

Trinity Lutheran School
Volunteer Handbook &
Code of Conduct



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Welcome!

Dear Friends,

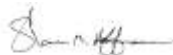
Thank you so much for your support of the ministry and mission of Trinity Lutheran School. The staff, students, and administration say “Thank You” for all you have already given in the past. Likewise we are excited about all the opportunities that this new school year will bring.

Volunteers have long helped Trinity in the mission to develop well-rounded, lifetime Christian disciples. That tradition of great volunteer assistance continues today. In an effort to help our volunteers have a continued great experience as well as support our students in learning; we have developed a written set of guidelines. These guidelines are meant to support and protect our volunteers as well as support and protect our students.

Jesus said, “Let the children come to me.” He taught that children were to be included and provided for within the community of faith. As Christians, we must take our responsibilities to our children very seriously. We fail in our responsibilities if we neglect to take adequate precautions in protecting God’s children and His people. This handbook helps us reduce the risk to God’s children through a practical policy of prevention. Likewise it will help protect our volunteers from potential false allegations.

We humbly ask that any person wishing to volunteer at Trinity would read this handbook and the Code of Conduct. We would then ask for our volunteers to certify to the statements on the registration/ acknowledgement page and return that page to the school office. Once completed, a person would then be allowed to volunteer at Trinity under the supervision of a staff member. We pray blessings in your service to God’s children!

Peace in Christ,



Shawn M. Hoffmann

Purpose: The mission of Trinity Lutheran School (TLS) is to help develop well-rounded lifetime Christian disciples. Volunteers play a very important role in this mission. We welcome and encourage anyone who cares about children and education to consider volunteering time and talents to the students of TLS. Specifically, volunteers help to...

- Support academic achievement and school goals, to assist teachers in providing basic skills instruction, to enrich quality of instruction, to enhance interpersonal experiences for students and to assist school staff with support services
- Increase children's motivation for learning
- Strengthen school/parent/community relations through positive participation
- Enhance the overall education program of TLS
- Provide positive Christian role modeling for TLS students

At TLS we take our responsibility to educate and care for children very seriously. The following guidelines are intended to facilitate a safe and nurturing environment in which children can learn and grow in a strong educational and spiritual environment.

By volunteering with Trinity Lutheran School, you have a responsibility to the school 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 the learning environment is not compromised. When a person is aware he or she can fully depend upon others to follow the rules of conduct, then our school is a better place to work for everyone.

Why develop a *Volunteer Handbook & Code of Conduct*?

We have been blessed by positive interactions between students, staff, and volunteers. Our goal is to continue this wonderful relationship while providing a common set of guidelines for our volunteers. The pages of this handbook provide a general overview of procedures and guidelines for TLS volunteers. Our policies are intended to create a safe environment for children, protecting our students, you, and the mission of Trinity Lutheran School. The following procedures have been adopted by our School Council. After you have carefully read this policy manual, please sign and return the agreement form located on the last page. This will enable you to utilize your gifts within the school setting as a registered volunteer.

What is a Volunteer?

We define a volunteer as one who voluntarily offers a service to the school without compensation and has direct contact with students. Individuals are defined as volunteers if participating in activities in which all students are not under the supervision of their parents/guardians. For instance, if a book fair takes place during the school day and a class comes to the fair, volunteers would have to possess a registered volunteer status to work with these students. A book fair in the evening in which students are accompanied by parents would not require volunteers with registered volunteer status.

Examples of Volunteers Requiring Registered Status:

Included but not limited to:

Classroom Volunteers	Classroom Reading Volunteers
Book Fair Volunteers	Cafeteria/Playground Volunteers
Field Trip Chaperones	Clerical Helpers
Musical Chaperones	Extra-curricular coaches

Examples of Volunteer involvement NOT Requiring Registered Status:

Junior Achievement Presenters Special Presenters
PTL Evening Event Volunteers Guest Speakers
Concession Area Volunteers
Game Day Helpers (i.e. scoreboard, timekeeper, etc.)

Rewards of Volunteering

There are many rewarding experiences that come from volunteering time and talents. Among these are:

- The opportunity to serve God by serving His children
- Chance to utilize your specific skills and talents
- Time spent sharing educational and spiritual experiences with your children
- Opportunity to strengthen a better understanding of how children learn

Trinity loves having volunteers and we continue to encourage our parents, congregation members, and friends of Trinity to volunteer their time. We are so thankful!

Process for Volunteer Registration:

1. Volunteer reads *Volunteer Handbook/Code of Conduct* and completes agreement form certifying that they have not been convicted of a violent crime and/or sex offense against children. This signature also indicates the volunteer's agreement to abide by the *Code of Conduct* set forth in this document.
2. The volunteer then returns the signed agreement form to the school office and the volunteer is added to the

registered volunteer list and is available to volunteer at the school under the guidance of a school staff member.

