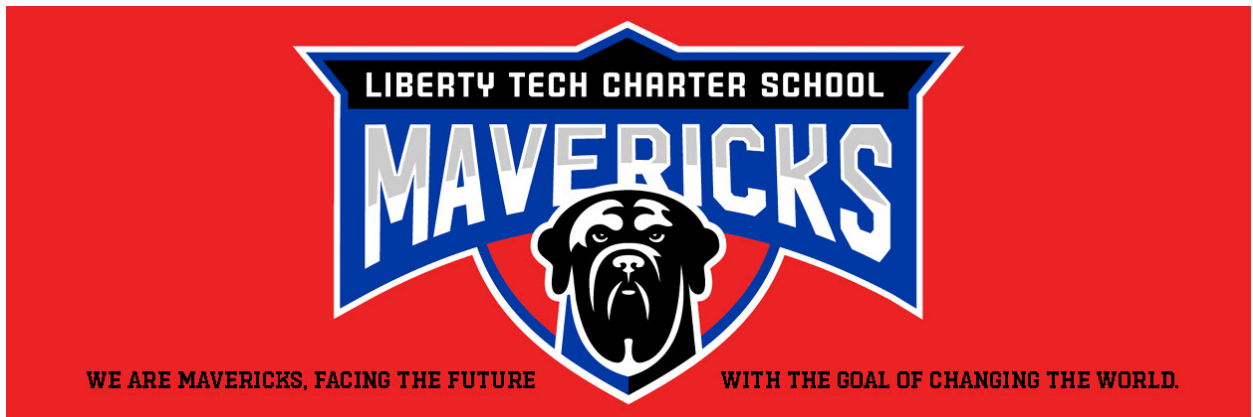


# Liberty Tech Charter School Volunteer Handbook



(Updated August 2023)

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## Thank You for Being a Volunteer!

Volunteering is the giving of time, energy, and concern. We thank all volunteers for their participation and dedication to the students of Liberty Tech Charter School. Together we can make each child's years in Liberty Tech a solid foundation upon which to build a lifetime of successful achievement.

## Ways That Parents Can Volunteer

There are many ways parents and/or caregivers are invited to volunteer, some of which include:

- PTO Events/Activities and Volunteer positions
- Helping children in the classroom (e.g. reading, math, art, science, computer lab)
- Garden care and assistance
- Field Trip Chaperones
- Parent Editors
- Correcting papers
- Tutoring
- Copying and preparing materials
- Computer tasks/web sites
- Providing place based instruction resources

PTO has many volunteer opportunities and will send information home with students regarding ways parents can sign up to volunteer. For classroom focused volunteer opportunities, speak directly with your child's teacher. Please feel free to ask in the office for further information regarding volunteering.

## Volunteer Program Benefits

Volunteers have always been an important resource in our school. A strong volunteer program benefits teachers, students, parents and the community at large. Some of the positive effects of a strong volunteer program include:

### Teachers

- Increased time to teach and plan
- Increased opportunity to enrich the curriculum
- Reduction in discipline problems

### Community

- Increased knowledge and appreciation of the education process

## Volunteer Program Benefits Continued...

### Students

- Increased individual attention
- Increased motivation
- Increased ability to relate to adults
- Increased respect for adults

### Parents

- Increased understanding of the education process
- Increased understanding of your child's learning process
- Increased familiarity with the staff and community
- Opportunity to practice and build skills
- Opportunity to share expertise and talents

## Eligibility requirements needed to be a volunteer

- 1) Background Check
- 2) Mandatory Child Abuse Reporting Training - Completion certificate must be printed, signed, and returned to the school.
- 3) FERPA training and sign off
- 4) Last page of this volunteer handbook signed

## Background Check

The state has approved legislation requiring school districts to have volunteers complete Background Check forms if they are working with students. All volunteers are required to complete a Background Check through the local sheriff's department. **The Background Check is good for 2 years.**

**Georgia Law § 42-1-15. Restriction on registered offenders residing, working, or loitering within a certain distance of child care facilities, churches, schools, or areas where minors congregate; penalty for violations; civil causes of action.**

(c) (1) On and after July 1, 2008, no individual shall be employed by or volunteer at any child care facility, school, or church or by or at any business or entity that is located within 1,000 feet of a child care facility, a school, or a church if the commission of the act for which such individual is required to register occurred on or after July 1, 2008. Such distance shall be determined by measuring from the outer boundary of the property of the location at which such individual is employed or volunteers to the outer boundary of the child care facility, school, or church at their closest points.

