

Volunteer



Spectrum High School
Volunteer Handbook

I. What is required for me to begin volunteering at Spectrum High School?

- Talk with the Volunteer Coordinator about ways you can volunteer.
- Complete the *Volunteer Application*, *Criminal Background Check Form*, and *Confidentiality Statement*.
- Read the Volunteer Handbook.
- Get confirmation that you are cleared to volunteer (after the *Criminal Background Check* results have been received).
- Enjoy volunteering!

II. Why we need you!

- Volunteering helps to enrich and enhance student learning.
- Volunteering enables teachers to offer more individual attention to their students.
- Volunteering provides individuals an opportunity to participate in a variety of activities within the school.
- Volunteering promotes and strengthens the partnership between families, the community, and the school.

III. Why Volunteer?

Volunteering is an opportunity for you to show your children ...

- Your interest in their school life.
- Your commitment to the community.
- Your belief that education is a partnership between family and school.
- Your belief that learning is a lifelong process.

IV. Benefits of Volunteering

A. Personal Benefits

- Experience the satisfaction of helping people.
- Develop new skills.
- Meet new and interesting people and develop new friendships.
- Share your time and talent.

B. Student Benefits

- Students will see a clear relationship between families, community, and the school.
- Students will develop a feeling that school is important because they see their parents and community showing an interest and becoming involved.
- Student's self-confidence improves when they notice the interest and involvement their families and community have in their school activities.
- Students are able to demonstrate first hand their activities to their families and community.
- Statistics prove that student achievement is higher when families are involved in school activities.

V. Help Counter

At Spectrum High School, we utilize an on-line system called *Help Counter* to track and record volunteer hours. Volunteers should contact Spectrum's Volunteer Coordinator, Janice Dammeier, for a user name and password. *Help Counter* can be accessed [here](#).

VI. Criminal Background Checks (*This does not include a credit report check.*)

Before volunteering at Spectrum, all volunteers must complete and submit a *Background Check Form*. The form will be sent by Spectrum for processing only if a person is planning to volunteer in one of the areas noted below.

Per School Board policy, criminal background checks will only be required of volunteers in specified assignments, such as field trips (off campus), athletic or academic coaching, and any non-staff supervised activity (on campus), every four years. Spectrum will cover the cost (currently around \$18) for the background check. See *Employment and Volunteer Background Check Policy #509*.

Forms are available in the school office or online at www.spectrumhighschool.org under *For Parents* and *Parent Volunteer Information*.

VII. Important Responsibilities when Volunteering

A. Accept Direction

Accept direction and supervision. While recognizing that you are an important leader, you do not take the place of a staff member, but are a supplementary person who offers assistance and enrichment with your personal skill and competence.

B. Appearance

As representatives of Spectrum High School, volunteers, like staff, are responsible for presenting a good image to students and to the community. Volunteers should dress appropriately for the condition and performance of their duties.

C. Arrival

Sign-in – Stop in the office immediately upon entering the school building. Volunteers are asked to sign in each time they volunteer at the school or are going on a field trip. The School Check-In System computer is located in the school office.

For security reasons, and in case of an emergency, it's important for the office to know who is in the building and why. Please be sure to record the time you volunteered before you leave. The hours you volunteer are calculated, so it's important that we have all your time recorded. In addition, a record of our volunteer hours enables the school to evaluate our volunteer program and recognize volunteers for their contributions.

Name Badge

Print a name badge when you sign into the School Check-In computer. By wearing a name badge, you will be recognized as someone who belongs in the building or on the field trip.

D. Assignment

If the volunteer assignment does not prove to be what you expected, please notify the supervising staff person. If you feel hesitant to discuss it with the staff person, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator.

E. Be Dependable

Come when promised and on time. Students, staff, and other volunteers count on you. If you are unable to keep a commitment, call the office and leave a message for the appropriate teacher, or the Volunteer Coordinator as far in advance as possible.

F. Behavioral Policies

Adult volunteers must agree to read and abide by Spectrum School Board policies prohibiting misconduct and poor behavioral choices:

1. Bullying Policy #516
2. Sexual Abuse/Molestation/ Misconduct Policy #501
3. Religious, Racial or Sexual Harassment Policy #504

Copies of the policies are available on Spectrum's website or may be obtained at the school office.

G. Communications

Maintain good communication with staff, the Volunteer Coordinator, and other volunteers. Any question is a good question - be sure to ask! Make every effort to arrange a time to talk with the teacher when there are problems or questions.

H. Confidentiality

Information regarding our students is confidential. Spectrum High School is regulated by the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act. This law states that ...

1. No information can be shared regarding a student without the written and witnessed signed consent of the adult student or underage student's parent or guardian.
2. Discussing personal information regarding an adult student or underage student will be cause for disciplinary action and/or lead to termination of the volunteer. Confidentiality is important to the integrity of our program. It's important to respect the privacy of all students, staff, and other volunteers. Never repeat anything you have heard or seen about individuals while volunteering.

