



summit schools
brilliant beginnings, bright futures

EDUCATION VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

Guidelines, Resources, and Opportunity for Volunteers

Welcome to Summit Schools!

Thank you for your willingness to partner with us in providing an excellent educational program. Summit Schools encourages volunteer participation in our school's programs and activities. There are several opportunities to volunteer and to actively participate in the educational program. Research indicates there are many positive outcomes for students when parents and community members volunteer and actively participate in their children's school.

Your involvement helps Summit build a school community that emphasizes academic excellence, community responsibility, basic skill development, individual strengths, technology integration, and a lifelong love of learning. As a volunteer, you provide enrichment opportunities that enhance the educational experience for students while supporting teachers and staff. Your participation helps us to fulfill our mission of creating a safe, positive, innovative and educational environment for all students.

As you enhance and support our school, it is important to help students be excited about learning. By modeling for students the kinds of behaviors and attitudes they need in order to succeed, you help them to develop into productive citizens of the school and community. This handbook is designed to provide you with practical information that will assist you in your volunteer placement.

We hope that the time you spend with our students is worthwhile for you as well as the students. If you have any questions that have not been addressed in this handbook, please feel free to ask. Once again, thank you for helping make a difference in the lives of students at Summit Schools.

Welcome!

Summit Administration and Board



Who is a Summit Volunteer?

Summit volunteers help to expand and enrich student learning by working under the direction of a Summit employee (administrators, teachers, or other school staff). Summit volunteers include parents, grandparents, and other community members.

Characteristics of Successful Volunteers

- ❖ Patience, kindness, and a genuine interest in each student
- ❖ Commitment to the volunteer activity
- ❖ Regular and scheduled attendance
- ❖ Adherence to all school policies
- ❖ A cooperative attitude, flexibility, and a willingness to attend training as needed
- ❖ Willingness to establish a good rapport with students and staff
- ❖ Enthusiastic about accepting each student and encouraging the best for him/her
- ❖ Fair, consistent, trustworthy, and honest in their approach, attitude, and interactions with students
- ❖ Maintains confidentiality

Summit Schools will:

- ❖ Survey volunteer needs of teachers and support staff
- ❖ Assist teachers and support staff in developing meaningful and productive volunteer roles
- ❖ Recruit and register volunteers
- ❖ Provide and collect required volunteer application/screening information
- ❖ Arrange orientation and training as necessary
- ❖ Place and schedule volunteers by matching their skills/interests to job

- ❖ Serve as a resource for volunteers
- ❖ Maintain volunteer program data
- ❖ Coordinate and host volunteer appreciation/recognition opportunities

A Summit volunteer:

- ❖ Will provide a service to the school
- ❖ Will not be compensated monetarily by the school
- ❖ Will provide volunteer service as scheduled and for more than one day (except for field trip and special event chaperones)
- ❖ Will provide volunteer service only within designated area(s)/classroom(s)
- ❖ Will sign in and out of the building
- ❖ Will record their volunteer hours in FACTS
- ❖ May have access to students while performing the service

Summit volunteers may gain:

- ❖ Personal satisfaction from helping students learn
- ❖ Opportunities to learn new skills and polish old ones
- ❖ Greater knowledge and understanding of Summit Schools
- ❖ Work experience that may support career growth

Summit students gain:

- ❖ Additional individual attention
- ❖ An accepting atmosphere for reinforced learning
- ❖ Support toward success, thus building better self-esteem
- ❖ A warm and caring adult who is a friend and role model

Summit Schools gain:

- ❖ Positive interaction with community
- ❖ Improved student achievement and behavior
- ❖ Additional services without extra costs
- ❖ Increased community understanding and support

Recruitment

Volunteers are recruited by Summit on an ongoing basis and without regard to race, creed, color, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, sex, disability, religion, political party affiliation, or actual or potential parental, family or marital status.

Volunteers may be recruited through either an interest in specific roles or through a general interest in volunteering which will later be matched with a specific role. No final acceptance and placement of a volunteer shall take place without the completion of the online volunteer application and screening statement (for positions working with or around students).



