

Volunteer FAQ's

How to become a volunteer?

Step 1: Visit www.manateeschools.net/volunteer to complete a volunteer application.

Step 2: Once you have received confirmation from Raptor Technologies of your volunteer clearance you need to visit the school you would like to volunteer with and speak to the Volunteer Coordinator located at the school of interest. You may also call the district's Community Engagement Specialist at (941) 708-8770 x41048.

Step 3: You will need to provide your driver's license or state ID to the front office when you enter the school.

How long will it take for my volunteer application to clear?

Please allow 3-5 days for your application to be processed. You must enter all information correctly, otherwise the application may be stalled or flagged, which will take longer to approve.

An individual is **NOT** eligible to volunteer ...

- If a person has been found guilty of any felony offense, regardless of adjudication, expungement or entered a plea of nolo contendere or guilty to any offense constituting a felony under Florida law or the jurisdiction in which the offense occurred within the last 10 years.
- If a person is found guilty of any misdemeanor offense within the past 5 years.

An individual **MAY BE CONSIDERED** to volunteer ...

- If convicted or judicial action of any misdemeanor is more than 5 years old and reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

All decisions are based upon the hiring guidelines of the School District of Manatee County.

If my volunteer privileges are revoked. May I volunteer at a different school?

No. If a volunteer's privileges are revoked, it applies district wide.

Are you checking my credit history to volunteer?

NO, but you will be required to provide personal information on the volunteer application, including your social security number. This information is strictly confidential through the Raptor system and JD Palatine to scan both sexual and criminal databases.

Who do I contact with questions regarding my volunteer application?

Please contact Deborah Perry-Gambino, Community Engagement Specialist at gambinod@manateeschools.net or call (941) 708-8770 x 41048, who can provide further direction.

What is a Level I clearance?

Level I clearance, is required for ALL volunteers interacting with students in a supervised environment, such as classrooms, cafeteria, media center, daytime field trips, where you are in eye and earshot of a school faculty member, or teacher at all times. Individuals desiring volunteer assignments in the school system must provide social security numbers and other personal information required to perform backgrounds screenings. The screening scans the Dru Sjodin National Sexual Offender Database and the FBI criminal database.

What is a Level II clearance?

Level II clearance is required for ALL volunteers who will be interacting with students in an unsupervised environment, such as overnight field trips, one-to-one mentoring, tutoring, and overnight competitions. Instructions to obtain Level II fingerprint clearance may be obtained by emailing gambinod@manateeschools.net. (Please note: Application fees for a Level II fingerprint screening are approximately \$80 and paid by the volunteer. The results are monitored by the Office of Safety & Security for a period of 5 years). In addition, volunteers who complete a Level II screening MUST also complete the Level I application.

Do you have to pay for a Level II screening if I had one completed through my employer or another county?

Yes. The School District of Manatee County does not have access to background check information from other employers or additional counties. All Level II screenings through FieldPrint, are linked to a specific identifiable number for the School District of Manatee County. The human resources department will be notified immediately of any discretions by a volunteer.

Who should I contact to become a Level II volunteer?

Please contact Deborah Perry-Gambino at gambinod@manateeschools.net to receive email instructions.

What are the qualifications to become a school volunteer?

The qualifications necessary to be a school volunteer include a personal desire to help, a sincere interest in students, an ability to follow school procedures and policies, and a willingness to make a definite time commitment. Any training needed will be provided by the school-based volunteer coordinator and school staff members. A teaching or education background is not required as volunteers work under the direction of a school's professional staff.

Can volunteers bring children with them to their volunteer assignment?

No, bringing other children for whom the volunteer is responsible to the volunteer assignment presents a liability issue for the school and district. In addition, having other children on campus disrupts the school and/or class procedures, disrupts student and teacher focus, and prevents the volunteer from giving full attention to volunteer work. Volunteers with young children at home can, however, still help the school by making arrangements to volunteer at home or help with special events. Any questions can be directed to the school Volunteer Coordinator.

When friends and neighbors ask about the volunteer's work and the school, what may the volunteer share with them?

Volunteers can be a big help in representing the volunteer program to the community. Talking about involvement in volunteering in the schools may inspire others to volunteer. However, volunteers may have access to "privileged information" which, naturally, should be treated as such. "Privileged information" is defined as personal records, grades, test scores, and the behavior and attitude of students, and information the student shares with the volunteer. This is important school business and should never be discussed outside of the school. Criticizing school personnel and practices is not appropriate. The volunteer's role in the school is as a professional working with other professionals.

Can a high school or college student volunteer at a middle or elementary school?

Yes, with the approval of the Principal. All student volunteers must complete an online volunteer application, sign in/out of the Raptor System each time they volunteer, and always wear a Raptor badge with their student ID. Signing in/out is essential to logging volunteer hours.

Can the volunteer choose the specific assignment?

Volunteers are placed in volunteer assignments based on the school needs. Efforts are made at the school to match volunteer interests with the school needs but cannot be guaranteed. Volunteers are placed only with teachers who have specifically requested volunteer assistance. A volunteer may submit a request to work with a specific teacher or in a particular role to the school Volunteer Coordinator, but the coordinator and the principal at the individual school make the decisions about volunteer placements.

What if a volunteer is unhappy with the assignment?

Volunteers should feel comfortable communicating with the school Volunteer Coordinator about assignments. Every effort is made to place volunteers in situations that match the needs of both the volunteer and the job. There are enough different jobs for everyone to feel comfortable. Teachers also have the opportunity to ask for a different assignment for a volunteer. If the volunteer program at the assigned school does not fit the volunteer interests, volunteers should contact the district Community Engagement Specialist at gambinod@manateeschools.net for assistance in finding a better fit at another school.

What does a volunteer do about student discipline?

Disciplinary action is the legal responsibility of teachers and other school staff. Volunteers should never be put in a position of having to enforce discipline. A volunteer experiencing a problem with student behavior should immediately inform the person supervising the volunteer's work.

What should a volunteer do if unable to be at a school at the assigned time?

When unable to be at the school at the assigned time, the volunteer should contact school personnel to inform them. On the first visit to the school, be sure to ascertain the way in which (e.g., email, phone call) and to whom (e.g., front office staff, volunteer coordinator, teacher) the school wants volunteer absences reported. The Volunteer Connection Information Guide has a "need to know" informational sheet to help you gather important information.

Why is it required and important for volunteers to sign-in and out of the Raptor system on the volunteer computer each time volunteering at a school?

There are many reasons this requirement is necessary, such as, but not limited to:

- Maintaining school security
- Documenting service for liability purposes and in the event of an emergency
- Required reporting to school district and state
- Verifying volunteer service which can be used as work experience for future employment
- Collecting data that supports grant applications
- Recognizing volunteers for their dedication and service

Also, volunteers in traditional public schools are covered by the school district's Workers Compensation insurance policy but only when signed in during the volunteer time to the volunteer computer system as an official, approved volunteer.

School District policy requires volunteers to sign in and out of the *Raptor System* database when on campus. Individuals who do not meet requirements for volunteers, as established by state law and the School Board of Manatee County will not be accepted or approved to volunteer. Volunteers will not be placed or will be dismissed if they falsify any information when applying to volunteer.