For the safety of our students and volunteers:

New Volunteer applicants are not permitted to chaperone or volunteer until a criminal history background check has been conducted and the individual meets the district’s volunteer guidelines.

Student and Employee Rights

If a student or faculty member feels uncomfortable about a volunteer and communicates that concern, the Principal may either dismiss the Volunteer or change the Volunteer’s responsibilities.

Revised: September 2015
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Introduction

Every Lake County School needs volunteers. Educators value the time and special talents of volunteers and welcome them into the classroom. School volunteers are people committed to making schools succeed. They offer special attention, care and talent that can inspire students to reach for and realize their dreams. School volunteers work at the school(s) of their choice and participate in activities that match their interests. Their hours are reported to the Florida Department of Education.

What is a VITAL Volunteer?

Anyone who performs assigned duties that support Lake County Schools’ (hereafter known as LCS) students and staff without expectation of compensation are known as “Volunteers.” Duties assigned to school volunteers shall be consistent with Florida Statutes and State Board of Education rules. It is the policy of LCS that there will be no discrimination on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, gender, genetic information, age, disability or marital status in its educational programs, services or activities. Volunteers must be at least 18 years of age to serve as a chaperone.

Volunteer Levels

Level I Volunteer

An individual who applies to be a school volunteer and will be assigned duties within the visual presence of School District personnel during their assigned duties. Examples include:

- Assisting with school-related functions.
- Tutoring students in the presence of the classroom teacher or other school personnel.

Clearance Requirement: Completion of the Volunteer Online Application and have a Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) background check conducted and approved prior to being assigned duties.

Level II Volunteer

An individual who applies to be a school volunteer and will be assigned duties outside of the immediate presence of a LCS employee. Examples include:

- Chaperoning field trips
- Mentoring students in groups or one-on-one
- Volunteer coaches
- Anyone transporting students to and from school functions

Clearance Requirement: Completion of the Volunteer Online Application. Effective July 1, 2004, Level II volunteers must be fingerprinted for State and National background clearance and approved prior to being assigned duties.

DID YOU KNOW...?

The classification of a Level 1 and Level 2 Volunteer is a standard set by each individual school.
Employee Volunteer

Current LCS employees and current substitutes are exempt from background screening. Volunteer hours cannot be reported on any volunteer that is not entered into the Volunteer Tracking System.

Clearance Requirement: It is requested, but not required that employees complete the Volunteer Online Application. The employee box should be selected during the Volunteer Online Application submission, to prevent unnecessary processing and payment of a background check. Employees will be approved upon confirmation of current employment status.

Student Volunteer

Student volunteers are classified as anyone under the age of 18 and must be able to volunteer for the assigned faculty/staff member with supervision and have the skills necessary to perform the duties requested while not interrupting the supervising teacher.

Clearance Requirement: Completion of the Volunteer Online Application. A parent/guardian signature is required on the Parental Consent Form, which is located on the General Information page of the Volunteer Online Application. A copy of this form is also included in the appendix of this handbook.

Other Volunteer Categories

School Health Room/Clinic Volunteer
- May work in the school’s health room/clinic but their responsibilities are limited to directing students to rest or calling their parents to pick them up.
- Volunteers SHOULD NOT dispense medication or apply first aid.
- Volunteers under the supervision of a LCS employee may assist a school with health screenings.

Guidance Office Volunteer
- May assist with tasks in the guidance office (e.g. maintaining files, assisting students researching scholarships or career opportunities).
- Volunteers must be trained in student confidentiality.

Dismissed Volunteers

Any volunteer who does not conduct himself/herself in an appropriate manner with students, staff, or other parents, etc., may be dismissed of their volunteer duties. At the Principal’s discretion, a Volunteer may be denied access to students or the campus through “Dismissal.”

If a volunteer is dismissed for any reason, the Principal will send a letter or email of notification to the Human Resources Department. The Online Volunteer Application system will then be updated to reflect the “Dismissed” status.
**Campus Visitors**

A “visitor” is defined as anyone who comes onto school property, but is not assigned duties or asked to supervise students. Guidelines for visitors are established and implemented at each individual school. Some examples of visitors include:

- Speaking to students as a one-time guest
- Eating lunch with your child
- Attending school functions as a guest
- Reading to classrooms as a one-time guest

**Campus Guidelines**

All volunteers, by district policy, must sign in and out at a location designated by the principal before proceeding to their volunteer assignment.

