



Yellowstone Academy and Yellowstone College Prep Volunteer Handbook

2021-2022

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WELCOME

Prospective volunteer of Yellowstone,

Thank you for reaching out and showing interest in volunteering with Yellowstone Schools and our students.

Yellowstone Schools' mission is to empower, inspire, and invest in our students in order for them to reach their highest potential. We believe that every student is born with a purpose and destined for success.

For over 15 years Yellowstone Academy has faithfully served Houston's inner-city children by providing a faith based education coupled with support services that help to remove the non-academic obstacles that so often hinder student achievement. Building on that success, Yellowstone College Prep was launched in 2018 as a charter school co-located with the Academy. Together, Yellowstone Schools will increasingly grow to serve students from PreK3 through 12th grade, all within the local Third Ward community.

We need the help from volunteers, like you, in order to continue fulfilling our mission and beliefs. As a volunteer, we hope you share our belief and keep our goals in mind while serving. Every volunteer, big and small, makes a difference in the lives of our students. Through your time as a Yellowstone volunteer, you will assist in creating a lasting impact on Yellowstone students. We hope you find your experience fun, fulfilling and rewarding.

Please carefully read the information to follow as it contains important information about your volunteer experience. Once you've read the document completely, please sign and return to us. If you have any questions, please contact our team at advancement@yellowstoneschools.org or 713.741.8000

Once again welcome and thank you!

Sincerely,

Amy Tanner, Brooke Pollock, Maricela Ramos, Patricia Jonesi, and Tommy Parker
Advancement Team

PURPOSE OF HANDBOOK

This handbook was prepared to assist you in becoming a Yellowstone Schools volunteer. This handbook will share our volunteer philosophy, practices, and policies, as well as, what you can expect as a valued volunteer.

This handbook should answer many of your questions regarding volunteerism; however, it is unable to provide the full scope of Yellowstone's Volunteer Program. We will use the following communications to answer questions, plan activities, and troubleshoot: email, phone calls, orientations, and informational meetings.

We believe you will enjoy volunteering at Yellowstone Schools and with your fellow volunteers. We ask that you read this handbook carefully before you begin volunteering, and refer to it whenever questions arise.

Yellowstone Schools reserve the right to amend, revise, or delete any policies or procedures mentioned in this Volunteer Handbook without notice. If you have any questions or concerns about the material in this book, please contact an Advancement team member.

PHILOSOPHY

Yellowstone Schools will operate in an atmosphere that is vibrant and innovative. The environment is characterized by structure and discipline, yet animated by optimism and hope. Staff, board members, parents, students, and volunteers will share the same academic, moral, and spiritual commitment to the purposes of the school. These shared purposes will provide clarity, direction, and consistency and will provide the policy platform from which all decisions about the school are made.

Yellowstone Schools will set high expectations for its students and place a premium on the basic attributes necessary for success in life: character, responsibility, self-reliance, and faith. The school will actively involve parents of students in all aspects of the child's educational, social, emotional, and spiritual process.

A print-rich environment that will foster the development of independent literacy will surround children in every classroom. They will have continued access to reading materials of all types and on a variety of levels, both in their classrooms, in the school library, and in their homes. The school day is organized in a way that maximizes the allotted instructional time. Teachers are provided with the training and support they need to constantly improve and enhance their instructional skills

BECOMING A VOLUNTEER

APPLICATION, PROCESS AND ORIENTATION

Individuals interested in volunteering at Yellowstone Schools must complete an [online application](#), including emergency information, the appropriate forms for personal background and criminal history checks, and sign this handbook. These documents are reviewed by an Advancement team member and the Human Resources team.

Yellowstone Schools reserves the right to verify all documents concerning a volunteer, including any information on the application, work history, education, references, and criminal background information. A volunteer who gives false or misleading information may not be selected or may be terminated if knowledge of such misinformation becomes known after selection.

