

Finding Your Fit



Volunteer Handbook

Guidelines, Resources, & Opportunities for
Volunteers
at Laconia Christian Academy

Welcome to LCA's *Finding Your Fit* Volunteer Program.

We are thrilled you are joining us as a volunteer. Your participation contributes to our mission to integrate faith, develop intellect, model service, and engage community.

We need your help! We need volunteers to work in every aspect of school operation, from classroom and office helpers, one-on-one tutors and mentors, facilities and grounds workers, to organizing and manning special events and extracurricular activities.

Please review this handbook. It gives an overview of the *Finding Your Fit* (FYF) program and provides important guidelines you should be aware of prior to volunteering. If you have any questions, feel free to contact the main office, Mr. Duba, or Mrs. Butler.

Thank you for providing your precious time, individual talents, and expertise as an FYF Volunteer. With the continued support of our community, we can provide a high quality education where the mission of LCA is advanced and every student is engaged.

A special thanks is reserved for the 2014-2015 PAC who invested hours in developing, refining, and promoting this program!

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Frequently Asked Questions

Why a formal volunteer program at LCA?

- Participating in a volunteer program like FYF is good for LCA. Engaged parents lend to the creation of a thriving community. The more parents and friends who participate in school activities and the school community, the greater the sense that we are in this together.
- While many parents and friends have sought to volunteer at LCA, they have been unaware of volunteer opportunities or the process by which to volunteer. A formal volunteer program creates a structure and process for serving.
- Parents and other friends have skills and talents that have the capacity to help us better achieve our mission. A formal program allows them to offer those skills and talents to the school community for the benefit of all of us.
- As the cost of running a comprehensive school program rises, engaging parents and other community members allows us to keep the cost of tuition within reach of the families of the Lakes Region.

How is FYF structured?

FYF is built on the belief that everyone has something to offer LCA, and that increased volunteerism allows LCA to create a better sense of community and limits the necessity of large tuition increases. As such, the program is structured as follows:

- Each participating family commits to donating 40 hours of volunteer services to LCA per enrolled child, with a maximum suggested commitment of 80 hours per family regardless of the number of enrolled children. Families with the capacity and desire to volunteer in excess of the suggested hours are certainly welcome to do so.
- Participation in FYF allows LCA to reduce the cost of operation, so families that elect to participate receive a tuition discount of \$500 per enrolled child.
- Tuition is discounted upon registration in the FYF program and will be awarded regardless of whether or not the participating family donates the suggested volunteer hours to which they have committed.
- Families receiving LCA tuition grants are expected to participate in FYF and receive no additional discounts beyond any grants already awarded.
- FYF families who do not contribute the suggested hours to which they have committed

may not be invited to participate in the program for the next school year.

- An initial list of volunteer opportunities is appended to this document. A current and regularly revised list of volunteer opportunities can be accessed through *Track It Forward* (www.trackitforward.com). Each volunteer opportunity has “suggested donated hours” and specific qualifications, as appropriate, associated with it. Parents and others can view the digital version and sign up for those opportunities for which they are qualified and in which they have an interest.
- Volunteer opportunities that might involve unsupervised contact with students require a NH State Police Criminal Background check.
- Volunteer opportunities that involve transporting students in Academy owned or private vehicles require both a NH State Police Criminal Background check and compliance with LCA’s Motor Vehicle and Insurance Policy.

What makes FYF *voluntary*?

Participation in FYF is voluntary. Although the PAC discussed several ways of structuring the program, in the final analysis it was decided that the program would best serve the mission of the school and our families by maintaining a voluntary feel to the program. You will note under “Volunteer Opportunities” in the appendix to this document that each volunteer opportunity has a “suggested donated hours” associated with it. While a tuition discount is offered to those participating in FYF, volunteering is not limited to those receiving a discount. FYF hours are credited in much the same way as are “suggested donations” at many fundraising events. While failure to provide the “suggested donated hours” will not affect the current year’s FYF discount, participation in subsequent years may be jeopardized.