For activities conducted after school hours, volunteers should be asked to sign in and state the purpose of their activity and the time frame for which they are volunteering. This sheet should be turned into the Volunteer Coordinator on the next school day. Advanced notice must be given to the Volunteer Coordinator before scheduling an after school activity. The notice should include a list of volunteer names. Please contact your principal, regarding any further questions on security.

All volunteers must wear an identifying nametag designated and approved by the administration of the school. For security reasons, faculty members and staff should direct individuals without a nametag to the front office.

*With the exception of verbally and politely requesting the students’ attention, volunteers should not discipline students.* All discipline concerns should be directed to the appropriate LCS employee.

Volunteers must always serve as positive role models. When serving as a VITAL volunteer, an individual must refrain from any and all inappropriate behaviors including, but not limited to:

- Use of profanity.
- Use of drugs (including alcohol and tobacco).
- Discussion of inappropriate topics.
- Making “advances” to a student.
- Selling merchandise or actively promoting their business.
- Persuasion to a personal way of thinking or acting.

Volunteer attire should comply with the dress code of the school.

Any discussion of a student is restricted to the student’s teacher, guidance counselor or school administration. Only appropriate school personnel may discuss individual students. Just as volunteers are subject to rules of confidentiality, their approval status is also confidential. Please be discreet when speaking with volunteers about their own status. Do not discuss a volunteer’s approval status with anyone other than the Principal, Volunteer, or Human Resources personnel at the district office.
Volunteer Application and Screening Guidelines

LCS reserves the right to refuse a volunteer and/or to conduct a FDLE check, as many times as deemed necessary, on any individual who submits an application as a VITAL Volunteer.

**Becoming a VITAL Volunteer**

To become a VITAL Volunteer, an individual must:
- Complete the LCS Volunteer Online Application which is located on the LCS website in the Volunteer Information section under Human Resources.
  - A link can also be found under the Community Engagement webpage.
- An individual who refuses to complete the application in its entirety or falsifies information on the Volunteer Application will not be approved.
- A background check must be completed and approved before the individual (excluding LCS employees and student volunteers) will be allowed to volunteer with any LCS students.
- All returning volunteers who have criminal offenses and have complied with the guideline and disclosed the required information may state “already on file” in the background section of the online application. If the applicant indicates any criminal offenses that do not come back on the FDLE report, more information will be requested - including but not limited to; an arrest report, final disposition, and a written explanation of the charges and/or convictions prior to approval.
- If there are any questions, please direct the applicant the Human Resources Department.

**Managing Volunteers**

It is the responsibility of the Volunteer Coordinator to manage communication with a volunteer as it relates to the job that he or she is applying for. Unfortunately, the size of a campus may prevent a Volunteer Coordinator from conducting individual interviews with everyone who wants to volunteer. However, the Volunteer Coordinator at the school or department site is responsible for overseeing the actions of that person and making sure they complete the appropriate paperwork.

**Screening Internal References**

- Our best reference for a volunteer are those that we have familiarity and association with. In most cases, a volunteer who has an interest in a school is either referred (internally) or has an association with the school (often parents of a child attending the school).
- It’s important to ensure there is a good fit between the applicant and the available opportunity. Factors like availability and proficiency/skillset should be considered when selecting and making contact with the applicants.

**DID YOU KNOW...?**

Screening internal references often becomes reactive process, and screening external references is a proactive process that will increase your available pool of dedicated volunteers.
Screening External References

- We understand that there are going to be times when a number of applicants may come from an unknown source. This requires the Volunteer Coordinator to consider a few screening tips when initially reviewing the volunteer’s application and when reaching out to the interested applicant:
  - Does the applicant have an association with the school – chances are, they heard about the opportunity from another parent or they have some association with the school
  - What is the applicant’s level of commitment look like?
  - Does the applicant express interest in a particular skillset?
  - Does the applicant have an interest in volunteering once, twice, or ongoing?

Timeline for Background Checks

The Human Resources Department will submit the necessary information to the appropriate agency that conducts background screenings.

