



Volunteer Handbook

Table of Contents

Superintendents Welcome	3
Expectations and Guidelines for Volunteering	5
Volunteering is a Privilege	5
District Policies and Regulation	5
You Are Part of an Education Team	6
Volunteer Expectations	7
Important Guidelines- Safety and Liability	8
Confidentiality.....	8
Safe Interaction with Students.....	8
Communication	8
Working Alone with Students	9
Gifts.....	9
Physical Contact with Students	9
Suspected Abuse or Neglect.....	10
Suicide.....	10
Field Trips/Off Campus Activities	10
Extracurricular/Enrichment Activities	11
Volunteer Coaches	11
Community Service Hours	11
In Case of Emergency	12
Bleeding and Body Fluids	12
Fractures and Pain	12
Back and Neck Injury.....	12
Drills (Fire, Bomb Threat, Earthquake, Lockdown)	12
Helpful Information	14
Student Learning Styles	14
Tips for Understanding Elementary-Age Students	14
Tips for Understanding Secondary Students.....	16
Culturally Diverse Students	17
Frequently Asked Questions	18

Welcome to North Thurston Public Schools!



"All Students Empowered and Future-Ready" is our vision for North Thurston Public Schools, informing our decisions and day-to-day actions from early learning to 12th grade. Located one hour south of Seattle, NTPS has a proud tradition of excellence in education and community support. With 2,000 high quality dedicated staff and teachers, we strive to provide our 14,550 students the academic and life skills necessary to succeed in a diverse world. Together with our community, we

support our students' physical, social, emotional and academic needs to help them become college and career ready upon graduation.

As you visit our website you will learn that we have a lot to offer in terms of a quality education. Our 13 elementary schools, 5 middle schools (including a performing arts magnet school), 3 comprehensive high schools and one high school of choice work hard to hold both compassion and high expectations for their students. NTPS is the largest and most diverse District in Thurston County, serving African American, Pacific Islander, Asian, Native American, Hispanic and other populations. We celebrate this diversity, along with our military families who make up 19% of our student population.

We hold a deeply-rooted belief that all students can learn and grow; therefore, we embrace the responsibility to ensure the success of each and every student. Our youngest learners begin with us in an integrated preschool program (Meadows, Mountain View and Seven Oaks) and continue on to our full day kindergarten program, now available in all of our elementary schools. We also have a Family Partnership Center which provides services to families with children birth to 3 who qualify. Our strong partnership with families begins at an early age.

We are proud of our students' success. Our recent State assessment results show that in virtually all grade levels (Gr 3-11) and subject areas (Math, English Language Arts, and Science), our students meet or exceed state averages. Thanks to community support we are able to offer a wide range of academic, enrichment, intervention, and support programs for all our students. We recently implemented highly-capable programming in each of our middle schools in sixth grade, and expanded our Advanced Placement program to more than 31 courses at the high schools. We also partner with South Sound Community College and the New Market Vocational Skills Center



for our junior and senior students.

Of course, we could not do all we do for kids without the support of our community. In 2014, voters overwhelmingly approved a historical \$175 million bond, providing for the renovation of existing facilities, safety and technology upgrades and the addition of a new middle school to accommodate our growing student population! Our levy dollars make up about 20 percent of our operating budget, providing for smaller class sizes, teachers in the areas of Art, Music and P.E., and professional development for our staff. We also enjoy strong relationships with more than 40 local businesses through our Partners in Education (P.I.E.) program. Further, our students benefit from local youth services ranging from the Boys & Girls Club of Lacey to YMCA for before and after school care.

Thanks for your interest in North Thurston Public Schools. Enjoy visiting our website and give us a call if you'd like to schedule a visit to our District or order a welcome packet.

Deb

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North Thurston Public Schools

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Expectations and Guidelines for Volunteering

Thank you for your interest in volunteering in North Thurston Public Schools. District schools depend on volunteers and value their contributions. Your willingness to serve the students and staff of the district is greatly appreciated. This handbook outlines the guidelines and expectations that volunteers must follow to create safe and successful experiences for students, staff and volunteers. All volunteering relationships established through North Thurston Public School must take place with students on the school campus during school hours or at other authorized school activities only.

