



Lake Erie Academy

2740 W. Central Avenue

Toledo, OH 43606

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Dr. Barbara Baker, School Leader

Jone Catchings, Office Manager



Volunteer Handbook

Volunteer Pledge

Information

We will share with you as much as possible about our school, our policies, and our people.

Training

We will provide you with the training you will need to do the job you have volunteered for.

Direction

We will answer your questions thoughtfully. You will receive guidance from people who are experienced and well informed.

Respect

We will consider your personal preferences, life experiences, education, and employment background in any volunteer assignment. Your ideas, suggestions and opinions will be valued.

Recognition

We will remind you daily of our appreciation for your valuable assistance.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Volunteers play an important role in the education and development of children. We all benefit from the work of people like you who generously give their time, talents, and energy.

Although you may not always see it, you are making a difference in the lives of the children with whom you work.

VOLUNTEER JOB DESCRIPTION

OBJECTIVE:

- To provide support for the education and social welfare of our community's children
- To assist school age children in developing their potential beginning with a focus on building relationships and moving towards improving academic and social skills
- To actively participate in a parent engagement initiative to promote community and family involvement that improves communication, volunteerism, and school/community interaction.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Sign in and out on the Volunteer Log for each session.
- Let the school leader know your strengths, talents, and abilities as well as the duties you prefer.
- Direct any questions, issues or concerns to the school office manager
- Notify the office manager in advance if you are expecting to be absent. In the event of an unexpected absence, call as soon as possible so that a replacement volunteer may be found or the child(ren) can be prepared.

QUALIFICATIONS:

- Interest in and comfort working with school-age children.
- Willing to be flexible and patient.
- Pass a background check.

BENEFITS:

- Volunteers will receive immeasurable appreciation for their time and efforts.
- Volunteers will receive training and materials specific to their volunteer duties.
- Volunteers will be supported by staff and school administrators

Volunteer Job Etiquette

PRIVACY

- ❖ **Be confidential.** A child's work and behavior is to be held in confidence. Discuss problems with staff or the school leader, not with other volunteers, parents, or in the community. Please understand that each time you go into school, only fragments of a whole year of learning and growing are observed. Communication between you and the teacher is the key to providing a good learning atmosphere for everyone.
- ❖ **Protect privacy.** Do not ask for a child's address or phone number. Do not share your address or phone number with the children. When asked about a particular student or circumstance, please respond, *"That information is confidential. Sorry I can't discuss it with you."* or *"Please check with the child's teacher."*

SAFETY

- ❖ **Always think "safety first"** when dealing with children. Always keep children in your line of vision. It is important to continually span all children for safety when in a large group setting. When in a small group setting, it is best that you keep doors open and have another adult present.
- ❖ **Notify a staff member** in the case of a serious problem such as a discipline problem, discrimination, an accident involving blood or if a child confides about an abusive situation. Staff will do the necessary follow up.
- ❖ **Follow "safe touch" suggestions.** Volunteers do not *initiate touching* a child (hand holding, hugs, lap-sitting), but may respond to child's initiation of an appropriate touch. Please know that hugs are not appropriate in school. Respecting a child's right to say "no", volunteers may ask a child if he/she would like a hand shake or a "high five."
- ❖ **Leave student transportation to school staff and to parents.** Volunteers should not transport students in private vehicles. If parents or the parent-designated driver is late to pick up a child, try to make telephone contact with the parents. If parents are unavailable, attempt to contact others listed on the child's information sheet. In the event that no one from the child's family is available, contact the office manager who will make arrangements for the child's transportation.

- ❖ **Gifts for individual students are inappropriate.** Don't bring gifts or food treats for *individual* students. With staff approval, volunteers may bring snacks for the entire group (for the staff to distribute when appropriate).

VOLUNTEER IDENTIFICATION

- ❖ **Sign in and out at the security desk** upon arrival and departure. Greet office staff and the teacher or supervisor with whom you are working.
- ❖ **Wear your name badge** for identification.

