

Home of the Comets



PARENT INVOLVEMENT HANDBOOK 2024-2025

LOSTANT COMMUNITY UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT 425
TITLE I/PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT HANDBOOK

Volunteer and Chaperone Handbook

Welcome

Thank you for your willingness to give your time and talents to benefit students within the Lostant Community Unit School District 425. Volunteers provide opportunities that help us enhance the educational experiences for students. Whether you volunteer one hour per week, one hour per year or for specific events and activities, your commitment to education is appreciated.

As stated in Board Policy 6:250, the Board of Education supports and encourages the use of volunteers to: (1) enhance students' educational attainment, (2) provide enrichment experiences for students, (3) increase the effective utilization of staff time and skills, (4) give more individual attention to students, and, (5) promote greater community involvement. The Board and District promote the use of school volunteers while maintaining a safe and secure environment for the students, to the extent applicable.

The school principal or designee will select and assign volunteers within a school building. If a staff member, other than the principal, recruits someone to act as a volunteer, the staff member must receive authorization from the principal in accordance with Board Policy 6:250. The principal or designee shall assign volunteer opportunities on the basis of an individual's qualifications and availability and the school's needs. A volunteer shall serve under the supervision of an assigned staff member.

This handbook is designed to help you make a smooth transition into your volunteer responsibilities. It outlines the District's volunteer policy, includes a copy of the Volunteer Form and highlights some standard procedures for volunteers. It is our hope that you will derive a great deal of personal satisfaction from your time in our schools.

All volunteers shall abide by the applicable District policies and procedures, including, but not limited to all sign-in and identification procedures and the confidentiality, safety, reporting and harassment policies. Volunteers are also expected to attend any applicable training sessions as a condition to serve.

For additional information, please consult the school principal.

On behalf of the students, teachers and staff, thank you for your service.

Who Can be a Volunteer

An approved volunteer is defined as meeting the following requirements:

- An adult over the age of 21 years
- An individual approved by Lostant Community Unit School District 425
- An individual selected for a specific activity

Note: No individual who refuses to submit to a criminal background check required by Board Policy 6:250, who has been convicted of any of the criminal offenses enumerated in 105 ILCS 5/34-18.5 (c), as amended, or who is identified as a “sex offender,” as defined by the Sex Offender Registration Act, or a “violent offense against youth,” as defined in the Child Murders and Violent Offender Against Youth Registration Act.

What volunteers can do

Volunteers may be used only in an auxiliary capacity under the direction and supervision of a staff member:

1. in non-teaching duties not requiring instructional judgment or evaluation of students;
2. for supervising study halls, long distance teaching areas used to facilitate instructional programs transmitted by electronic media (such as computers, video and audio) and school-sponsored extracurricular activities;
3. to assist with academic programs under a certificated teacher’s immediate supervision;
4. as a guest lecturer or resource person under a certificated teacher’s direction and with the administration’s approval; or
5. as supervisors, chaperones or sponsors for non-academic school activities.

What volunteers may not do

Volunteers may not:

1. substitute for a member of the school staff;
2. establish instructional objectives or lesson plans;
3. impose, administer or enforce student discipline;
4. give medication; or
5. access confidential student records.

Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteer opportunities vary by the school day. Examples of daily (in-session) volunteer opportunities include:

- tutoring or reading one-on-one with a single student or small group of students, serving as a guest lecturer, assisting a classroom teacher, providing support for clerical or office staff, or chaperoning school-sponsored field trips.
- There are also many opportunities for volunteers during evening hours, weekends, or over the summer. These may include after school activities, school improvement projects, community outreach, and involvement with parent groups or athletic/activity booster clubs.

Volunteer Responsibilities

Dependability and Promptness

Dependability and promptness are important to the volunteer experience. Volunteers who will be late or absent are expected to call the assigned staff person as soon as possible so other arrangements may be made.

Mandatory Reporting of Suspected Child Abuse

State law provides that education professionals are mandated reporters of suspected child abuse. A volunteer who has reason to believe that a child has been subject to abuse or maltreatment must report it immediately to the teacher or a school or district administrator.

Respecting Classroom Activities

The time a volunteer spends in a classroom is important to the teacher and the students. Siblings are not to accompany parent volunteers in a classroom setting. If you volunteer in your child's class, please do not engage your child's teacher in an impromptu conference while volunteering. You may schedule a teacher conference at any time throughout the year.

Harassment Reporting

Pursuant to Board Policy 7:20 no person, including a District employee or agent, or student, shall harass or intimidate another student based upon a student's sex, color, race, religion, creed, ancestry, national origin, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, or other protected group status. Sexual harassment is behavior that is of a sexual nature and unwelcome. Adult-to-adult, adult-to-student, student-to-student or student-to-adult harassment is prohibited. If you believe you are a victim of harassment or violence, or have information about the harassment or violence of any adult or student, you must report it to the building administrator or staff contact.

Student Discipline

Student discipline is not a volunteer responsibility. When concerns about disciplining students occur, these concerns should be addressed to the classroom teacher or building administrator.