Volunteering is a Privilege

Volunteering is a privilege, not a right. All volunteers serve at the sole discretion of the building principal, volunteer coordinator or teacher. If at any time you do not adhere to our policies, procedures and/or expectations outlined in this handbook, you may be dismissed or reassigned by the building principal or the district Volunteer Specialist.

North Thurston Public School District Policies and Regulations

As a NTPS volunteer, you are expected to adhere to all District policies, particularly those listed below, which are located on our district website at www.nthurston.k12.wa.us. Please read this handbook before your first volunteer experience. Volunteers may be removed from service at any time at an administrator's discretion.

- • Volunteers (Policies 5430, 5430P)
- • Prohibition of Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (Policies 3207, 3207P)
- • Harassment (Policies 3208, 3208P)
- • Nondiscrimination (Policy 3210, 3210P)
- • Transgender Students (Policies 3211, 3211P)
- • Sexual Harassment (Policies 3205, 5011, 5011P)
- • Use of Restraint or Isolation (Policy 3247, 3247P)
- • Possession of Weapons (Policy 4210)
- • Use of Tobacco Nicotine Products and Delivery Devices (Policy 4215)
- • Maintaining Professional Boundaries (Policies 5215, 5215P)
- • Child Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation Prevention (Policies 3421, 3421P)
- • Drug-Free Schools, Community and Workplace (Policy 5201)
- • Students With Diabetes (Policies 3418, 3418P)

Policies are posted on the NTPS website: <https://www.nthurston.k12.wa.us/policy>

You Are Part of an Education Team

Volunteers who are committed to helping students be successful are important members of the school team. These individuals are essential to bringing the outside world to the school. Students need contact with individuals who can share experiences and bring other perspectives into the classroom. They need adults who can guide them through the learning process.

Goals:

- Enrich the curriculum
- Enrich student's learning opportunities
- Provide help for individual students
- Provide opportunities for meaningful service
- Relieve teachers of some non-instructional tasks
- Establish a school and community partnership for quality education
- Enhance all aspects of the educational process

Working closely with the classroom teacher and school staff includes:

- Following the direction of a school staff member
- Accepting direction and suggestions from teachers and school staff
- Respecting the privacy of teachers and students by not discussing school matters away from the classroom
- Understanding that evaluation of a student's learning can only be done by the teacher
- Committing to working in a classroom to support and improve education for all students
- Seeking help from the teacher when you need additional information or instruction
- Sharing ideas and constructive comments with the teacher
- Acknowledging that teachers are responsible for discipline in the classroom
- Referring to the classroom teacher or regular school staff member for final solution of any student problem which arises, whether of an instructional, medical or operational nature
- Contacting your school volunteer coordinator for volunteer opportunities, hours, and any other issues pertaining to volunteering

Enjoy working with students by:

- Finding ways to establish a good rapport with students
- Providing help and assistance without doing the work for students
- Showing a genuine interest in each student
- Accepting each student and encouraging the best from him or her
- Using patience and kindness

Sometimes a volunteer placement may not be a fit for the volunteer, the teacher or the school. If your volunteer placement does not work for you, the teacher or the school for whatever reason, your volunteer assignment may be ended, modified or changed to a new assignment.

You may request a different placement if you wish to continue volunteering. Please contact your school Volunteer Coordinator if you have any issues.

Volunteer Expectations

Volunteers are expected to:

- Be an approved volunteer.
- Sign in and out at the office and always wear an ID badge while on school grounds.
- Wear professional attire.
- Show respect for all staff and students.
- Share concerns regarding students with the school staff only.
- If you cannot make your scheduled volunteer time, please call the school so the teacher and students will know you will not be there.
- Please do not bring younger children to the school during your volunteer hours.
- Please turn off your cell phone while you are volunteering in the classroom and refrain from making personal calls or texting while on the school campus.

Ground Rules for School District Facilities

- No smoking or tobacco allowed, including on athletic fields and in district vehicles.
- No weapons allowed.
- No drugs or alcohol allowed.
- Do not use school equipment for personal purposes.

