

# **EDUCATION VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK**

Guidelines, Resources, &  
Opportunity for Volunteers



**Cedar Rapids  
Community School District**

*Excellence for All*

2016-2017

## **Welcome Education Volunteer!**

We are excited to have you as a volunteer in the Cedar Rapids Community School District. The District's vision is Excellence for All and – as a volunteer – you can help make that possible.

We are extremely appreciative of our community support. During the 2015-2016 school year, approximately 6,968 volunteers donated 137,165 hours of service, a value worth well over \$1 million. In addition, over 100 businesses and organizations developed or continued volunteer partnerships providing valuable educational enhancements. Our education volunteers outnumbered staff by more than 2 to 1.

Volunteers work in every aspect of school operation, from classroom helpers and one-on-one mentors to organizing and manning special events and extracurricular activities. We hope you will find this handbook helpful. It gives an overview of the Volunteer Services Program and provides important guidelines for volunteering. If you have any questions, feel welcome to contact your school's volunteer coordinator or the District Volunteer Services Program at (319) 558-2124.

Thank you for sharing your gift of time, individual talents, and expertise as an education volunteer. With the continued support of our community are able to provide a high quality education where every student can reach his or her highest potential.

Best Regards,

Marcia Hughes  
Community Relations Supervisor  
Cedar Rapids Community School District

# Cedar Rapids Community School District Volunteer Services Program

## **OVERVIEW**

### **Who is an education volunteer?**

An education volunteer helps to expand and enrich the students' learning experiences by working under the direction of teachers and school staff. Education volunteers include parents, retirees, students, and others who assist the teacher or other members of the school staff.

An education volunteer:

- Will provide a service to the school
- Will not be compensated monetarily by the school district
- Will provide volunteer service for more than one day at any one site (except for field trip / enrichment trip / activity chaperones)
- May have access to students while performing the service

**Qualifications:** You should have a genuine interest in students, a professional commitment to your volunteer activity, regular attendance, a cooperative attitude, flexibility, and a willingness to attend training as needed.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Responsibilities of the District Volunteer Services Program (Community Relations Office)**

- Develop and disseminate District-level volunteer materials

- Provide centralized support to the decentralized programming at each school
- Represent the District program to the community.
- Work with school-based volunteer coordinators to develop and maintain the school programs.
- Coordinate and host District-level recognition events.

### **At the School**

Each school's volunteer program is individualized to meet the needs of the students and teachers at the school. In cooperation with the principals, the school's Volunteer Coordinator(s) directs their volunteer program. The school Volunteer Coordinator:

- Surveys needs of teachers.
- Recruits and registers volunteers
- Provides and collects the required volunteer disclosure cards to/from all volunteers
- Arranges orientation and training as necessary
- Places volunteers by matching their skills/interests to job assignments.
- Serves as a resource for volunteers.
- Maintains volunteer program data for the school and submits to the District according to established schedule.
- Coordinates school recognition of volunteers.

### **Volunteers in Schools: Benefits for Everyone**

#### **The volunteer gains:**

- Personal satisfaction from helping students learn.
- Opportunities to learn new skills, polish old ones.
- Knowledge and understanding of the Cedar Rapids Community School District.
- Work experience that may lead to a future career.

#### **The student gains:**

- Additional individual attention.
- An accepting atmosphere for reinforced learning.

- Support toward success, thus building better self-esteem.
- A warm and caring adult who is a friend and role model.

### **The school and District gains:**

- Positive interaction with the community.
- Improved student achievement and behavior.
- Additional services without extra costs.
- Increased community understanding and support.

## **GETTING STARTED**

If you are not yet a volunteer in the Cedar Rapids Community School District, contact the school you are interested in volunteering with or the Volunteer Services Program (Community Relations Office) and they will direct you to a school. You will be asked to complete the Education Volunteer Application and Volunteer Disclosure Card to complete the process. After you have been cleared to volunteer, the school volunteer coordinator will provide an orientation on school policies and volunteer procedures. A meeting may be scheduled between you and the individual you will be assisting.

### **School Procedures**

Every school has specific information for the volunteer to be aware of. Volunteers need to know fire and tornado drill procedures, restroom locations, parking information, absence procedures, the location of the volunteer sign-in book and name tags, the opening and closing times of the school, the location for coats, and general regulations in the school.

### **Volunteer Application**

All adult and retiree volunteer applicants, including field trip chaperones must complete the Education Volunteer Application/Interest form (at either the school or District level), and the Volunteer Disclosure Card PRIOR to

volunteering or chaperoning. A volunteer must complete a Volunteer Disclosure Card at each school where he/she wants to volunteer.