## Mandatory Child Abuse Reporting Training

All volunteers are deemed by the state as mandatory reporters of suspected child abuse. **All volunteers must complete mandatory reporter training annually.** The training can be found at the following link: <https://www.prosolutionstraining.com>

Once on the site you will be asked to create an account. Then you will search for the following course: **Child Abuse and Neglect: Mandated Reporting Requirements for Employees, Volunteers, and Contractors of Georgia Public School.** The course will take some time to complete and will include questions based on the training. At the end of the course you will receive a certificate of completion. The certificate must be printed, signed, and turned into the school

## Scheduling, Sign In, & Sign Out

All volunteer activities must be scheduled through the appropriate teacher or staff member on the volunteer calendar 24 hours prior. All volunteers must sign in and out at the main office. As a safety

measure, it allows the school to know who is or who has been in the building. (Our insurance requires the school to know who is in the building at all times.) Signing in also helps the school to find you if there is an emergency. Lastly, signing “in” and “out” enables us to collect and tabulate volunteer hours necessary for many grant applications.

Also, once signed in, please wear your volunteer badge or a visitor’s tag in a visible location while you are on school grounds.. This will help everyone, including students, to get to know you more quickly and allows the school to know that you have a reason to be there.

## Volunteer Role

A volunteer provides support not only to the students, but also to the teacher, the nature of which is based on the discretion of the teacher for whom you are volunteering. As a parent, you have a unique perspective and ability to understand students. However, as a volunteer, you must act in that capacity first and foremost.

Volunteers must not lend money to students, and shall not give children gifts, food, or presents. Facilitating Classroom Learning

In order to facilitate classroom learning, teachers have a set of volunteer guidelines for working with students. These guidelines may involve specific questions or procedures to ensure students are provided the appropriate challenge and support for their learning.

## Professionalism

Although the job is voluntary, the commitment is professional. Besides maintaining an attitude of mutual respect and confidence, you should become familiar with school and classroom policies and practices. Working with the teaching staff requires flexibility and a willingness to follow directions.

Please be on time! Volunteers’ timeliness affects a teacher’s ability to execute their daily plan. Remember, too, that teacher’s desks may contain confidential files and information that should remain private. Dependability

Students, teachers and staff members rely on the services performed by volunteers. Notify the teacher or staff member within 24 hours of your scheduled shift.

## Respectful Behavior

Volunteers are expected to exhibit behavior that is respectful and assumes equality toward members of the same and opposite sex, and all ethnic/racial and religious groups. Volunteers shall not make any comments that can be construed as racist, sexist, or otherwise discriminatory.

Volunteers shall avoid promoting any commercial products, religious doctrines or beliefs, as well as any political candidates (this includes political buttons) or parties.

## Confidentiality and FERPA Acknowledgement

Confidentiality is extremely important for everyone who works or volunteers in a school. Volunteers must protect staff and students' right to privacy.

Once a volunteer begins to work in a school setting, s/he becomes privy to knowledge about children's behavior patterns, academic ability, emotional maturity, relationships with others, etc. In some cases, information of this nature is imparted so that the volunteer can work more effectively with the child. In other cases, it is simply acquired in the course of frequent contact in the school.

In addition, volunteers are in a position to learn more about staff members than would normally be learned from their public image. One also forms personal opinions about the professional competency of individual teachers and staff.

Regardless of how a volunteer comes by this type of information and/or develops personal opinions, it is considered privileged and must be kept personal and private.

A volunteer is expected to:

- Never share opinions about behavior and/or academic programs of students.
- Never share personal information about the student or student's family with other people.
- Never contact students' families regarding classroom or playground issues
- Never share specific information with a parent about their child or other children based on your classroom experience, whether positive or negative.
- Never share knowledge and/or opinions about the professional competency of individual teachers and staff in the community.
- Never make comments harmful to the reputation of any student, professional or other volunteer.

If parents and friends ask about your work, tell them you enjoy working with the children and discuss the activities you do rather than specific information about the child, the teacher, or the school.

If problems develop, the line of communication regarding a situation in the school is always first with the staff member concerned and then, if necessary, with the deans or the principal.

## Acknowledgement of Volunteer Responsibilities under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and Georgia SB 89

What is FERPA?

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a Federal law that protects personally identifiable information (PII) in students' education records from unauthorized disclosure. It affords parents the right to have access to their children's education records, the right to seek to have the records amended, and the right for parents and eligible students to have some control over the disclosure of PII from education records.

FERPA includes provisions allowing students' PII from education records to be disclosed without the prior written consent of parents, if the disclosure meets the criteria for one of the permitted consent exceptions.

The school official exception allows educational agencies to share PII from education records without consent with contractors, consultants, volunteers, or other parties to whom an agency or institution has outsourced institutional services or functions, as long as certain additional requirements are met.

The FERPA statute is codified at 20 U.S.C. § 1232g, and the FERPA regulations are found at 34 CFR Part 99.