Background Checks

Background checks will be performed on volunteers who work with students outside of the guidance/supervision of a staff member. Examples of these volunteers include but are not limited to: athletic coaches, extra-curricular club coaches (chess, scholastic bowl, drama), and Camp CILCA chaperones.

Volunteers in these areas will be contacted for completion of a background check in addition to agreement to expectations set forth in this document.

Procedural Expectations of Volunteers at TLS

- Complete registration process
- Be punctual and reliable for events
- Notify school in case of an absence
- Follow building sign-in/sign-out procedures
- Wear identification badges issued at school while both in the building and on field trip
- Practice the professional ethics of confidentiality regarding students, fellow volunteers, and staff
- Sign and follow *Volunteer Code of Conduct*
- Utilize adult restroom facilities during school hours
- Notify school principal if arrested for a misdemeanor or felony sex, drug or weapon related offense as well as any ordinance violation involving illegal substances

Volunteer Safety and Conduct Guidelines:

Commitment

- We are most grateful to our volunteers for making every effort to honor the commitments they have made. If, for some reason, a volunteer cannot meet a commitment, we ask that he/she inform the teacher or other staff person. This should be done as early as possible so that alternate arrangements can be made.
- Volunteers should be prompt; due to scheduling requirements, it is important to make every minute count.

Confidentiality

- Volunteers often have the opportunity to observe interaction among students, among teachers, or between teachers and students. They are sometimes party to privileged information which needs to remain confidential. It is also a breach of ethics to discuss confidential school situations with other parents.
- Confidentiality is a priority in your relationship with your student. Some students share sensitive information about issues and concerns in their personal lives. Any question concerning a child's behavior, achievement, and/or needs should be immediately directed to the teacher.
- Volunteers must be especially careful to honor confidentiality. Breaching confidentiality can be hurtful to children, their families and the staff.

To help, here are some sample issues that can arise:

- ***“Wasn't it cute when John ...”*** No matter how innocent, cute, funny or charming a classroom event may be, it is not okay to repeat stories about students. What happens in the classroom stays in the classroom.

- ***When parents ask you questions ...*** Many parents are tempted to ask you about how their children behave in school. This is especially likely if you are friends outside of school. It is not acceptable to put volunteers in this awkward position. If parents do have concerns, encourage them to talk to the class teacher.
- ***When you see or overhear something ...*** As a volunteer, you might see or hear things from staff or students which they would not want to have repeated outside the school. What happens in the classroom (or the hall, or the cafeteria) stays at school.
- ***When a student tells you about their family, pet, vacation, etc. ...*** As students become comfortable working with you, they might decide to share something personal. You need to keep this information private.
- ***When you have a concern ...*** If a student tells you something that causes you concern, or if you observe something that troubles you, tell the classroom teacher or, inform the principal if appropriate.

Discipline

- Rules and procedures related to student discipline have been established by the school and individual classroom teachers. Classroom teachers and school administrators are responsible for student discipline. These guidelines are maintained for the safety and welfare of all students. Please seek assistance from a classroom teacher in the event that discipline may be needed.

Fire and Emergency Procedures

- Volunteers should make themselves familiar with the fire and emergency exit routes posted in every classroom.

- If an emergency is to arise, volunteers must follow the directions of the school staff individual present.
- In the event that a member of the school staff is not present, emergency procedures can be found in each classroom.

Open Area Rule

- While working with students, volunteers should be in the open where others can see them interact with students.

Restroom Supervision and Guidance

- Volunteers should avoid taking children to the restroom. Elementary students may be accompanied to the restroom for supervision and assistance when needed. (However, the student should receive the minimum amount of assistance needed based upon their individual capabilities.) If for any reason that a volunteer must go to the restroom to check up on an individual child, they should:
 - 1) Seek out another person to accompany them.
 - 2) If another person is not available to accompany them they should go to the exterior restroom door, knock, and ask if the child needs assistance.
 - 3) If the child requires assistance, the worker should leave the exterior restroom door open when entering the bathroom area and try to verbally assist the child in completing their activities while the child remains behind the door of the restroom stall.
 - 4) Any assistance with the straightening or fastening of garments should only be done in the presence of teacher or another adult.

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. Exceptions may be granted for classroom parties when a number of volunteers are present.

