



SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS - FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the difference between a volunteer and a visitor?

A “volunteer” is an individual who provides a service without compensation for the benefit of district schools, staff members, and/or students. Examples of services volunteers may provide include, but are not limited to: tutoring, leading small group activities, helping teachers/staff with organizational tasks, supervising students on field trips or extracurricular activities, working special events, and coaching student athletes.

Conversely, a visitor is any individual who enters a district school or site for any other reason. For example, parents or guardians who are visiting their child’s classroom only for a class party or academic observation, meeting with a teacher or administrator, attending an activity involving their student or having a meal with their student, do not have to apply/register as a volunteer, but must sign in as a visitor at the school, present a valid ID, and abide by other school and School Board rules regarding school visitors, including LPSB Policy KG, *Visitors to the Schools*. Parents, guardians, and other community members assisting students other than their own or helping with the execution of a school-wide activity, such as field day or field trips, must apply/register as a volunteer.

Does a parent or guardian to apply/register as a volunteer in order to eat lunch with his/her child?

No, a parent eating lunch with his/her child is considered a visitor, not a volunteer.

What about individuals who visit a school for one-time events such as Dr. Seuss Day or Career Day? Will they need to go through the application process?

No, for one day/one-time only events, visitors do not have to go through the volunteer application process. If the visitor wants to return on a regular basis to perform a volunteer function, the visitor becomes a volunteer who will need to go through the application process.

Do police officers or firemen visiting a school for a presentation to students need to go through the application process?

No, they would be considered visitors, not volunteers. The main thing to keep in mind with this question is: Does this person come into a school on a recurring basis to perform a volunteer function and/or interact with students outside of a general, one-time presentation to a class in the presence of a staff member? If the answer is yes, then he/she must register through the application process. Otherwise, he/she would be considered a visitor.

What is the difference between a chaperone and a volunteer?

For the purpose of volunteering, a chaperone is a volunteer who is over the age of 21 who may have the responsibility of supervising students during an off-campus field trip or activity. During these types of activities, teachers are expected to maintain specific chaperone-to-student ratios.

If a parent wants to visit his/her child at a field trip event, does he/she need to go through the application process?

No, parents may visit their children at school sponsored events that are otherwise directed and supervised by school staff.

If individuals, including parents, want to help out and perform volunteer duties on a class field trip do they need to go through the application process?

Yes, this is a Level 2 volunteer activity where an individual will be interacting directly with students and may not be directly supervised by district staff at all times.

If I am attending a local field trip with my child and will not be acting as a chaperone, do I need to have a Level 2 clearance?

The Principal and classroom teacher will discuss and make that decision with the district's Volunteer Coordinator and the Human Resources Department. It depends on your role as determined by the Principal and teacher. If the possibility exists that you may be alone with students, a Level 2 clearance will be required.

If I am going to volunteer in a classroom with the teacher present at all times, do I need to apply/register as a volunteer?

Yes. If a district employee will be responsible for supervision of the volunteer at all times, then that is considered a Level 1 volunteer which does not require a full criminal background check but does still require application, screening, approval, and registration as a Level 1 volunteer in the district prior to commencing such volunteer services.

If I am a LPSB employee and also want to participate in Level 2 volunteer activities, do I have to apply and undergo a background check?

Current LPSB employees do not have to undergo another criminal background check in order to be a Level 2 volunteer. Current LPSB employees who wish to volunteer should submit a Volunteer Application Form to the Human Resources Department so that employment may be verified and for record-keeping and tracking purposes.

If I am approved to volunteer while my child/children attend a specific school and then we move/graduate to another school, do I have to go through the application process again?

No, volunteer approval is not school-specific. However, security clearances for volunteers must be renewed every three (3) years regardless of school, and volunteers will be required to submit a new volunteer application/renewal to be approved/continue as a volunteer in the district. Nonetheless, registered volunteers are subject to screening and/or background checks at any time at the discretion of the district.

The school PTA has recruited volunteers to help at the school to perform volunteer duties, do they need to be approved through application process?

Yes, if the PTA is bringing in volunteers to help the school and perform a volunteer function for the school, those individuals will need to go through the application process.

Do college students or groups who volunteer in a school need to be approved through application process?

It depends. If they are working in a school through a Memorandum of Understanding or regular educational partnership between LPSB and the college or the college group, then they probably do not. If, however, such college students are volunteering on their own and returning to the school on a regular basis, then, yes, they do.

What happens if a parent or community volunteer does not feel comfortable getting fingerprinted?

If an individual does not feel comfortable for any reason getting fingerprint clearance, he/she will not be able to qualify as a Level 2 volunteer. Level 1 volunteers, on the other hand, are not required to be fingerprinted and undergo a full criminal background check.

Does every volunteer go through a complete criminal background check with fingerprinting?

No, only Level 2 volunteers will need to submit to a full criminal background check. Examples of Level 2 volunteers are field trip chaperones, volunteer athletic coaches or assistants, or any other volunteers who may have interaction with students without direct supervision of school staff. Level 1 volunteers, like library/office/clerical volunteers, lunchroom or classroom helpers, concession stand workers, etc., do not undergo a full criminal background check. They must complete and sign the Volunteer Application Form, sign the Volunteer Agreement, and present a valid ID, and the district's Volunteer Coordinator is responsible for checking them against the National and State sex offender registry databases before they are cleared to volunteer in the district.

What background check information could disqualify me from volunteering with LPSS?

LPSS reserves the right to deny an application or decline the services of a volunteer at any time for any reason. Possible reasons for denial or dismissal of volunteers include but are not limited to:

- Most felony convictions
- Two or more DUI convictions in the last five years
- Any domestic violence convictions
- Any child abuse or reckless endangerment convictions, including neglect
- Any outstanding criminal warrants
- Any current felony or abuse-related charges where the court date is outstanding
- Any felony convictions involving the illegal sale, distribution, or possession with intent to distribute a controlled substance in the last seven years
- Any convictions involving unlawful behavior (sexual or otherwise) involving a minor child
- An active restraining or protective order that limits or prohibits access to any LPSS site, staff member, or student
- Involvement in a custody dispute that limits or prohibits access to an LPSS site or student
- Any other information that suggests an applicant's volunteer service may be incompatible with the protection of student health, welfare, or safety

For purposes of this policy, "conviction" means a conviction by a jury or a court and includes pleas of no contest or the imposition of a deferred or suspended sentence.

How will volunteers be notified if they are cleared to work in a school?

The district's Volunteer Coordinator will email both the volunteer applicant and the school's designated volunteer manager with notification of eligibility status and level of approval, along with a copy of the volunteer's signed Application and signed Agreement for the volunteer's and the school's records.

I am a parent and was denied volunteer privileges due to disqualifying offenses on my background check. Can I participate in my child's school events?

Parents or guardians who are excluded from volunteer activities may visit or attend public events at the school such as Parent Teacher Association meetings and student performances.

I would like to volunteer, but I have a preschool child. Can I bring my child with me?

No. Taking preschool children with you to school presents a liability problem for the school. In addition, having a very young child in a classroom interrupts class procedure, disrupts the students, and prevents the volunteer from giving full attention to the work the teacher has prepared.

What do I do about student discipline?

Disciplinary action is the responsibility of the teachers and school staff. ***Volunteers do not enforce discipline.*** Request students to work according to the rules in the classroom. Immediately notify the teacher if there is a discipline problem.

IF YOU HAVE A QUESTION, ASK