

Paramount Unified School District Volunteer Handbook



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Introduction

Welcome to Paramount Unified School District (PUSD). We appreciate your time and effort in helping to make PUSD the best educational environment for all our students and schools.

In this handbook, you will find important information that will make your volunteer service successful and rewarding.

Your assistance is valued!

Definition of a Volunteer and How to Apply

A volunteer is a parent, community member, or another adult who assists at a school site or program on a regular or semi-regular basis before, during, or after school hours. Your participation enhances the instructional program which motivates and encourages students. Thank you for your interest in becoming a volunteer with Paramount Unified School District.

Description of Volunteer Tiers

Tier I Volunteers

Definition – Has no contact with student with or without supervision. Examples of tasks are working in the front office/copy volunteers or committee volunteers. Volunteer that works under the direct supervision of District Staff. Typically involves 5 hours or less per week.

Requirements

- Complete Mandated Reporter training
- Register an account with the District Raptor Volunteer Management System
- Read PUSD Volunteer Handbook
- Sign in at the school's front office
- Adhere to all school site safety protocols

Tier II Volunteers

Definition – Has student contact as a volunteer. Are primarily supervised by a teacher or any PUSD staff member but may have brief periods of working alone with students or out of the sightline of District staff. Examples of tasks may be as a coach, tutor, or other unsupervised school settings (i.e., chaperone or overnight school-sponsored trips, driver of students). Typically involves more than 5 hours per week.

Requirements

- Complete Mandated Reporter training
- Submit a tuberculosis risk assessment
- Live Scan Fingerprint Clearance
- Register an account with the District Raptor Volunteer Management System
- Read PUSD Volunteer Handbook
- Sign in at the school's front office
- Adhere to all school site safety protocols

Volunteer Standard of Conduct

By volunteering with PUSD, you have a responsibility to the District and to your fellow volunteers to adhere to certain rules of behavior and conduct. The purpose of these rules is not to restrict your rights, but rather to be certain that the learning environment is not compromised. When a person is aware that they can fully depend upon others to follow the rules of conduct, then our organization is a better place to work for everyone. Volunteers should become familiar with the specific rules at the school site(s) at which they volunteer.

We expect each volunteer to always act in a mature and responsible manner which sets an example to all they help. District standards of conduct and personnel policies include, but are not limited to:

- Observing safety rules at all times and using common sense in operating any equipment.
- Treating fellow volunteers, teachers, students, parents, and administrators with respect and kindness.
- No possession of any type of firearm, weapon, or explosive, on District premises.
- The maintenance of a drug-free workplace. Employees and volunteers are prohibited from being intoxicated or under the influence of controlled substances while volunteering, use, possession, or sale of a controlled substance in any quantity while on District premises (except medications prescribed by a physician which do not impair volunteer performance) will result in immediate dismissal from volunteer service.
- This is a tobacco-free district. Tobacco products, including vaping devices, shall not be used on District premises.
- No soliciting or selling of products, services, etc., on District property without the prior written approval of the Superintendent or designee.
- Refraining from proselytizing in regard to religion or politics on District property.
- Maintaining the confidentiality of all personal and privileged information.
- Abiding by all current CDPH guidelines related to the health and safety of students and staff.

What Volunteers Should Know About Policies & Procedures

PUSD provides equal volunteering opportunities for everyone regardless of the person's actual or perceived race, religious creed, color, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, pregnancy, physical or mental disability, medical condition, genetic information, military and veteran status, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sex, sexual orientation, or their association with a person or group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics that do not prohibit performance of essential job functions. All matters relating to volunteering are based upon the ability to perform the job, as well as dependability and reliability.

Background Check

In accordance with Board Policy 1240 and California Education Code 35021, volunteers that perform volunteer service five hours or less per week will require a Megan's Law clearance check by providing their driver's license to be scanned through our Raptor Visitor Management System. Volunteers that perform volunteer service more than five hours per week, chaperone field trips, transport students, or are not

always supervised by district staff need to receive a Live Scan Fingerprint clearance through the FBI/DOJ prior to volunteering.

Sign In/Out

All volunteers check in each day at the school office. Please return back to the office to check out at the end of your designated volunteer time.

Absence & Punctuality

Volunteers are asked to commit to specific time(s) and day(s), as teachers need to know they can count on you. If you are unable to volunteer on a given day, or if you will arrive late, please contact your school site immediately.

Resignation/Dismissal

If for any reason you decide not to continue volunteering with the District, please inform your school site administrator and those you work with directly. The District reserves the right to discontinue the volunteer relations with any individual at any time.

