

ST. JOHNS CLASSICAL ACADEMY



VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

2023-24 school year



The Lions Council

Lions Council works with the SJCA administration to facilitate the school volunteer program.

7/2023

Learn the True. Do the Good. Love the Beautiful.

Who is a School Volunteer? A school volunteer is a person willing to take time to share wisdom and experience with those on the threshold of the future. A school volunteer helps to expand and enrich the students' learning experiences by working under the direction of teachers and school staff.

According to Florida Statute 1012.01 (5):

"A K-12 school volunteer is any nonpaid person who may be appointed by a district school board or its designee. School volunteers may include, but may be limited to parents, senior citizens, students, and others who assist the teacher or other members of the school staff."

Occasionally it can be difficult to decide if an individual falls into the classification of a school volunteer. A school volunteer usually meets all the following criteria:

1. The individual will provide a service to the school.
2. The individual will NOT be compensated monetarily by the school.
3. The individual may have access to students while performing the service.

Qualifications: You should have a genuine interest in students, a professional commitment to your volunteer activity, regular attendance, a cooperative attitude, flexibility, good health, and a willingness to attend training sessions as needed. Each school's volunteer program is individualized to meet the needs of the students and teachers at the school. In cooperation with the headmaster, the school's Volunteer Coordinator directs their volunteer program.

Responsibilities of the school Volunteer Coordinator:

- Survey the needs of the teachers.
- Recruit and register volunteers, especially parents.
- Arrange orientation and training.
- Place volunteers by matching their skills/interests to job assignments.
- Serve as a resource for volunteers.
- Coordinate school recognition events for volunteers.

Benefits for Everyone:

The volunteer gains-

- Personal satisfaction from helping children learn.
- Opportunities to learn new skills and/or polish old ones.
- Knowledge and understanding of classical education.
- Work experience that may lead to a future career.

The student gains-

- Additional individual attention (if placed in direct contact with volunteer).
- An accepting atmosphere for reinforced learning.
- A chance to succeed, thus building better self-esteem.

The school gains-

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

The county gains-

- Better educated students.
- Greater confidence in the educational system.

If you are not yet a volunteer, visit www.lionscouncil.org.

School Procedures

Volunteers need to know fire and lock-down drill procedures, restroom locations, school dress code for students and adults, non-smoking rule, parking areas, absence procedures, the opening and closing times of school, the eating facilities, use of cell phones, and general regulations in the school.

Volunteer Applications

All adult and senior volunteer applicants, including field trip chaperones, must complete a [Volunteer Registration](http://www.lionscouncil.org) available on www.lionscouncil.org and driver's license scan to complete the process PRIOR to volunteering or chaperoning.

In accordance with the new Florida State Statute 435.12, the SJCA Governing Board adopted a new policy on February 23, 2023, requiring a more thorough background screening for all volunteers. Level two background checks include biometric screening in addition to what is required with level one. This is common and even required by law for those in education, healthcare, and many other employees holding positions of trust and responsibility. This is MANDATORY for all volunteer positions.

Health Regulations

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 teacher short-handed, and you may want to volunteer even though you are not well, but doing so is not good for you, the children, or the teacher. Please call the school and leave a message when you have an unforeseen absence.

Children learn by example, and we ask that you, as a role model, use good health habits when you are at school. Attendance, punctuality, and reliability are expected since students are counting on you. Please inform teachers in advance of planned absences. Students will be disappointed you cannot come but will be reassured that you cared enough to call.

Appearance and Manner

Volunteers are considered non-paid employees and should be well groomed and dress professionally. Hats, short skirts and shorts, exposed midriffs, low-cut blouses, and inappropriate graphics/language are not allowed. Workout clothing is only acceptable for fitness related activities. If you are not sure how you should dress, please ask your volunteer coordinator. Volunteers should also set a good example to students by maintaining professional conduct and language. We are a classical academy; we follow a set of virtues, and we need your help to keep the virtues alive.

Confidentiality

Volunteers must maintain strict confidence concerning information they learn about students or faculty. Keep information about students between yourself and the teacher. A misplaced comment can be devastating to a student, the family, and the volunteer program. If you have questions or concerns, talk with the teacher, volunteer coordinator, or headmaster.

When Volunteering, always:

1. Report to the reception building.
2. Sign in through Raptor and in the Volunteer Chromebook.
3. Always wear your ID badge.

These requirements are necessary because:

1. Safeguarding our students and maintaining campus security is of the utmost importance.
2. Volunteers who have been approved and follow the school's sign-in procedure are covered by our general liability policies while volunteering.
3. Verified volunteer service can be used as work experience for future employment.
4. Individual volunteers will be recognized for their dedication and service to our school. The record of volunteer attendance is one basis for consideration of these awards.
5. State awards are granted to schools who log a designated number of volunteer hours per enrolled student.

Orientation

We will hold an orientation early in the school year for new and returning volunteers. Volunteer opportunities will be reviewed, and school policies and procedures explained. If you are unable to attend this session, contact your school volunteer coordinator and other training will be scheduled.

