



VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK



2016-2017
UNITY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

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Welcome

Dear Volunteer,

I am thrilled that you have chosen to volunteer at Unity Christian School. Volunteers are a vital part of achieving our goals at Unity. There are a myriad of volunteer opportunities here at Unity, including reading in the classroom, making copies for teachers, assisting with Book Fairs, and planning events like the Fall Festival, Father-Daughter Dance, and Doughnuts for Dads, as well selling concessions at athletic events and setting up for Fine Arts events. The Lion's Pride PTO, Athletic Booster Club, and Fine Arts Booster Club all serve as an important links between parent volunteers and the school, as these groups actually oversees many of these events.

The Unity administration realizes that we could not accomplish many of the things we do here at Unity without our volunteers. YOU are vital to the success of the school. Your time, talents, and resources, are greatly appreciated. I hope that you find an area in which to volunteer that fully utilizes your particular talents, and that your volunteer experience with us is rewarding and positive.

The following information package includes pertinent details about Unity, and the roles and responsibilities of our volunteers. If you have any questions please feel free to contact myself or the Volunteer Program Coordinator, Jennifer Eddins.

Once again, welcome and thank you!

Sincerely,

Eric M. Munn

Head of School

About Unity Christian School

Unity Christian School's Mission is:

To partner with Christian parents in the process of preparing their children to impact the world for Jesus Christ by pursuing their God-given potential in academics, leadership, and service.

Statement of Faith:

- We believe the Bible is the inspired, inerrant and authoritative Word of God. (2Timothy 3:16, 2Peter 1:21)
- We believe there is one God who manifests Himself in three distinct personalities: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. (Genesis 1:1, Matthew 28:19, John 10:30)
- We believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God (John 10:33) who came down in human form (Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:23, Luke 1:35), lived a sinless life (Hebrew 4:15, Hebrew 7:26), died on the cross (1Corinthians 15:3, Ephesians 1:7, Hebrew 2:9), was buried, rose again (John 11:25, 1Corinthians 15:4) and ascended to heaven to the right hand of God (Mark 16:19).
- We believe in the Holy Spirit, whose ministry to the world is the conviction of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment and whose indwelling ministry to the saints is the empowerment to live a godly life, dedicated to serving Christ and His church. (John 14:15-17, Romans 8:13-14, 1 Corinthians 3:16, 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, Ephesians 4:30, Ephesians 5:18)
- We believe in the total depravity of man. Man is without mercy before God in his natural state. (Romans 1:21-32)
- We believe in the necessity of the new birth for salvation, which comes through faith alone in the Lord Jesus Christ and His finished work on the cross. (John 3:16-19, John 5:24, Romans 3:23, Romans 5:8-9, Ephesians 2:8-10, Titus 3:5)
- We believe in the reality of an eternal Heaven and an eternal Hell. (Matthew 25:46)
- We believe that the church is a body of born again believers who meet together for worship, fellowship and evangelism. (Eph. 5:25b-27)
- We believe in the return of Jesus Christ for all believers, dead and alive. (John 5:28-29)
- We believe that marriage is between a man and a woman, and that sex outside of that relationship violates God's plan and Law. (I Corinthians 6:18-20; Ephesians 5:31-32)
- We believe that homosexuality is a violation of the Scripture. (Romans 1:24-27)

Volunteering at Unity Christian School

Purpose of the Volunteer Program

- Most importantly, to ensure the safety of the students.
- Create a sense of community among volunteers.
- Provide an organizational structure through which parents and volunteers work with administrators, teachers, and staff to achieve spiritual and educational objectives of the school.
- Provide standardization and coordination of communication efforts.
- Provide policies and training support for all volunteers
- Encourage and stimulate parental participation in the life of Unity.
- Welcome new families and facilitate their transition into the Unity family.
- Comply with accreditation standards.

The Importance of the Volunteer

- Volunteers are VITAL to what we do at Unity Christian School. We absolutely could not do what we do without all our very willing, hard-working volunteers.
- There are myriad of service opportunities within the Unity community, including options for those who work outside the home.
- Volunteers assist the school in all of the following categories:
 - Teacher assistance
 - Administrative assistance
 - Special event planning
 - Fundraising

Volunteer Structure

- All Unity volunteers operate under the guidelines as outlined in this program manual. This manual is specifically designed to provide direction for all people who desire to serve in a volunteer capacity at Unity Christian School.
- No policy in this manual will supersede any school policy as outlined in the Faculty/Staff Handbook or the Parent/Student Handbook.
- All volunteers agree to serve without expectation of compensation.
- All volunteers must commit to providing a safe and secure environment for students and employees.