Harassment at School/Human Dignity

The North Thurston Public Schools Harassment Policy calls for a commitment to an educational environment that is free from all types of discrimination and harassment, including sexual harassment, bullying and intimidation. Volunteers are expected and required to respect and uphold both the North Thurston Public School District Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying Policy and the North Thurston Public School District Harassment Policy. The district asks you to review each of these policies in detail prior to volunteering. These policies can be located under “Important School District Policies” at the end of this handbook.

Volunteers and parents who engage in harassment, intimidation or bullying on school property or at school activities will be restricted from school property and activities, as appropriate.

Important Guidelines- Safety and Liability

Maintain Student Confidentiality

Volunteers are expected and required to keep all ‘student information’ that they obtain while working as a volunteer for the district confidential. In fact, federal law strictly prohibits school districts and district volunteers from releasing any student information without parent/guardian permission. Student information includes all academic, medical and personal information. Volunteers cannot take photos of students during their volunteer activities and post them publicly without authorization from the school. Student work, like artwork or papers, is also protected by law and cannot be shared publicly without written permission.

Disclosure of student information by a volunteer is a violation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) and may subject the volunteer and the district to civil liability. It is very important that you keep information about students confidential. It is important that you do not discuss students or their progress with others –even their parents. Do not make references to student’s abilities in front of other students. The only person who should be told about a student’s work is their teacher. If parents ask about their student’s progress, suggest in a friendly way that they contact the teacher.

Safe Interaction with Students

The school board expects that all staff and volunteers will strive to set the kind of example for students that will serve them well in their own conduct and behavior and contribute toward a school atmosphere that is friendly but has a degree of formality.

All interactions with students should be professional and focused on teaching and learning. These guidelines protect both the student and the volunteer.

Do NOT:

- Take a student or students on private outings
- Initiate social activities with students
- Have a prolonged verbal exchange with students if you have an impromptu encounter at a public place
- Provide childcare for students
- Ask a student to baby-sit for your family

Communication

Do NOT:

- Engage in Social Networking with students via Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Vine, Twitter or any other social networking website to initiate or maintain relationship(s) with any student that is not consistent with appropriate professional behavior and/or boundaries.
- Provide your personal phone number or email.
- Say or write things to a student that you would be uncomfortable sharing with the

student's parents, district/school administrators or the teacher you are working with.

- Make any comments that are based on gender or could be construed as sexist.
- Make any comments and/or innuendos that are sexual in nature or could be construed as sexual.
- Make jokes that belittle or diminish another person.
- Give students compliments that focus on physical attributes.
- Initiate conversations or correspondence of a private and/or personal nature with students.

Working Alone with Students at School

- Never work in isolation with a student
- Always keep the door open and lights on
- Do not post anything on class windows that would obstruct a clear view into the room

Gifts

In general, giving gifts to students is not encouraged. If gifts are provided they should be:

- Of nominal value
- Identical for all students in the class
- Approved by the teacher or administrator in charge of the program

Physical Contact with Students

It is the District's expectation that all physical contact between volunteers and students must be professional and appropriate. Some students, especially at the elementary level, will naturally become very attached and affectionate toward you. Many students are craving affection and attention, so it is important that you handle the situation with sensitivity. Unfortunately, **front hugs should be avoided**. Instead, carefully put your arm around a child's shoulder and turn it into a side hug. Use other signs of affection, such as "high fives." In addition, regardless of age, students should never sit on your lap.

Areas that are safest to touch are:

- Shoulders
- Upper Back
- Arms
- Hands

Remember to keep in mind the cultural perspective and personal context of touch from the student's perspective. Cultural influences, beliefs and personal history affect a student's comfort level regarding personal boundaries. Some children are not comfortable with touch and may want more personal space. Respect their wishes. Recognize their signals that they do not want to be touched, such as avoiding you or drawing back or away from you when you touch.

**Special circumstances will arise where touch that exceeds these guidelines will be necessary. Special physical education needs, nursing and coaching may require additional student contact for the health and hygiene needs of the student. Be clear (to yourself and the student) about when, where, why and how you are touching the student.

Report Suspected Abuse or Neglect

As a volunteer, you are in a unique position to observe students. If you suspect that a student may be the victim of abuse or neglect, report it immediately to the principal, school counselor or another school district employee.