Training

On-the-job training is provided by the school employee (teacher, office specialist, etc.) supervising you.

How You Can Help

From preparing materials for a lab experiment, to cleaning lunch tables, we can find a volunteer job to suit every person's background and interest. The following is an overview of example volunteer opportunities available within SJCA.

Schools reserve the right to recruit volunteers only for job positions in need at the school. To help with the placement process, please consider the following:

- Would you like to work directly with students? Do you have special talents and/or skills that would benefit music, art, drama, physical education, or an extra-curricular program?
- Would you prefer elementary, middle, or high school?
- How much time can you commit to volunteering?
- What days/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?

Example Volunteer Job Descriptions:

Art Volunteer

- Works with small groups on special projects.
- Helps teacher with preparations and clean up.
- Assists in designing and building stage sets for school productions.
- Creates and/or makes costumes.

Classroom Volunteer (opportunities will vary based on teacher needs)

- Reads to children or listens to them read.
- Uses phonogram cards to help students learn letter sounds, or flash cards for math.
- Assists students with special projects.
- Assists students in academic work without evaluating.
- Chaperones on field trips.
- Prepares bulletin boards or hands-on teaching materials.

Clerical Volunteer

- Assists the support staff in our school operation by working as a receptionist, assists with picture day, orientation, etc.

Health Room Volunteer

- Helps conduct health screenings.
- Field Day First Aid Tent

Band/Chorus/Music Volunteer

- Accompanies choral groups as a pianist (upon director discretion).
- Works with small groups on requested projects/activities.
- Files and organizes music and uniforms.
- Travels with students to performances.
- Participates/assists with fundraisers
- Assists in the placement and storage of audio equipment.
- Set up/break down stage.
- Assists younger students during rehearsals/performance.

Physical Education Volunteer

- Sets up water coolers.
- Helps with field day events.

Opportunities Based on Availability

Even if you are not sure what you might like to do as a school volunteer, you probably know when you are or are not available. Is your schedule flexible and time is not an issue? Do you work and would you only be available at night and on the weekends? Your availability, whether it is during the day, night, or weekend, is an important consideration. Also, whether you can commit to a weekly schedule or only sporadically will affect the volunteer opportunities offered to you by our school. The list below might provide some ideas when considering your availability:

- Classroom coordinator
- Help with spirit nights

- Lions Council projects
- Fundraisers
- Help with clubs and sports activities
- Chaperone band/athletic/field trips
- Helping teachers with supplies, books, etc.
- Help with field day
- Help with science labs
- Help with plays (costumes, props, sets, etc.)
- Picture Day
- Teacher Appreciation Week
- Health Room Screenings

VOLUNTEERS MUST MAINTAIN STRICT CONFIDENTIALITY concerning information they see and hear about students and staff, including grades, records, and abilities.

- Volunteers DO NOT discipline students. Provide "instruction" to students regarding behavior. Report discipline problems to the teacher.
- Volunteers must always be supervised when working with students. They may not supervise a classroom or give permission for a student to leave a classroom. These are the teachers' responsibilities.
- Volunteers do not diagnose student weaknesses and strengths, prescribe activities for students, or evaluate student progress.
- Volunteers' discussions with teachers should not interrupt class time.
- **Please turn cell phones off.**
- Volunteers are not to bring preschool children or non SJCA scholars to the school while volunteering. This presents a liability issue, and it can be disruptive.
- Volunteers should set a good example for students by their manner (know and be part of our values and virtues), appearance, and behavior. They should be well groomed, appropriately dressed, and maintain professional conduct/language.
- Volunteers should be in good physical and mental health.
- Volunteers may not give any medication to students.
- Volunteers' comments should not be written on student papers.
- Volunteers should not laugh at or belittle student answers or efforts.
- Volunteers should contact ONLY school staff members with any concerns regarding students.
- Volunteers are assigned only to staff members who request their services.
- Comparing and criticizing teachers and students is not acceptable volunteer behavior.
- Volunteers **may not** conduct personal business at school.
- Volunteers **may not** hold informal parent/teacher conferences or leisure conversations with staff members or other volunteers during volunteer time.
- Volunteers **may not** take photographs of students. Never post any student photos or student information on social media.
- Volunteers should never touch students in any way that is aggressive, disciplinary, or sexual in nature.
- All volunteers must sign **in/out** at reception building and wear volunteer uniform and identifying nametag while on school campus **at all times**.

If any of these guidelines are not followed, immediate suspension will follow.

Safety Guidelines

- Know and follow all the school's safety 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 accident to the school office and complete an accident report immediately.

