



# Volunteer Handbook

Metro South Volunteers is a program of the Bloomington Public Schools.  
A collaboration with the Bloomington, Eden Prairie, Edina, and Richfield  
Community Education Departments.

# Metro South Adult Basic Education

## Welcome

We are pleased you have chosen to join us at Metro South Volunteers. Our volunteers are an integral part of the programs of Metro South Adult Basic Education, and play a valuable role in helping students reach their academic goals. Volunteers contribute to providing a well-rounded educational experience for all learners enrolled in our programs - from extra support with reading skills to exploring new career opportunities. Your willingness to make a difference in the lives of our students contributes to their success as members of our community. We hope the investment of your time will prove to be rewarding and challenging, as well as provide many opportunities for you to engage in lifelong learning.

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## Metro South Volunteers Mission Statement

Metro South Volunteers supports adult learners through a network of caring volunteers dedicated to promoting literacy. As advocates of lifelong learning, we provide both students and volunteers with learning opportunities.

At Metro South Volunteers, we celebrate diversity and respect the rights and liberty of each individual to practice their own religion and political beliefs.

# Benefits of Volunteering

**Discounted Community Education Classes:** While you are an active volunteer in our program, (and have submitted time sheets), you will receive a coupon for \$10.00 off one Community Education class each time a catalog is mailed three times per year. These classes are offered in Bloomington, Eden Prairie, Edina, and Richfield.

**Professional Experience:** If you are taking time to be at home with your family, thinking of a career change, or wanting practical knowledge in education, this is a great opportunity for you! Volunteer experience is impressive on job applications and resumes. It is an excellent way to gain and develop new skills. We are pleased to provide references, letters of recommendation, and letters to current employers to acknowledge your contribution to our students and program.

**Personal Experience:** As a volunteer, you will have the opportunity to meet people from your community and learn about a variety of cultures, help people adjust to living in the United States, use your creativity in meeting the needs of students and learn more about Adult Basic Education (ABE). The greatest reward is knowing you are making a difference in the lives of our students.

**Tax Deductions:** Some of your out-of-pocket expenses connected with volunteering may be deductible when you file your income tax. Consult with your tax advisor concerning your personal tax situation.

## Metro South Adult Basic Education Mission Statement

Supporting the efforts of all adults who wish to improve their lives through literacy, education, career development, and life long learning.

"The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others."

Mahatma Gandhi



# Volunteer Descriptions

## Collaborative Partnership ESL/ELL Volunteer

Tutoring Sites: We have Collaborative Partnerships located in Bloomington, Eden Prairie, Edina, and Richfield.

Purpose of Position: ESL/ELL Volunteer: Assist learners in improving their English language skills in a one-to-one or small group learning environment. The central focus is on functional aspects of language use, including topics such as reading comprehension, writing, grammar and conversation skills. An important aspect is helping learners adjust to and understand US culture and society.

Training: Attend Literacy Minnesota's 12-hour ESL Tutor Pre-Service Training. This training is not required if you have a current teaching license or if you have tutored 400 hours in another program. In addition to the 12 hour training, volunteers must attend or obtain 2 hours of In-Service training annually.

Time Commitment: Ideally we ask that volunteers commit to a minimum of six months after training is completed. Collaborative classes meet twice a week for 1.5 or 2 hours. Volunteers generally teach one or both classes each week and also spend time lesson planning.

### Responsibilities:

- Be dependable. Students, staff and other volunteers count on you.
- If you are going to be absent, contact the Metro South ESL Outreach Liaison or the Metro South Volunteers secretary and student (depending on site policies) as soon as possible.
  - NOTE: Please see Student Contact section under Volunteer Policies and Guidelines.
- Record your volunteer hours and student contact hours on the site attendance sheet.
- Keep a record of lesson plans and student work.
- Prepare each lesson to meet the individual goals and needs of the learner.
- Carefully listen to your learner and offer encouragement and support.
- Assign manageable tasks and provide positive feedback.
- Identify the learners' interest areas and integrate related material into lessons.
- Follow the methods and teaching techniques demonstrated in the tutor training.
- Inform the Metro South ESL Outreach Liaison, the Metro South Volunteers Secretary, or the Volunteer/Outreach Coordinator promptly of any problems encountered in the tutoring situation.
- If your volunteer placement does not prove to be what you expected or if you decide to end your placement, please notify the Volunteer/Outreach Coordinator.
- Personal injuries occurred while volunteering must be reported immediately to the supervising staff and to Metro South Volunteers staff.