All volunteers are asked to sign a *Volunteer Acknowledgement and Agreement Form* addressing confidentiality and compliance with policies.

I. Cultural Differences

It's important that we work with one another positively and consider cultural, moral, and value differences.

J. Discipline

Volunteers may not discipline students beyond maintaining order in their group or activity. Please report any problems with students' behavior to the supervising staff person. The paid professional staff of the school is always responsible for discipline.

K. Mandatory Reporting

Volunteers are considered "mandated reporters." That means, you must report when you have knowledge or reason to believe that a child is being or has been neglected or physically or sexually abused. Report any incident or suspicion immediately to a staff person.

L. Record Keeping

Keeping accurate records is an important part of the volunteer program. Accurate records allow us to assist volunteers who might request records for use on job applications, they allow us to track how, when, and where volunteers are utilized at the school, and they serve in future program planning. Accurate records also enable us to recognize the contributions of all volunteers.

M. Staff Responsibilities

Volunteers are an important part of the educational team. The suggestions and opinions of volunteers are always welcome. It is the professional staff, however, that is held responsible by law for the decisions that are made regarding the instruction of students and school management. For this reason, volunteers always work under the direct supervision of the professional staff. The professional staff is responsible for everything that goes on in the building, including student instruction, safety, and discipline.

N. Student Contact

As a volunteer, you will meet many students and will enjoy working with them. However, volunteers should not telephone students, visit them at their homes, or meet students off school grounds without permission from the parents and/or school leadership. In addition, when working with students, whether individually or in small groups, we recommend you work in a highly visible area. This is for the protection of both the students and volunteers.

O. Use of controlled substances

It is important that we are in compliance with the *Drug Free Workplace Act of 1988* prohibiting the manufacture, distribution, possession, or use of controlled substances in the workplace. This policy applies to paid staff, volunteers, and students, and is included in Spectrum High School's *Drug and Alcohol Policy #306*. This policy can be found on Spectrum High School's website at www.spectrumhighschool.org

VIII. More Helpful Information

A. Tax deductions

Some of your out-of-pocket expenses connected with volunteering may be deductible when you file your income tax statement. Consult with your tax advisor concerning your personal tax situation.

B. What I should not do as a volunteer

Volunteers supplement and support the program, but may not ...

- Have access to student permanent record files
- Diagnose student needs
- Make final evaluation on student achievement
- Counsel students
- Discuss student progress with parents

C. Tips for Working with Students

- Call students by name; be friendly and caring.
- Be enthusiastic, patient, and kind.
- Praise success.
- Be honest with students. It's okay to say, "I don't know."
- Be comfortable with silence. Allow students time to think and form answers.
- Do not give any student materials on your own without first discussing it with the teacher.
- Accept students as they are. Be sensitive to differences in background, culture, religion, values, vocabulary, and aspirations.
- Never make a promise you can't fulfill.
- Do not eat candy, snacks, or gum when working with students unless it is part of programming.
- Be dependable and prompt.

- Keep calm in an emergency.
- Maintain your sense of humor.
- Enjoy making a positive difference in students' lives!

We hope this information has been helpful as you prepare to volunteer at Spectrum High School. Please do not hesitate to contact our Volunteer Coordinator with any questions.

We look forward to working together to provide the best possible education for our students!

Thank you!

Spectrum High School Board and Administration

Spectrum High School Volunteer Acknowledgement and Agreement

Directions: Please read below, sign the agreement, and return this form to Spectrum’s Volunteer Coordinator.

CONFIDENTIALITY

While volunteering at Spectrum, you may encounter or become aware of information about student grades, test scores, or other information about specific students. You may also overhear conversations between school staff regarding students, and observe student interactions, including behavioral incidents that may need to be addressed by school staff.

To protect the data privacy rights of students, in compliance with state and federal laws, we ask that you sign this form indicating that any information you obtain related to any student will remain confidential.

POLICY COMPLIANCE

By signing below, you are also indicating you have had the opportunity to read the following Spectrum School Board Policies and agree to abide by those policies:

- * *Bullying Policy #516*
- * *Sexual Abuse/Molestation/ Misconduct Policy #501*
- * *Religious, Racial or Sexual Harassment Policy #504*
- * *Drug and Alcohol Policy #306*

Copies of the policies are available on Spectrum’s website at spectrumhighschool.org or may be obtained from the school office.

VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT

I have read the current *Spectrum High School Volunteer Handbook*, and agree to comply with expectations regarding a background check, confidentiality, and other Spectrum policies as noted on the *Volunteer Acknowledgement and Agreement Form*.

I agree to begin volunteering only after I have been cleared by the Volunteer Coordinator to do so.

First and Last Name (Please print)

Signature

Date