### **Volunteer Disclosure Card - Policy 1002**

The Cedar Rapids Community School Board of Directors recognizes the need to maintain a District Volunteer Services Program to support classroom instruction and co-curricular activities. The Board encourages ongoing and active volunteer involvement by individuals and groups within the schools, as well as at the central administration office and in supervised off-site activities before, during, and after school hours. The District shall make every reasonable effort to provide a safe learning environment for students working with volunteers.

Use of the volunteer services in each school is encouraged as a means of involving the community in the instructional program. The Building Volunteer Coordinator will assist in the recruitment and training of persons willing to contribute their time to work in the schools. Activities of volunteers may include general assistance in the schools and classrooms, special help in the reinforcement of skills, and involvement with enrichment activities that align with curriculum.

### **Volunteer Disclosure Statement – Procedure 1002a**

It is the policy of the Cedar Rapids Community School District Board of Directors to make every reasonable effort to provide a safe learning environment for students working with volunteers. Therefore, the District requires the following information:

- Have you ever been convicted of a felony? \_\_\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO
- Have you ever been convicted, or had an administrative finding, of violating any law involving child abuse, sexual abuse, physical abuse, sexual harassment or exploitation, or any other crime? \_\_\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO
- Do you currently have charges pending relating to any of the above? \_\_\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO

A “YES” answer requires a background check and an interview with a District administrator.

As a volunteer for the Cedar Rapids Community School District, I understand that it is my responsibility to treat information about students, staff, and other situations of a professional nature as confidential.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## **Health Information**

Please do not come to school if you are ill. This includes a cold, sore throat, or cough. You may think you are leaving the school shorthanded, and you may want to volunteer even though you are not well, but doing so is not good for you, the students, or the teacher/staff. Please call the school and leave a message for the teacher or staff member you are volunteering with when you have an unforeseen absence.

## **Attendance**

Punctuality and reliability are expected since students are counting on you. Please inform teachers/staff in advance of planned absences and call the school for unforeseen absences. Students will be disappointed you cannot come, but will be reassured that you cared enough to call.

## **Confidentiality**

Volunteers must maintain strict confidentiality concerning information they learn about students or teachers/staff. Keep information about students between yourself and the teacher. A misplaced comment can be devastating to a student, the family, and the volunteer program. If you have questions or concerns, talk with the teacher, guidance counselor, or school administrator.

## **Sign In/Out and Wear a Nametag**

When volunteering always: 1. Report to the school office to check in as a visitor; 2. Sign in at the designated volunteer area; 3. Wear a school-provided volunteer ID badge; 4. Record your volunteer hours at the designated volunteer area.

These requirements are necessary because:

- Student and staff safety and security are our highest priority.
- Volunteers are covered by the District's Commercial General liability insurance while performing assigned volunteer duties (Procedure 1002.3a).
- All hours you provide as a service to the school, including work done at home for the school, should be

recorded. These include not only hours in the classroom but hours provided to the school's PTA/PTO, school committees, and curriculum-related activities and organizations.

- Verified volunteer service can be used as work experience for future employment.
- Individual volunteers will be recognized for their dedication and service to our schools. The record of volunteer attendance is one basis for these recognitions.
- Volunteer data is a key component of many grant/funding proposals that help to support the school district programming.

### **Orientation**

Many schools hold orientations early in the school year for new and returning volunteers. Volunteer opportunities will be reviewed and school policies and procedures explained. If you are unable to attend, contact your school volunteer coordinator to arrange an alternate opportunity.

### **Training**

On-the-job training is provided by the school or District as appropriate.

## **MAKING THE RIGHT MATCH**

From preparing materials for a classroom project to mentoring a student one-on-one, there is a volunteer job to suit every person's background and interest. Following is an overview of possible volunteer opportunities; not all are available at every school in the District. Schools reserve the right to recruit volunteers only for job positions in need at their school. To help with the placement process please consider the following:

- Would you like to work directly with students?
- Would you like to be a mentor or classroom assistant or an office worker?



- Do you have special talents and/or skills that would benefit music, art, drama, physical education, or another curriculum-based program?
- Would you prefer elementary, middle, or high school?
- How much time can you commit to volunteering?
- What days or hours do you prefer?
- Can you make a weekly commitment or are you only available occasionally?
- What experience do you have that would prepare you for your volunteer job?
- What is your motivation for volunteering?

## **Volunteer Opportunity Descriptions**

### **Classroom Volunteer**

- Reads to students or listens to them read.
- Uses teacher-provided resources and materials to support students.
- Assists younger students with learning the alphabet, colors, numbers, and in identifying letters, shapes, rhyming words, etc.
- Supervises learning centers, games, and other areas where an extra pair of hands is helpful.
- Assists student with special projects.
- Assists students in academic work without evaluating.
- Chaperones on field/enrichment trips.
- Prepares hands-on learning materials.