The Volunteer Online Application must be submitted in a timely manner. It is up to the school to establish appropriate timelines for the completion of background screenings before field trips or other volunteer activities. The district office will not approve last minute applicants and it is strongly recommended that Volunteer Coordinators leave a 3 week planning period for such activities.

Background clearance or fingerprinting must be completed and approved before assigning duties to any volunteer.

Guidelines for Applicants with Criminal Backgrounds

An individual, who applies to become a LCS Vital Volunteer but has indicated that he or she has been convicted of a crime, will be processed in the following way:

- Approval code will be changed to “Active – Pending Background Review” – the individual is prohibited from volunteering until approval is given by HR.
- If the district is unable to make a final decision based upon the information supplied by the volunteer applicant, and the FDLE check, HR will send a letter requesting additional information or documentation regarding the charges. A copy of the letter will be sent to the principal for the school’s file.
- Once the requested information is received and reviewed a final decision will be made and the approval status will be updated accordingly.
Transportation of Students by Volunteers

The use of parents/guardians to transport students for a school function is discouraged. Scheduling LCS bus and driver is preferred for all school functions.

In the event that private vehicles are used to transport students, School Board Policy 8.36 requires that:

1. Each student’s parent or guardian is notified in writing about the transportation arrangement and gives written permission before a student is transported in a private vehicle.
2. The vehicle be registered in the State of Florida, be insured for personal injury protection and property damage liability in at least the minimum amounts required by law, and be in good working order.
3. The driver submits his/her driver’s license, vehicle registration and insurance ID card to the principal for approval in a reasonable amount of time before the planned trip.

Florida Department of Law Enforcement Reports

- An FDLE report, or information contained in the report, cannot be copied or released to the applicant or another organization.
- In the State of Florida, an individual has the right to request his or her criminal history record for review, to ensure that it is both accurate and complete. If, after reviewing his or her criminal history, the individual feels the record is inaccurate and/or incomplete, it is the individual’s responsibility to contact the agency responsible for submitting the part of the record in question. The requestor may use the results to examine accuracy and/or to challenge any information contained in the history which he or she feels is inaccurate and/or incomplete. Any other use of the results will constitute a violation of applicable State and Federal law.

To request criminal history information, you may send a letter to:
Florida Department of Law Enforcement -
User Services Bureau
Criminal History Services
PO Box 1489
Tallahassee FL 32302

Or order the information online at: https://web.fdle.state.fl.us/search/app/contact

At this time there is a charge for this service. For additional information please call FDLE at (850) 410-8109. For written requests, include a return address, the name, any aliases, date of birth, race, sex and social security number and last address. Your check or money order should accompany your request. It is the responsibility of the volunteer to contact the arresting agency or an attorney to make the necessary corrections to his/her criminal background. If the volunteer obtains court papers or a corrected background check, a copy must be submitted to HR before volunteer approval.
Logging into SearchSoft – Volunteer Tracking System

Volunteer Coordinators will login to SearchSoft through a different website than the portal for Applicants:  
https://ats3.searchsoft.net/ats/emp_login.shtml?bypass=Y&COMPANY_ID=00016523
(You may want to save this link in your favorites)

The webpage will look similar to the screenshot below and you will always see Employer Login:

![Login Page Screenshot]

Your username and password will be assigned to you by Human Resources. Please contact your HR Specialist if you cannot remember your login information.

IMPORTANT: **DO NOT SHARE YOUR LOGIN WITH ANYONE!!**

In SearchSoft, users will enter their **password** as an electronic signature, authorizing certain actions to take place. Every saved action in SearchSoft is part of a legally defensible audit trail; therefore, do not share your login/password with anyone.
Screening Applicants

Searching for Volunteer Applicants

The Searching Menu section allows you to find volunteer applicants based on your defined search criteria. When conducting a search from this tab you are searching the entire pool of volunteer applicants.

To search the entire pool of volunteer applicants, please follow the steps below.

1. Click on the “Searching” tab.
2. Enter your search criteria to pull up the desired applicant. Click on Volunteer in the Applicant Type.
3. De-select “Active” to view all volunteer applicants. Hold down the Ctrl key and click on Active.