Volunteer Policies

Screening

Serving in the Unity volunteer program is a privilege and requires the agreement of the volunteer to submit to a thorough screening process prior to being permitted to serve. The screening process is outlined as follows:

- Submit a Unity Volunteer Application
- Authorize school administration to obtain a background check (\$10 fee to the volunteer)
- Authorize school to contact references
- Attend a Unity Volunteer Training Session

Confidentiality

Confidentiality must be observed in all matters. Be professionally discreet, never publicly discuss students, parents, or educators. Especially if you hear sensitive information, be respectful and do not repeat to others.

Communications

Modes of communication vary according to the volunteer position, as well as the preference of the committee chair, room mom, or teacher. If ever you feel as if communication is lacking, simply ASK! We want to improve communication, but we may need your help.

Standard of Appearance

- Dress within the spirit of the faculty/staff dress code, especially if you are working alongside the teacher in the classroom.
- Attire should be modest and in good taste.
- Modestly fitting jeans in good repair are acceptable.
- Blouses that are see-through or have spaghetti straps should not be worn.

Emergency Procedures

Should you be on campus during a drill or actual emergency, instructions are posted in each classroom indicating how to leave the building, as well as where you should report if there is a tornado. Look for a school employee to guide you.

Grievance Policy

Unity Christian School recognizes the need to have a biblical model for filing a grievance or resolving a conflict. The objective of this policy is to establish biblical guidelines for the resolution of conflict and grievances in the partnership between parents and the school. These guidelines, based upon Matthew 18:15-17, are to be followed as the means for resolving all conflict and grievance. The full policy may be found on page 26 of the Parent Student Handbook.

Volunteer grievance guidelines:

- In situations where differences arise between volunteers or between a volunteer and staff, it is advised to first try to resolve these differences amongst the parties involved.
- If a third party is needed, the Volunteer Program Coordinator is to be informed and involved. It will be his/her discretion as to what level UCS Administration becomes involved. Under no circumstances shall differences be made public or involve other members of the organization.
- If the grievance is in regard to the Volunteer Program Coordinator, an appeal may be made directly to the Head of School.

Unity Christian School Volunteer-Student Interaction Protocol

Unity Christian School strives to provide a safe environment for students, families, employees and volunteers. The interaction between adults and children must be consistent in order for children to feel secure. Most often students will interact directly with teachers and administration. Relationships are built and students become very comfortable around the adults that they interact with on a consistent basis. However, there are times when students will also interact with volunteers with whom they have little or no opportunity to build relationship.

The following guidelines are designed to provide consistency for interaction between Unity volunteers who do not regularly interact with students.

Volunteers will:

- Wear an official Unity badge while on campus.
- Introduce themselves by name and position before initiating communication with a student who they are not familiar with.
- Formally introduce themselves again if there is any chance a student might not remember him/her.
- When possible, use the student's name while communicating with them.
- Not interact with a student in a disciplinary situation.

Mandatory Child Abuse Reporting

Teachers, administrators, and certain other employees of Independent Schools have long been subject to the mandatory reporting requirements of the child abuse reporting statute. The law provides it is a crime for a mandatory reporter knowingly and willfully to fail to report suspected child abuse.

Georgia law has recently been amended to include “child service organization personnel” as mandatory reporters of suspected child abuse. “Child service organization personnel” are defined as:

[P]ersons **employed or volunteering** at a business or organization, whether public, private, for profit, not for profit, or voluntary, that provides care, treatment, education, training, supervision, coaching, counseling, recreational programs, or shelter to children. O.C.G.A. §19-7-5(b)(5).

This definition extends the mandatory reporting requirements to all employees – not just certain designated employees – and all volunteers – including parents, coaches, community volunteers, and board members of Unity Christian School. **Volunteers are required to report, as explained below, suspected child abuse if they have reasonable cause to believe that a child is abused.**

Any person making a report or causing a report to be made in good faith “shall in so doing be immune from any civil or criminal liability that might otherwise be incurred or imposed.” O.C.G.A. §19-7-5(f).

