

Volunteer Handbook

2026-2027

Why We Exist

The mission of the Parent Service Organization (PSO) at Great Hearts Northern Oaks is to support the teachers and staff who guide our children daily in the pursuit of truth, beauty, and goodness. We accomplish this by providing volunteers for on-campus assistance through committees, special events, and as room and grade-level representatives.

How to Get Involved

To begin volunteering, visit **GHNOPSO.org** to:

- Submit a background check request via the Raptor system
- Print and complete the FERPA Confidentiality Form
- Watch the Volunteer Training Video
- Fill out the Volunteer Interest Form to let us know how you'd like to serve

Note: The completion of these steps is required each school year prior to volunteering on campus. Background checks are valid from July 1 – June 30.

Expectations While on Campus

- Volunteers may arrive no more than 15 minutes early to their scheduled shift.
- Upon arrival, sign in at the Front Desk, and wear the provided volunteer badge at all times.
- Remain in your assigned area during your volunteer shift. If volunteering in multiple areas, notify the Front Desk staff.
- Do not approach teachers to discuss your child while serving as a volunteer. Please contact your scholar's teacher via email to schedule a conversation, per the Family Handbook.
- At the end of your shift, sign out, return your badge, and promptly exit the building.

These guidelines ensure campus safety and show respect for our teachers and staff. Failure to follow them may result in removal from volunteer activities.

FERPA Explained

The **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)** protects the confidentiality of all student information. Volunteers must never disclose what they see or hear on campus about any student.

Examples of FERPA violations include:

- While working the Front Desk, you see a friend's child go to the nurse and text the parent to let them know.
- While volunteering in the Lunchroom, a student forgets their lunch or is upset, and you notify their parent.

Reminder: All communication regarding a student must come directly from the school.

Upper School Volunteer Conduct & Student Interaction

When volunteering in the Upper School, please remember that students are expected to maintain high standards of decorum, and the same is expected of our volunteers.

Please follow these additional guidelines:

- Maintain a respectful and professional distance from students. Volunteers are not permitted to engage in personal conversations with students.
- Do not initiate physical contact with students.
- While volunteering, comments to and with students should be general, such as 'What book are you reading in Humane Letters right now?' Avoid discussing academic performance, disciplinary actions, personal or private matters with or about any student.
- Any concerns or observations about student behavior should be communicated directly to a faculty member or school administrator.
- Upper School students are becoming young adults—our role as volunteers is to model respectful behavior and uphold the classical environment they learn in.
- Do not privately text, email, or message with a student in your capacity as a PSO Volunteer.

Thank you for helping maintain the character, safety, and academic focus of our Upper School community.

Volunteer Communication

Lower School Committees

- Committees communicate through GroupMe, managed by Committee Leads and the Lower School VP
- Direct questions and schedule needs to your Committee Lead or via the GroupMe group
- Committee Leads submit volunteer schedules to Administration.

Upper School Grade Level Leads

- Grade Level Leads coordinate with the Upper School VP for communications and planning.

Dress Code

When in doubt, “dress like you work here” is a helpful guideline. Just as students follow a uniform code, volunteers are expected to wear clothing that is respectful and appropriate for a school environment.

- Leggings must be worn with a long top or sweater tied around the waist.
- Jeans are acceptable if free of holes or distressing.
- Shorts and skirts should be of modest (mid-thigh) length.

Thank you for presenting yourself in a respectful way that supports the values of our school community.

Contact your PSO Leadership Team with questions at northern oakspso@gmail.com.