Who is an FYF volunteer?

An FYF volunteer is a person willing to take time to share wisdom, experience, or skills with the Academy and/or our students. An FYF volunteer helps to expand and enrich the Academy and/or its students' learning experiences by working under the direction of teachers and school staff.

According to NH RSA 508:17, a volunteer is “an individual performing services for a nonprofit organization or government entity who does not receive compensation, other than reimbursement for expenses actually incurred for such services. In the case of volunteer athletic coaches or sports officials, such volunteers shall possess proper certification or validation of competence in the rules, procedures, practices, and programs of the athletic activity.”

Occasionally it can be difficult to decide if an individual falls into the classification of a school

volunteer. A school volunteer usually meets all of the following criteria:

1. The individual will provide a service to the school.
2. The individual will NOT be compensated monetarily by the Academy.
3. The individual will typically provide volunteer services for more than one day at any one site (except for chaperones).
4. The individual may have access to students while performing the service.

Any parent, extended family member, or other community member can participate in FYF. Parents and other community members (non-enrolled children, grandparents, extended family, friends, etc.) can volunteer on behalf of any student they choose. This is important to consider, as not all parents who would like to participate have the capacity to do so. These families can benefit from the benevolence of others.

What qualifications are necessary to volunteer?

Volunteers should have the following attributes:

- a genuine interest in students and/or the enhancement of the Academy,
- a professional commitment to their volunteer activity,
- regular and prompt attendance,
- a cooperative attitude,
- flexibility,
- good health,
- and a willingness to attend training sessions, as needed.

How do I know what to do?

Ask yourself the following questions:

- Would I like to work directly with students? If so, with what age group?
- Would I like to be a tutor or a classroom assistant, an office worker, or student mentor?
- Do I have talents and/or skills that would benefit music, art, drama, physical education, athletics, or an extracurricular program?
- Would I be willing to clean, paint, or help maintain the grounds or buildings?
- Do I have skills, training, certifications, or licenses that could be put to use on campus?
- Would I be willing to help with fundraising?
- How much time can I commit to volunteering?
- What days or hours do I have available?

- Can I make a weekly commitment or am I only available occasionally?
- What experience do I have that would prepare me for my volunteer service?

A list of volunteer opportunities is appended to this document. It is not exhaustive, so please be creative as you are considering where to volunteer.

Getting Started as an FYF volunteer

Application

All FYF volunteer applicants, including field trip chaperones, but excluding one-time guest speakers/lecturers, must complete an FYF Application and wait for clearance PRIOR to volunteering or chaperoning. The application needs to be completed accurately and in its entirety. The form is sent to the Academy office for approval. Volunteer applicants who might have unsupervised contact with students require a NH State Police Criminal Background check. Applicants who plan to volunteer to transport students in Academy or privately owned vehicles require both a NH State Police Criminal Background check and compliance with LCA's Motor Vehicle and Insurance Policy.

Renewal

Volunteers will be asked to renew background checks every five years and driving records every three years. Motor Vehicle and Insurance Policies must be updated annually. The Academy will inform volunteers when renewal is necessary and provide them with a new application. Renewals need to be processed within 90 days. During the renewal period volunteers may continue to serve.

Orientation

All school families participating in FYF to receive an FYF tuition discount must attend the annual spring FYF kick-off orientation. Another orientation will be held early in the school year for new volunteers. Volunteer opportunities will be reviewed and school policies and procedures explained (eg. fire drill procedures, school dress code, rules about smoking, parking areas, absence procedures, FYF hours tracking, name tags, the opening and closing times of the Academy, the use of cell phones, and general regulations in the school). For particular projects, additional orientation/training meetings may be scheduled as necessary in small groups or individually, depending on the activity/service for which the individual(s) is volunteering. On-the-job training is provided by the supervising school employee (teacher, staff member, administrator, etc.), as necessary.