GETTING STARTED

Please complete Summit's online volunteer application and screening statement each school year. Once approved to volunteer, we may provide an orientation on school policies and volunteer procedures as needed. This information will include emergency (fire and tornado) procedures, restroom location, parking information, absence procedures, the location of our visitor sign-in book and name tags, the opening and closing times of the school, the location for coats, how to log volunteer hours in FACTS, and general regulations of the school.

Volunteer Application

All volunteer applicants, including field trip chaperones and drivers, must annually complete and sign the online volunteer application and screening statement PRIOR to volunteering (including chaperoning).

Volunteer Application Questions

The safety and security of Summit students and staff is the top priority of the Summit Schools Board of Trustees. Therefore, Summit requires the following information from all volunteers:

- ❖ Have you ever been convicted of a felony? ___ Yes ___ No
 - o A "Yes" answer requires an interview with a school administrator to be further considered.

- ❖ Have you ever been convicted, or had an administrative finding, of violating any law involving child abuse, sexual abuse, physical abuse, sexual harassment or exploitation, or any other crime? ___ Yes ___ No

- o A "Yes" answer requires an interview with a school administrator to be further considered.

❖ Do you currently have charges pending relating to any of the above?

Yes No

- o A "Yes" answer requires an interview with a school administrator to be further considered.

Criminal Records Check

As appropriate for the protection of students and staff, volunteers will be asked to submit to a criminal background check as well as a child abuse check. Volunteers who do not agree to the background check – authorized by completing the online volunteer application – may not volunteer at Summit Schools.

Interviewing

Prior to being assigned to a position working with or around students, a volunteer may meet with the designated volunteer coordinator to ascertain his/her suitability for and interest in that position. The interview is intended to determine the qualifications of the volunteer and their commitment to fulfill the requirements of the position, and should answer any questions that the volunteer might have about the position. Interviews may be conducted in person to examine the volunteer skills and abilities.

Field Trips and Off-Campus Activities

It is the general policy of Summit Schools that all off-campus field trips and activity chaperones be at least 21 years of age. Volunteers who wish to drive students must have a valid Iowa State driver's license and proof of personal vehicle insurance. Anyone driving students must complete the required driver statement (text copied below) each school year.

Staff and Volunteer Driver Statement

- ❖ I understand the conditions of my responsibility while driving my personal vehicle for an authorized school activity.
- ❖ I have a current and valid driver's license that I will provide a copy of to Summit Schools BEFORE I drive on a field trip.
- ❖ I am not subject to any driver's license suspension, revocation, cancellation, denial or bar and have not committed an offense or act which, either alone or with

previous offenses or acts, could result in license suspension, revocation, cancellation, denial or bar.

- ❖ To the best of my knowledge, the vehicle I will be driving is in safe operating condition.
 - ❖ I possess proof of insurance for the vehicle that I will provide a copy of to Summit Schools BEFORE I drive on a field trip.
 - ❖ I have the owner's permission to operate the vehicle.
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Conflict of Interest

Individuals who have a conflict of interest with any activity or program of the school - whether personal, philosophical, or financial – may not serve as a volunteer with the school.

Position Descriptions

Volunteers, just as paid staff, require a clear, complete, and current description of the duties and responsibilities of the position which they are expected to fill. Prior to any volunteer assignment or recruitment effort, a position description may be developed for the volunteer position. This position description may be given to each accepted volunteer and utilized in subsequent management and evaluation efforts. Position descriptions would be reviewed and updated whenever the work involved in the position changes substantially.

All position descriptions shall include a description of the purpose and duties of the position, a designated supervisor and work area (classroom/office/at home, etc.), a schedule for the performance of the job (if needed), and a listing of job qualifications (as applicable). Supervisory staff will take the lead in developing volunteer position descriptions.

Summit will only recruit or place volunteers when staff are prepared to make meaningful use of volunteer resources for the benefit of students.

Orientation and Training

All volunteers may receive a general orientation on the nature and purpose of the school and an orientation on the nature and operation of the program or activity for which they are recruited. Volunteers may receive specific on-the-job training to provide them with the information and skills necessary to perform their volunteer assignment. Staff will have a role in the design and delivery of on-the-job training to volunteers assigned to them. (Orientation/training may be provided in writing depending on the type of position.)

