enhancing, or maintaining your school's academic and athletic reputation in your community.

When you support and enhance educators as honest, expert, and caring professionals.

When you help promote parental and community involvement.

When you talk about your role in improving students' education.

When you speak highly of the teachers' effectiveness in the classrooms.

When you attend school committee meetings to give input into decision-making.

When you write your local, state, and federal officials to support educational issues.

When you help others to understand the importance of the short and long term goals of the school and its programs.

When you suggest new activities and general enthusiasm for positive changes.

When you share your pride of the schools' achievements.

Without gossiping,
you can spread the
GOOD NEWS
about your school

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CHILD HAVING ACADEMIC PROBLEMS AND CORRESPONDING PRINCIPLES

(Characteristics)

Lack of self-confidence

Fear of school (usually stems from past ridicule and failure in the school)

Economic poverty (possibly poor nutrition, physical discomfort in environment)

Low scholastic aptitude

Differing values, attitudes, and goals

Apathy

Sensitivity to non-verbal communication

Feeling of helplessness

Feeling of being “stupid”

(Principles)

Plan for success in every visit.

Praise each success. Avoid any sarcasm. Never appear condescending.

Make the setting comfortable and share your concerns with the coordinator or teacher who may refer to Family Resource Center or other social agencies.

Use repetition, a variety of “active” learning games, flash cards, rote, humor, role playing, etc.

Encourage students’ responsibility to learn, you cannot learn for them.

Direct teaching to the needs of the student, and find that by asking some of their interest.

Be aware of your facial expressions, gestures and tones of voice.

Be empathetic. Promote encouragement and success. Be aware that hostility, procrastination, and inattention often comes from anxiety.

Encourage student. Be verbal regarding the fact that we all learn differently.

Always be a friend. You may be the only person your student will feel comfortable with. Be patient. Sometimes, it takes a long time to see real progress. Laugh with your student, but be careful not to laugh at the student. What may be funny to you, may be another way to make them feel inadequate.

Successful Volunteers...

...are dependable.

The students count on you. The teachers count on you and are disappointed when you are not there.

...are punctual.

The whole school revolves around schedules. Tardiness is wasted time and can throw the whole day off.

...are good models.

Dress in a manner that requests respect. A neat and clean appearance makes a positive impression.

...respect students' and staffs' confidentiality.

You may be in a position to know about test scores, hear stories of an embarrassing nature, or observe situations that must remain confidential.

...refrain from giving advice when it is not invited.

Many teachers welcome suggestions, but often there are reasons why they do things in a particular way. Remember, your job is to help the show run smoothly – not run it.

...communicate with their teachers.

When you are unsure about your task, ask for help. When you don't understand something, ask for further instructions. When you have a problem, talk it over with the teacher or supervisor on site. Do not share with general public.

...profit from mistakes and accept constructive advice.

We all make mistakes, but when we learn from them it is an educational gain.

...take advantage of various learning opportunities.

Attend workshops; observe others; communicate with educators; read appropriate materials.

...employ a good sense of humor.

...are warm, caring people.

**The smile and encouraging word that you give the student
may be the only ones he or she gets that day.**

**Russellville Independent Schools
Volunteer's Evaluation of the Volunteer Program**

1. List the ways you have helped teachers or staff. _____

2. How often did you volunteer? _____

3. Did you feel you were adequately trained for assigned tasks? _____

If you answered "no" please explain:

4. Did teachers/staff give you supervision as you needed it? _____

If you answered "no" please explain:

5. Did you usually have a good relationship with students? _____

If you answered *No*, list problems or misunderstandings: _____

6. Did you enjoy being a volunteer? _____ Do you plan to volunteer next year? _____

7. Did you feel you were helpful to students, teachers and/or staff? _____

8. What suggestions do you have for future training?

9. What other types of activities would you like to be able to do?

10. Briefly describe your most enjoyable experience as a volunteer without using names:

Russellville Independent Schools

Teacher's/Staff's Evaluation of the Volunteer Program

1. List the ways you have been helped by volunteers this year:

2. How often were you assisted by a volunteer?

3. Did you feel the volunteer was adequately trained for assigned tasks?

If you answered "no" please explain:

4. Did your volunteers complete their assigned tasks to your satisfaction?

If you answered "no" please explain: _____

5. Did you usually have a good relationship with your volunteer helpers? _____

If you answered "no", list problems or misunderstandings:

6. Do you plan to request volunteer help next year? _____

7. Did you feel having a volunteer allowed you more time to be more effective? _____

8. What suggestions do you have for future training of volunteers? _____

9. Please list other ways a volunteer could be helpful to you?
