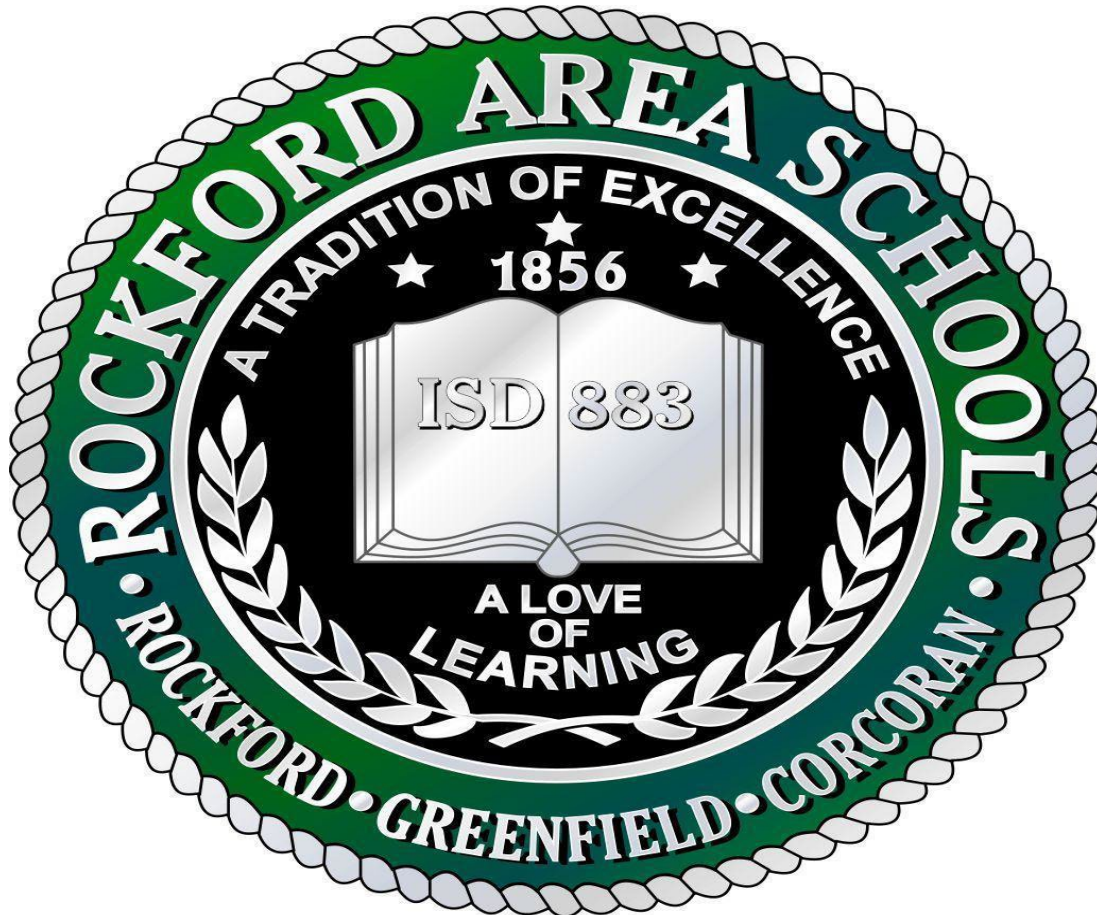


2026-2027

Rockford Area Schools Volunteer Handbook



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Updated by: Rockford Handbook Team, March 2026

Data Classification: Public Information | TLP: CLEAR

This handbook contains general volunteer guidance, conduct expectations, and district procedures intended for school volunteers and may be disclosed in accordance with Minnesota Statutes Chapter 13 and applicable district policies.

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ROCKFORD AREA SCHOOLS ISD 883 VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK



Welcome to Rockford Area Schools ISD 883!

Thank you for your interest in volunteering with Rockford Area Schools. Volunteers play a vital role in enhancing our students' educational experiences, and we greatly appreciate your time, talents, and dedication. This handbook provides essential information about our expectations, policies, and procedures to ensure a safe and positive experience for both volunteers and students.

District Mission Statement

Our mission is to provide a rigorous and innovative educational environment that empowers every student to achieve success in a changing world. Volunteers contribute to this mission by supporting students, staff, and programs across our schools.

District Core Values

We believe in:

- **The brilliance of ourselves and others** – Everyone has the capacity and responsibility to foster the growth and brilliance of others.
- **Authentic community engagement** – Engaging and supporting our employees, families, and communities enhances the healthy development of each learner.
- **High expectations** – Instilling and upholding high expectations empowers students and staff to higher levels of achievement.

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- **Collective responsibility** – Embodying the collective and urgent responsibility of anti-racist practices enriches a work and learning environment and community.
 - **Persistent effort** – Through persistent effort, we will create anti-racist schools and academically successful learners.
 - **Racial consciousness and cultural competence** – These qualities are essential to each person’s ability to be a catalyst for change.
 - **Advocacy for equity** – Everyone has equal intrinsic worth, and we will advocate for the historically marginalized.
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Volunteer Program Overview

Who Can Volunteer?