Placement

In placing a volunteer, attention shall be paid to the interests and abilities of the volunteer and to the needs of the volunteer position. Volunteers will be assigned to work with a Summit staff person only with the agreement of that staff person. The volunteer must be under the supervision of the identified teacher or staff member at all times. This supervisor is responsible for day-to-day guidance of the work of the volunteer. Volunteers may not supervise students.

Attendance

Because our school is an active and busy learning environment, all regular volunteer activities should be scheduled in advance. Punctuality and reliability are important since students are counting on you at that time. Please inform teachers/staff in advance of planned absences and call the school for unforeseen absences. Students will be disappointed you cannot come, but will be reassured that you cared enough to call. Thank you for not disrupting the learning environment by dropping in to volunteer at an unscheduled time. Volunteers shall sign in upon arrival and sign out when leaving.

Recording Volunteer Hours

Be sure to log your volunteer time with each visit/job. Time tracking helps Summit maintain an accurate record of involvement in our school. It also offers powerful – and necessary – data for grants and external funding applications. Your time should be tracked in your [FACTS](#) family portal if you have an account. If you do not have access to a FACTS account, please email your hours to the Volunteer Coordinator.

Confidentiality

Volunteers are required by federal law to keep all student information that they obtain while working as a Summit volunteer confidential. Student information includes all academic, medical and personal information. In addition volunteers cannot take photos/video or share student work without parent/guardian written permission. Disclosure of student information by a volunteer is a violation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and may subject the volunteer and school to civil liability.

Dress Code

Volunteers should dress appropriately for the conditions and performance of their duties.

Health Information

Please do not come to school if you are ill. This includes a cold, sore throat, or cough. You may think you are leaving the school shorthanded, and you may want to volunteer even though you are not well, but doing so is not good for you, the students, or the

teacher/staff. Please call the school and leave a message for the teacher or staff member you are volunteering with when you have an unforeseen absence.

Sign In & Out / Wear a Nametag / Record Hours

When volunteering at Summit, **always:** 1. Sign in to the Visitor Log. 2. Wear a school-provided volunteer name badge. 3. Record your volunteer hours in [FACTS](#) if you have a login. If you do not have a FACTS login, please email your hours to the Volunteer Coordinator. These requirements are necessary because:

- ❖ Student and staff safety and security are our highest priority.
- ❖ Volunteers are covered by Summit Schools' commercial general liability insurance while performing assigned volunteer duties.
- ❖ All hours you provide as a service to the school, including work done at home for the school and as a chaperone for curriculum-related activities/field trips, should be recorded. Verified volunteer service can be used as work experience for future employment. Individual volunteers may be recognized for their dedication and service to our school. The record of volunteer attendance is one basis for these recognitions. Volunteer data is a key component of many grant/funding proposals that help to support Summit programming.

Safe interactions with students

The Summit administration and board expects that all staff and volunteers will strive to set the kind of example for students that will serve them well in their own conduct and behavior and contribute toward a supportive learning atmosphere. Interactions with students should be focused on teaching and learning. The guidelines below are intended to protect both the student and volunteer.

A Summit volunteer will

- ❖ Meet only in public spaces with students within the school setting. Never meet with students behind closed doors or off campus without prior parent/guardian permission.
- ❖ Avoid initiating social activities outside the school setting unless parent/guardian approved.
- ❖ Refrain from initiating any personal or private conversations or correspondence with students.
- ❖ Refrain from engaging in social media with students (Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, X, etc.) or other social networking websites.
- ❖ Refrain from sharing your personal phone or email information with students.
- ❖ Avoid giving students gifts unless identical for all students in the class and with Summit administration approval.
- ❖ Refrain from giving students inappropriate signs of affection such as front hugs, students sitting on lap, touching or patting on areas other than shoulders, upper

back, face, arms or hands or any other contact that may make a student feel uncomfortable.

Reporting Suspected Abuse or Neglect

As a volunteer if you suspect that a student may be the victim of abuse or neglect, you are required by law to report it immediately to the teachers, school administration or another school employee.

