



# Odyssey Charter School

## 2011-2012 Volunteer Handbook & Application Materials

Odyssey Charter School  
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## Odyssey Charter School Executive Director's Welcome



September 2011

Dear Odyssey Charter School Volunteer:

**Welcome to Odyssey Charter School!** We are excited you have chosen to volunteer your time to serve and assist our students. The support of volunteers such as yourself, tremendously increases our ability to meet the individual needs of each child. Odyssey Charter School encourages parents/guardians, family members, friends and community members to share their time, knowledge and abilities with our students.

Volunteering at Odyssey Charter School will allow you to directly influence the lives of our students, by sharing your knowledge, talents, skills, and role modeling. By providing of your time, you will be able to help expand their curiosities, provide additional opportunities for learning, and share in the process of becoming successful individuals. This handbook is designed to provide you with all the practical information that will assist you in your volunteer placement. It is our hope that the time you spend with our students is worthwhile for you as well as our students.

If you have any questions or concerns not addressed in this handbook or at the required volunteer orientation, please feel free to call our office at, (626) 229-0993.

Once again, thank you for helping make a difference in the lives of students at Odyssey Charter School. We hope that you find your volunteer experience to be a rewarding one.

Sincerely,

Lauren O'Neill  
Executive Director

## Odyssey Charter School Requirements for Volunteering

In order to comply with the School Volunteer Procedures set forth by the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE), all Odyssey Charter School volunteers must meet the following requirements:

- ❑ Complete a Volunteer Application (attached)
- ❑ Read and sign the Confidentiality Agreement (attached)
- ❑ Read and sign the Volunteer Guidelines Statement (attached)
- ❑ Read and sign the Governing Board Volunteer Policy (attached)
- ❑ Complete a LiveScan Fingerprint clearance through the U.S. Department of Justice. Details will be provided during your Volunteer Orientation  
*(Locally, LiveScan is available for a fee through the Pasadena City College Police Department. More information is available by calling (626) 585-3210 or at <http://www.pasadena.edu/police/livescan.cfm>)*
- ❑ Provide proof of a negative Tuberculosis (TB) Test (Test must have been administered within the past five years)

## Odyssey Charter School

# Volunteer Expectations

In an effort to ensure both our volunteers and students have a positive experience, the following expectations have been drafted for you to consider as you engage in this volunteer experience.

As a school volunteer, you can expect:

- o To feel the assistance you are providing is worthwhile and contributes to the overall value of the program in which you are participating
- o To be treated with respect and consideration by all Odyssey students and staff
- o A suitable assignment in line with your areas of interest and skills
- o Clear instructions and any training necessary for particular volunteer assignments
- o A proper orientation of the school facilities and introductions to key personnel as well as information regarding parking, storage of personal items, restrooms and our staff lounge
- o An effective mechanism for two-way communication with staff (i.e. discussion time or regular memo exchange for ongoing direction and feedback)
- o Direct support from staff if difficulties arise in any situation

In an effort to ensure this volunteer experience is positive for everyone, we expect our volunteers to adhere to the following responsibilities:

- o Remember the Executive Director has ultimate responsibility for all personnel, policy and programs in the school, including volunteers
- o Follow all policies, procedures, and rules of Odyssey Charter School
- o Maintain high standards of ethical behavior and confidentiality
- o Be reliable and punctual for volunteer assignments. This includes keeping your commitment to the volunteer activity. Emergencies and unexpected things to happen, in which case notification to the school is also necessary
- o Assist under the direction and supervision of qualified staff following their instruction closely
- o Volunteers are in the school to assist and supplement-not replace the role of paid staff
- o Be receptive to and participate in any required orientations, trainings and meetings with staff
- o Offer constructive feedback to staff on your experience as a volunteer and make good use of their evaluation of your performance

***Please remember, you are a role model  
for students and the school community!***

## Odyssey Charter School

# Guidelines for Volunteers

Whether you are a volunteer familiar with our policies and procedures, or a new volunteer, we have created the following guidelines to ensure your experience is positive for both you and our students.