Before de-selecting:

After de-selecting:

4. Click on “Submit” at the top or bottom of the page.

Refining Searches:

- After you have performed a search, you can scroll to the bottom of the results page and click on “Refine this Search”. Your last searching criteria will be saved and return you to the search page where you can choose additional criteria to narrow your search results further.

Saved Searches:

- After you have performed a search you can scroll to the bottom of the results page and click on “Save this Search”. This allows you to title the search and return to the searching results by clicking on “Saved Searches” in the left side bar of the Searching page.

DID YOU KNOW…?

Last Name/First Name/Middle Initial/Other Name(s) are all text searches. SearchSoft will return the applicants who have an exact match to the search criteria entered. It is best to utilize text fields in conjunction with the wildcard “**” character.
Applicant Folders

The Applicant Folders feature allows users to store candidates in folders for future reference. Users can share those folders with other users in the system. To start using Folders, simply select the "Add to Folder" in the action box from any applicant search result page.

For example, if you are looking at a list of "Interested Applicants" from a search, you can place a check mark next to any number of those applicants and select "Add to Folder" in the action box at the top of the page. After selecting "Go", you will be able to select the appropriate folder for the checked applicants, or you will be given the option to create a new folder. Just give your new folder a name and your list of applicants is then neatly filed away.

Step by Step - Adding a Folder

1. Place a check in the box next to the volunteer(s) you would like to add to a folder
2. Select "Add to Folder" from the Actions Menu
3. Click the "Go" button
4. Place a check in the desired folder(s) (OR create a new folder from here!)
5. Click "Add to Folder" button

If you want to see the applicants stored in your new folder, click on the "Searching" tab at the top of the page and then select "Folders" from the left side bar. You will see a list of your existing folder, and if you click "Applicants" next to your new folder, you will see the applicants who were previously added to that folder.

E-mailing Volunteer Applicants

The e-mail feature allows a user to contact volunteer applicants through the SearchSoft portal. The system also keeps a record of the e-mail.

To e-mail a volunteer applicant, please follow the steps below.

1. Utilize the Searching feature to locate to volunteer applicant.
2. On the “Search Results” page click on the box next to the volunteer applicant(s) who will be receiving the email.
3. From the “Select an action” pull down on the top of the page, select “Create and Send Email”, then “Go”.
4. Enter the title, subject, and message. You can select to “Email and Discard” for a one-time use or to “Email and Save” if you wish to use a generic email again.

DID YOU KNOW...?

If you would like to send the same email again, you can select, “Email and Save”. Then, you can select, “Select and Send Email” to reuse it for another applicant by selecting it from the appropriate title. Email history is retained in the SearchSoft database concerning all applicants. To view email history, first search for the applicant then click “view” next to the applicant name. From the “Current Page” dropdown select “Email History”. Email correspondence is viewable by clicking on “View” next to each email string. Please note if you are documenting contacts for internal candidates that it does not provide you with a read receipt.
Creating Applicant Notes

To create notes in an applicant’s profile, please follow the steps below.

1. Click on the “Searching” tab.
2. Enter your search criteria to pull up the desired applicant.
3. Or locate the applicant from the “Jobs” tab.
4. Click “View/Edit” for the appropriate applicant.
5. From the “Current Page” pull down on the top of the page, select “Notes”
6. Click “Add” to create a note.

**IMPORTANT:** All SearchSoft users can view all applicant notes! Therefore, it is imperative that only non-sensitive information is placed in the notes. Please only list dates of contact, interview status, etc. in the notes. Do not put any negative comments or sensitive information in the Notes area.

## eForms

**Document Search**

A document search allows a user to search eForm documents by their status and version.

**STEPS:**

1. Click on the eForms tab.
2. Click on Document Search in the left side bar.
   
   - **Document Status** is the current status of the eForm document in SearchSoft.
   
   - **Document Type** is the type of eForm document.
   
   - **Creator** is the person who initiated the document by using their login information to log in to SearchSoft. For instance, if you login to SearchSoft as a Principal but your Assistant Principal initiated the document you are looking for then you would chose the Assistant Principal as the creator of the document.

Once you have your search results you can sort the results by Subject User, Date Created, Form, Current Form Status and Created By. All of these options are noted in “Red” at the top of the page.