- Parents and guardians of students
- Grandparents and family members
- Community members
- Business and civic organization representatives
- High school students fulfilling service requirements.

Ways to Volunteer

- Classroom assistance
 - Library and media center support
 - Mentoring and tutoring
 - Field trip chaperones
 - Event and extracurricular activity support
 - Office and clerical help
 - Facility and outdoor beautification projects
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Volunteer Application & Background Checks

Annual Volunteer Application Renewal

All volunteers must complete a new application each school year. Applications can be found on the district website or at each school’s main office. Completing an application does not commit you to volunteering, but it is a necessary step to get started.

Background Check Requirement

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In compliance with **Minnesota Statute 123B.03**, all volunteers working with students must complete a background check, which includes:

- Criminal history check
- Sex offender registry check

Volunteers must provide a signed consent form and may be responsible for associated costs unless covered by the school district. If the results of the background check affect eligibility, the district will notify the individual accordingly.

Reference: Minnesota Statute 123B.03

Volunteer Status and Expectations

Sign-In and Identification

- Volunteers must check in at the front office and wear a visitor badge while on school grounds.
- Volunteers should sign out upon leaving.

Professional Conduct

- Treat all students, staff, and fellow volunteers with respect.
- Dress appropriately for the school environment.
- Arrive on time and notify the school if unable to fulfill a volunteer commitment.
- Always follow all school policies and procedures.

Confidentiality and Data Privacy

- Minnesota Data Privacy Laws and Policy 515 (Protection and Privacy of Education Records) bind volunteers.
- Personal, academic, or behavioral information about students must remain confidential.
- Any concerns about student well-being should be reported directly to a school administrator or staff member.

Volunteer Contact Restrictions

- Volunteers may not contact students outside of school without parental and administrative approval.
- Restricted contact includes social media, telephone communication, or meeting students off school grounds.

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Cultural Awareness

Our community is culturally diverse. Volunteers should work positively with everyone and be aware of cultural differences to foster an inclusive environment.

Discipline Protocol

- Volunteers should not discipline students beyond maintaining order in their group or activity.
- Any behavioral issues should be reported to the supervising staff, as they are responsible for discipline.

Accident Reporting

- If an injury occurs while volunteering, report it immediately to the building health professional, Volunteer Services Coordinator, or supervising staff.

Record Keeping

- Accurate record-keeping of volunteer hours is crucial. Volunteers should log their hours as directed by the school.

Staff Responsibilities

- While volunteer suggestions are valued, staff members are legally responsible for decisions regarding student instruction and school management.

Field Trip and Event Guidelines

Field Trip Requirements

- Volunteers assisting on field trips must complete a background check.
- Volunteers must follow the direction of the lead teacher or staff member.
- No unauthorized stops or detours are allowed.

Emergency Procedures

- Follow staff instructions during fire drills, lockdowns, and other emergency procedures.
- Review the school's **Emergency Action Guide** for response protocols.

Reference: Policy 507 (Emergency Procedures)

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Mandatory Reporting

Minnesota state law requires all school personnel and volunteers to report any suspected child abuse or neglect. If a volunteer suspects a student is being harmed, they must:

- Immediately report concerns to a school administrator, counselor, or teacher.
- Avoid questioning the student or investigating on their own.
- Maintain confidentiality and allow school officials to handle the matter appropriately.

Failure to report suspected abuse or neglect may result in legal consequences. Rockford Area Schools provides training and resources to help volunteers understand their responsibilities under **Policy 414 (Mandated Reporting of Maltreatment of Children or Vulnerable Adults)**.

Volunteer Recognition and Appreciation

We value the contributions of our volunteers and regularly recognize their efforts through:

- Volunteer appreciation events.
- Certificates of recognition
- Acknowledgment in school communications

Sexual Harassment Policy

Rockford Area Schools is committed to maintaining an environment free from sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination and is prohibited in our educational programs and activities.

Definition of Sexual Harassment:

Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, nonverbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- Submission to such conduct is made, either explicitly or implicitly, a term or condition of an individual's employment or education.
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for decisions affecting that individual.
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.

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Reporting Procedures:

- Any volunteer who believes they have been subjected to sexual harassment or has witnessed such conduct should report the incident promptly to the Title IX Coordinator or any school administrator.
- The district will investigate all complaints promptly and take appropriate corrective action to eliminate the conduct and prevent its recurrence.

For detailed information, refer to **Policy 413 (Harassment and Violence Prevention)**.

Bullying Policy

Rockford Area Schools is committed to providing a safe and respectful environment free from bullying, harassment, and intimidation. Volunteers should be aware of and adhere to **Policy 514 (Bullying Prohibition Policy)**, which states:

- Bullying is prohibited on school property, at school functions, and in school transportation.
- Volunteers should immediately report any instances of bullying to a school administrator or staff member.
- Retaliation against individuals reporting bullying is strictly prohibited.
- The district will investigate all reports and take appropriate action.

