



Palacios Independent School District

Volunteer Handbook Revised 10/24

<http://www.palaciosisd.org>

Volunteer Opportunities

In Palacios ISD, we believe that parent involvement ensures student success and an important way for parents to be involved is to volunteer. Volunteer opportunities include:

Lunchroom Volunteers - These volunteers assist with duties in school cafeterias, such as monitoring student safety, supporting student needs like retrieving utensils, napkins, etc., and helping with cleaning and transitions between lunch groups.

PLC/ARD Volunteer - These volunteers assist the campus by covering for teachers and other personnel on an as-needed basis to provide classroom coverage for staff who need to be out for a short period of time to attend critical/essential meetings.

Extra-Curricular Volunteer - These volunteers provide assistance with supervising students during extracurricular activities for our students. Their responsibilities may include chaperoning and supervising students. At the discretion of the sponsor, volunteers may also be asked to help with loading and unloading items.

Student Drop off/Pickup Volunteer – these volunteers will work with school personnel to help supervise or manage students during drop off and pick up times. These volunteers are expected to follow instructions exactly as given by PISD police and campus administration.

*Please note that any volunteer opportunities you choose to help with should be scheduled with the campus or extra-curricular leader the day before. At no point should you go to a campus without being asked or getting clearance before volunteering. Drop-ins should not occur. If there is an emergency shortage of personnel on a day, the campus may call you to come in to volunteer.

Volunteer Requirements

All individuals wishing to volunteer in any capacity must have a background check completed. The volunteer forms can be filled out at the campus where you want to volunteer. The completed forms will be submitted by the campus to district administration for a background check after principal approval. Please do not bring the form to the district office yourself. Once a background check has been completed, the campus and individuals will be notified and added to the PISD Volunteer List. Each individual must complete a background check **every school year** to be eligible to volunteer. It is unnecessary to complete a form for each campus if you wish to volunteer in more than one place but you must have the approval of the campus administrator prior to volunteering at a different campus than where you originally signed up. You will not be allowed to volunteer until the background check has been completed. Please allow 5 business days for the check to be completed.

All individuals wishing to volunteer in Palacios ISD should also meet the following requirements:

Punctuality and Dependability: Please be on time for any scheduled opportunities.

Professionalism – Present oneself as a professional in attitude, dress, and communication.

Confidentiality – Maintain student confidentiality as you are made aware of reasons for absences, other potentially sensitive student information, etc.

Reporting Schedule

Individuals interested in volunteering should contact the campus for the specific assignment and schedule for that assignment. Volunteers will be assigned shift(s) based on need, availability, and request.

If a volunteer is not able to report during his/her scheduled volunteer shift, he or she should notify the campus front office as soon as possible so other arrangements can be made. **Volunteers should not try to find a replacement on their own.**

Dress Code

Since volunteers reflect the individual campus and Palacios ISD, they are asked to observe modesty and neatness in clothing and personal appearance. Clothing must not display images or suggestions of inappropriate content to include but not limited to:

Drug or alcohol use, violence, guns, political statements, and obscene content or gestures.

Campus administrators have the right to dismiss volunteers who wear questionable or inappropriate attire from campus. All volunteers should be clean and well-groomed.

Code of Ethics

Volunteers are considered professional team members and expected to observe the same ethical code as employees. Each volunteer is required to review and comply with the Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators.

[Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators](#)

Complaints and concerns from volunteers should be directed to the building principal or the district's administration.

All volunteers are expected to have a friendly, cheerful, and cooperative attitude toward building personnel, students, and visitors at all times.

Confidentiality

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) requires faculty and staff to maintain confidentiality of all student records. As a volunteer, you may be privy to confidential student information as students and parents come to the office to make requests, attend meetings, etc. As a volunteer, you shall maintain the highest level of confidentiality, to the same degree as faculty/staff, in order to protect the privacy of our students and families. Volunteers must comply with the confidentiality provisions in the Code of Ethics. You will also be required to watch a FERPA training video that will be attached in the final section of this document in the agreement section.

Reporting Concerns

The safety of our students and staff is our number one priority. Volunteers are expected to report any concerns about students' safety to the campus principal or district administration immediately. Additionally, all volunteers in Palacios ISD are required to complete a Standard Response Protocol (SRP) training prior to beginning to volunteer in our schools. This training will be available electronically. Please follow the link at the end of this document.

Noise Level & Distractions

Volunteers are asked to keep the noise level and distractions to a minimum to allow campus personnel to utilize their time efficiently. Please do not allow your phone or other issues to distract you from what you are there to assist with.

Teacher Access

Volunteers are asked to follow the same protocol for accessing teachers as other parents. If a conversation and/or conference is needed with a teacher, the volunteer must request that via email or phone call and schedule a time (outside of volunteer hours) to meet with the teacher. **Volunteers may not drop in on teachers throughout the day to speak about their own personal children.**

Parking

Volunteers may park in the front parking lot of the school.

Identification

All volunteers will be given a volunteer badge that should be worn at all times while on duty.

Safety

The continual safety of students and staff is paramount. Every individual in the school has some responsibility for everyone's safety. Additional safety precautions include ensuring that all exterior doors are closed and locked at all times of the day and that all interior doors – occupied or unoccupied – are locked at all times of the day. No exterior doors should ever be propped open

for convenience or any other reason. Any observation of exterior doors that are propped open, don't latch and close correctly, or appear to require maintenance or upkeep should immediately be reported to the campus administration and/or campus police officer.

Questions & Clarification

If a student or parent asks a question the volunteer can't answer, he or she should seek an administrator or office personnel. Volunteers should never attempt to answer questions she/he does not know the answer to nor be afraid to ask for information or clarification.

Campus Policies and Procedures

Some of the volunteer opportunities may be specific to the volunteer job, while others may vary slightly from campus to campus. Please follow the instructions of the campus administrator or group sponsor at all times.

Volunteering is a privilege and a huge help to the campus, but the opportunity is not guaranteed. PISD reserves the right to remove volunteers with or without cause as needed or warranted. No guarantees are made that all volunteers who apply will be selected for a role.

Palacios Independent School District

Parent Volunteer Handbook Acknowledgment

I acknowledge that I have read the Palacios ISD Volunteer Handbook and agree to comply with all policies and procedures. I understand the importance of private matters and agree to maintain confidentiality of student information. I agree to abide by the *Code of Ethics & Standard Practices for Texas Educators* and acknowledge that my failure to do so shall make me subject to limited, or a complete loss of, volunteer opportunities within Palacios ISD. I will report all concerns, especially those regarding student safety, to the campus principal or district administration.

After reviewing this handbook and before the first volunteer shift each school year, Palacios ISD volunteers must complete the acknowledgment form, SRP, and FERPA training at the link below. If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Brian A Williams at 361 972 5491 x 1034 or brianw@palaciosisd.org.

You must complete the entire form to be eligible to volunteer. You must complete the volunteer form on campus before beginning this portion.

[PISD volunteer SRP](#)

FERPA Training