Signs of Abuse:

- Shows sudden changes in behavior or school performance.
- Has not received help for physical or medical problems.
- Has learning problems (or difficulty concentrating) that cannot be attributed to specific physical or psychological causes.
- Is always watchful, as though preparing for something bad to happen.
- Lacks adult supervision.
- Is overly compliant, passive, or withdrawn.
- Comes to school or other activities early, stays late, and does not want to go home.
- Signs of injury, such as welts, bruising, cuts, burns, fractures, or swellings.
- A history of repeated, untreated, or unexplained physical injury.
- A contradiction between the story “I fell off my bed” and physical evidence that has included repeated bruising.
- The child appears to be uncomfortable or fearful when talking about the injury.
- Child alludes to or seems preoccupied with sexual matters.

Signs of Neglect:

- Is frequently absent from school.
- Begs or steals food or money.
- Lacks needed medical or dental care, immunizations, or glasses.
- Is consistently dirty and has severe body odor.
- Lacks sufficient clothing for the weather.
- Abuses alcohol or other drugs.
- States that there is no one at home to provide care.

Suicide

Any information that indicates that a student is thinking about or has attempted suicide must be taken seriously. Confidentiality is not applicable when the student threatens himself, herself, or others. If a child shares information with you that may indicate that he or she may be thinking of attempting suicide, the information must be reported immediately to the building principal. If the information the child shares with you, or any visual evidence indicates that a suicide has been attempted, stay with the child. Such a child should never, in any circumstance, be left alone.

Field Trips and Off-Campus Activities

It is the general policy of North Thurston Public Schools that all off-campus field trip and activity chaperones must be at least 21 years of age. Volunteers who wish to drive students should be at least 25 years of age and must have a valid Washington State driver’s license.

Volunteer drivers must also complete the required driving forms and file them with the school office before every field trip/off campus activity.

What is the difference between a chaperone and a volunteer?

For the purpose of volunteering in NTPS, a chaperone is a volunteer who is over the age of 21 who has 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. (The exact ratio varies based upon age of students and type of activity).

Extracurricular and Enrichment Activities

All extracurricular and enrichment activities must be organized under the authority of North Thurston Public School or its partners and comply with all applicable rules and regulations.

Volunteer Coaches

Individuals who wish to become volunteer coaches for any school in North Thurston Public School must complete the North Thurston Public School Volunteer Application and be approved as a volunteer. (This process can take up to two weeks to complete, so volunteers are recommended to begin this process early).

Please note: [WIAA](#) (Washington Interscholastic Activities Association) requires volunteer coaches must be 19 years of age with the exception that High school students may serve as middle level volunteer assistant coaches during the designated middle school season when under the direct supervision of the middle level coach. These high school students must meet WIAA coaches standards minimum requirements to hold a valid First Aid Certification and a valid CPR card. Volunteer Coaches must be at least 21 years of age to chaperone off-campus activities.

Community Service Hours

NTPS strives to find volunteer opportunities that are mutually beneficial to both the volunteer and the students in our schools. We understand that people need community service hours for a variety of reasons, and ask that volunteers work with their direct supervisors at the school to arrange for signatures that confirm hours worked. However, North Thurston Public School cannot allow volunteers to complete court-ordered community service hours through our schools.

In Case of Emergency

Volunteers are not expected to perform any type of first aid, but occasionally, situations or unexpected medical emergencies happen while you are working with students. Below are a few universal precautions for dealing with illness and injuries at school.

Bleeding and body fluids

Whenever possible, avoid contact with body fluids. For example, have the student hold a cloth and apply pressure to his or her bloody nose or minor cut. In case of a serious injury, if a student cannot care for himself or herself, place a barrier between you and the body fluids. Use disposable gloves any time your hands could come in direct contact with blood, body fluids or body wastes. Call the school nurse or school secretary.

Always wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water immediately after helping an injured student.

Fractures and sprains

Keep the student warm and as comfortable as possible. Do not move him or her unless absolutely necessary. If it is necessary to move the student, give firm and gentle splinting support to the injured area. Call the school nurse or school secretary.