Effective Communication with Teachers

Thank you for being respectful of the teacher's time when working in the classroom. It is best practice to meet the teacher or supervising staff member prior to starting your volunteer time. This meet and greet should include specific duties while volunteering, preferred communications systems and exchanging contact information. Do not be afraid to ask questions. If you have specific concerns or questions, ask the teacher when would be a good time to discuss. If it concerns the discipline of a student, immediately ask for assistance; it is not the role of a volunteer to discipline students. Be sure to contact the teacher if you cannot come at your scheduled time so alternate plans can be made.

Volunteers as Volunteer Supervisors

A volunteer may act as a supervisor of other volunteers, provided that the supervising volunteer is under the direct supervision of a paid Summit staff member. Volunteers may not supervise students or staff.

Representation of Summit Schools

Volunteers are not authorized to act as representatives of the school, including public statements to the media, coalition or lobbying efforts with other organizations, or any agreements involving contractual or other financial obligations.

Resignation/Dismissal

Volunteers may resign from their volunteer service with the school at any time. We ask that volunteers who intend to resign provide advance notice of their departure and a reason for their decision. Similarly, the school may at any time, for whatever reason, decide to end the volunteer's relationship with the school. No volunteer will be removed until the volunteer has had an opportunity to discuss the reasons for possible dismissal with supervisory staff/administration. Possible reasons for dismissal may include, but are not limited to: being under the influence of alcohol or drugs; theft of property or misuse of school equipment or materials; abuse or mistreatment of students, staff or other volunteers; or failure to abide by school/volunteer policies and procedures.

Reimbursement of Expenses

Volunteers may be eligible for reimbursement of expenses incurred while undertaking business for the school. Prior authorization is required.

Access to School Property and Materials

As appropriate, volunteers may have access to school property and receive training in the operation of any equipment. Property and materials should be used only for school-related purposes.

Evaluation of School Volunteer Program

Summit may conduct regular evaluations of the utilization of volunteers by the school. This evaluation process shall include information gathered from volunteers, staff, and students.

Ways to Volunteer

From preparing materials for a classroom project to mentoring a student one-on-one, there is a volunteer job to suit nearly every person's background and interest. Below is a general overview of possible volunteer opportunities. Please understand that not all volunteer opportunities are available in every Summit class or each school year. We make every effort to recruit volunteers only for positions in need. To help with the placement process, volunteers should consider the following:

- ❖ Would you like to work directly with students?
- ❖ Would you like to be a mentor or classroom assistant?
- ❖ Do you have special talents and/or skills that would benefit music, art, physical education or another curriculum-based program?
- ❖ What age group would you prefer?
- ❖ How much time can you commit to volunteering?
- ❖ What days or hours do you prefer?
- ❖ Can you make a weekly commitment or are you only available occasionally?
- ❖ What experience do you have that would prepare you for your volunteer job?
- ❖ What is your motivation for volunteering?

Suggested Volunteer Opportunities

Classroom Volunteer

- ❖ Reads to students and listens to them read.
- ❖ Helps students 1:1 to enhance their critical thinking skills using problems.
- ❖ Uses teacher-provided resources and materials to support students.
- ❖ Assists younger students with learning the alphabet, colors, numbers, and in identifying letters, shapes, rhyming words, etc.
- ❖ Supervises learning centers, games, and other areas where an extra pair of hands is helpful.
- ❖ Assists students with special projects.

- ❖ Assists students in academic work without evaluating.

At-Home Volunteer

- ❖ Organizes learning celebrations.
- ❖ Prepares hands-on learning material.

Clerical Volunteer

- ❖ Assists staff in the operation of our school.
- ❖ Assists with book fairs and other projects.

Field Trip / Offsite Activity Volunteer

- ❖ Transports students to field trip locations using personal vehicles.
- ❖ Assists teachers during field trips.
- ❖ Takes responsibility for a group of students assigned by the teacher.
- ❖ Follows specific chaperone guidelines as provided by the school.

Fine Arts Volunteer

- ❖ Works with small groups of students on special projects.
- ❖ Helps teachers with activity/event preparations and clean-up.
- ❖ Accompanies choral groups as a pianist.

Guidance Volunteer

- ❖ Works with small groups on special projects.
- ❖ Mentors students.
- ❖ Steps up as a career or special topic classroom presenter.