### **Clerical Volunteer**

- Assists the support staff in the operation of our schools.

### **Field Trip/Enrichment Trip Volunteer**

- Assists teachers during field trips.
- Takes responsibility of a group of students assigned by the teacher.
- Follows specific chaperone guidelines as provided by the school.

### **Fine Arts Volunteer**

- Works with small groups on special projects.
- Helps teacher with preparations and clean-up.
- Assists in designing and building stage sets for school performances.
- Creates and/or makes costumes
- Accompanies choral groups as a pianist.
- Works with small groups on special projects.
- Files and organizes music and uniforms.
- Travels with students to performances.

### **Guidance Volunteer**

- Works with small groups on special projects.
- Mentors students.
- Might become a career or special topic classroom presenter.

### **Campus Volunteer**

- Assists with campus beautification and/or the school garden.

### **Computer Volunteer**

- Helps students use the Internet
- Performs research on the Internet for teachers.

### **Library/Media Center Volunteer**

- Responds to teachers' and students' requests for support.
- Helps at the circulation desk; shelves books/materials.
- Assists with book fairs.

### **Math Volunteer**

- Helps students enhance their critical thinking skills using problems.

### **Mentor Volunteer**

- Works with small groups to reinforce basic skills.
- Works at any grade level and in any subject area.

- Offers remedial help or reinforcement activities.
- Works with an at-risk student needing extra support.
- Serves as a role model, helping the student understand how education will help him or her reach personal goals.
- Encourages school attendance; discourages tardiness.
- May provide additional challenges to gifted students.

### **Physical Education Volunteer**

- Helps the PE teacher with special programs (roller skating, fitness, etc.)
- Helps with field day events.

### **Project-Based Learning Volunteer**

- Engage with students in authentic community projects, problems, and opportunities.

### **School Committee Volunteer**

- Serves on a school committee to address a specific need.



## Opportunities Based on Availability

Even if you are not sure what you might like to do as an education volunteer, you probably know when you are and are not available. Your availability is an important consideration. Also, whether you can commit to a weekly schedule or only sporadically will impact the volunteer opportunities available to you. The table below might provide some ideas when considering your availability.

MATCHING AVAILABILITY TO OPPORTUNITIES		
Time Available to Volunteer	Opportunities at the Elementary Schools	Opportunities at Secondary Schools
School Days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classroom Assistant</li> <li>• One-on-one mentor</li> <li>• At-home assistance</li> <li>• Cafeteria helper (kindergarten)</li> <li>• SPEAK UP (8-week public speaking)</li> <li>• Rockin' Reader (reading mentor)</li> <li>• Help in library/media center</li> <li>• Weekend take-home backpack preparations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One-to-one mentoring</li> <li>• Help with clubs, sports, and curriculum-related school activities</li> <li>• Building-specific classroom support</li> <li>• PTA/parent organization</li> </ul>
Occasional/Special Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AMERICA READS Day</li> <li>• PTA/PTO involvement</li> <li>• Help with parent nights</li> <li>• Help with book fairs</li> <li>• Help with carnivals</li> <li>• Help with PE programs</li> <li>• At-home assistance</li> <li>• Boxtops/receipts</li> <li>• Field Day</li> <li>• Fifth grade end-of-year recognition</li> <li>• Fine arts program volunteer</li> <li>• SPEAK UP (8-week public speaking)</li> <li>• Health screenings</li> <li>• Landscape/campus beautification</li> <li>• School advisory committees</li> <li>• Social/hospitality volunteer</li> <li>• 'Specials' volunteer</li> <li>• Field trip chaperone</li> <li>• Campus beautification</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PTA/parent organization involvement</li> <li>• School advisory committees</li> <li>• Help with clubs, sports, and curriculum-related school activities</li> <li>• Chaperone band, show choir, other program activities</li> <li>• Social events</li> <li>• Assessment assistants</li> </ul>

<b>Weekly Commitment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Take-home folders</li><li>• One-to-one mentoring</li><li>• Rockin' Reader (reading mentor)</li><li>• Big Brothers/Big Sisters Lunch Buddy</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• One-to-one mentoring</li><li>• Help with clubs, sports, and curriculum-related school activities</li><li>• Chaperone band, show choir, other program activities</li></ul>
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# Volunteers!