Back and neck injuries

Keep the student lying straight with head in line. Keep the student warm and quiet. **DO NOT MOVE THE STUDENT.** Call the school nurse or school secretary.

Drills

All schools are required to conduct drills for emergency preparedness.

Fire / Bomb Threat

1. A fire alarm will sound.
2. All students, employees and volunteers will follow the emergency evacuation plan, walking students out of the classroom to the emergency exit.
3. Everyone is to remain outside until notified to return to the building.

Intruder Alert / Lockdown

1. An announcement over the PA system will indicate an intruder alert or lock down. (Note: Lockdowns can last an indeterminate amount of time. Once the doors are locked no persons are allowed to enter or leave until the end of the lockdown.) Please note, there are different levels of lockdowns.
 2. All students, employees, volunteers will follow the lockdown plan, usher students into classrooms and lock all doors and windows, pull curtains, close blinds and turn off lights.
 3. No one, including volunteers, is to leave or enter the building until an “all clear” announcement is given.
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Earthquake

1. If an actual earthquake occurs, no announcement will be made.
2. When you feel the earth shaking, everyone is to “drop, cover and hold.”
3. When the shaking has subsided, wait for emergency instructions to leave the building in the regular evacuation route.

Helpful Information

Students' Learning Styles

Every person has a tendency to acquire skills or learn in a certain way. Even within a family, one child might learn best by doing while another learns best by hearing. Tutors can be more effective if they are aware of a child's individual learning style. When a student does not understand a concept through one learning style, another can be used.

For example, if a student struggles to understand material written on the board or in a book, then oral presentation may be more effective. Development of many learning styles gives students a better chance to learn.

Research shows that approximately 30% of elementary school-age children learn best through seeing, 25% learn best by hearing, and 15% learn best by touching and doing. The remaining 30% learn equally well by each method. It is estimated that 80% of material presented to school-age children is visual.

Visual Learners

Visual learners learn best by seeing information. Directions and assignments should be written. Presenting material through graphs, charts, outlines, and notes is most effective for these students. Any oral instructions should be presented in short, clear sentences. Recall, for these students, is strengthened through the practice of writing and outlining the subject material.

Auditory learners

Auditory learners learn best by hearing the information. Questions and directions should be given orally. Discussing material works best with these students. The more they hear the material, the more recall is possible. Tapes, CDs and lectures greatly benefit auditory learners.

Tactile learners

Tactile learners learn best through hands-on-activities. Task cards, computers, and math manipulatives provide effective methods.

Kinesthetic learners

Kinesthetic learners learn best by experiencing information. Methods of presentation include acting, building, interviewing, role-playing, and observing.

Tips for Understanding Elementary-Age Students

Children entering elementary school have different levels of social and intellectual development. Students at the elementary level need adult approval and encouragement in all of their efforts. Because some students have had fewer opportunities to develop language skills and relationships with adults, their needs for conversation and interaction are significant. Social skills are still developing and guidelines for appropriate behaviors are important skills they need to practice.

Adults working with children can be an important part of their learning simply by modeling

appropriate behavior. Patience and reassurance are important qualities to display for our youngest learners.

Five-year-olds:

- Show increased willingness to cooperate and prefer cooperative play
- Are increasingly social and talkative
- Are developing a sense of fairness
- Are learning to respect the property of friends
- Usually have a strong desire to please parents and other adults
- Are eager to make friends and may pick a “best” friend

Six-year-olds:

- Are becoming more socially independent and choose their own friends
- Are egocentric but becoming interested in group activities
- May still have a hard time waiting and taking turns
- Tattle often to check sense of right and wrong
- Are full of energy and ready for new challenges
- Want all of everything, so making choices may be difficult

Seven-year-olds:

- Want and need approval of adults and peers
- Can be very conscientious and strive to please adults
- Can be sensitive and get feelings hurt by criticism
- Like to spend time alone or watching in the background
- May sometimes feel that everyone is against them

Eight-year-olds:

- Show spirit; are generally willing to try just about anything
- May turn to tears and self-criticism upon failure but usually recover quickly
- Usually get along well with others
- Choose companions of the same sex and age
- Are very sensitive to what others think
- Want to look like and act like peers
- Choose a “best” friend, but may change friends often
- Enjoy group activities in organizations and in own secret clubs

