



Our Network for Education

Volunteer Handbook

Never doubt that a small group of committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.

--Margaret Mead



****A special thank you to Howard-Suamico School District for sharing information and allowing us to reproduce it in this handbook.*



*Success in life has nothing to do with what you gain in life or accomplish for yourself. It's what you do for others.
--Danny Thomas*

Welcome and thank you for volunteering!

The Wausau School District hopes that your experience volunteering will be rewarding and enjoyable. Our community is very fortunate to have parents and community members who voluntarily give up their time for our students. You are an important partner in one of the most important jobs our community has, educating our youth.

It's because of this partnership we've created O.N.E., Our Network for Education. The O.N.E. Program is part of the District Mission to involve families and other community members as partners in the learning process.

To assist in this partnership, we've created this handbook offering specific information on duties and responsibilities of volunteers in our District.

Please note that all forms and information can be found on the District web site's O.N.E. page. If you have further questions or need additional information, please contact me at rhagedor@wausau.k12.wi.us or 261.0584.

ONE volunteer...ONE hour...ONE day...can make a difference in the life of a child. Thank you again for your time and involvement in one of our greatest resources, our students!

Roxane Hagedorn
Volunteer & Community Involvement Coordinator

Table of Contents

Our Commitment.....	page 3
Becoming a Volunteer.....	page 4
Volunteer Responsibilities & Expectations	pages 5-6
Helpful Tips for Working with Children	page 7
Frequently Asked Questions.....	page 8
Important Telephone Numbers.....	page 9

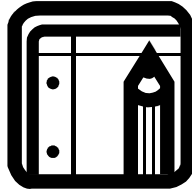
Our Commitment to You

The Wausau School District recognizes the important contributions of volunteers. Because we recognize the need for and commitment of our volunteers, we promise to:

- treat our volunteers with respect;
- make every effort to assign volunteers to positions that match their interests and skills;
- provide volunteers with necessary information about our schools, policies, personnel and programs;
- offer support throughout the volunteer experience;
- make sure volunteers understand whom to talk to about any concerns;
- give volunteers the opportunity to share comments and suggestions about their volunteer experience; and
- thank our volunteers for the contributions they make to the quality and culture of our schools.



Becoming a Volunteer



There are several steps in becoming involved as a volunteer.

1. **Find potential volunteer opportunities.** You can view and sign up for available opportunities by visiting our website at www.wausau.k12.wi.us, clicking the “Volunteer Now” button and then selecting the school you want to volunteer at. You can also contact Roxane Hagedorn, Volunteer & Community Involvement Coordinator at rhagedor@wausau.k12.wi.us or 261.0584.
2. **Fill out a volunteer profile.** All volunteers need to fill out a profile. You are encouraged to fill out the form online when you preview opportunities. You can also pick up a paper profile at any school office, you can print one online on our website or one can be emailed by contacting rhagedor@wausau.k12.wi.us. A profile must be completed and approved before starting your volunteer service.

Some volunteer opportunities will require a criminal background check to ensure the safety of our students. These checks take time to complete. For this reason, a profile and criminal background check form should be submitted no less than 4 weeks prior to the first day of volunteer service.

3. **Wait for follow-up communication.** The school contact person or Volunteer & Community Involvement Coordinator will contact you about any additional requirements, approval and your assignment. Once you are assigned, review this guidebook and complete any necessary training specific to your activity and you can begin making a difference!

The highest reward for a person's work is not what they get for it, but what they become because of it.

--John Ruskin

Volunteer Responsibilities and Expectations

PRIVACY

- **Be confidential.** A child's work and behavior is confidential. Discuss any problems with staff or the Volunteer and Community Involvement Coordinator, **not with other volunteers, parents or others in the community.** If someone asks you about a particular student, respond, *"That information is confidential. Sorry I can't discuss it with you,"* or *"Please check with the child's teacher."*
- **Protect privacy.** Do not ask for a child's address or phone number. Do not share your address or phone number with children.

SAFETY

- **Sign in and out at the school office.** Let office staff know that you are scheduled to volunteer and they will direct you on where to go. You can track your volunteer hours online if you wish.
- **Wear a "Visitor" badge.** Each school's main office has badges where you sign in.
- **Always think "safety first".** Always keep children in your line of vision. It's important to continually scan all children for safety when in a large group. When in a small group, it's best to keep doors open and have another adult present.
- **Notify staff if there are problems.** This includes areas of discipline, 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 may respond to a child's initiation of an appropriate touch and should respect a child's right to say "no". Volunteers may ask a child if they would like a handshake or a high-five.
- **Do not transport students in private vehicles.** Volunteers should not transport students under any circumstances. If parents are late to pick up a child, inform school staff and they will make phone contact with the parents or guardians.

RESPECT

- **Respect children's diversity.** This includes culture, religion and background. Don't assume all children celebrate the same holidays (Christmas, Easter, Halloween or even birthdays). Practice correct pronunciation of the children's names if they are unfamiliar.

➤ **Use formal names for adults.** Students will refer to you with a Mr., Ms., Mrs. or Miss in front of your last name. When around students, staff will refer to you in this way. Please refer to all adults this way, as well, in order to be consistent for the children.

