



SEVIER MIDDLE SCHOOL

Focus. Challenge. Prepare.

We provide a safe, high-quality learning environment where all students become competent, self-reliant, curious and creative citizens who pursue personal excellence and contribute meaningfully to their community.

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Welcome from the Principal

Dear Parents,

Your service as a volunteer is an integral part of our school. You add so much to the educational and enrichment experiences that our children have at Sevier, and we appreciate you.

We created this handbook to provide some guidelines for your participation. We hope to support your confidence and skills so that you know your time spent here is worthwhile.

Remember that there are countless ways to contribute to our children's education, whether it be making phone calls, attending meetings or coming into the school to help us in some way.

Whatever you do, please know how much you are appreciated.

Chad Maguire, Principal

Introduction

We want to welcome you and help you make the most of your volunteer experience. There are so many different ways to participate at Sevier; we hope this handbook will help you choose opportunities that are enjoyable to you.

As a volunteer, you are an important part of the Sevier community. When you become a volunteer, your work takes on special significance -- though you are not part of the staff, you share their responsibilities while working with students.

When you volunteer at Sevier, you help . . .

- your child
- other children
- teachers
- administrators
- the community

Building a Strong Volunteer Community

Sevier has a strong tradition of parent involvement. Because volunteers are such an integral part of our school, it is important to keep our standards high. This is a very busy place, with over 80 faculty and staff members and almost 750 students. It is important for all volunteers to remember the following:

- Be responsible and safe -- always put children first.
- Respect confidentiality. Students and staff have a right to privacy.
- Be professional.
- Communicate
- Ask for help -- don't suffer in silence!
- When things come up and you can't fulfill a promise, let someone know.
- Ask for help -- don't suffer in silence!
- Share your experience with others and encourage new volunteers.
- Try to replace yourself when you move on and help train the new person.

Commitment - *Once you become a volunteer others depend on you.*

- Try to pick what is manageable and interesting to you.
- Be prepared. Communicate with teachers and coordinators ahead of time.
- Be on time. If you can't make it, let someone know. If necessary (e.g. in the Library), try to find a substitute.

Getting Started

Before starting your first volunteer task, we ask all volunteers to be aware of the Greenville County Schools Volunteer Guidelines:

ALL VOLUNTEERS MUST RECEIVE DISTRICT APPROVAL PRIOR TO VOLUNTEERING AT ANY SCHOOL/CENTER OR CHAPERONING ANY SCHOOL FIELD TRIP. PLEASE ALLOW UP TO 2-WEEKS FOR THE APPROVAL PROCESS.

Volunteer Guidelines

Greenville County Schools (GCS), in an effort to ensure the safety of all of our students, has implemented additional security checks for school volunteers. All volunteers must submit an online application to the district and receive clearance from the district before volunteering at any school/center or chaperoning any school field trip.

Volunteers are now identified by two different categories: Level I or Level II. The application process for each is detailed below:

LEVEL I - *This level requires the presence and supervision of a GCS employee at all times.* Level I volunteers must have a National Sex Offender Registry check run every time they volunteer at the school (this is the current process each time you check into a school and/or district office). Level I volunteers may volunteer in classrooms, work in the Media Center, and participate in school activities on campus as long as staff members are present.

Volunteer Guidelines (cont.)

LEVEL I application process:

To access the volunteer application system, the applicant enters: <https://apps.raptortech.com/Apply/MzE6ZW4tVVM=> (Española: <https://apps.raptortech.com/Apply/MzE6ZXMtVVM=>) and completes the **Volunteer Application Form**, a Level I volunteer only selects those functions not containing (Vol. II) in the name.

- Once approved the Level I volunteer is notified by email.
- Level I volunteers must sign in each time they volunteer. Photo identification must be presented each time for verification.