Requested Paperwork: Attendance sheets. Accurate records are important for annual state reports and verify how we utilize volunteers for program planning and future funding purposes.

Supervisor: Metro South ESL Outreach Liaison or  
Metro South Volunteer/Outreach Coordinator.

## ESL/ELL, GED or Adult Diploma Classroom Assistant

Tutoring Sites: Metro South Adult Basic Education classroom at the Community Education Campus (CEC), Pond, and Metro South Adult Basic Education classroom in Eden Prairie at Hennepin Technical College (HTC).

Purpose of Position: To provide assistance to a Metro South ABE instructor in providing basic skills and English instruction in a classroom setting. Tutors may work as a general assistant, focus on specific topics such as writing, work one-to-one with a student, or assist in other enrichment opportunities listed below. The instructor will provide support and materials for tutors. Classroom assistants may assist with computer, language and math skills as requested by the teacher.

- Math Tutor – Volunteers need to feel comfortable explaining and demonstrating math concepts using several approaches.
- Reading Lab Tutor – Volunteers need to feel comfortable explaining basic grammar concepts as well as reading comprehension strategies.
- Help Room Tutor – Volunteers need to feel comfortable explaining concepts in a wide variety of subject areas; i.e. math, science, social studies, writing, etc.
- Computer Lab Tutor – Volunteers need basic knowledge of software use, keyboarding, Microsoft Word, navigating the Internet and implementing District policies in use of computers.
- Job Readiness Tutor - Volunteers will give individualized attention to learners who are in need of extra help looking for employment, planning for education, or defining their goals. Volunteers should be comfortable with Internet job search engines, online job application procedures, and how to write resumes and cover letters.

Training: Onsite training and orientation is provided by staff. Literacy Minnesota offers a 3-hour online training which is highly recommended. In addition, attendance at the 12-hour Pre-Service Training in Literacy or ESL is recommended, but not required. Attend periodic in-services offered by Metro South Volunteers and Literacy Minnesota.

Time Commitment: Tutors should commit to working in the classroom two hours per week for a minimum of six months.

### Responsibilities:

- Be dependable. Students, staff, and other volunteers count on you.
- Sign in and out when you volunteer and wear your name tag.
- If you are going to be absent, contact Metro South Volunteers or the classroom teacher ASAP.
- Work cooperatively with the teacher to determine lesson content and approaches.
- Carefully listen to your learners and offer encouragement and support.
- Inform Metro South Volunteers promptly of any problems encountered.
- If your volunteer placement does not prove to be what you expected or if you decide to end your placement, please notify the Volunteer/Outreach Coordinator.
- Personal injuries occurred while volunteering must be reported immediately to the supervising staff and to Metro South Volunteers staff.
- Report any potential safety issues you may observe to supervising staff.

Requested Paperwork: Volunteer time sheets – your volunteer hours are important to us. Accurate records are important for annual state reports and verify how we utilize volunteers for program planning and future funding purposes.

Supervisor: Classroom Teacher and/or Metro South Volunteer/Outreach Coordinator.

# Volunteer Policies and Guidelines

## Your Role as a Volunteer

You will be supervised and given direction by the classroom teacher. While you are an important leader, the classroom teacher has the ultimate say in how the class will be lead. We appreciate that you, as a volunteer, will offer assistance and enrichment with your personal skill and competence. It is important that all volunteers stay within the parameters of the assigned task that the teacher or supervisor has directed. Consult with the teacher or supervisor if you would like clarification regarding your role.