General

- A student's name is very important. Make sure you spell it correctly.
- Make sure students know how to pronounce your name.
- Be patient!
- Be reliable. People are counting on you to be there.
- Allow your own child room to grow. Ideally, volunteer in a location other than your child's classroom.
- If students gain your attention and praise only when they behave, they will soon learn that you expect proper conduct.
- Positive statements greatly influence students' attitudes about themselves and contribute to their success-building experiences. Some expressions to 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 very proud of the way you worked today." "It looks like you put a lot of thinking into this." "That's respectful behavior. Thank you!"
- Remember that you are in school for a relatively short portion of time. Therefore, your perception of a situation can be mistaken because you are not aware of all the circumstances. If you have questions or concerns about something, please ask the teacher about it directly and privately.
- Please do not speculate with friends or on Facebook. Discuss information about student academic performance and behavior only with appropriate school staff. You may not discuss a child's progress with his or her parent. ALL communications about a child's schoolwork must go to the parents from the appropriate school staff, not from other parents. If parents ask you about a child's progress, suggest in a friendly way that they contact the teacher directly.

Q's & A's

Q: How do I become a volunteer?

A: Register with the Lions Council via www.lionscouncil.org under the Volunteer tab.

Lions Council and SJCA School Staff work together to facilitate the volunteer approval process. Once the form is submitted and reviewed to confirm that the timeframe for volunteering allows for time to complete screening, you will receive an email from Volunteers@stjca.org or communciations.lioncouncil@stjca.org with instructions on how to complete the biometric screening. In this email, you will be given a link to register or call for an appointment.

Q: What are the qualifications of a school volunteer?

A: Must have a personal desire to help, sincere interest in students, ability to follow school procedures and policies, and a willingness to make a definite time commitment. Any necessary training will be provided by the teacher or at a special workshop.

Q: How do I find out which volunteer services are needed?

A: The school has a Volunteer Coordinator who will assist you in your placement. Your volunteer assignment is determined by your skills, interests, and preferences, and by the school and teachers' needs. **Please understand that you will be placed where you are needed.** You may not always be in your desired position, but we covet your time and appreciate your dedication to our faculty and staff.

Q: What if I cannot offer my services on a regular basis? Can I still volunteer?

A: Yes! You can volunteer on special school projects. The time commitment will depend on the project. Another possibility is to arrange to work on tasks at home.

Q: I would like to volunteer, but I have a preschool child/ non SJCA scholar. Can I bring my child with me?

A: No. Bringing preschool children with you to school presents a liability problem for the school. In addition, having a young child in the school interrupts procedures, disrupts the students, and prevents the volunteer from giving full attention to the work the teacher has prepared. However, you can still help the school by making arrangements to do work at home. Another possibility is to buddy-up with another volunteer with a preschool child. One babysits while the other volunteers. As long as the babysitter is not paid for their services, their hours of babysitting may also count as volunteer hours.

Q: May I choose the teacher with whom I want to work?

A: Volunteers are placed only in classrooms where teachers have specifically requested assistance.

Q: What if I do not feel qualified to perform an assignment I have agreed to undertake?

A: Feel free to say so. Remember, there are many different jobs. Talk to your volunteer coordinator for reassignment.

Q: What do I do about discipline?

A: Disciplinary action is the responsibility of the teachers and school staff. Volunteers do not enforce discipline. Immediately notify the teacher if there is a discipline problem.

Q: My friends and neighbors will ask me about school. What do I say?

A: We want you to talk about your school and your involvement. But you may have access to "privileged" information, which must be treated as confidential. Privileged information is important school business and must never be discussed outside of school. Also, remember that criticizing school personnel and school practices is not acceptable. In school, you are a professional working with other professionals.

Q: Is the fee required? What if I cannot afford it?

A: Please contact our volunteer coordinator directly in this situation. The Lions Council may be able to help cover your fee, or we can break it up into smaller payments. We are appreciative of your assistance, but must maintain strict safety and dress code standards, and therefore would prefer you to purchase Volunteer T-shirts and we must run background checks.

2023-24 Volunteer Contact Information

Nicole Chapman- Lions Council Chairman, chairman.lioncouncil@stjca.org

Lion Support Committee/Volunteer Coordinator- Jamie Thornbury, LSC@stjca.org

School: St. Johns Classical Academy

Phone: (904) 458-8240

Address: 114 Canova Rd. Fleming Island, FL 32003

Quick Reference- PROCEDURES

Fire Drill: When alarm has sounded, prepare to leave the room, but wait for announcement. Follow your class to their outside location and wait for the all- clear to come back inside.

Lock-Down Drill: When you hear the announcement, get into the safe zone with the students in the classroom. Lights are off, doors are locked, everyone is quiet until the all-clear is given.

Dress Code: SJCA Volunteer T-shirt, Navy blue T-shirt, or SJCA spirit shirt, Khaki or Denim bottoms, no jeggings/ no rips. Shorts must be Bermuda length/ Skirts top of the knee. For those who do not purchase volunteer T-shirt, volunteer vests are available.

Opening/Closing times: Upper 7:30-2:25 (Wed. 12:25); Lower 8:00-3:00 (Wed. 1:00)

Location of sign-in/out binder & name badge: Reception building

Parking: Park in the front parking lot on the east side of campus. (By the athletic building or the east side of the Multipurpose Building.)

Who to notify when you are absent: LSC@stjca.org

Eating at school: Outside