



Wickliffe City School District

VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

Wickliffe City School District

Volunteer Handbook

Welcome to the Wickliffe City School District!

Volunteers fulfill a vital role in our District. As a volunteer you will help to promote and foster the goals of our schools and you will provide important resources for students.

Our primary goal in the School District is to provide a high quality academic experience for students. We value the diverse talents and contributions that volunteers bring, and appreciate your interest in volunteering your time and skills to contribute to the academic experiences of our students.

This Volunteer Handbook contains information that is essential to your success as a volunteer. Please read it in its entirety before you begin volunteering.

We hope that you find your volunteer experience with our schools rewarding and worthwhile. We invite you to contact us at any time.

The Wickliffe Board of Education

Volunteer Handbook

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Overview of the Wickliffe City School District

The Wickliffe City School District is one of the smaller school districts in Lake County with a current enrollment of about 1500 students. Our students represent the rich tradition of the school district and the community it serves.

The Wickliffe City School District is committed to the pursuit of excellence in education. We strive to select the best-qualified individuals to become a part of our teaching staff. Sixty-one percent of our teachers hold advanced degrees. The most important qualification we feel our teachers have, however, is a commitment to their students and a dedication to their profession, which we believe is unmatched in any other school system in the state.

The School District is currently made up of the following schools and programs.

(grades K-6)
Wickliffe Lower School

(grades 7 -12)
Wickliffe Upper School

Extra and Co-curricular Activities

The Wickliffe City School District has a proud tradition of academic success and extra-curricular programming. The small class sizes give teachers and students the opportunity to build positive relationships in the learning community comprising our schools.

What is a Volunteer?

Volunteering is a custom that is deeply rooted in our nation's history. Americans have always worked together to build a better life for fellow Americans, whether that volunteer work involved clearing land, building a house, establishing governance, or developing our schools

In the Wickliffe Schools we believe it is critical for our students to observe volunteering as an expression of citizenship in the school environment. It is important for students to learn how to volunteer so they will be able to model the spirit of cooperation and service that is part of responsible citizenship. As part of the high school curriculum students have to complete forty hours of community service. This requirement builds and reinforces the concept of volunteering in our high school students.

As a school volunteer, you embody a wealth of human talent and skills. We want to facilitate the use of your time and abilities in a manner that will enhance the educational opportunities for our students. In return, we hope we contribute to a new dimension in your life as you serve as a model for today's youth.

How Does One Qualify as a Volunteer?

All persons interested in volunteer opportunities must comply with the School District's requirements:

- 1) Obtain a criminal background check by calling (440) 943-7773 for an appointment.

Volunteer criminal background checks are valid for 4 years. Volunteers chaperoning overnight events with our students must have a new background check done. e.g. 6th Grade Camp

Volunteer coaches must meet with the Athletic Director for specific requirements which include a Pupil Activity Permit and BCII/FBI checks. All documentation must be completed before volunteers have contact with students.

Upon receipt of a valid background check you will be issued a name badge which must be worn whenever you are volunteering.

How Are Volunteer Assignments Made?

A volunteer in the Wickliffe City School District might perform any one of a number of different types of responsibilities. For example, a volunteer might be assigned to a classroom to help the teacher with the classroom activities. A volunteer might also be assigned to help chaperone field trips or to work directly with students in tutoring. Other volunteer assignments might require working outside the classroom, for example, volunteering with the athletic boosters, parent and advisory boards, athletic concession stands, or the parent organization. Volunteer assignments may be short-term or ongoing through the year.

Your Responsibilities as a Volunteer

Your primary responsibility as a volunteer is to report to the teacher or other employee to whom you are assigned. In addition, you will be given a specific set of responsibilities in your volunteer role. Here are some general guidelines to follow in performing your volunteer responsibilities.

1. **Sign-In** - Please sign in at the building's office each time you arrive. For the security of the building, we need to know who is in the building and where to find you in case of emergency. There is a sign-in sheet in each building. **You must wear your volunteer badge when volunteering.**
2. **Confidentiality** – An important foundation of all school volunteer programs is confidentiality. You may observe, read and hear much about individual children while you are volunteering. Discussing school events, lessons, and issues in general is fine, but avoid repeating anything about individual children.
3. **Dependability** – Both teachers and children have planned their day around you. You are making a commitment when you agree to be a volunteer. Others depend on you to arrive on time and do what you said you would do. Please, always call the school if you are going to be late or if you must be absent.
4. **Discipline** – You must refer all discipline problems to the teacher or staff person in charge of the area. The responsibility for the direct supervision and a discipline rests with the professional staff of the school
5. **Be Nice!** – Learning the student's names and showing interest in what they are doing or saying is considered appropriately warm and friendly. You can also show the students that you care by your encouragement and genuine praise. Students sense genuine concern and appreciate it.
6. **Review and follow** guidelines of Board Policy GBH, Staff-Student Relations on page 8 of this handbook.
7. **Sign-Out** – Please sign out at the building's office each time you leave. In addition, it is required that you **MUST** leave your badge with the building secretary at the main office.

Arriving at School

When you arrive, report to the main office in the building where your assignment is located. Personnel in the school office will provide you with the information and materials you need for that day. The office staff should be able to tell you where to locate the materials you will need.

Organizing Your Volunteer Activities

We have a few tips for you for organizing your volunteer activities. First, ask questions. No question is too small and we count on you to ask what you need to know to become a valuable member of our volunteer team. Second, ask for and take advantage of training sessions as they become available. And third, be sure to document your hours by keeping a simple time sheet provided by the office.