On occasion, an Advancement team member will hold orientation/training sessions for volunteers and/or an informational meeting, if needed. This session is designed to provide information and answer questions about the role of volunteers at Yellowstone Schools. Among other matters, prospective volunteers are made aware of safety precautions, emergency procedures, grievances, confidentiality policy, reporting sexual abuse, and neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse, exploitation, emotional abuse, abandonment, and harassment policy. Volunteers are also provided recommendations and suggestions for successfully volunteering at Yellowstone Schools.

Yellowstone Schools will provide each volunteer with a copy of this volunteer handbook, which includes rules, regulations, guidelines, and expectations. Volunteers are required to sign a form indicating they have read and understood the handbook.

Volunteers are given a list of volunteer duties and descriptions in different areas of the school. With the volunteer's interests in mind, an Advancement team member will place the volunteer(s) in the position believed to best fit their talents, the students, and the staff.

The minimum age for a volunteer is 21 years old, unless accompanied by a parent or participating in an approved volunteer group activity. Special permission must be given by an Advancement team member if a volunteer is under 18 years of age.

Visit our online application here <https://yellowstoneschools.org/volunteer/>. All volunteers must reapply and re-submit a background check at the end of each school year.

SIGNING IN AND OUT

Volunteers are responsible for signing in at the front office upon arrival, before their volunteer duties begin. Same applies for signing out before leaving the building. The volunteer will sign-in at the front-desk, will then be provided a name tag, and wear the Yellowstone Schools name tag while on duty. For safety and security, Yellowstone Schools must know who is in the building at all times, this also aids the Advancement team in keeping track of each individual's total number of volunteer hours.

When entering the building to volunteer, belongings should not be left unattended. Valuables should not be left in a visible place in any vehicle. Yellowstone Schools is not responsible for any item left unattended.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY VOLUNTEERING

Yellowstone Schools provides equal volunteer opportunities to all people regardless of gender, race, marital status, political belief, or disability that does not interfere with the volunteer's responsibilities. Selected volunteers are chosen based on their ability to be reliable, dependable, responsible, and to perform the duties appropriate to their role.

IF ISSUES ARISE

A member of the Advancement team reserves the right to terminate any person selected as a volunteer under the following circumstances:

1. Failure to comply with the school's policies, rules and regulations
2. Unacceptable attitude, actions or appearance
3. Any other circumstances in which, the Advancement team, deems inappropriate and contrary to the standards of Yellowstone Schools

VIRTUAL VOLUNTEERING

During global pandemic

Due to current CDC guidelines, and in light of COVID-19, volunteer opportunities with students are limited. The advancement team will communicate volunteer opportunities on a monthly basis to keep volunteers up-to-date.

All **off-site projects** that need to be dropped-off at the school (i.e. putting together care packages, writing encouraging notes, etc.) will need to be completed following safety protocols.

Virtual tutoring, lunches, and/or reading with Yellowstone students must be coordinated through an Advancement team member. Volunteers will need to coordinate with the student's teacher for lesson plans, areas of focus, and scheduling. All volunteers should consider virtual sessions the same as an "in-person" opportunity by following all policies, even when you can't meet a student in-person.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

COMMITMENT TO VOLUNTEERING

Whether a volunteer's position is a weekly or a one-time responsibility, Yellowstone Schools asks that all volunteers are faithful in their commitment to the volunteer program. **Please be on time and ready to volunteer. If for any reason a volunteer cannot make his/her scheduled time, an Advancement team member must be contacted as soon as possible in order that he/she might fill that role and/or notify the teacher of the change. We request all cancellations be given 24 hours in advance so we can update the teacher, student and/or applicable participants.**

If a volunteer is unable to meet his/her commitment for an extended period of time, an Advancement team member may need to replace him/her. A volunteer may request a leave of absence, but is not guaranteed the same role upon return.

If a volunteer is new to the placement/classroom, after signing in, please notify the main office staff, and someone will introduce the volunteer to the teacher(s).