## Opportunities Based on Skill

It is also important to consider your skills, talents, and interest when volunteering. The table below might help you find the perfect match. Look at the “I AM” and “I LIKE TO” columns to see if you can find an area most like yourself. Then look across the row to the volunteer opportunities at either elementary or secondary levels that match your interests. Be sure to be open-minded to the fact that not all volunteer roles are available at all schools, nor does this table include all the potential volunteer placements. Be sure to share your skills, talents, and interests with the school’s volunteer coordinator.

MATCHING SKILLS TO OPPORTUNITIES			
I AM...	I LIKE TO...	Potential volunteer opportunities at elementary schools for me...	Potential volunteer opportunities at secondary schools for me...
<b>Practical</b> - realistic, straight forward, athletic, a nature lover, mechanically inclined	play a sport, work outdoors, fix things, solve mechanical problems, work on cars, use my hands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help in PE class</li> <li>• Help with field days</li> <li>• Help set-up carnivals</li> <li>• Help build sets for plays</li> <li>• Campus beautification</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help in PE class</li> <li>• Campus beautification</li> <li>• Project-based learning support</li> <li>• Campus beautification</li> </ul>
<b>Inquisitive</b> – investigative, analytical, scientific, observant, precise	think abstractly, solve math problems, understand physical theories, use a microscope, work on cars	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help with science lab, science nights</li> <li>• Work with students on math skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help with science lab</li> <li>• Math or science mentor</li> <li>• Project Lead the Way volunteer</li> <li>• Project-based learning support</li> <li>• Computer skills assistant</li> </ul>
<b>Artistic/Musical</b> – creative, intuitive, imaginative, innovative, an individualist	sketch/draw/paint/sculpt, play an instrument, write stories/poetry/music, sing/act/dance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help in music, band, art</li> <li>• Chaperone fine arts trips</li> <li>• Help set-up exhibits</li> <li>• Prepare bulletin boards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help in visual or performing arts programs</li> <li>• Help with drama productions</li> <li>• Chaperone fine arts trips/events</li> <li>• Help with plays (costumes, stage sets, acting)</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help with yearbook</li> <li>• Project-based learning support</li> <li>• PTA/parent organization</li> </ul>
<p><b>Social –</b> friendly, helpful, idealistic, insightful, outgoing, understanding</p>	<p>teach/train others, express myself clearly, lead a group discussion, mediate disputes, cooperate well with others</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greeter</li> <li>• One-on-one mentor</li> <li>• Rockin' Reader (reading volunteer)</li> <li>• Classroom volunteer</li> <li>• SPEAK UP (8-week public speaking)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greeter</li> <li>• Mentor</li> <li>• Club or activities sponsor/helper</li> <li>• PTA/parent organization</li> <li>• Project-based learning support</li> </ul>
<p><b>Enterprising –</b> Self-confident, sociable, energetic, persuasive/assertive</p>	<p>initiate projects, organize activities convince people, sell things give talks/speeches</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speaker for career day</li> <li>• PTA/PTO leader</li> <li>• School advisory committee member</li> <li>• SPEAK UP (8-week public speaking)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PTA/parent organization</li> <li>• School advisory committee membership</li> </ul>
<p><b>Behind-the-scenes –</b> detail-oriented, numerically inclined, methodical, conscientious, efficient</p>	<p>follow clearly-defined procedures, keep accurate records, use a computer, work with numbers, take care of details</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clerical support</li> <li>• Media Center/Library helper</li> <li>• Book fair help</li> <li>• Hospitality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clerical support</li> <li>• Media center/library helper</li> <li>• Main office help</li> <li>• Internet researcher</li> <li>• Help in business or technology classes</li> <li>• Project-based learning support</li> </ul>

# **IMPORTANT VOLUNTEER GUIDELINES**

## **When Working with Students**

- Volunteers must maintain strict confidentiality concerning information they see and hear about students and staff, including students' grades, records, and abilities.
- Volunteers must complete and submit the Volunteer Disclosure Card (one for each school) prior to volunteering.
- Volunteers must complete and submit the Driver Statement Card (annually) prior to transporting students in a vehicle.
- Volunteers DO NOT discipline students. Report discipline issues to the teacher or building administrator.
- Volunteers must always be supervised when working with students. They may not supervise a classroom or give permission or a student to leave a classroom. These are the teachers' responsibilities.
- Volunteers to not diagnose student strengths or weaknesses, prescribe activities for students, or evaluate student progress.
- Volunteers' discussions with teachers should not interrupt class time. Please silence cell phones.
- Volunteers should not bring preschool children into the classroom during instruction time. This presents a liability issue and is disruptive to the classroom.
- Volunteers should set a good example for students by their manner, appearance, and behavior.
- Volunteers may not give any medication to students.
- Volunteers must sign in/out and wear a school-issued volunteer name badge when volunteering.
- Volunteers' comments should not be written on student papers.
- Volunteers should not laugh at or belittle student answers or efforts.
- Volunteers should contact ONLY school staff members with any concerns regarding students.



