



Pharr Literacy Project, Inc. Volunteer Handbook

Welcome!

It is a pleasure for me to welcome you to the Pharr Literacy Project (PLP). Our volunteers play an integral role in the educational services we provide to our students and the community. Every member of PLP team has a specific role in maintaining the high quality of educational services that distinguishes this organization. Each student, employee and volunteer with whom you come in contact may judge his or her experience at PLP you set. It is extremely important for all of us to be responsive to the needs of our constituents, in everything we do in our continued effort to provide an “educational environment.” We are thankful for the commitment you have made by joining our team. Pharr Literacy Project relies on the dedication of people like you to maintain our high standards. We hope you will find your volunteer experience to be interesting as well as enjoyable and rewarding.

Sincerely,

Kelly Michal, Sites Coordinator
956-783-7746 Office
956-640-0163 Cell



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VOLUNTEER SERVICES

The purpose of Volunteer Services is to provide and maintain supplementary assistance to the students and staff of PLP. PLP's volunteers are a vital dynamic group that devotes their skills and care in order to support the purpose and service strategy of the department. It is the goal of the Volunteer Services to match individuals willing to share their time and talent with the "right" volunteer opportunity.

VOLUNTEER GUIDELINES

To be successful as a volunteer, you must be dependable, punctual, and understanding. Highly motivated and have a willingness to learn are also important. Personal qualities of a successful volunteer include an emphasis on confidentiality and discretion.

Strategic Goals and Objectives

- Create a system of measurable, high quality student educational satisfaction services.
- Identify community needs and meet those needs via educational services within PLP as cost effective as possible.
- Develop strong relationships with students, staff and other volunteers.
- Constantly improve cost control measures and asset management practices to assure the growth and improvement of PLP.

HOW TO BECOME A VOLUNTEER AT PLP

- Complete an application and PLP's background check process.
- Schedule an appointment for an interview by calling PLP Central Office at 956-783-7746
- Provide employment or personal references
- Attend a mandatory Orientation for New Volunteers.
- Obtain an ID for volunteers – To be assigned by Sites Coordinator

Your volunteer experience will begin when all necessary requirements are met. Find out how you can make a difference. Give your time and talent where they count...become a PLP Volunteer.



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VOLUNTEER RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

Confidentiality/ Privacy

- Anything you see,
- Anything you hear,
- Anything you read,
- Anything you observe with your five senses,
- Anything you already know about a student....
- **MUST BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL**

The PLP personnel ensure that confidentiality is maintained through the following:

- Personal Information related to students, staff and volunteers are kept in locked cabinets or restricted data bases and are not discussed publicly.
- Personal information is not be released unless proper written authorization is obtained..
- Departmental policies address high risk personal identifiers.
- Privacy and confidentiality are to be maintained at all time!

SIGNING IN/OUT

All Volunteers are required to log of their day to day activities.

ATTENDANCE

If you are unable to report for your assignment or you plan to be absent for an extended period of time, please call the PLP Central Office at 956-783-7746

ASSIGNMENTS

During your interview with the Sites Coordinator you will have the opportunity to select the days and hours you are available to volunteer.

ANNUAL ORIENTATION/ EDUCATION

PLP volunteers must attend a mandatory orientation before starting a volunteer assignment. There will be an annual re-assessment educational class that all volunteers will be required to attend. Failure to attend will result in separation of services.

SMOKING

PLP maintains a smoke free environment. Those wishing to smoke must do so in the



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ENVIRONMENT OF CARE

Safety at PLP is everyone's responsibility. Everyone is expected to follow safety guidelines. Please report any safety issue to the Sites Coordinator who will contact the appropriate entity.

PERSONAL PROPERTY

PLP is not responsible for lost or stolen personal property. It is preferable that volunteers leave valuables at home.

TELEPHONE CALLS

Volunteers may only receive emergency calls while on duty. If it is necessary to make an outside call, you may use the telephone in the PLP Central office with permission.

ACCIDENTS OR INJURIES

Any accident or injury, which involves a volunteer who is on duty- no matter how minor- should be reported to the Sites Coordinator. An incident report will be completed for you.

SUGGESTION BOX

The Volunteer Suggestion Box is located in the PLP Central Office. Your comments and ideas are welcome and valuable.

SERVICES AWARDS

A record of all hours contributed to PLP is maintained by each volunteer. Each year volunteers with 100 hours or more from the previous year are invited to a recognition event.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment is unlawful verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. It violates both federal and state anti-discrimination laws. Volunteers who believe they have been subject to sexual harassment are urged to report it to an executive board member. See Sexual Harassment Policy.



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DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

Crime Prevention Safety

- Stay alert! Be observant and aware of your surroundings at all times. Report suspicious activity.
- Park in PLP lots. Secure valuables in your trunk, lock doors, and keep your windows closed.
- Always wear your identification card.
- Protect handbags, briefcases, and other valuables by securing them in locked drawers.
- Insist that services or repair persons show you proper identification. If they do not have scheduled appointments, do not see them. Be wary of unannounced visitors. Look out for each other. If you see suspicious activity or persons in near your associates' work areas, report it to the Sites Coordinator. See it! Hear it! Report it!

ADA COMPLIANCE (AMERICAN WITH DISABILITIES ACT)

The Americans with Disability Act (ADA) is the national first comprehensive Federal Law for people with disabilities. PLP fully supports the ADA via its employment practices and services.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE

PLP prohibits the unauthorized use, possession, manufacture, distribution, and dispensing and sale of controlled substances on the property. The possession, use, sale, or distribution of alcoholic beverages is also prohibited on PLP's property. The unlawful possession, use, manufacture, sale, or distribution of drugs or alcohol by volunteers on PLP's property will result in immediate dismissal.

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

PLP is committed to preventing violence in and around the workplace. Threats, aggressive or violent behavior will not be tolerated.

VOLUNTEER CONDUCT – (see PLP Code of Conduct for additional information)

It is critical for all volunteers to realize the importance and effect that their conduct has on the institution's ability to meet the needs of our students, staff and volunteers. See Code of Ethics for additional information.. The following standards of conduct must be adhered to all times.



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Standard 1. Whenever interacting with students, staff or other volunteers, all volunteers must introduce themselves by name and title when appropriate and ask if they can be assistance. Make sure your ID is readily visible.

Standard 2. Use common sense. When interacting with students, staff and other volunteers, be polite, smile and say “hello”. Treat the person, as you would want to be treated. Kind words and polite gestures make people feel special.

Standard 3. A professional and neat appearance is required to properly represent the institution and to have a positive influence on those we meet.

Standard 4. If asked specific questions from students, staff or other volunteers, volunteer must make every effort to be as informative as possible or seek out assistance.

Standard 5. Personal conversations in front of students, staff and other volunteers are unacceptable.

Standard 6. Privacy and confidentiality are to be maintained at all times!

Standard 7. Monitor the volume of your voice. Shouting is clearly unacceptable. Your words and tone should show respect and consideration, and desire to provide service.

Standard 8. When interacting with fellow volunteers, be polite, show respect and consideration. Treat the person as you would want to be treated. When you help your co-workers, you help PLP.

In Closing

This orientation manual is intended to help stimulate your thoughts, questions and suggestions about specific issues and concerns. We welcome your participation and input. PLP appreciates you and the volunteer work that you perform. Your involvement is vital to maintaining and enhancing the link between PLP and the community.

Thank you!