As representatives of the School District, volunteers, like staff, are responsible for presenting a good image to students and to the community. Volunteers shall dress appropriately for the conditions and performance of their duties, including regard to personal hygiene. We have students and staff with fragrance allergies, and their reactions can be mild to severe. Please be cautious in your use of perfumes, colognes and lotions.

## Communications

Keep good communication with staff, site contact, and other volunteers. Any question is a good question – be sure to ask! Make every effort to arrange a time to talk with the teacher outside of class when there are problems or questions.

## Confidentiality

Information regarding our students is confidential. The School District is regulated by the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act, which includes the following:

1. No information can be shared regarding a student, without the written and witnessed signed consent of the adult student or underage student's parent or guardian.
2. Discussing personal information, regarding an adult student or underage student will be cause for disciplinary action and/or lead to termination of the volunteer.

Confidentiality is important to the integrity of our program. It is important to respect the privacy of all students, staff and other volunteers. Never repeat anything you have heard or seen about individuals while volunteering. To respect confidentiality of your students, do not bring guests with you while volunteering. If you have safety concerns regarding information a student has shared with you, please contact your supervising staff (either your classroom teacher, the program liaison, or the volunteer/outreach coordinator).

## Cultural Awareness

Our communities are culturally diverse. It is important that we work together positively and be aware of cultural differences.

- respect and learn from each other
- reject stereotypes
- value differences
- work on bridging cultural gaps
- find common ground
- understand people have different learning styles

Please understand Metro South ABE students, staff, and volunteers practice and hold diverse religious and/or political beliefs. During your volunteer time, please refrain from proselytizing or endorsing political candidates or issues.

## Non-Discrimination Policy

Metro South Volunteers does not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, ethnicity, religion, gender, age, physical appearance, sexual orientation, familial status, or disability.

## Staff Responsibilities

Volunteers are an important part of the educational team and suggestions and opinions are always welcomed. It is the Metro South staff, however, that is held responsible by law for the decisions that are made regarding the instruction of students and school management. For this reason, volunteers always work under the direct supervision of the Metro South staff who are responsible for everything that goes on in the building including student instruction, safety, and discipline.

## Student Behavior

If you find that you are having trouble with a student, please let the supervising staff person know. Volunteers may not discipline students beyond maintaining order in their group or activity. Please report any problems with student behavior to the supervising staff person. The professional staff of the school is always responsible for managing student behavior.

## Student Contact

As a volunteer you will meet many students and will enjoy working with them. However, volunteers should not have contact with student(s) outside of their volunteer assignment. In addition, when working with students, whether individually or in small groups, we recommend you work in a highly visible area. This is not only for the protection of the students but volunteers as well.

## Transportation

ISD271 will provide student transportation consistent with the requirements of the law in the event of a school-sponsored activity. Transportation of a student by a volunteer in a vehicle or the transportation of a volunteer by a student in a vehicle for any reason. Do not give or accept rides for any reason.

# Volunteer Dismissal Policy

A volunteer may be dismissed for misrepresenting his/her qualifications, not completing training, not complying with stated responsibilities, and/or disregarding volunteer policies.

- Complaints or grievances regarding a tutor should be presented in writing to the Volunteer/Outreach Coordinator.
- The Volunteer/Outreach Coordinator will provide dated documentation of volunteer infraction(s).
- The volunteer will meet with the Volunteer/Outreach Coordinator to discuss infraction(s).
- The Volunteer/Outreach Coordinator and volunteer will develop a plan with a time frame to remedy the situation.
- If the infraction(s) continue(s) after the designated date of compliance, the Volunteer/Outreach Coordinator will proceed with the dismissal of the volunteer.

# School District Policies

To view all School Board Policies go to this link: [Bloomington Public Schools Policies](#). As a Metro South volunteer it is your responsibility to read, understand, and comply with all School Board Policies. Contact the Volunteer/Outreach Coordinator or site supervisor if you have any questions. Volunteers are required to observe and comply with all school policies including:

## Policy 413: Harassment and Violence

The purpose of this policy is to maintain a learning and working environment that is free from harassment and violence on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, familial status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, or disability. This is a mandatory policy, and should be updated annually to reflect changing Federal and State laws.