Tracking Volunteer Hours

Please be sure to report completed volunteer hours to the Academy's *Track It Forward* website. Credit for suggested volunteer hours is based on the volunteer opportunities appended to this document. Sign-up for specific volunteer opportunities, tracking, and monitoring is done through *Track It Forward* at www.trackitforward.com. Report all hours in *Track It Forward* that you provide as a service to the school, including work done at home for the school. Preauthorization is required for volunteer hours awarded for opportunities NOT listed on the appended document. When making a decision as to what constitutes volunteer service, the FYF Coordinator will consider hours completed while providing non-paid service to the Academy. Community service hours can also be submitted for approval.

Sign-In/Out Procedures

Safeguarding our students and maintaining campus security is of the utmost importance. Signing in and out allows Academy personnel to know who is on campus, at what time, and in what capacity. Additionally, volunteers who have been approved and follow the Academy's sign-in procedure are covered by Academy's liability policies while volunteering.

Therefore:

- Report to the Academy office when arriving on campus.
- Sign in at the office when volunteering while school is in session or while the office is open.
- Wear a Visitor badge. Volunteers who are not wearing a Visitor badge will be asked to report to the office to sign in and get one.
- Sign out and return your Visitor badge after completing your volunteer service hours.

Health Regulations

Volunteers should not come to school if they are ill. This includes a cold, sore throat, or cough. Volunteers may think they are leaving the teacher shorthanded, and they may want to volunteer even though they are not well, but doing so is not good for them, the children, or the teacher.

Volunteers should call the Academy and leave a message for the teacher when they have an unforeseen absence. Children learn by example, and we ask that volunteers, as role models, use good health habits when they are at school.

Attendance

Punctuality and reliability are expected since students, staff, and other families are counting on you. Please inform teachers or the FYF Coordinator in advance of planned absences and call the Academy for unforeseen absences. Students and staff will be disappointed you cannot come, but they will be pleased that you cared enough to call.

Appearance and Manner

Volunteers are considered non-paid employees and should be well-groomed and professionally dressed. If you are not sure how you should dress, please ask the teacher, someone in the Academy office, or the FYF Coordinator. Volunteers should also set a good example to students by maintaining professional conduct and language.

Confidentiality

Volunteers must maintain strict confidentiality concerning information they might learn about students or faculty. Keep information about students between yourself and the teacher. A misplaced comment can be devastating to a student, family, and the FYF program. If you have questions or concerns, talk with the teacher, someone in the Academy office, or the FYF Coordinator.

Volunteer Placement

The FYF Coordinator will make every effort to place volunteers in service areas where they indicate a strength, skill ability, or a desire to serve. Keep in mind, however, that the FYF Coordinator takes the following into consideration:

- The Academy has a prioritized list of volunteer opportunities, so the FYF Coordinator may encourage you to volunteer in one of these priority need areas in lieu of or in addition to your desired service area.
- For volunteer opportunities that require special skills, training, certifications, or licenses,

the FYF Coordinator will seek to place the most qualified volunteer in that position.

- Sign-up for volunteer opportunities that do not require special skills, training, certifications, or licenses is based on a first-come, first served basis.
- For any number of reasons, it may become necessary for the FYF Coordinator to remove or re-assign a volunteer from one volunteer opportunity to another. A decision of this nature will be made carefully and in consultation with the Head of School.

NH State Law and Regulations

Child Protection Act

NH RSA 169-C:29 Persons Required to Report. – Any physician, surgeon, county medical examiner, psychiatrist, resident, intern, dentist, osteopath, optometrist, chiropractor, psychologist, therapist, registered nurse, hospital personnel (engaged in admission, examination, care and treatment of persons), Christian Science practitioner, teacher, school official, school nurse, school counselor, social worker, day care worker, any other child or foster care worker, law enforcement official, priest, minister, or rabbi or any other person having reason to suspect that a child has been abused or neglected shall report the same in accordance with this chapter.

Note: A volunteer must also report to the Academy's Head of School and to the FYF Coordinator that they have made such a report.

