



**Yellowstone Academy and
Yellowstone College Prep Volunteer Handbook**

2022-2023

Table of Contents

WELCOME	3-4
Mission and values	3
Purpose of handbook	4
Philosophy	4
BECOMING A VOLUNTEER	5-6
Application process, interviews, and orientation	5
Signing in and out	6
Equal opportunity volunteering	6
If issues arise	6
Virtual Volunteering	6
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES	7-8
Commitment to Volunteering	7
Confidentiality	8
Dress Code	8
Grievances and Concerns	8
HEALTH AND SAFETY	8-10
COVID-19 Protocol	8
General health	8
Child abuse and neglect	9
Firearms	9
Tobacco use and substance abuse	10
Fire drills (while on campus)	10
Neglect, abuse, and harassment policies	10
OTHER INFORMATION	11
VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT	12
BOARD OF DIRECTORS	13

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 for them to reach their highest potential. We believe that every student is born with a purpose and destined for success.

Rooted in the Christian faith, Yellowstone Schools educates more than 400 majority Black children in PK3 through 8th grade. Located in Houston's historic Third Ward, Yellowstone is committed to partnering with students and families, regardless of financial means, to provide life-changing experiences and an excellent education, to develop faith and character, and to prepare scholars for life beyond high school.

Yellowstone Schools is comprised of Yellowstone Academy—a private, Christian school serving PK3 through 5th grade—and Yellowstone College Prep, a tuition-free charter school growing to serve 6th through 12th grade. As a public entity, College Prep complies with all federal and state laws.

At Yellowstone, we couple strong curriculum, dynamic teachers, and robust athletic and extracurricular programming with transportation assistance, free daily meals, and social services to serve our students in the best way possible. The school also consistently connects with our students' parents to promote strong family participation in their child's educational success and individual well-being. Yellowstone sets high academic expectations for our students and places a premium on the development of their faith, character, and responsibility.

We need help from volunteers like you to continue fulfilling our mission and beliefs. Volunteers like you are a crucial part of our family, and our students and staff take great joy in welcoming you to our campus. Your work ensures that Yellowstone's students achieve their God-given potential through a

faith-based education. As volunteers, we hope you share our beliefs 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 following information, which contains essential information about your volunteer experience. Once you've read the document thoroughly, please sign and return it to the advancement team. If you have any questions, please contact our team at advancement@yellowstoneschools.org or 713.741.8000

Once again, welcome, and thank you!

Sincerely,

Brooke Pollock, Tommy Parker, Maricela Ramos, Jean Smith, and Amy Tanner
Advancement Team

PURPOSE OF HANDBOOK

This handbook will assist you throughout your time at Yellowstone and shares our volunteer philosophy, practices, policies, and what you can expect as a valued volunteer.

This handbook should answer many of your questions regarding volunteerism; however, it cannot 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 hope you enjoy volunteering at Yellowstone Schools. We ask that you read this handbook carefully before you begin volunteering and refer to it whenever questions arise.

Yellowstone Schools reserves the right to amend, revise, or delete any policies or procedures mentioned in this 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 a structured and disciplined environment that is vibrant, innovative, and 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 guide our policies and decisions and provide direction and consistency.

Yellowstone Schools will set high expectations for its students and place a premium on essential 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.

We organize the school day to maximize the allotted instructional time and provide teachers with the training and support they need to improve and enhance their instructional skills. Yellowstone students participate in a print-rich environment that fosters the development of independent literacy in every classroom.

BECOMING A VOLUNTEER

APPLICATION, PROCESS, AND ORIENTATION

Individuals interested in volunteering at Yellowstone Schools must complete an [online application](#) that includes a background and criminal history check. Volunteers will sign and turn in this handbook at the orientation or before their first shift.

Yellowstone Schools reserves the right to verify all documents concerning a volunteer, including any information on the application. We reserve the right to decline, ban, or terminate volunteers at any given time.

The Advancement team will hold an initial orientation/training session for all volunteers interacting with students. We design these sessions to provide information and answer questions about the role of volunteers at Yellowstone Schools. During the session, volunteers get an overview of our 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 must review and sign a form indicating they have read and understood the handbook.

The minimum age for a volunteer is 21 years old unless previously approved by the Advancement team and accompanied by a parent or participating in an approved volunteer group activity.

Visit our online application here <https://yellowstoneschools.org/volunteer/>. All volunteers must complete the application process once per school year.

SIGNING IN AND OUT

Volunteers are responsible for signing in at the front office upon arrival before their duties begin and signing out before they leave. Volunteers will receive a name tag every time they sign in and must wear it while volunteering on campus. For safety and security, Yellowstone Schools must know who is in the building in case of emergencies. This also helps us track hours of service given by each volunteer.

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

George Kaleh

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