Reference: Policy 514 (Bullying Prohibition Policy)

Additional Relevant Policies and Resources

Volunteers must adhere to the following **Rockford Area Schools policies**:

- **Drug-Free Workplace/Drug-Free School** (Policy 418)
- **Tobacco-Free Environment** (Policy 419)
- **Harassment and Violence Prevention** (Policy 413)
- **Internet Acceptable Use and Safety** (Policy 524)
- **Volunteer Background Check Policy** (Policy 404)
- **Student Privacy and Confidentiality** (Policy 515)
- **Bullying Prohibition Policy** (Policy 514)

These policies can be accessed at: **Rockford Area Schools Policies**

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Title IX:

Rockford Area Schools does not discriminate on the basis of sex and prohibits sex discrimination in any educational program or activity that it operates, as required by Title IX, including employment.

All Title IX reports and concerns should be directed to the Superintendent of Schools

More information can be found at <https://www.rockford883.org/district/departments/human-resources/title-i>

Contact Information

For more information or to get started as a volunteer, please contact: Rockford Area Schools

ISD 883 Rockford Area Schools

651 Ash Street

Rockford, MN 55373

Phone: **763-477-9165**

Email: cindy.gapinski@rockford883.org

Website: www.rockford.k12.mn.us

Thank you for your willingness to support our students and schools!

Building Contact Information:

District Office

 **Superintendent:** Dr. Jeff Ridlehoover

 **Office Phone:** (763) 477-9165

Rockford Elementary Arts Magnet School

 **Principal:** Brenda Nyhus



 **Office Phone:** (763) 477-5837

Rockford Middle School - Center for Environmental Studies



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 **Principal:** Paul Warzecha
 **Office Phone:** (763) 477-5831

Rockford High School - IB World School

 **Principal:** Paul Menard
 **Office Phone:** (763) 477-5846

For additional information, visit www.rockford883.org

Emergency Contact Number: 911

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Rockford Area Schools – Volunteer Emergency Response Guide



At Rockford Area Schools, the safety of our students, staff, and volunteers is our top priority. Please familiarize yourself with the following emergency procedures. If you witness an emergency, notify a staff member immediately or call 911 if necessary.

Fire Emergency



- **Evacuate** the building immediately using the nearest exit.
- **Do not use elevators.**
- Follow posted evacuation routes and proceed to the designated assembly area.
- Do not re-enter the building until authorized by emergency personnel.

Severe Weather (Tornado, High Winds, etc.)



- Move to a designated shelter area, typically an interior room or hallway on the lowest floor, away from windows.
- Follow staff instructions and remain in place until the “All Clear” is given.

Medical Emergency



- Call **911** for life-threatening conditions.
- Alert the main office or another staff member immediately.
- If trained, provide first aid/CPR until medical personnel arrive.

Lockdown Procedures



- **Lockdown** (Threat Inside): Move to the nearest secure room, lock doors, turn off lights, and remain silent.
- **Lockout** (Threat Outside): All exterior doors will be secured; remain inside the building and continue normal activities.
- Follow staff instructions and do not open doors until an official “All Clear” is given.

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Suspicious Activity or Threats

- Report concerns immediately to a staff member or administrator.
- Do not approach or confront suspicious individuals.
- Follow school protocols for safety.



Chemical Spill or Gas Leak

- Move away from the affected area.
- Alert staff immediately.
- Follow evacuation or shelter-in-place instructions.

General Safety Tips for Volunteers

- Always wear your volunteer badge while on school premises.
- Be aware of your surroundings and report any safety concerns.
- Follow all staff instructions during emergencies.

For any questions regarding emergency procedures, please consult school administrators. Thank you for your commitment to a safe school environment!

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VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT

Rockford Area Schools

ROCKFORD AREA SCHOOLS
Independent School District #883
6051 Ash Street, Rockford, MN 55373

Volunteer Name:

Position: (name of program) Volunteer

Volunteer Start Date: Day of Week, Date??, 202?

Volunteer End Date: The duration for this Volunteer Agreement may be adjusted or terminated by Rockford Area Schools at any time.

VOLUNTEER

Individuals, including School District employees, frequently wish to volunteer to assist with coverage, supervision, and other tasks related to student activities, athletics, or other functions. These service hours are performed for civic, charitable, or humanitarian reasons, without expectation or receipt of compensation for services rendered. There is no requirement or expectation that any individual or employee performs volunteer services on behalf of the School District, nor any work-related benefit, incentive, or opportunity that will be provided or enhanced as a result of such services.

VOLUNTEER STATEMENT

I am interested in volunteering for this assignment. By signing this letter of assignment, I acknowledge and affirm that I will be performing these services voluntarily and without any expectation of compensation or other benefits. I understand the expectations outlined above and agree to abide by the guidelines set forth in this agreement and in the policies of the Rockford Area Schools District.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I hereby acknowledge that I have carefully read this volunteer agreement, that I fully understand its contents, and agree to this assignment according to the terms and conditions listed above. By signing below, I express my understanding and intent to enter into this assignment willingly and voluntarily.

This agreement must be signed prior to volunteering.

Printed Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____

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