Current Form Status lets the user know where their eForm document is in workflow. Once the eForm has been completed the “current form status” column will be blank on your results page.
Volunteer Approval/Renewal Request

The Volunteer Approval/Renewal Request eForm allows a user to submit a request for approval of a volunteer to Human Resources. (This process replaces sending the paper volunteer application form to HR.)

To initiate a Volunteer Approval/Renewal Request, please follow the steps below:

1. Check the Volunteer Tracking System to determine the current status of the volunteer applicant. Please do not submit this eForm for volunteers who are currently approved. If the volunteer is currently approved, you do not need to submit this eForm to HR. **If the volunteer does not exist in the volunteer database, or is up for renewal, you should follow the steps below to submit this eForm to HR.**

2. Click on the “Searching” tab to locate the volunteer applicant. (See page 4 for searching instructions).

3. Select the volunteer applicant to be submitted for approval by clicking in the box next to his/her name.

4. From the “Select an action” pull down on the top of the page, select “Assign Document(s)” then “Go”.

5. Choose “Volunteer Approval/Renewal Request” on the pop up box.

6. Click on “Assign Documents”.

7. Using the pull-down menu, select your Building/Department.

8. Check Level 1 or Level 2 – **This is very important as it will determine which type of screening is conducted.** Note: Level 1 or Level 2 is not required for employee and student volunteers.

9. Enter comments, if desired, in the Comments box.

10. Use the “Select and action” pull-down menu to choose either Level 1, Level 2, Employee or Student submission

```
(Select an action)
(Select an action)
Submit - Employee - Assign to any "Volunteer Approval" user
Submit - Student - Assign to any "Volunteer Approval" user
Submit - Level 1 - Assign to any "Volunteer Approval" user
Submit - Level 2 - Assign to any "Volunteer Approval" user
```

11. Enter your user account’s password in the Signature field. (This is the same as the password you use to login to SearchSoft)
12. Click “Submit.”

13. The eForm will be sent electronically to HR to begin the approval process.
   a. Level 1 volunteer applicants will be submitted for screening
   b. Level 2 volunteer applicants will receive an email which contains instructions to register for fingerprinting

14. When the screening/fingerprint results are received by HR, the eForm will be “completed” and the volunteer coordinator will receive an email similar to the one below indicating the approval/denial of the volunteer applicant.

----Original Message-----
From: no-reply@searchsoft.net [mailto:no-reply@searchsoft.net]
Sent: Friday, August 16, 2013 2:14 PM

Subject: Level 2 Volunteer Approved

The following Level 2 volunteer has been approved and is now able to perform volunteer duties which may be assigned outside the immediate presence of a Lake County Schools employee.

Name of Volunteer

You may contact Human Resources if you have questions about the status of this volunteer.

Please direct all replies to OnlineApplication@lake.k12.fl.us

You have received this email because you have an online account at Lake County Schools. If you no longer wish to receive emails from this system, please go to: https://ats3.searchsoft.net/ats/optout.jsp?u=3700310029&c=00016523&h=cZyOJQmjx

15. Approval status will also be entered in the Volunteer Tracking System.

16. As stated in the email above, you may contact the volunteer once you receive an approval email.

DID YOU KNOW...?
Information from the volunteer application transfers over to the Volunteer Approval/Renewal Request. This means fewer fields for you to complete.
Application Process Step-by-Step Guide

Phase 1: Applicant Interest

1. Interested applicants are directed to fill out application.
2. Applicant fills out application.
3. Applicant contacts the School Volunteer Coordinator to let them know they’ve completed the application.
5. School Volunteer Coordinator screens application, determines level and submits applicant to district for screening (Volunteer Approval/Renewal Request eForm).
6. District Volunteer Processor receives volunteer request and begins the approval process.