- Volunteers are assigned only to staff members who request their services.
- Comparing and criticizing teachers and students is not acceptable volunteer behavior.
- Volunteers may not conduct personal business at school
- Volunteers may not take photographs of students, unless permitted by a school administrator for a school project. Never post any student photos or information on social media sites.
- Volunteers should never touch students in any way that is aggressive disciplinary, or sexual in nature.

### **Safety/Security Guidelines**

- Know and follow all of the school's safety and security rules
- If an accident occurs, immediately notify a staff member.
- Never move a child involved in an accident. A member of the school staff will initiate proper procedures.
- If you are hurt or involved in an accident while serving in your volunteer capacity, you should report the incident to the school office and complete an accident report immediately.

### **HELPING STUDENTS LEARN**

- A student's name is very important. Make sure you say and spell it correctly.
- Make sure your student knows and can pronounce your name. You might give the student a card with your name written on it.
- LISTEN! Show that you are interested in each student as a person. Listen carefully to what the student has to say.
- Students make mistakes. Assure them that this is part of learning.
- Build the student's self-confidence. Praise your student honestly and frequently.

- Encourage students to feel, smell, taste, and listen as well as look at objects. Let student discover.
- Ask questions that may lead students to the answer instead of telling them the answer.
- Let students try new methods, even if you know an easier way.
- Give the students as much time as they need to understand new ideas. Be patient!
- Be reliable. Students will be disappointed when you are absent. Show you care by calling when you can't go to school when expected.
- Allow your own child room to grow. Volunteer in a location other than your child's classroom.

### **Students Learn By**

- Doing – not by passive observing.
- Asking questions and searching for answers to their questions.
- Discovering – using all their senses, whenever possible.
- Experimenting – sorting and combining objects.
- Repeating experiences.
- Building confidence in themselves.

### **Communicating with Students**

The following suggestions are provided to help volunteers communicate with students to get positive results.

- Be sure the students understand what you're saying. We sometimes use words they do not comprehend.
- Keep your voice as low as possible. The students will often get louder as your voice increases in volume.
- Instruct students as though you expect them to comply. Give sufficient warnings and time. Example: "Jason, in five minutes you'll need to stop painting and put your apron away."
- Positive statements greatly influence student's attitudes about themselves and contribute to their success-building experiences.

## **Some expressions to boost a student's self-image**

- *I like the way you're working.*
- *That's right! Good for you.*
- *That's quite an improvement.*
- *Good thinking.*
- *I'm very proud of the way you worked today.*
- *It looks like you put a lot of thinking into this.*
- *That's respectful behavior. Thank you.*

## **PRIDE – GOALS FOR AN EDUCATION VOLUNTEER**

**Provide** individual educational assistance to students.

**Relieve** the teacher of some non-instructional tasks and duties.

**Improve** students' self-worth by increasing the opportunity for educational achievement.

**Demonstrate** community interest, concern, and support for the educational system.

**Enhance** all aspects of the educational process and enrich the curriculum.

## **VOLUNTEER CHECKLIST**

### **I have:**

- ✓ completed and submitted the Volunteer Application/Interest form (at either the school or District level), and Disclosure Card
- ✓ waited for my application to be processed before volunteering
- ✓ participated in an orientation/training session as appropriate
- ✓ been assigned to a teacher or staff supervisor of a project/activity
- ✓ a specific place and time to work

## I know:

- ✓ the school layout, parking, and facilities available.
- ✓ classroom policies, procedures, and rules.
- ✓ safety and security procedures and rules.
- ✓ where and when to report to work.
- ✓ where to sign in and record my hours.
- ✓ where the volunteer name badges are located.
- ✓ what to do if I must be absent.
- ✓ what to do if I am working with a substitute teacher.
- ✓ where instruction materials are kept.
- ✓ what is expected of me.
- ✓ how to contact the school's volunteer coordinator.









### ***Non-Discrimination Policy***

It is the policy of the Cedar Rapids Community School District not to illegally discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, creed, age (employment only), marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, and socioeconomic status (students/program only) in its educational programs and its employment practices. There is a grievance procedure for processing complaints of discrimination. District employees with questions or a grievance related to this policy should contact the Executive Director of Human Resources, 319-558-2000. Students and others should contact the Manager of Student Equity, 319-558-2000. The District mailing address is 2500 Edgewood Rd NW, Cedar Rapids, IA 52405-1015.