OUR MISSION

The mission of the Desert Sands Unified School District, a dynamic system of challenging educational choices, is to ensure every student develops the knowledge, skills and motivation to succeed as a productive, ethical, and global citizen by ensuring equal access to learning provided by caring, committed, collaborative staff working with our families and extended partnerships.
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We are excited to have you as a volunteer! Volunteers work in many aspects of the school system. As a volunteer, you will discover a multitude of opportunities that directly or indirectly support the Desert Sands Unified School District’s 29,000 students and 2,700 employees.

Volunteers have always played, and will continue to play, an important role in public schools. Please review this handbook, as it provides an overview and important guidelines you should be aware of prior to volunteering.

Thank you for considering the Desert Sands Unified School District as your partner, and for giving so freely of your time and talents in service to others. We are building the future, one student at a time.

It has been said that one finger cannot lift a pebble. Thanks for giving us a helping hand.

Sincerely,

Scott L. Bailey
Superintendent of Schools
Desert Sands Unified School District
WHAT TASKS CAN I PERFORM AS A VOLUNTEER?

Desert Sands Unified School District allows its volunteers to perform a vast amount of tasks, within the correct amount of clearances, of course. Below you will find some of the many examples of what a school volunteer may encounter during a regular school year. If the activity you wish to volunteer for is not indicated on the list below, we ask you to please contact our Personnel Services department for clarification.

★ Classroom
★ Field trips (additional clearance required)
★ Library
★ Tutoring (additional clearance required)
★ Clerical
★ Coaching/Choir (additional clearance)
★ Fund Raising
★ Breakfast/Lunch Programs
★ Reading Programs
★ Dance Chaperones
★ School Beautification
★ Special Events

WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT AS A SCHOOL VOLUNTEER?

As a volunteer, you should expect:

➢ That your assistance contributes to the overall value of the education program.
➢ To be treated with respect and consideration by all students and staff.
➢ Your areas of interests and skills to be taken in considerations when given assignment that meet both educational and student supervision needs.
➢ Clear instruction and any training necessary for specific volunteer assignments.
➢ Proper orientation, introductions to key personnel and any pertinent information regarding storage of personal items and/or basic housekeeping rules at the site.
➢ Effective communication with staff and other volunteers.
➢ Direct support from staff if challenges arise.
HOW DO I APPLY?

NON-SUPERVISORY VOLUNTEER

★ No field trips
★ Must submit volunteer application
★ Must Upload valid U.S. government ID
★ Must enter U.S. government ID as it appears on document.
  ○ (SSN not accepted)
★ Must complete mandated reporter training
★ Check volunteer application status online by going to https://applications.dsusd.us/volunteer/
  ○ Select “Check the Status or Renew an existing Application”
★ If everything is current and completed, approval can take up to 3 days.

SUPERVISORY VOLUNTEER

★ Can attend field trips
★ Must submit volunteer application
★ Must enter U.S. government ID as it appears on document.
  ○ (SSN not accepted)
★ Must Upload valid U.S. government ID
★ Must complete Live Scan service using District form.
★ Must complete mandated reporter training
★ Check volunteer application status online by going to https://applications.dsusd.us/volunteer/
  ○ Select “Check the Status or Renew an existing Application”
★ If everything is current and completed, approval can take anywhere from 3 to 30 days, if there are any delays with fingerprint clearance.
A school volunteer is there to enrich the educational program and student supervision at each site. Below is some helpful information to apply or not apply in a classroom and/or school setting.

➔ A volunteer is:

◆ **Not** a teacher or an educational assistant.
◆ **Not** a therapist or a counselor.
◆ **Not** on campus to develop friendships with students.

➔ DSUSD encourages volunteers to:

◆ Freely ask questions about:
  - Programs
  - Policies
  - Equipment

◆ Follow teachers and staff established procedures.

◆ Talk to teacher about any difficulties at appropriate times.
  - **Never** discuss matters in front of students or parents.

◆ Help students tackle their work, but **not** do their work for them.

◆ Speak to students in a positive way.

◆ Remind students of appropriate behavior if they are disruptive or break rules.

◆ Show by example; be calm and showcase a responsible attitude when dealing with problems.

◆ Volunteers are **not** to bring children with them into school sites when volunteering.

*Remember that corrective discipline is the responsibility of the principal and teaching staff.
Show respect for our staff and students, who come from diverse families, cultures, and communities - each with its own set of values and beliefs.
DSUSD considers its primary responsibility to be the protection and nurturing of students. For this reason any suspicion of improper or illegal dealing with students will be handled swiftly and seriously, with the involvement of law enforcement as required and necessary.