Phase 2: Approval Process

1. District Volunteer Processor receives volunteer begins the approval/screening process.
2. **For Level 1:**
   a. District Volunteer Processor submits applicants to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) for a background check.
   b. If APPROVED, District Volunteer Processor will mark application as “Approved”, indicating the approval level, and add expiration/renewal dates on application.
   c. Automated SearchSoft E-mail is sent to applicant and School Volunteer coordinator indicating approval status.
   d. School Volunteer Coordinator manages communication moving forward.
3. **For Level 2:**
   a. District Volunteer Processor must submit the applicant for a State and National background clearance check. Fingerprinting is required.
   b. District Volunteer Processor begins processing the eForm, which sends an E-mail to the applicant requesting an FDLE VECHS waiver be submitted to the School Volunteer Coordinator.
   c. School Volunteer Coordinator retains a copy for their records, but sends the ORIGINAL to the District Volunteer Processor to continue the screening process.
   d. District Volunteer Processor continues processing the eForm, which sends an E-mail to the applicant with instructions on how to complete fingerprinting. Note: Applicants may have to check their Spam folder, depending on their e-mail settings.
   e. If APPROVED, District Volunteer Processor will mark application as “Approved”, indicating the approval level, and add expiration/renewal dates on application.
   f. Automated SearchSoft E-mail is sent to applicant and School Volunteer coordinator indicating approval status.
   g. School Volunteer Coordinator manages communication moving forward.
Frequently Asked Questions

Q. I don’t want to be embarrassed at school, or have my child embarrassed by a mistake that I made in my past. Do I have to disclose a previous arrest?
A. Yes. If a volunteer does not disclose an arrest, the application is considered fraudulent and the volunteer may be denied approval. (This is clearly stated on the volunteer application.)

Q. Does the school have access to my background check?
A. No. The background check is received at the district office. Background checks are strictly confidential and are not discussed with a volunteer who calls requesting the information.

Q. A withheld on my case. Is that considered a conviction? Will that prevent me from getting volunteer approval?
A. Adjudication Withheld means a “Court decision at any point after filing of a criminal complaint, to continue court jurisdiction but stop short of pronouncing judgment” (Defined by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement.) This may occur to avoid the undesirable effects of correction. Approval is based on level and age of charge.

Q. I went through a diversion program (pre-trial intervention, etc.). Could that prevent me from being approved as a volunteer?
A. Yes. In order to enter a diversion program, you waive the right to a trial. Usually, you must enter a plea of nolo contender (will not contest charge, but neither admits guilt nor claims innocence) or guilty.

Q. May I chaperone on field trips with my child if I have not completed the volunteer screening process or been denied to volunteer?
A. No. You cannot “chaperone” students as a “volunteer”. However, you may attend field trips as a visitor, at the school’s discretion. You will be required to drive your personal vehicle to the field trip destination. This is a school function. Your child must ride on the bus to field trips, unless you sign your child out as absent for the day. You may not be in charge of students other than your own child. The ability to obtain a discounted admission for the field trip will be at the school’s discretion. The school may have a limited number of discounted admissions available, which are reserved for chaperones. You may be required to purchase your admission at full price directly from the park, museum, etc.

Q. May I attend school functions even though I cannot volunteer?
A. Yes! We want every parent/guardian to take an active part in the education of his or her child. You may certainly attend school functions, as a parent and visitor, at the discretion of the school. However, you cannot work with students as a volunteer, nor can the time you spend at the school functions be counted as volunteer hours.

Q. Why do I have to submit my social security number when applying for a volunteer position with Lake County Schools?
A. We comply with the background/employment requirements stated in Florida State Statute 1012.56
In order for your son/daughter to become a volunteer with Lake County Schools, your consent is required. Please read and sign this parental consent form if you would like to continue the approval process of your son/daughter serving as a volunteer.

NAME OF PROSPECTIVE YOUTH VOLUNTEER: ________________________________

DATE OF BIRTH: __________ SCHOOL ATTENDING CURRENTLY: ____________________

I understand that son/daughter named above wishes to be considered for volunteer work with Lake County Schools. I hereby give my permission for him/her to serve in this capacity. I understand that he/she will be expected to meet all the requirements of the role, including regular attendance and adherence to Lake County School District’s policies and procedures. I understand that he/she will not receive monetary compensation for the services contributed as a volunteer. I also understand that Lake County Schools is not liable for any physical injuries that may occur during the period of the volunteer assignment.

SIGNATURE OF PARENT: ________________________________

NAME OF PARENT: ________________________________

RELATIONSHIP TO PROSPECTIVE YOUTH VOLUNTEER: ____________________

DATE: ____________________

Please submit completed form to School Volunteer Coordinator or upload document to your online application on the ‘Attachments’ page.

9/12/2013