LEVEL II – *This level allows interaction with students without a GCS employee present.* Level II volunteers must have a National Sex Offender Registry check run every time they volunteer at the school as well as a criminal background check good for three years. **Chaperones for field trips are required to be a Level II volunteer, regardless of the destination.**

LEVEL II application process:

To access the volunteer application system, the applicant enters: <https://apps.raptortech.com/Apply/MzE6ZW4tVVM=> and completes the **Volunteer Application Form**, a Level II volunteer can select all functions available including those with (Vol. II) in the name. By selecting Vol. II functions the system will conduct a criminal background check.

- Once approved the Level II volunteer is notified by email. This process could take up to two weeks to complete.

Level II volunteers must sign in each time they volunteer.
Photo identification must be presented each time for verification.

Confidentiality

To make sure that students, staff and families feel comfortable, we all need to respect each other's privacy. Volunteers must be especially careful to honor confidentiality. Breaching confidentiality can be hurtful to children, their families and the staff. It can also harm the good reputation our volunteer parents have earned over the years.

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

“Wasn’t it cute when John . . .” No matter how innocent, cute, funny or charming an 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 or friends behave at school. This is especially likely if you are friends outside school. It is not okay to put volunteers in this awkward position. Don't ask! Don't tell!

If parents do have concerns, encourage them to talk to the teacher, counselor, or administrator.

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 hallway or among students stays at school.

When students tell you about their family, pet, vacation, etc. . . .

As students become comfortable around you , they might share something personal. You need to keep this information private, even if you know the child and their family outside of school.

If you have concerns about something you see or hear, please talk to the teacher or Principal, if appropriate.

Approach - Be professional and be positive!

- Strive to give each child the best you can and know that other Sevier volunteers do the same when working with your child.

Confidentiality (cont.)

- Respect each student. Greet and serve all students the same way you expect your own son or daughter to be treated.
- Respect your co-workers and all school employees. Refrain from sharing negative opinions while in the role of “volunteer,” and never share within the hearing of students.
- Try not to single your child out for attention as this may make them uncomfortable or distract teachers while they are teaching. If you have questions wait until there is an appropriate moment.
- Honor your commitments and be on time.
- Find ways to be positive and notice things that are working well.
- Constructive criticism is welcome. Make your comments directly to the teacher or administrator, in private, e-mail, or by phone.
- Remember your time and energy is helping to make Sevier a great place to learn.

Opportunities

Volunteer skills, interests and time commitments vary we hope you will be able to find something that you will enjoy doing.

- **Classroom opportunities:** Some teachers may like to have volunteers help with classroom projects or on field trips. If you are interested in getting involved, a great idea is to send the teacher a note.
- **School-wide opportunities:** Sevier has many programs geared at enriching student experience outside the classroom. Volunteers might help in after-school programs or in the library, supporting student research or shelving books.

One shots - *short time commitments; special one time events*

Examples: help with field day, sell concessions at a dance, put up a display of student art or a display for the library.

Weekly/Ongoing - *some programs rely on regular time commitments*

Examples: help at the library, office assistance, scrap-booking school events

Projects - *larger commitments that may span several days or weeks.*

Examples: help organize a fundraiser or plan a talent show.

Sharing Knowledge, Tips and Ideas

Although Sevier has many special traditions, new ideas arise each year. To make the best of both, we encourage volunteers to share their insights with one another, with staff, School Improvement Council and the PTA.

If you see a better way to do something, don't be shy to come forward.

Similarly, if you have a great experience from another school, share with the PTA your ideas about a potentially great fundraiser or exciting school-wide project.

Miscellaneous

Clean up

After you have finished any activity within the school, it is important to tidy up afterwards. For obvious reasons scissors, glue, etc. should not be left lying around.

Parking

There is ample space for parking in our front and rear parking lots.

Regardless of which lot you choose to park in, please only enter the school through the main office door. Please do not park in the fire lane or bus lane.

Funding

If you need PTA funds for an activity, please contact the PTA for approval before you go out and buy supplies. If the PTA is able to approve the purchase, only then can they reimburse you.

Space for Events

Sevier has wonderful spaces for volunteers to share. These include the gym, the stage, the library, and the amphitheater. If you want to use any of these spaces for events or meetings, please contact the School Secretary in advance to request your space.