Below are some items that we encourage all volunteers to keep in mind:

➔ **DO NOT:**

- Use your position to promote own religious, political, economic, or social bias.
- Use students restrooms.
- Drive alone with a student in your vehicle.
- Take a child alone to any of the following:
  - Restroom
  - Office
  - Classroom
  - Any other private place on Campus.
- Arrange ANY areas hidden from view.
  - If directed to work with a student in empty room, be sure to leave door open at any time, sit in separate desks, which can are easily seen by those passing by.
- Socialize with students outside of regular school hours and activities. (ie. phone calls, texts, visits, email, etc.)
- Hold a student on your lap. All school personnel and volunteers **must** be extremely careful not to touch a child in any way that could be inappropriately interpreted.

➔ **A front hug is never acceptable, so carefully put your arm around a child’s shoulder and turn in into a side hug. Use other signs of affection, such as “high fives,” “fist pumps” and handshakes.**
The state of California dictates that it is the legal obligation for all school personnel to report any suspected case of child abuse. Although volunteers are not considered mandated reporters, it is the district’s responsibility to train all volunteers via the Mandated Reporter: Child Abuse and Neglect Training course. Volunteers are required to complete this online training on a yearly basis and report any strong suspicion of abuse to supervising teacher and/or principal, no exceptions.

Things to keep in mind:

**DON’T:**
- “Promise not to tell”
- Try to “Counsel” the child
- Be judgemental
- Try to offer solutions

**DO:**
- Remain merely a sympathetic “listening ear”
- Inform a Supervising teacher or principal if there’s strong suspicion of abuse.
It is a requirement for all Non-Supervisory and Supervisory volunteers to upload their State issued Driver’s License, Identifications, U.S. Military Identifications and/or U.S. Passports to their application prior to submitting...therefore, unfortunately, **we cannot** accept International Passports nor international Driver’s License, Identities, and/or cards that are solely utilized for cross-border travel between neighboring countries.

All of our applications are ran through a United States database under Megan's Law. When faced with an international volunteer that possesses no U.S. State issued Identification it becomes impossible for us to verify any criminal background as international databases may not be available.
Desert Sands Unified School District is a **DRUG-FREE** workplace. Alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs, and smoking are prohibited on all school and district properties. Therefore, we must reiterate, that all volunteers shall not drink, smoke, nor take any illegal drugs during their time of service.

**PLEASE:**

★ **Do Not** go into school if you are ill
  - Includes: Cold, sore throat or cough

★ **Use** good habits when you are at school; students learn by example.

★ **Maintain good personal hygiene**
  - Well-groomed & physically approachable
  - Children are sensitive/outspoken to: bad breath and body odor.

*Be aware of school playground regulations...*

**Carefully Supervise (Watch Closely) Activities/Materials Such As:**

- Climbing
- Running
- Scissors
- Saws
- Woodworking Tools
- Glass Items
- Cooking Utensils
- Pans
- Sand (can damage eyes)
- Pointed Objects (ie. Math compass)

➔ **Do Not Allow** students to use paper cutter or handle hot appliances, utensils, or equipment.

➔ **Report** any dangerous condition and/or situation to supervisor at once!

➔ If there is blood on a student, secure a staff member.

**Remember:**

 ➢ Follow all safety rules in every school you volunteer services to.
 ➢ Immediately secure a staff member if an accident occurs.
 ➢ **Never** move a child involved in an accident.
  - Only school staff will initiate proper procedures for accidents.
TIPS FOR WORKING WITH STUDENTS & STUDENT BEHAVIOR AND DISCIPLINE

- Try to learn the names of students as quickly as possible, including correct pronunciation.
- Work at student’s level and show interest in their school activities.
- Be clear about what you will be doing each session:
  - Working on specific academic skill
  - Learning to play a new game
  - Telling them a story
- Listen attentively, be aware of the child’s feelings, provide encouragement and praise frequently.
- If mistake is made, let child know that making mistakes is a part of learning. Consult the teacher if a child cannot master a skill you are working on.
- Finish each session on a positive note. Point out their accomplishments.

DSUSD’s Board of Education strives to provide a supportive, caring, and orderly school environment that will enable students to develop skills that encourage to achieve their intellectual, physical, and social potential.

Good discipline means a sense of order prevailing throughout each school campus, thus offering security and comfort to our teaching and learning communities. It encourages, acknowledges, and rewards positive behavior while outlining potential consequences for inappropriate behavior.
One of the greatest challenges in effective volunteering, is the expressed concern by teachers and principals regarding the possible misuse of privileged information, such as...

Students:
❖ Behavior Patterns
❖ Academic Ability
❖ Emotional Maturity

In some cases, information of this nature is simply acquired in the course of frequent contact of the school site. In addition, volunteers find themselves in a position to learn more about staff members than would normally be learned from their “public image.” There is nothing wrong with the volunteers processing such knowledge and arriving to personal conclusions. However, it should never be shared in the community or with anyone who has no legitimate need to know.

If a problem develops, always address the issue with the staff member involved and, if necessary, meet with the principal.
The administration is available to assist you with any questions, concerns, problems, etc. that you may have.

Thank you for volunteering in the Desert Sands Unified School District!