If a volunteer is ill, he/she may not come to volunteer and will notify an advancement team member that they cannot attend.

While volunteering, Yellowstone Schools asks that all volunteers keep their cell phones turned on vibrate and/or silent mode. Volunteers needing to place phone calls may excuse themselves and go outside to a private area.

An Advancement team member must be notified of any change of address or phone number.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Other than information about abuse or neglect (below), information that volunteers learn through time spent with children regarding children and their families **must remain confidential**. Volunteers may not gossip or discuss the children with others within or outside Yellowstone Schools. Volunteers should feel free to bring any concerns about the child to the attention of the on-site social worker and/or social work department.

DRESS CODE

To maintain a standard that will represent the school well, Yellowstone Schools asks that the volunteers adhere to the following dress code:

- No short shorts, miniskirts, work out attire or short dresses
- No low cut shirts or shirts that reveal a bare midriff
- No muscle shirts
- No spaghetti straps, halter tops or any other shirt revealing undergarments
- No leggings, torn pants or torn jeans
- No t-shirts with inappropriate slogans or advertisements for alcohol or tobacco products
- As a general rule, please use modesty and discretion.

GRIEVANCES AND CONCERNS

It is common for a student to share personal information with volunteers after a relationship is formed, i.e. a conflict at school that is upsetting them, a challenging situation at home, or a struggle they are having in the classroom.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

COVID-19 PROTOCOL

On September 18, 2020, Yellowstone posted a guide with detailed information on protocols being taken in regard to COVID-19. Please review guide, [here](#), or by visiting <https://yellowstoneschools.org/covid-19-updates/>

GENERAL HEALTH

“Hand washing is the single most important means of preventing the spread of infection,” The Center for Disease Control. All volunteers must wash their hands before reporting to volunteer duties, after using the restroom, before eating (if at the school for lunch), and before leaving the school. This is to aid in guarding the volunteers, the students, and the staff from illness.

If a student is in need of immediate health attention, or needs to see a health professional, please notify the teacher, school nurse, and/or main office staff, immediately.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

All individuals are required by Texas state law to report any suspected instances of child abuse or neglect. The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment defines child abuse and neglect as “any recent act of failure to act on the part of a parent or caregiver that results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse, or exploitation, or an act or failure to act that presents an imminent risk of serious harm.” A person commits a Class B misdemeanor if the person has cause to believe that a child’s physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect and knowingly fails to make a report within 48 hours of the event that led to the suspicion of abuse neglect. (Texas Family Code 261.109)

A person reporting or assisting in the investigation of a report pursuant to the law is immune from liability, civil or criminal, that might otherwise be incurred or imposed. Immunity extends to participation in any judicial proceeding resulting from the report. (Texas Family Code 261.106)

If a volunteer, at any time, suspects abuse or neglect, he/she must immediately bring this to the attention of the on-site social worker, an Advancement team member, and the Executive Director. The volunteer will then receive assistance in reporting this to the proper authorities.

Volunteers must never promise a child that any information about an abusive situation is kept a secret.

This [video](#) is designed to make you aware of potential situations of sexual abuse of children and teens in schools.

<http://minorsoncampus.ue.org/shine-a-light-k12/>.

FIREARMS POLICY

Yellowstone Schools is a weapon free environment. Under no circumstances may any individual bring a weapon into the school.

According to the Texas Administrative Code, Chapter 6, Rule §6.44, a licensed gun holder may not carry a handgun on the physical premises of a school, educational institution or a transportation vehicle of a school or educational institution. Violation is a third degree felony.

TOBACCO USE AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Yellowstone Schools is a non-smoking facility. All persons must refrain from any form of tobacco use while on the school property or at a school sponsored event.

All individuals are prohibited from possessing, manufacturing, soliciting and/or distributing any form of a controlled or illegal substance while on school property or at a school sponsored event.