Tuberculosis Risk Assessment

All Tier II Volunteers will be required to submit a completed tuberculosis risk assessment certificate prior to volunteering.

Safety & Security of Students and Volunteers

Student Discipline

Classroom teachers and school administrators are responsible for student discipline. Rules and procedures related to student discipline have been established by the school and individual classroom teachers. These guidelines are maintained for the safety and welfare of all students. Fairness, consistency, and follow-through are essential to maintaining classroom learning environments. By volunteering with the District, you assume an obligation to maintain this confidentiality. It is essential that you do not share any information about students, even with your own family, friends, or acquaintances. Because of its seriousness, disclosure of confidential information could lead to dismissal.

Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect

Volunteers should report to the school administrator if they have any reason to believe a student has been abused or neglected.

Theft

No item purchased or supplied by the District should ever be removed from school sites without the express authorization of your school site administrator. It is highly recommended that volunteers do not bring excessive amounts of money or valuables on campus. If you carry a purse, ask to place it in a secure location. PUSD is not responsible for personal items lost or stolen.

Parking Lot Caution

Great care must be taken and drivers must watch closely for students and others at all times when driving near schools and/or in school parking lots. You should also check with the school office for information on where you should park.

Other Policies Volunteers Should Know When At PUSD

The success of PUSD's volunteer program depends upon the quality of the relationship between the District volunteers, teachers, students and parents, and the general public. Regardless if you are a volunteer or a paid staff member, you are an ambassador of Paramount Unified School District.

Dress Code

Volunteers are expected to dress in accordance with accepted social and business standards. If you are unsure as to the appropriateness of particular attire, please consult with the school site administrator.

Personal Phone Calls

Cell phones are to be placed on vibrate or silent mode during your volunteer time. Personal phone calls should be made off-campus to avoid disruptions. Volunteers must not photograph or video students unless they have permission from site personnel.

Office Machines

The staff appreciates volunteers helping teachers prepare classroom materials. Volunteers should be trained on the correct usage of all office equipment. It is also very helpful if volunteers are willing to step aside and allow teachers or office staff to interrupt them and use machines during recess or on occasions when staff members need immediate access to machines or equipment at school. District equipment is only to be used for educational/school purposes. They are not for personal use. Parent volunteers may use computers that are in classrooms as directed by the teacher. Volunteer flexibility and cooperation in this area are greatly appreciated. All volunteers shall adhere to the provisions of the federal copyright law and maintain the highest ethical standards in using copyright materials. The District shall provide no legal support to any volunteer who violates copyright laws.

Staff Lounge Guidelines

The staff lounge should not be used as a "workroom". Cutting, pasting, collating, etc., should be done in the classrooms, teacher workrooms, or office workrooms. Teachers should not send volunteers to work in the lounge.

Areas of Caution

Some actions, even without improper motive, are common trouble areas.

- Do not ask a single student to come early to set up for a class or activity.
- Do not give a gift to a student at school.
- Do not invite students for social activities outside of school.

May I hug a student?

Some students, particularly younger children, may express affection toward you. Children should never sit on your lap. Use “high fives” or handshakes. Remember to be aware of cultural perspectives regarding boundaries.

Grievances

A grievance is defined as any event, condition, rule, or practice which the volunteer believes violates their civil rights or treats them unfairly while volunteering (Refer to Board Policy 1312.3, Uniform Complaint Procedures). Volunteers should attempt to resolve a grievance by discussing their concerns with the school administrator.

Siblings

As a general rule, younger siblings should not accompany parent volunteers to school when they are volunteering. Younger siblings can be a distraction to students, staff, and parent volunteers in the classroom. Additionally, younger siblings need to be supervised carefully for their own safety in the school environment. Some of the equipment that is used by volunteers should not be accessible and is not safe for young children (laminating machines, paper cutters, scissors, staplers, copy machines, etc.).

When Working with Students

- Relax and be yourself
- Be friendly toward all students and interested in the students’ activities
- Encourage students to try and do activities to the best of their ability
- Praise individual students for a job well done
- Proceed at the student’s own rate of speed
- Don’t do for a student what they can do for themselves
- Call the students by name at each opportunity
- Be flexible and patient

Questions?

Please contact Human Resources at (562) 602-6006 or hr@paramount.k12.ca.us.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Why do volunteers need to be fingerprinted?

- **A:** To ensure the safety of our students, the District requires any volunteer who may be alone with students to be fingerprinted.

Q: If I have already been fingerprinted elsewhere, do I need to get fingerprinted again?