Sign-In Procedures

Student, staff and building visitor safety is a school and District priority. All volunteers must report to the main office each time they volunteer. Volunteers will be given a name tag to wear while on school premises. It is important for a school to know who is in the building, where to find them or who to contact in case of emergency.

Student and Adult Privacy

Volunteers are bound by the same rules of confidentiality/data privacy (state statute that governs student and employee information) as Lostant CUSD 425 teachers and other staff. Confidentiality policies include those established by the Illinois School Student Records Act, the Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA) and the National School Lunch Act.

All student records and student data are considered confidential information. Student records and student data may not be left where they can be viewed by others. Student records and student data may only be copied with administrative approval. Student information may not be discussed or shared with anyone other than school or District personnel.

Volunteers who have questions or concerns about anything seen or heard should bring these questions or concerns to the attention of the teacher or school administrator. Problems, abilities, behavior, relationships, grades and confidences of students or staff are never to be discussed with anyone other than the student's teacher or site administrator.

Safety

Volunteers must immediately report concerns for student safety to the school principal. Lostant CUSD 425 has emergency procedures. Please follow the instructions of staff in case of emergency such as a fire, tornado, etc.

If you need help

If you need more instructions in order to perform a task, please ask the teacher or building administrator. Communicating with the teacher and principal helps to ensure that a volunteer's valuable time is well spent.

Termination of Volunteer

Activity Individuals who are unable to continue serving in an assigned volunteer activity should notify the staff contact and school principal.

Individuals who do not meet appropriate requirements for volunteers working with children, as established by state law and the Lostant CUSD 425 School District policy, will not be accepted into the program. If a volunteer does not conform to the guidelines outlined in this handbook, the building principal or designee may suggest alternative actions or assignments. If this option does not meet with success, the principal has the option to terminate a volunteer's placement.

Falsification or omission on the registration form, which is a public document, is a criminal offense that can be prosecuted and may constitute grounds for dismissal. The District may, in its sole discretion, terminate a volunteer's services.

Becoming a volunteer

As required by Board Policy 6:250, an individual seeking to volunteer must execute and submit a [Volunteer Agreement and Release](#) at the time he/she first seeks to serve as a volunteer and at least annually thereafter. By executing the Volunteer Agreement and Release, the individual agrees to:

1. comply with the provisions of District policy and all volunteer guidelines implemented by the District; and
2. authorize a background check, including fingerprinting, if necessary.

Any volunteer who will have direct contact with students without the continuous supervision of a staff member present for an extended period of time and/or on a long-term or regular basis (e.g. semester or school year) will be required to submit to a criminal background check, including, where appropriate and necessary, fingerprinting.

No individual who refuses to submit to a criminal background check required by this policy, who has been convicted of any criminal offenses enumerated in 10 ILCS 5/34-18.5(c), as amended, or who is identified as a "sex offender," as defined by the Sex Offender Registration Act, or a "violent offense against youth," as defined in the Child Murders and Violent Offender Against Youth Registration Act. As part of the review of all applications to serve as a volunteer, the principal or designee shall also check the Illinois Sex Offender Registry, www.isp.state.il.us/sor and the violent offenders against youth database maintained by the State Police (when available). The background check and review of the sex/violence against youth lists will be satisfactorily completed before authorizing any individual to serve as a volunteer.

CHAPERONE GUIDELINES

Lostant CUSD 425 provides school-sponsored field trips as valuable learning and interactive experiences for students. Chaperones are volunteers who agree to accompany and assist District 425 staff on school-sponsored field trips. Chaperones provide additional adult supervision and work to ensure a safe, engaging, and well-supervised experience for students. Students are expected to treat all volunteers with courtesy, respect, and a cooperative attitude. Teachers and school administrators are responsible for assigning specific duties for chaperones. The following guidelines are specific to volunteers who agree to chaperone District 425 sponsored activities and are in addition to the general volunteer guidelines previously outlined in this handbook:

- Only District 425 students are allowed to participate in school-sponsored activities (siblings are not authorized to accompany a parent chaperone);
- All participating students must be assigned an adult chaperone;
- All chaperones must adhere to requirements provided by the Illinois School Code, Board of Education policies, school rules, and the guidelines of this handbook;
- Chaperones will work cooperatively with other school personnel to meet the needs of students with special needs;
- Chaperones will assist the supervising teacher/staff in implementing all policies and rules governing student conduct;
- Chaperones are not authorized to administer medicine to students;
- Chaperones will report all incidents and disciplinary issues to school personnel in a timely manner;
- Chaperones will maintain student and adult confidentiality;
- Chaperones will take necessary and reasonable precautions to protect students;
- Chaperones will cooperate with the plans made by the trip coordinator to account for and respond to weather, illness, vehicle maintenance, traffic or other types of emergencies or delays; and
- Chaperones will adhere to an organized system for communicating and performing student counts.

Transportation

District 425 shall provide transportation for all students and teachers. Students are required to use the transportation provided by the school district as part of the class activity. Chaperones are welcome to ride the field trip buses when used and if space allows. In some instances, chaperones may be asked to drive their own vehicle, at their own expense and liability.