A report may be made orally, in writing, or by electronic means to:

Eric Munn, Head of School
2960 New Calhoun Hwy NE, Rome, GA 30161
706-292-0700, ext. 301
emunn@unitychristianschool.org

Volunteer Guidelines

General Guidelines

- All volunteers must check in at the front desk upon arrival. You will be given an official Unity visitor's badge, which is to be worn in a highly visible location.
- Please be prompt and dependable. Take your commitment seriously. People are counting on your presence at an appointed time. If you must be absent, please make every effort to contact the teacher, staff, or other parent volunteer.
- A volunteer should not be with an individual or group of students unless a paid employee is also present. This is for the protection of the student, the volunteer, and the school.
- Stay with the student group you are helping. Only attend to the activities for which you are on campus.
- Seek to understand and accept all students.
- Follow rules established by the supervising employee.
- Any requests for permission made by students should be given by the employee (i.e. going to the restroom, getting a drink of water, going to the front desk, etc.).
- Direct all disciplinary situations to the supervising employee.
- Volunteers serve in an effort to make the school process function at a higher level. All interaction between Unity students and volunteers must be positive in nature. In the event there is a conflict between a volunteer and a student it must be resolved by the supervising employee and not the volunteer.
- Be supportive, and do not gossip.

Volunteer-Unity Christian School Staff Interaction Guidelines

- Communicate regularly with the teacher or staff member with whom you work.
- You will be most helpful as a volunteer if you are willing to do whatever needs doing. But if you aren't getting to do the things you'd like to do, discuss that with the teacher after school hours.
- Support and supplement the instructional program of the teacher.
- Do not expect the teacher to have time to chat. Class time must be focused on the students. If you need to talk to the teacher about your student, make an appointment to talk outside of school hours.

Volunteer-Student Interaction Guidelines

- Understand the class rules so there are consistent behavior expectations for the students.
- Inform a supervising teacher or administrator when you witness students misbehaving.
 - It is **NOT** your responsibility to discipline the students. It is okay to ask students to stop unsafe or unkind behavior, but the next step is to let a teacher or other school employee know about the problem and allow them to handle it.
 - If you are having trouble with a student or group you are supervising, let the teacher know immediately, and ask him/her how he/she would like you to handle similar situations in the future.
- Do not raise your voice when speaking to a student.
- Never place your hands on a student.
- Never use corporal punishment.
 - Unity does not practice or permit corporal punishment
- Never be alone in a room with a student.
- Always be in public places.

- Set a good example for our students, as well as the other volunteers, of Christ-like behavior.

Volunteers' Code of Conduct

- Take your commitment to our organization to heart, performing your duties to the best of your ability.
- Honor confidentiality.
- Respect the mission and goals of Unity Christian School.
- Deal with conflicts or difficulties in an appropriate manner as outlined in this manual.
- Respect the property of Unity Christian School.
- Be courteous, friendly and cooperative.
- Offer constructive feedback about our organization in an appropriate manner.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why do our volunteers need background checks?

One of our main priorities is to keep children safe.

Won't this move deter people from volunteering?

We are confident that all our volunteers will understand and appreciate the great extent we are going to in order to maintain a safe environment.

Do I have to go through the application and screening process every year?

Currently, the volunteer application process is done one time and once cleared the volunteer is free to volunteer from that point forward. Each volunteer is responsible for reporting any subsequent events. The background check is a one-time check.

Could Unity Christian School use a background check that was done by my church, another agency or employer?

Possibly. You should contact your church, employer or agency to get a copy and then bring the copy of the background check to the Volunteer Program Coordinator, and it will be determined if your background check is appropriate.

Is it my responsibility to get a background check?

UCS will obtain the background check on behalf of the volunteer. You need only to sign the application, which is available at the Volunteer Program Training, and pay the \$10 fee.

Who determines if someone is "cleared" to volunteer?

The UCS Administration will review for approval/denial of volunteer status.

Who is maintaining the records?

Office of the Head of School

What privacy safeguards are in place? Who will be privy to the information?

UCS will maintain these reports. However, the information obtained from these searches includes public records from across the nation. Because of this, UCS cannot guarantee that the information is confidential. If an individual is concerned that a criminal background check will reveal something that they do not want disclosed, they should not volunteer to serve at UCS. UCS will not disclose this to any member of the public unless required by law to do so, but Georgia law does require disclosure of most government records to members of the public upon written request.

Do volunteers get a copy of the report?

Yes, they can ask for a copy.

Can they appeal a decision?

There will be no appeal procedure since there is no legal right to volunteer; UCS can always refuse volunteer work absent discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex or disability.