Nine-year-olds:

- Worry and complain a lot
- Have definite likes and dislikes
- Begin a new drive for independence and resent being “bossed” by parents
- Know right from wrong. They will accept blame when necessary but may offer excuses
- Show increased interest in friends and decreased interest in family
- Are interested in group activities and concerns

Ten-year-olds:

- Generally like people and are liked by others
- Like to accept responsibility and try to do things well
- Like to praise and offer encouragement
- Still have a strong group spirit, but it may start to diminish
- May begin to show more loyalty to a best friend than to a group; this is especially true of girls
- May enjoy being part of a team

“At Risk” students – students needing additional support

Research shows that many students who are going to have problems in school can be identified when they are in second, third, or fourth grade. They are generally behind the other students in math, reading, or science. Many have trouble dealing with interpersonal relationships. Tutors can provide the one-to-one support and caring which is needed to help these students succeed.

Tips for Understanding Secondary Students

Middle school students

Children undergo more rapid and profound personal changes between ages 10 and 15 than any other time in their lives. These developmental processes often pose challenges for the adults responsible for guiding and educating the middle school youngster. However, we must be cautious not to make generalizations about all middle school students. No two develop socially, emotionally, intellectually or physically at the same rate. Physical growth becomes most evident during these years, but development in the other areas is dramatic as well, shifting from concrete thinking to abstract, increased emphasis on personal grooming, strong desire for peer acceptance, and the search for personal identity. The adults in these children’s lives must act as mentors who recognize each stage of development and help them make wise decisions.

11-to-13-year-olds

- Are less self-centered
- May express great enthusiasm
- May show more tact, especially with friends
- Can be patient and friendly with smaller children
- May become moody or may show signs of emotional turmoil if puberty has begun
- Have a strong desire to conform to peers’ ways of dressing and behaving

High school students

The transition to high school can be very difficult for some students. At this stage, the game changes considerably. Grades, credits earned, and test scores all become part of a student’s permanent record. Students begin making decisions regarding careers and post-secondary education. For some, high school can be a very stressful time. High school students find a great deal more independence, but with it come more responsibility for choices and decisions. They still need guidance and mentoring to help them make wise decisions. Adults can still play

significant roles in their development. For some, academic achievement is extremely difficult and requires lots of extended learning opportunities. For others, academic achievement is not nearly as difficult, but they need lots of advice and guidance surrounding peer acceptance, counseling, and post-secondary education plans. It is critical that adults recognize these needs.

14-to 18-year-olds

- Strive to establish a sense of personal identity
- May become preoccupied with self-doubt
- May feel lonely or isolated
- May have dramatic mood swings
- May seek to assert independence and autonomy while fighting feelings of insecurity
- May judge self according to perceived opinions of others
- Seek independence from parents; some conflict may result, but overall relationship with parents is likely to be positive.
- Seek emotional support which may come from parents or peers
- May show tendency to conform to peers in early teen years but later may be able to resist peer pressure
- Learn to interact with an increasing number of people from home, school, and community
- Are capable of forming close relationships with peers of either sex

Working with Culturally Diverse Students

As a volunteer in North Thurston Public Schools, it is important to develop a respect and an appreciation of the diverse cultures and backgrounds of the students. Some strategies for making instruction responsive to the ethnic/cultural backgrounds of students include:

- Use correct pronunciation of students' names. If you are not sure of the pronunciation say "would you pronounce your name for me?" Avoid comments which label the name as "strange" or "funny." Don't shorten a student's name or give him or her a nickname.
- Be aware that you may represent a different culture and authority and that may be threatening to some students. Avoid judgments and let the students know that you value them.
- Be aware and respect that cultural differences may affect student behavior, attendance, health, and acceptance of tutor assistance.
- Respect every student and speak respectfully of all racial, ethnic, cultural, and religious groups.
- Use correct ethnicity or racial identity. If you are not sure, ask "What is your heritage?" Do not guess or assume. We want to develop each student's pride in his or her racial or ethnic heritage and promote acceptance and understanding of all.