Campus Volunteer

- ❖ Assists with school campus beautification and/or the outdoor classroom and school garden. This includes Clean-Up Days, regular buildings and grounds assistance.

Mentor Volunteer

- ❖ Works with small groups or 1:1 to reinforce basic skills or students needing extra support.
- ❖ Works at any grade level and in any subject area under teacher direction.
- ❖ Serves as a role model, helping the student understand how education will help him or her reach personal goals.
- ❖ Encourages school attendance; discourages tardiness.
- ❖ May provide additional challenges to gifted students outside of classroom instruction in before/after school activities such as LEGO League, Mock Trial, etc.

Physical Education / Health Volunteer

- ❖ Helps the PE teacher with special programs (roller skating, etc.).
- ❖ Assists with Running Club.
- ❖ Assists with Barbell Club.
- ❖ Helps with Summit Field Day event.
- ❖ Helps with Summit gardens.
- ❖ Helps with Summit Monarch Zone.

Project-Based Learning Volunteer

- ❖ Engages with students and school partner organizations in authentic community projects, problems, and opportunities.
- ❖ Helps with end-of-school-year celebration.
- ❖ Assists with Lego League enrichment programming.
- ❖ Assists with the YALE Program.
- ❖ Serves as a Junior Achievement Program instructor in a classroom.
- ❖ Serves as guest speaker in classrooms, perhaps sharing insights on career preparedness.

School Leader/Committee Volunteer

- ❖ Serves as a member of the Summit Parent Teacher Organization (PTO).
- ❖ Serves as a member of the Board of Trustees.
- ❖ Serves on a school committee to address a specific need or help with a special event (i.e. Development Committee, School Improvement Advisory Committee [SIAC], Celebrate Summit, Marketing, etc.).

Business and Organization Partnership Volunteers

- ❖ Partnerships with businesses and community groups help support Summit's learning environment by their individual and group volunteer contributions.

IMPORTANT VOLUNTEER GUIDELINES

- ❖ Discipline issues should be immediately reported to the teacher or building administrator. Volunteers should not discipline students.
- ❖ Please silence cell phones when volunteering.
- ❖ Volunteers should not bring other children with them into the classroom during instruction time. This presents a liability issue for Summit Schools and can be disruptive to the learning environment for students and the volunteer.
- ❖ Volunteers may never give medication to students.
- ❖ Volunteer comments should not be written on student papers/projects.
- ❖ Volunteers should not laugh at or belittle student answers or efforts.
- ❖ Volunteers should contact **ONLY** school staff members with any concerns regarding students.
- ❖ Volunteers should work only with the staff member(s) and within the school area(s) they are assigned to according to the job description.

- ❖ The Extended Day Program does not utilize volunteers.
- ❖ Volunteers are not utilized during lunch, unless specifically assigned through a job description. Lunch guests (parent/guardian and other family members) are considered school visitors and should follow related policy.
- ❖ Volunteers are not utilized at recess and should not be on the playground with students unless specifically assigned through a job description.
- ❖ Volunteers should not conduct personal business at school.
- ❖ Comparing and criticizing teachers and students is not acceptable volunteer behavior.
- ❖ Volunteers may not take photographs/video of students, unless permitted by a school administrator for a specific school project. Never post any student photos/video or information on social media sites.
- ❖ Volunteers should never touch students in any way that is aggressive, disciplinary, or sexual in nature.
- ❖ Volunteers should not consume alcohol and/or use tobacco while on school grounds or on school field trips.

SAFETY AND SECURITY GUIDELINES

Summit's safety and security program helps ensure that students, staff, visitors, and volunteers are as safe as possible when in the school or in school-related activities off campus.

- ❖ Know and follow all Summit safety and security rules.
- ❖ If an accident occurs, immediately notify a staff member.
- ❖ Never move a child involved in an accident. A member of the school staff will initiate proper procedures.
- ❖ If you are hurt or involved in an accident while serving in your volunteer capacity, you should report the incident to the school office and complete an accident report immediately.