RESPECT

- ❖ **Be respectful of children's diversity** of culture, religion, and background. Don't assume the child celebrates the same holidays (Christmas, Easter, Halloween, or even birthdays). Also don't assume the make-up of a child's "family" (size, race, gender, or blend) or the family's economic status. Practice correct pronunciation of the children's names if they are unfamiliar. Show interest in the children's cultures and learn more about them.
- ❖ **Show respect by using formal names.** As a matter of school policy, students will refer to you with a Mr., Ms., Mrs., or Miss in front of your last name. In the presence of students, staff will also refer to you this way. Please refer to all of the adults this way as well in order to be consistent for the children's sake.
- ❖ **Be courteous of instructional time** that staff members have set aside to update you on project-specific needs. We are very pleased that you are donating your time to our children and enjoy having you as a part of our program. However, please save the conversational part of the visit for a more appropriate time as teachers need to adhere to a fairly rigid schedule. Your understanding of this matter will be greatly appreciated.

COMMUNICATION

- ❖ **Complete** any required paperwork and attend training sessions as needed.
- ❖ **Communicate.** Ask questions, share ideas, get to know the staff and other volunteers. Don't hesitate to call, leave a note, or ask for a meeting with the school leader to discuss any problems or concerns that may arise. Every problem can be solved with respect and honest communication.
- ❖ **Be prompt and dependable.** If possible, please call at least one day in advance to let the office manager know you will not be there at your scheduled time.

- ❖ **Ensure positive closure.** If you plan on ending your volunteer involvement before the end of the year, please notify the office manager. It is especially important that the children be left with a clear message that you have enjoyed working with them.

ATTITUDE

- ❖ **Bring a smile,** lots of praise, positive feedback and your willingness to work. Friendliness can be contagious and is an important part of your contribution to our school.
- ❖ **Be honest** in your approach and attitude.
- ❖ **Be patient** when working with students. They may be having difficulties of which you are not aware. Your patience will work wonders.
- ❖ **Be flexible** in responding to the needs of children and staff.
- ❖ **Be a positive role model** for children in attitude, behavior, language, and dress. Let your conversations demonstrate respect for others, and avoid using language that may be perceived as discriminatory, sexist, or offensive.

*Everyone can be great because anyone can serve.
You only need a heart full of grace and a soul generated by love.*

~Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Frequently Asked Questions:

- **Is there a safe place for my coat/belongings?**

1. Check with the office manager for a safe place to put your belongings.
2. Loss and/or damage to personal belongings are not the responsibility of the school.

- **Where is the adult bathroom?**

Please use the staff bathroom in the main office.

- **What should I do if a child is disruptive or uncooperative?**

Talk with the school leader about the disciplinary role you are to play before you begin. If you are involved in after school activities, your role may be more involved than other positions. Be sure that you are comfortable with whatever is decided. All volunteers are expected to follow the school's discipline policy.

- **Is there a telephone I can use?**

The phones have been installed in the classrooms for school business; i.e. calling the office, other staff members, or parents. They are not for personal use. In the case of an emergency please use the phone in the office or a classroom phone may be used in an after school program.

- **How do I know if school has been closed due to bad weather?**

Notice of school closings will be given over the local television stations.

VOLUNTEER AGREEMENTS

Lake Erie Academy

CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

I understand that during my time as a volunteer, I may learn confidential information regarding students, parents, and district personnel. Sharing this information with anyone other than school administrators is considered a breach of trust.

I agree that I will hold all such information in the highest confidentiality, and that failure to do so may result in my dismissal from the Volunteer Program.

Volunteer Signature

Date

CONFIRMATION OF VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK RECEIPT

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Volunteer Handbook. I agree to follow the policies therein.

I understand that receipt of the Volunteer Handbook does not constitute a contract between me and the school district, nor does it guarantee my participation or assignment to a volunteer position.

Volunteer Signature

Date

A Tribute to Volunteers

Valuable is the work you do

Outstanding is how you always come through

Loyal, sincere and full of good cheer

Untiring in your efforts throughout the year

Notable are the contributions you make

Trustworthy in every project you take

Eager to reach your every goal

Effective in the way you fulfill your role

Ready with a smile like a shining star

Special and wonderful that's what you are!!