As a volunteer for **Liberty Tech Charter School**, you might perform services that require you to access and use personally identifiable information (PII) from students' education records. Your access and use of the PII is governed by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

FERPA requires the school or school district to maintain "direct control" over your use and maintenance of students' education records and to use reasonable methods to ensure that you obtain access to only those education records in which you have an educational interest.

If you have any questions about FERPA, they should be directed to Ms. Gina Tonnis at 770-461-000 or [gina.tonnis@libertytechcharter.org](mailto:gina.tonnis@libertytechcharter.org).

What are My Responsibilities Under FERPA?

**View video at : <https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/training/school-volunteers-and-ferpa>**

What should I do to protect student personally identifiable information (PII) from education records under FERPA?

It's important that you take the following steps to protect student privacy:

- *Do not disclose the PII to another party (except back to the School).* The PII must not be shared with unauthorized users, and it must be protected from inadvertent disclosure due to careless handling.
- *Do not use the PII for other purposes.* The PII has been provided only for you to perform the volunteer service for which the school provided you the information. It should not be used for other purposes.

- *Do not keep the PII after you complete your volunteer service.* Destroy or return the PII to the school after completion of the service that you provided.

## Discipline and Classroom Management

Allow the teachers to discipline children. If there are incidents of misbehavior, it is the teacher's job to deal with them. As a volunteer, it is helpful to be specific about rules and expectations with students. Keep limits and boundaries in place. Consistently and calmly work with students taking a neutral stance, restating rules and expectations and offering reasonable choices.

## Schedule Teacher Conference Time

Important conversations deserve preparation and dedicated time. If you need to speak with a teacher about your child, schedule a mutually agreeable time outside of class time.

## Hallways

Please keep in mind that hallway conversations can carry into classrooms and may disrupt instruction. Please keep conversations quiet or pick a location in the building for longer conversations that will not disrupt classroom learning.

## Preschoolers/Siblings

Please do not bring preschoolers or siblings when you volunteer in classrooms during school hours. Coats/Purses

Please do not bring anything of value to school. Coats, purses, umbrellas, etc. may be kept in the classroom where you are working.

## Smoking

There is no smoking on school property.

## Dogs

No dogs allowed on campus. Thank you for being respectful of those with allergies, and for helping to keep our play areas clean.

## Telephone/Cellular Phones



School phones are available for your use if needed. Please turn off cell phones or place them on silent mode. You may leave the school office number in case of emergencies.

### Restrooms

Please use the adult restrooms located near the staff lounge.

### Emergency Procedures

If there is a fire, earthquake, lockdown drill or emergency exercise of any kind, please follow your class and do as the teacher instructs the students

### Volunteers are the best!

We are all here to help you with your volunteer experience. Anytime you need help, please just ask. We are so grateful and thankful that you are willing to help us enhance the lives of children at Liberty Tech Charter School.

See below for acknowledgement and understanding of this information.

## Volunteer Commitment

As a volunteer you are a representative of Liberty Tech Charter School. As such, the expectation is that you uphold the virtues of our school at all times.

- Temperance - Temperance means to be self-controlled; it is to give yourself to something, but with restraint. It's an active, thoughtful resolve to restrain our wills, minds, actions, and tongues; in a word, our whole self. At Liberty Tech Charter School, we strive to govern our behavior with self-control in a manner in which what we say and do always represents the best of who we are as individuals.
- Prudence - At Liberty Tech Charter School, we strive to execute good judgment at all times. We are careful to reflect upon how our current actions will impact future outcomes. We prepare ourselves with the knowledge necessary to make wise decisions that lead to future success.
- Justice - A commonly accepted definition of Justice is that it is a moral standard of all men to one another requiring them to perform their social and moral as well as legal obligations to each other and to grant to each other all that fairly be granted. It is through the practice of justice that we ensure a safe environment for learning. At Liberty Tech Charter School, we hold justice as a key virtue because the safety of all our community members is of utmost importance.
- Fortitude - Fortitude is a willingness to freely go beyond the call of duty, to make sacrifices, to act on your convictions. Fortitude includes the courage to confront our personal weaknesses and attraction to vice. Fortitude allows us to push through difficulty. Fortitude helps us to resist fear. At Liberty Tech Charter School, we realize that it takes fortitude in order to stand up for what is right. We realize that it takes fortitude to face challenges head on. We realize it takes fortitude in order to chart new paths. At Liberty Tech Charter School living with fortitude is a way of life.

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have read and understand the entirety of the Liberty Tech Charter School Volunteer Handbook. I also recognize that it is my responsibility to govern myself according to the principles outlined in this handbook, and that failure to do so can result in my inability to further volunteer at Liberty Tech Charter School. **I acknowledge that I have read, understand, and will uphold all responsibilities as outlined in *Acknowledgement of Volunteer Responsibilities under FERPA*.**

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Name of School: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_