Transportation and Field Trips

Volunteers provide a valuable service by helping to supervise students on educational and recreational field trips. In order to maintain the security and safety of our students, it is critical that the following procedures be followed:

- Volunteers should wear an identification badge at all times when escorting children.
- A student should never be alone in a vehicle with an adult. Volunteers should have another adult present, or if possible, multiple students. As often as practical, two adults will be assigned to supervise or lead activities involving children or youth.
- Students should be transported directly to their destination. No unauthorized stops should be made.
- Students should never be transported without parental permission.
- Volunteers should avoid physical contact with students while in vehicles.
- Driver must not have any convictions during the preceding three years for driving under the influence of alcohol or a controlled substance.
- Drivers are to obey all traffic laws and are to make every reasonable effort to assure the safety of their passengers, including a seat belt for every passenger. Illinois law requires that every passenger wear a seat belt.
- Any chaperone who is asked to drive students in a vehicle must submit a copy of his/her driver's license and proof of insurance to the school office PRIOR to the trip.

- Chaperones must complete and submit a Volunteer Registration/Acknowledgement Form PRIOR to the trip. The service of chaperones who fail to do this may be refused.

Volunteer Prohibitions

- Outside of members of law enforcement, volunteers are prohibited from possessing any type of firearm, weapon, or explosive on school premises or while on school sponsored field trip.
- Volunteers are prohibited from being intoxicated or under the influence of controlled substances while volunteering.
- TLS is a tobacco free school. Tobacco products shall not be used on school premises.
- Volunteers are prohibited from the use, possession, or sale of an illegal controlled substance in any quantity.

Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting

Any volunteer who suspects or receives knowledge that a student may be an abused or neglected child shall immediately report such a case to the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. The volunteer shall also promptly notify the school administrator that a report has been made. Resources and training can be found at www.state.il.us/dcfs The DCFS Hotline is: 800-252-2873. Resources are also available at the school office upon request.

Volunteer Tips for Success

- Relax and be yourself
- Be friendly toward all students
- Encourage the student to try and do the activity to the best of his or her ability
- Praise individual students for a job well done

- Remember that a student often responds better to suggestions, rather than commands
- Proceed at the student's rate of speed
- Don't do for a student what he or she can do for him or herself
- Call the student by name at each opportunity
- Set a good example for the students in every way
- Be impartial while dealing with students and strive to be fair while judging their actions
- Give your full attention to the students you are working with. Avoid the temptation of being distracted by cell phones, tablets, books, and the like
- Be patient – remember teachers and students are human. They will have good days as well as bad days, and will not perform at 100% efficiency at all times
- Under no circumstances should ongoing instruction be interrupted. If you have questions wait until there is an appropriate moment
- Respect that a teacher's desk and/or work area is private

Volunteer Opportunities

- Read stories to children
- Work with children in special interest areas
- Present learning game activities to children
- Prepare and present materials for art, physical education, and music activities
- Check books out to children
- Accompany groups on field trips
- Assist with campus special events
- Assist with PTL activities and functions
- Tutor students
- Assist in school office
- Share technology skills

CODE of Conduct

- I agree to treat fellow volunteers, students, and staff with kindness and respect.
- I agree to wear volunteer identification while volunteering both on and off of school premise.
- I will not contact students outside of school hours without permission from the student's parents. Likewise I will not remove students from school or school field trips without the written permission from the student's parents/guardians.
- I will maintain confidentiality outside of school and will share with teachers and/or administration any concerns that I may have related to student welfare and safety.
- I agree to avoid situations where I am left completely alone/unobserved with a child.
- I agree to maintain professional boundaries at all times and avoid unwarranted and/or inappropriate touching of a student.
- I agree not to assist with activities of a personal nature that children can do for themselves (changing clothes, using the washroom).
- I agree not to exchange personal communication information (i.e. phone number, email, social media alias) with students unless it is required as a part of my role as a volunteer.
- I agree to allow the teacher or staff member to enact student discipline if needed.
- I agree not to bring siblings along on my volunteer activities (exception: classroom parties)

- I agree to dress in accordance with accepted social standards connected to the expected volunteer activity (i.e. hiking field trip, classroom reader, tie-dye assistance)
- While driving students I agree to obey all traffic laws and make every reasonable effort to assure the safety of my passengers, including a seat belt for every passenger.
- I agree to use adult bathroom facilities while in the school during school hours.
- I agree to maintain a constructive attitude and courteous demeanor while volunteering. This includes avoiding the use of vulgar language.
- I agree only to do what is in the best personal, spiritual, and educational interest of every child with whom I come in contact.
- I have read and understand the above provisions, guidelines, and policies as outlined in the Volunteer Handbook.

I understand this agreement can be cancelled at any time at the discretion of either party. I also understand that violation of the *Code of Conduct* and accompany guidelines may result in an inability to volunteer at Trinity Lutheran School.

I certify that I have not been convicted of violent crime and/or sex offense against children.

I further certify that I have read the volunteer handbook and will abide by the Code of Conduct set forth within.

Printed Name: _____

Signature: _____