## Policy 414: Mandated Reporting of Child Neglect or Physical or Sexual Abuse

The purpose of this policy and accompanying regulation is to make clear statutory requirements and District procedures for reporting suspected child neglect or physical or sexual abuse.

## Policy 415: Mandated Reporting of Suspected Maltreatment of Vulnerable Adults

To ensure the required reporting of suspected maltreatment of vulnerable adults. When school personnel know or have reason to believe a vulnerable adult is being maltreated, the school personnel must immediately report their knowledge or belief.

## Policy 417: Chemical Use and Abuse

ISD #271 recognizes that chemical use and abuse constitutes a grave threat to the physical and mental well-being of students and employees and significantly impedes the learning process. Chemical use and abuse also creates significant problems for society in general. ISD #271 believes that the public school has a role in education, intervention, and prevention of chemical use and abuse. The purpose of this policy is to assist the school district in its goal to prevent chemical use and abuse by providing procedures for education and intervention.

## Policy 418/419: Drug Free Workplace/Drug Free School and Tobacco/Vaping Free Environment

The purpose of this policy is to maintain a safe and healthful environment for employees and students by prohibiting the use of alcohol, toxic substances and controlled substances without a physician's prescription. The purpose of this policy is to maintain a learning and working environment that is drug and tobacco free.

#### Policy 423: Staff - Student Relationships

To maintain an educational environment in which all students are treated with respect and dignity. District staff is to provide students with appropriate guidance, understanding, and direction while maintaining a standard of professionalism and acting within accepted standards of conduct.

#### Policy 457: Respectful and Professional Workplace

To ensure employees are not subjected to disrespectful and unprofessional behavior, threats or acts of physical or verbal harassment, violence or harm or disruptive conduct that causes others to feel unsafe.

#### Policy 501: Weapon Free Schools

The purpose of this policy is to assure a safe school environment for students, staff and the public.

#### Policy 506: Student Discipline

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that students are aware of and comply with ISD # 271 expectations for student conduct. Such compliance will enhance the school district's ability to maintain discipline and ensure that there is no interference with the educational process. The school district will take appropriate disciplinary action when students fail to adhere to the Code of Student Conduct established by this policy.

#### Policy 514: Bullying Prohibition

To ensure a system is in place to prevent and respond to acts of bullying, intimidation, violence, reprisal, retaliation, and other similar disruptive and detrimental behavior.

#### Policy 515: Protection and Privacy of Student Records

To collect, maintain and disseminate pupil records and protect the privacy rights of students as provided in federal law and state statutes.

#### Policy 524: Social Media Guidelines for Metro South Staff - Internet Acceptable Use and Safety

The Internet, district computer networks and computer workstations must be used responsibly, ethically and legally. Failure to adhere to district policies, regulations and guidelines for the use of computers, networks and the Internet will result in a revocation of access privileges. The purpose of this policy is to ensure appropriate access to the district computer network and acceptable and safe use of the Internet, including electronic communications.

**Policy 540: Hazing Prohibition**

The purpose of this policy is to maintain a safe learning environment for students and staff that is free from hazing. Hazing activities of any type are inconsistent with the educational goals of the school district and are prohibited at all times.

**Policy 609: Religion in the Schools**

To identify the status of religion in the curriculum, environment and calendar of Bloomington Public Schools.

**Policy 903: Visitors to School District Buildings and Sites**

To inform the school community and the general public of the position of the School Board on visitors to school buildings and other school property.

**Policy 906: Volunteers**

Volunteers play an important role in education as they help to individualize instruction, promote school/community interaction, support school activities and events, provide multigenerational and multi-cultural experiences, and enrich curriculum for all learners.

Thank you so much for taking the time to acquaint yourself with our policies and procedures. We appreciate your support and dedication which allows us to deliver excellent programming.

“What volunteers bring is the human touch, the individual, caring approach that no government program, however well-meaning and well-executed, can deliver.”

Edward James Olmo