- **A:** Yes. PUSD requires volunteers to be fingerprinted for our District. Previous employees, teachers who work at other school districts or have been fingerprinted with LACOE still have to get fingerprinted again with us in order to be approved to volunteer. The only volunteers that do not need to get fingerprinted are current employees of the Paramount Unified School District.
 - At this time, we are only requiring fingerprints for volunteers who will be alone with students primarily on overnight trips or field trips where volunteers are alone with students and not within sight of PUSD staff.

Q: How often do I need to be fingerprinted?

- **A :** Volunteers only need to be fingerprinted once for the entire time they volunteer in PUSD.
 - If you are volunteering at multiple school sites, or your child's school of residence changes during the school year, please notify district office personnel by calling (562) 602-6006.
 - A district personnel will notify the corresponding school sites regarding background check results. Please note that a volunteer application will need to be completed for the new school site that your child attends.
 - Individuals who are no longer interested in volunteering, and who would like to be removed from our volunteer list, can contact the Human Resources department to request to have their information removed by calling (562) 602-6006 or email hr@paramount.k12.ca.us.

Q: What types of crimes would prohibit a volunteer from working in schools?

- Felony sexual offenses
- Crimes against minors (misdemeanor or felony)
- Possession, sales, or use of controlled substances
- Illegal possession or use of weapons or dangerous objects
- Assault and battery
- Burglary or robbery

Q: What if the arrest or conviction took place many years ago?

- **A:** The Personnel Services department will schedule a phone conference with the volunteer applicant and make a decision on eligibility of service. This decision would be final and cannot be appealed.

Q: How do I know my personal information will be kept confidential?

- **A:** All Department of Justice (DOJ) reports are destroyed after a determination of eligibility to volunteer is made. The volunteer database is maintained under the same security measures as employee and student information.

Appendix A – BP 1240: Volunteer

The Governing Board recognizes that volunteer assistance in schools can enrich the educational program, increase supervision of students, and contribute to school safety while strengthening the schools' relationships with the community. The Board encourages parents/guardians and other members of the community to share their time, knowledge, and abilities with students.

The Superintendent or designee shall develop and implement a plan for recruiting, screening, and placing volunteers, including strategies for reaching underrepresented groups of parents/guardians and community members. He/she may also recruit community members to serve as mentors to students and/or make appropriate referrals to community organizations.

The Board prohibits harassment of any volunteer on the basis of race, religious creed, color, national origin, ancestry, physical disability, mental disability, medical condition, genetic information, marital status, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, age, sexual orientation, or military and veteran status. (Government Code 12940)

As appropriate, the Superintendent or designee shall provide volunteers with information about school goals, programs, and practices and an orientation or other training related to their specific responsibilities. Employees who supervise volunteers shall ensure that volunteers are assigned meaningful responsibilities that utilize their skills and expertise and maximize their contribution to the educational program.

Volunteer work shall be limited to those projects that do not replace the normal duties of classified staff. The Board nevertheless encourages volunteers to work on short-term projects to the extent that they enhance the classroom or school and comply with employee negotiated agreements.

The Superintendent or designee shall establish procedures for determining whether volunteers possess the qualifications, if any, required by law and administrative regulation for the types of duties they will perform.

Volunteers shall act in accordance with district policies, regulations, and school rules. The Superintendent or designee shall be responsible for investigating and resolving complaints regarding volunteers.

The Board of Education recognizes that volunteers may serve on district-authorized committees. In some cases, the superintendent or designee may authorize these committees to have a board to facilitate the business of the committee. Volunteers serving on a committee in a leadership capacity shall operate in a manner consistent with the California Professional Standards for Educational Leaders.

The Board encourages principals to develop a means for recognizing the contributions of each school's volunteers.

The Superintendent or designee shall periodically report to the Board regarding the district's volunteer assistance program.

Workers' Compensation Insurance

The Board desires to provide a safe environment for volunteers and minimize the district's exposure to liability.

Upon the adoption of a resolution by the Board, volunteers shall be entitled to workers' compensation benefits for any injury sustained while engaged in the performance of service for the district. (Labor Code 3364.5)

Criminal Background Check

Prior to assuming a volunteer position working with students in a district-sponsored student activity program, a volunteer shall obtain fingerprint clearance through the Department of Justice and Federal Bureau of Investigation. Student activity programs include, but are not limited to, scholastic programs, interscholastic programs, and extracurricular activities sponsored by the district or a school booster club, such as cheer team, drill team, dance team, and marching band. (Education Code 49024)

Volunteers serving in a leadership position on a district committee shall be subject to the same requirements.