School Calendar

One of the aims of the calendar is to make sure that important school events and fundraisers are spaced evenly throughout the year. Please ensure that any new events that you plan are included on the calendar. You can access the Sevier Community Calendar at www.greenville.k12.sc.us/sevier.

OVERVIEW

ALL volunteers must be cleared EACH school year through the Greenville County Schools (GCS) Volunteer Application Process. The process is currently defined as a background check through the SC Sex Offender Registry. (Note: A separate background check for volunteer coaches is coordinated by the GCS Director of Athletics.) Approved volunteers signing in the **Raptor System** to volunteer at schools will receive a printed name tag marked VOLUNTEER I OR II.

THE **RAPTOR SYSTEM** VOLUNTEER DATABASE

The **Raptor System** is a database developed to limit access to information about individuals. Assigned school personnel will only have access to add a person to the database. If an individual has not been added to the database, the sign-in screen will include notice that photo ID may be required to verify identity.

IF SOMEONE'S NAME IS LISTED ON THE NATIONAL SEX OFFENDER REGISTRY

Applies to Parents/Guardians, Visitors, Volunteers and Vendors (All Categories) The **Raptor System** sends an alert to the principal and other school designees when a potential sex offender signs in. This alert (matches a sex offender by name) compels further investigation by the school. The principal or designee should access the National Sex Offender Registry.

- Parent/Guardians – Can only conduct business related to child at that school and must be escorted at all times.
- Visitors – Person is denied access.
- Volunteers – Person is denied access and cannot volunteer.
- Vendors – Person is denied access and company is contacted to explain reason.
- All Categories - The principal must meet with the person as soon as possible to gather additional information

Reports

The **Raptor System** can provide various reports such as volunteer hours for individuals and total for the school.

Available Volunteer Opportunities

- **Box tops** – Volunteers needed for box top collections 4x/year and preparing them to be sent off.
- **Veteran's Day** – This event is in November, Sevier hosts Veterans from around the upstate for a light breakfast, speaker and luncheon. Volunteers are needed to set up media center and send in food and drinks for the event.
- **Fundraising** – Volunteers are needed to help serve treats at any one of the 3 fundraising incentive parties that PTA sponsors. These parties are usually during the lunch hours of 10:45-12:45pm. Help is also needed to prepare fundraiser orders to be distributed to the students. Volunteers needed to collect \$1 on no-collar days at the door upon students' arrival to school.
- **General Volunteer** - Volunteers needed on an as needed basis. We will contact you as various PTA needs arise.
- **Mixers**– Volunteers needed to sell concessions or help with activities at any one of the 3 mixers that PTA sponsors. Mixers are after school until about 5:30pm.
- **Chaperones for Field Trips** – Grade specific (Roper Mtn Science Center, Career trips, Peace Center, other).
- **Concerts and Athletic Events** – Volunteers needed to break-down chairs and equipment after events.
- **Red Ribbon Week** – Volunteers to hand out promotional material or give simple instructions to students during scheduled activities. R.R.R. is a drug and alcohol prevention awareness campaign observed annually in October.
- **Media Center** - Volunteers needed for shelving, straightening and organizing books.
- **Spring Fling** – This is a carnival type of event in April after school until 7:00pm. Volunteers needed to sell tickets at the event and before. Help is also needed to “man” the various booths, sell concessions and silly string and help with set up or break-down on the day of the event.
- **Front office help** – Volunteers to greet visitors and assists office staff in aiding students, parents and the public.

- **Hospitality** - Volunteers are needed to Bake or Buy food/drinks and send in for the following PTA sponsored events: Veteran's day (Nov), Christmas Celebration for teachers (Dec), "Soup"er Bowl (Crockpots of soup) Luncheon for teachers (Feb), Spring Fling (April), Teacher and Staff Appreciation Luncheon (May). and Dances.
- **School Improvement Council** – Participate in study and development of school action planning and public support efforts.

We look forward to your involvement at Sevier!