➤ **Do not bring gifts/treats for individual students.** With staff approval, volunteers may bring snacks for the entire classroom (for the staff to distribute when appropriate).

➤ **Children learn in different ways.** Not every child learns the same; some will learning by doing and experimenting, others by asking questions, some will use their senses and others will use past experiences. Remember that asking the right questions can lead to the answers for a child. Don't just give them the answers. They will make mistakes. This is your chance to show them you understand and that this is part of learning. Provide praise and positive statements to reinforce good work and acceptable behavior.

➤ **Dress appropriately.** Volunteers should dress comfortably but remember you are a role model. Clothing should not disrupt the learning process. Please do not wear hats, caps, hoods, bandanas or sunglasses into school. Clothing that displays suggestive, offensive, obscene, sexually degrading or racially motivated graphics or statements is not allowed. Backless shirts, strapless or spaghetti-strapped tops should not be worn and clothing should completely cover your torso.

COMMUNICATION

➤ **Paperwork.** Please be sure all required paperwork is complete (either online or paper hardcopy). All volunteers must fill out a volunteer profile. Some opportunities will require a criminal background check and training.

➤ **Ask questions, share ideas.** Don't hesitate to call, leave a note or ask for a meeting with the Americorps VISTA or school contact person to discuss any problems, questions or ideas you may have. Please let staff know if there is something you are unclear about in your volunteer assignment.

➤ **Be prompt and dependable.** If possible, change your availability online or call staff at least one day in advance if you will not be able to be at your assigned site at your scheduled time. Teachers and students count on you and look forward to seeing you.

And don't forget...

Bring a smile...

Be patient...

Be flexible...

Be a positive role model...

HAVE FUN...and continue to learn!

Helpful Tips for Working with Children

Enjoy yourself and they will too!

Be warm and friendly.

Listen and show interest in them as a person.

Know and use the correct pronunciation and spelling of their name.

To encourage a child, use positive comments.

Let them know it's okay to make a mistake. It's part of learning!



If you don't know the answer, admit it. Then work on the problem together or ask the teacher.

Be reliable.

Keep a sense of humor.

Don't make promises you can't keep.

Encourage children to do their own thinking and give them time to answer.

Not all children learn in the same way. Understand and embrace those differences.



Volunteer Frequently Asked Questions

✓ **How much time should I volunteer?**

We welcome any time you can give to volunteer. Volunteering does not mean you have to commit to everyday or all day. Anytime and level of commitment you can contribute is greatly appreciated.

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

You can leave belongings in the school office or keep them with you. Lost and/or damage of personal belongings is not the responsibility of the school.

✓ **Where are the adult bathrooms?**

There are staff bathrooms at each school. Please ask school staff where they are located.

✓ **How do I know if school is canceled?**

If school is canceled or students are released early because of weather or another unanticipated situation, announcements will be made via the following media outlets:

WAOW-Channel 9
WSAW-Channel 7
Wausau Daily Herald
WDEZ 101.9 FM
WIFC 95.5 FM

WIZD 99.9 FM
WMZK 104.1 FM
WOFM 94.7 FM
WSPT 97.9 FM
WJMT 730 AM

WRIG 1390 AM
WSAU 550 AM
WSPT 1010 AM
WXCO 1230 AM

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

Talk to the school staff you are volunteering with or another staff member. Volunteers are expected to maintain firm but kind control of students and refer serious problems or concerns to school staff.

✓ **Can I purchase a hot lunch at school?**

Volunteers may purchase school lunch at the adult price when they are volunteering at school. Check with the school office as soon as possible for menu and price information. Please note that most schools need to have lunch counts prior to 9:00 a.m. each day.

✓ **Am I allowed in the staff lounge?**

Lounges are reserved for school staff members only.

✓ **What should I do if there is an emergency drill?**

Volunteers are required to participate in emergency drills. Please follow the directions of the school staff you are working with.

✓ **Is there smoking allowed anywhere on school grounds?**

No, smoking is not allowed anywhere on school property. This includes inside a personal vehicle parked in a school parking lot.

Important Telephone Numbers

Roxane Hagedorn, Volunteer & Community Involvement Coordinator 261.0584

Elementary Schools

A.C. Kiefer Educational Center.....261.0265
Franklin Elementary School..... 261.0000
G.D. Jones Elementary School 261.0950
Grant Elementary School261.0190
Hawthorn Hills Elementary School..... 261.0045
Hewitt-Texas Elementary School 261.0015
John Marshall Elementary School 261.0060
Lincoln Elementary School.....261.0965
Maine Elementary School..... 261.0250
Rib Mountain Elementary School 261.0220
Riverview Elementary School..... 261.0030
South Mountain Elementary School261.0235
Stettin Elementary School..... 261.0205
Thomas Jefferson Elementary School..... 261.0175
Wausau Area Montessori Charter School261.0795

Middle Schools

Horace Mann Middle School.....261.0725
John Muir Middle School261.0100
New Horizons Charter School 261.0060

High Schools

Wausau East High School..... 261.0650
Wausau West High School 261.0850
Enrich, Excel, Achieve Learning Academy (EEA)..... 261.2490

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