Appendix B – AR 1240: Volunteer Assistance

Duties of Volunteers

The Superintendent or designee may assign volunteers to:

1. Assist certificated personnel in the performance of their duties, including in the supervision of students and in the performance of instructional tasks which, in the judgment of the certificated personnel to which the volunteer is assigned, may be performed by a person not licensed as a classroom teacher (Education Code 35021, 45343, 45344, 45349)
2. Serve as nonteaching aides under the immediate supervision and direction of certificated personnel to perform noninstructional work which assists certificated personnel in the performance of teaching and administrative responsibilities (Education Code 35021)
3. Supervise students during lunch, breakfast, or other nutritional periods (Education Code 35021, 44814, 44815)
4. Work on short-term facilities projects pursuant to the section below entitled "Volunteer Facilities Projects"
5. Perform other duties in support of district or school operations as approved by the Superintendent or designee

Volunteers shall not be authorized to assign grades to students, and shall not be used to assist certificated staff in performing teaching or administrative responsibilities in place of regularly authorized classified employees who have been laid off. (Education Code 35021, 45344)

Basic Skills Proficiency Requirement

Volunteers who supervise or provide instruction to students pursuant to Education Code 45349 shall submit evidence of basic skills proficiency to the Superintendent or designee. (Education Code 45344.5, 45349)

Volunteer Screening

All volunteers must comply with district and site volunteer and visitation protocols, including signing in and out and wearing an identification badge or sticker. All volunteers must provide a copy of valid identification, including but not limited to a Driver's License, Identification Card, or Passport, and disclose whether they are a registered sex offender and/or to provide the district with sufficient information in order to allow verification of this status on the Department of Justice's Megan's Law web site. (cf. 3515.5 - Sex Offender Notification)

Criminal Background Check

Prior to assuming a volunteer position working with students in a district-sponsored student activity program, a volunteer shall obtain fingerprint clearance through the Department of Justice and Federal Bureau of Investigation. At his/her discretion, the volunteer may choose to meet this requirement by obtaining an Activity Supervisor Clearance Certificate from the Commission on Teacher Credentialing. Student activity programs include, but are not limited to, scholastic programs, interscholastic programs, and extracurricular activities sponsored by the district or a school booster club, such as cheer team, drill team, dance team, and marching band. (Education Code 49024)

The Superintendent or designee shall determine which volunteer positions in the district are subject to the above requirements.

The criminal background check requirement shall not apply to volunteer supervisors for breakfast, lunch, or other nutritional periods or to volunteer nonteaching aides under the immediate supervision and direction of certificated personnel pursuant to Education Code 35021, including parents/guardians volunteering in a classroom or on a field trip or community members providing noninstructional services. (Education Code 49024)

Registered Sex Offenders

No person who is required to register as a sex offender pursuant to Penal Code 290 shall be assigned as a volunteer to assist certificated personnel in the performance of their duties; supervise students during lunch, breakfast, or other nutritional period; or serve as a nonteaching aide to perform noninstructional tasks. In addition, a person who is required to register as a sex offender because of a conviction for a crime where the victim was a minor under age 16 shall not serve as a volunteer in any capacity in which he/she would be working directly and in an unaccompanied setting with minors on more than an incidental and occasional basis or have supervision or disciplinary power over minors. (Education Code 35021, 45349; Penal Code 290.95)

Tuberculosis Assessment/Examination

Upon initial volunteer assignment, a volunteer shall have on file with the school a certificate showing that he/she has submitted a tuberculosis risk assessment and, if tuberculosis risk factors were identified, was examined and found to be free of infectious tuberculosis. (Education Code 49406)

The Superintendent or designee may be exempt from the tuberculosis risk assessment and/or examination those volunteers whose functions do not require frequent or prolonged contact with students. (Education Code 49406)

Volunteer Facilities Projects

All volunteer facilities projects shall have approximate start and completion dates and shall be approved by the principal in advance. Projects also shall be approved in advance by the Superintendent or designee if they involve the following types of work:

1. Alterations, additions, or repairs to buildings and grounds
2. Construction involving wall or roof penetration, drilling, or nailing
3. Structural modifications
4. Electrical, electronic, plumbing, or heating and cooling work
5. Painting
6. Installation of carpet, playground equipment, benches, sprinkler systems, marquees or signs
7. Paving
8. Tree planting, pruning, or removal

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that volunteers possess the appropriate license and/or have sufficient expertise required for the project. He/she shall also ensure that such projects comply with building and safety codes and other applicable laws and collective bargaining agreements. The district shall provide on-site assistance and supervision for such projects as necessary. Projects shall be inspected upon completion to ensure that the work was done satisfactorily.

The Superintendent or designee shall revoke volunteer privileges for any individual that displays disruptive behavior.