HELPING STUDENTS LEARN

- ❖ A student's name is very important. Please try to say and spell it correctly.
- ❖ Make sure your student knows and can pronounce your name. You might give the student a card with your name written on it.
- ❖ LISTEN! Show that you are interested in each student as a person. Listen carefully to what the student has to say.
- ❖ Students make mistakes. Assure them that this is part of learning.
- ❖ Help build the student's self-confidence. Praise your student honestly and frequently.
- ❖ Encourage students to feel, smell, taste, and listen as well as look at objects. Let students discover.

- ❖ Ask questions that may lead students to the answer instead of telling them the answer.
- ❖ Let students try new methods, even if you know an easier way.
- ❖ Give the students as much time as they need to understand new ideas. Be patient!
- ❖ Be reliable. Students will be disappointed when you are absent. Show you care by calling Summit when you can't go to school when expected.
- ❖ If you are a parent/grandparent volunteer, allow your child/grandchild to grow. Volunteer (at least occasionally) in a location other than your child's/grandchild's classroom.

Students learn by

- ❖ Doing – not by passive observing.
- ❖ Asking questions and searching for answers to their questions.
- ❖ Discovering – using all their senses whenever possible.
- ❖ Experimenting – sorting and combining objects.
- ❖ Repeating experiences.
- ❖ Building confidence in themselves.

Communicating with students

The following suggestions are provided to help volunteers communicate with students to get positive results.

- ❖ Be sure the student(s) understand what you're saying. We sometimes use words they do not understand.
- ❖ Keep your voice as low as possible. Students will often get louder as your voice increases in volume.
- ❖ Instruct students as though you expect them to comply. Give sufficient warnings and time. Example: "Jason, in five minutes you'll need to stop painting and put your apron away."
- ❖ Positive statements greatly influence student's attitudes about themselves and contribute to their success-building experiences.

Expressions that help boost a student's self-image

- ❖ *I like the way you're working.*
- ❖ *That's right! Good for you.*
- ❖ *That's quite an improvement.*
- ❖ *Good thinking.*
- ❖ *I'm proud of the way you worked today.*
- ❖ *It looks like you put a lot of thinking into this.*
- ❖ *That's respectful behavior. Thank you.*

PRINCIPLES OF THE SUMMIT VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

All volunteers must understand and agree to the following:

- ❖ The volunteer program at Summit operates with the approval of the Board of Trustees and the school administration, and is guided by the principles and policies of the school.
- ❖ Volunteers must complete the online Volunteer Application annually and agree to a background check.
- ❖ Volunteers serve in an assisting capacity under the direction and supervision of Summit employees (administrators, teachers, or other school staff).
- ❖ Volunteers provide supplemental and supportive service. Volunteers are not a substitute for any member of the school staff and will take no action(s) which may disrupt, undermine, or interfere with the educational process.
- ❖ A volunteer may not access confidential files and records.
- ❖ The relationship between volunteers and the school staff should be one of mutual respect and confidence.
- ❖ Volunteers must maintain confidentiality of students and staff.
- ❖ Summit may terminate the services of a volunteer at any time.
- ❖ Volunteers must sign in upon arrival and receive a name tag; and sign out and return the name tag.
- ❖ Volunteers must record their hours in the FACTS system if they have an account. Otherwise, volunteers will email the Volunteer Coordinator with their hours.
- ❖ To be eligible to drive for a field trip / offsite activity, a volunteer must complete the Driver's Statement annually, and provide a copy of their driver's license and insurance.

AS A SUMMIT VOLUNTEER, I KNOW AND UNDERSTAND

- ❖ my role(s) and responsibilities as a volunteer
- ❖ the school and campus layout
- ❖ classroom policies, procedures, and rules
- ❖ safety and security procedures and rules
- ❖ where and when to report to work as a volunteer
- ❖ where to sign in and record my volunteer hours
- ❖ where the volunteer name badges are located
- ❖ what to do if I must be absent
- ❖ where instructional materials are kept
- ❖ policies regarding harassment, and confidentiality

SUMMIT VOLUNTEER CHECKLIST

I have:

- ❖ completed and submitted the online volunteer application and screening statement
- ❖ waited for my application to be processed before volunteering
- ❖ participated in an orientation/training, as appropriate

- ❖ been assigned to a teacher or staff supervisor of a project/activity
- ❖ a specific place and time to work