FIRE DRILLS (while on campus)

Fire drills are held a minimum of once a month. Instructions for exiting the building are posted in each room of the school building. Each volunteer must follow these instructions.

NEGLECT, PHYSICAL ABUSE, SEXUAL ABUSE, EXPLOITATION, EMOTIONAL ABUSE, ABANDONMENT, AND HARASSMENT POLICY

Yellowstone Schools intends to make the campus and sponsored activities free from any form of neglect, abuse, exploitation and/or harassment. If a volunteer is believed to engage or has engaged in any of the above, the situation will be investigated, and appropriate actions will take place, including termination of the volunteer.

Neglect, abuse, exploitation, abandonment, and harassment include all but are not limited to:

- Moral or social behavior that could be detrimental to others
- Intentional physical or emotional abuse
- Offensive comments, jokes, or behavior dealing with a person's race, religion, age, sexual orientation, marital status or medical condition
- Sexual suggestions, advances and talk
- Sexual physical contact or any attempted sexual relationships
- For a [full list of definitions](https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubpdfs/define.pdf#page=83%22%3E) of child abuse and neglect please visit <https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubpdfs/define.pdf#page=83%22%3E>

A volunteer should maintain appropriate boundaries with children and refrain from any behavior that could be considered inappropriate contact with children, such as hugging, kissing, or touching.

A volunteer should never physically discipline a child. Concerns about the behavior of a child should be brought to the attention of the teacher and on-site social worker.

If a volunteer is with a student, he or she should not, under any circumstances, leave the student alone. If a volunteer must step out of the room even for just a moment, he or she must inform the teacher or the aide.

Volunteers engaging in any activities and conversations with children should occur in non-private areas. Activities should be observable and easily interrupted. If volunteers are taking students out of the classroom, it is ONLY in the library or in the hallway next to the teacher's classroom.

Please do not allow a child to hold your hand, sit on your lap, climb on you, play with your hair, and hold anything of value, etc. during any instructional time (including time in line).

- Do not give rides to students.
- Do not give money or gifts to students or family members of the students.
- Profanity is not acceptable at Yellowstone Schools.

OTHER INFORMATION

MILEAGE

Mileage traveling to and from the school is tax deductible. Volunteers are responsible for keeping the appropriate records, including a mileage log. A tax accountant should be consulted for further information.

QUESTIONS

If you have any questions after reading this document and/or once your volunteer position begins, please contact an Advancement team member at advancement@yellowstoneschools.org or calling 713.741.8000.

VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT/ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Signature on this document acknowledges that you have read and reviewed the Yellowstone Schools Volunteer Handbook. Please sign, date, and return the receipt to an Advancement team member before beginning any volunteer activities.

I, _____, certify that I have received and reviewed the Yellowstone Schools volunteer handbook.

I further understand that, by signing this statement as required, I am indicating that I have read the Yellowstone Schools Volunteer Handbook and understand its contents, agree to the policies and procedures listed, and understand what I am signing. I also realize that this statement will become a permanent part of my volunteer file.

Volunteer's Name (please print first and last name)

Signature

Date

**Return to: Advancement Department
Yellowstone Schools**

advancement@yellowstoneschools.org

Please electronically sign or photograph/scan a signed copy to the email address above.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Yellowstone Academy:

Clark Thompson, *Board Chairman*

Duane King, *Board President*

Venus Anderson

Cedric Burgher II

Brad Childers

Les Csorba

David Dominy

Karey Dye

Bryan Fisher

Sherrill Garland

David Humphreys

David Lumpkins

Kristi Lumpkins

Mark McCollum

Devin McCord

William "Trey" McDonald

Phillip Pace

Frank Tsuru

Elizabeth Wareing

Valerie Williams

James Zucker

Yellowstone College Prep:

Lionel Jellins, *Board Chairman*

Janice Character

David Lumpkins

William "Trey" McDonald

Tori Moore-Cofield

John Peavy

Valerie Williams