Managing Students

It is assumed that volunteers will work under the close supervision of a certificated teacher or staff person in charge. On rare occasion volunteers may find themselves in a situation when the teacher or staff person in charge is not within immediate contact. The following suggestions are written to accommodate such situations.

Below are some tips others have found helpful.

1. Act confidently even if you don't really feel that way.
2. Use eye contact to communicate with a student.
3. Speak quietly.
4. Follow through with promises and consequences.
5. Do not allow students to leave the area or to go to the restroom in groups without first establishing the appropriate procedure with the teacher or person in charge.
6. Most students will follow along with what needs to be done, but there will be some who will question your plans or authority. Do not argue. Instead say, "I know this isn't the way Ms. Smith does it, but this is the plan for today."
7. Don't let students manipulate you or protest. State clearly and directly what needs to be done.
8. Don't criticize or embarrass students; don't demean students; don't say negative things about the District or the class; never use profane language; never behave abusively toward a student.
9. Provide students with very specific instructions for everything.
10. Use positive statements to motivate the class.
11. Do not give students or teachers food or gifts. Many students have dietary restrictions or food allergies and giving them food could endanger their health; this includes candy, fruit, snacks or any type of food.
12. Remember the three F's: be **fair, firm and friendly**.
13. Keep your sense of humor

Managing Ill or Injured Students

1. **School Nurse** – Nurses are available. Usually another staff member in the office can see students who are ill or injured if the school nurse is not available.
2. **Medication** – You are not permitted to administer medication to students. If a student gives you medication, bring it to the main office.
3. **When to Contact the Principal** – A student who has been injured should be reported to the teacher or the principal's office immediately. Report ALL head injuries, and pay special attention to any injuries of the sensory organs (eyes, ears, nose, etc). If a student is seriously injured stay with the student and send another adult to the office to report the incident. Only send another student if an adult is not available. You should also contact the principal immediately if:
 - A. you have any concerns about marks or injuries on a student's body; or
 - B. a student tells you anything that causes you to be concerned about his or her safety or well-being.
4. **Emergency Procedures** – Be sure you know where the nearest building exits are and how to evacuate your classroom in the event of an emergency such as a fire.

Conducting Yourself as a Professional

As a volunteer, you are expected to conduct yourself in a professional and appropriate manner at all times. You are subject to the same standards or professional behavior that the District applies to all of its employees, including the following:

- You are expected to deal objectively, fairly and without prejudice with individual students. If you encounter a serious disciplinary problem, you must report it to the school office. If a serious problem arises at the high school level, contact the office by using the phone or the call button in the classroom. If a serious problem arises at the middle or elementary school level, contact the main office.
- Your role as a volunteer may give you access to highly confidential information. You must treat it as such and refrain from disclosing such information to anyone who does not have an absolute need to know it.
- You are expected to behave professionally at all times.
- You are expected to dress professionally, in a manner that is appropriate for your volunteer role.

- You should refrain from criticizing a teacher's style or teaching methods in front of other teachers or students
- You should not spread rumors or engage in gossip; both are considered unprofessional behavior
- You are expected to communicate regularly with the contact person for your volunteer position

School Closings

Please listen for public service announcements about school closings during inclement weather.

Important School District Policies

The Wickliffe City School District is a large organization that is governed by many complex state and federal laws and many policies. Every volunteer should be familiar with a few of our key policies, which are summarized below. If you have questions about other School District policies, please contact your building's administrator.

Equal Employment Opportunity

The policy of the Wickliffe City School District is to support and promote the concept and practice of equal employment opportunity for all persons without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, age, disability, or other human differences. The School Board values the diversity and the multicultural qualities of students, employees and volunteers in our School District. The philosophy of the Board is to foster and promote the spirit as well as the law of equal employment opportunity.

It is the policy of the Board of Education that all employees of the School District have the right to work in an environment free from discrimination, which encompasses freedom from harassment. Further, the Board supports the goals of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Harassment

The School District's policy prohibits all forms of harassment, including racial and sexual harassment, and draws special attention to the prohibition of sexual harassment. Each School District employee and volunteer has a responsibility to maintain a workplace and an educational environment free from harassment. Harassment or offensive conduct in the workplace is prohibited. The School District has developed appropriate complaint procedures to resolve issues related to alleged sexual harassment. If you have any questions or complaints regarding sexual harassment, contact the Superintendent.

Human Relations/Employee Relations

The achievement of academic excellence is directly related to the quality of the educational environment in which learning takes place. The Board of Education believes that the pursuit of academic excellence is enhanced by attention to human relations values that focus on the ability of all members of the Wickliffe school community to reach their maximum potential. The values that characterize our School District include the following:

- Respect for the dignity and worth of each individual – employees, students and volunteers;
- Understanding, trust and acceptance of sexual, ethnic, racial and religious differences;
- Self-discipline and personal responsibility for individual behavior; and
- Compassion, fairness, and consistency.

Professional Ethics

The School District abides by the rules set forth in the Ohio Ethics law, which established certain codes of conduct for public employees in Ohio. If you are not familiar with these rules, please contact the Superintendent for information.

Rules of Conduct

The School District has established rules of conduct to help guide behavior. Paramount among these is courtesy and respect for others. Inappropriate behavior by a volunteer may result in immediate removal from the classroom and the volunteer roster. You are encouraged to maintain an open line of communication with your contact person and to make him/her aware of any potential problems so that they may be addressed without delay.

If You Must Leave Us

If you decide at any time that you want your name removed from the volunteer list, we ask that you provide sufficient notification to your contact person.