NH RSA 169-C:30 Nature and Content of Report. – An oral report shall be made immediately by telephone or otherwise, and followed within 48 hours by a report in writing, if so requested, to the department. Such report shall, if known, contain the name and address of the child suspected of being neglected or abused and the person responsible for the child's welfare, the specific information indicating neglect or the nature and extent of the child's injuries (including any evidence of previous injuries), the identity of the person or persons suspected of being responsible for such neglect or abuse, and any other information that might be helpful in establishing neglect or abuse or that may be required by the department.

NH RSA 169-C:31 Immunity From Liability. – Anyone participating in good faith in the making of a report pursuant to this chapter is immune from any liability, civil or criminal, that might otherwise be incurred or imposed. Any such participant has the same immunity with respect to participation in any investigation by the department or judicial proceeding resulting from such report.

Procedures for Reporting Child Abuse. Anyone who has reason to suspect child abuse and neglect must report to the DCYF Central Intake Office by telephone at 1-800-894-5533 or 603-271-6556 or by facsimile at 603-271-6565. After regular business hours, child abuse emergencies are to be referred to the local law enforcement agency. In an emergency, life-threatening situation, a violent or near violent situation, 9-1-1 should be called for an immediate law enforcement response. The statewide enhanced 9-1-1 system will automatically connect the caller to the proper law enforcement agency from where the call originates.

Volunteer Liability

NH RSA 508:17 Volunteers; Nonprofit Organizations; Liability Limited. –

I. Any person who is a volunteer of a nonprofit organization or government entity shall be immune from civil liability in any action brought on the basis of any act or omission resulting in damage or injury to any person if:

(a) The nonprofit organization or government entity has a record indicating that the person claiming to be a volunteer is a volunteer for such organization or entity; and

(b) The volunteer was acting in good faith and within the scope of his official functions and duties with the organization; and

(c) The damage or injury was not caused by willful, wanton, or grossly negligent misconduct by the volunteer.

I-a. [Repealed.]

II. Liability of a nonprofit organization for damage or injury sustained by any one person in actions brought against the organization alleging negligence on the part of an organization volunteer is limited to \$250,000. Such limit applies in the aggregate to any and all actions to recover for damage or injury sustained by one person in a single incident or occurrence. Liability of a nonprofit organization for damage or injury sustained by any number of persons in a single incident or occurrence involving negligence on the part of an organization volunteer is limited to \$1,000,000.

III. Nothing in this section shall be construed to affect any civil action brought by any nonprofit organization against any volunteer of such organization.

IV. Volunteer activity related to transportation or to care of the organization's premises shall be excepted from the provisions of paragraph I of this section.

V. In this section:

(a) "Damage or injury" includes physical, non physical, economic and noneconomic damage and property damage.

(b) "Nonprofit organization" shall include, but not be limited to, a not for profit organization, corporation, community chest, fund or foundation organized and operated exclusively for religious, cultural, charitable, scientific, recreational, literary, agricultural, or educational purposes, or to foster amateur competition in a sport formally recognized by the National Collegiate Athletic Association, and an organization exempt from taxation under section 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 organized or incorporated in this state or having a principal place of business in this state.

(c) "Volunteer" means an individual performing services for a nonprofit organization or government entity who does not receive compensation, other than reimbursement for expenses

actually incurred for such services. In the case of volunteer athletic coaches or sports officials, such volunteers shall possess proper certification or validation of competence in the rules, procedures, practices, and programs of the athletic activity.

Role and Responsibility of FYF Coordinator

The role and responsibility of the FYF Coordinator is as follows:

- Surveying needs of faculty, staff, and administrators.
- Recruiting volunteers (parents and community members).
- Placing volunteers by matching their skills/interests to job assignments.
- Developing and disseminating volunteer materials.
- Serving as a resource for volunteers.
- Arranging for orientation and training.
- Keeping accurate records of volunteer applications and service hours.
- Coordinating school recognition events for volunteers.