- A volunteer is not a teacher, teachers' aide, therapist, or counselor. Accept all students as they are, and refer them to a staff of teacher when needed
- Ask questions freely about programs, policies, materials and supplies at a time appropriate for both the staff member and yourself. Talk to the teacher about any difficulties at appropriate times, not in front of students or parents
- Share your experiences and talents. Let the staff member know what skills you possess (story telling, singing, playing an instrument, etc.)
- Learn the names of students...Students feel they matter when you recognize them by name. Don't worry, this takes time
- Help students tackle their work but do not do the work for them. If they get off-track, help them get back on in a tactful manner
- Work at the student's level-- sit or stand with him/her and at their level. Show your interest and involvement
- Speak in a positive way to students--point out the things they have done right
- Remind students of appropriate behavior if they are disruptive. Remember though, corrective discipline is the responsibility of the teachers, School Counselor or Executive Director.
- Don't forget to sign in upon arrival and sign out upon departure in the Volunteer Sign-In Log located in the front office
- Always wear your nametag during your stay on the campus. This will assist us identify you as a volunteer and not a campus visitor.

## Odyssey Charter School

# Starting Your Volunteer Experience

The following listing is a suggested way to help you engage in this volunteer experience at Odyssey Charter School.

- ❑ Meet with teacher/staff member before you start. Volunteers are placed with teachers or other staff members who have requested volunteer assistance. Some have specific roles and tasks for their volunteers, while others identify those tasks on an as-needed basis.
  - Ask questions if you are unclear about a task or assignment
  - Keep all lines of communication open
- ❑ Get to know the school grounds
  - Know the location and phone number of the school office
  - Know the location of important rooms such as restrooms, community hall, etc.
  - Find out where to park
- ❑ If you are volunteering in a classroom, spend some time observing the class
  - Become familiar with classroom routines
  - Identify location of supplies and materials within the classroom
- ❑ If you are volunteering on the play yard, spend some time observing students
  - Be well informed of the playground expectations, if you are unsure, ask a staff member
- ❑ Establish positive relationships with the students
  - Be friendly; let them know you are glad to be here!
  - Be encouraging to students
- ❑ If you experience any problems with your placement, try to resolve them first with the teacher or staff member with whom you are working. If you require additional assistance, please contact the school's Executive Director, Lauren O'Neill.
- ❑ When first meeting the staff/teacher you will be working with, please remember to discuss the following:
  - Days and times to work in classroom/on campus
  - Procedures for you and staff member to be in communication
  - Alternate plans for the days when the teacher or staff member is absent

- How you will be told of the day's assignment (folder, note, etc.)
- The name students will call you
- Teachers' own classroom management style
- Storage of your personal belongings
- Location of staff lounge and adult restrooms

### **Disclosure of Possible Abuse**

It is the school's **legal** obligation to report any suspected child abuse to the appropriate authorities. If a child indicates to a volunteer that he/she has been or is the victim of abuse, or if a volunteer has strong suspicions that a student may be a victim of abuse, the volunteer must **immediately** inform either the supervising teacher, or school administrator.

Despite a child asking you to "promise not to tell", as an educational institution we have the legal burden to disclose any and all suspected child abuse. A volunteer **cannot** keep such a promise, and you must be able to disclose this to the child confiding in you. One way this can be done is by letting the child know you are worried for their safety and you care for them and do not want them to be harmed or hurt in any way by anyone.

Please do not try to counsel the child; remain sympathetic and become a listening ear without being judgmental or offering solutions. Assistance and counseling should and will come from those professionals with the responsibility and experience to provide it.

**Volunteers must remember that any personal information must be kept in the strictest confidence and can only be shared with the school staff.**

**Odyssey Charter School**  
**VOLUNTEER APPLICATION**

*All Odyssey Charter School volunteers are required to complete and submit this application before beginning any volunteer assignment. Please ensure all contact information is accurate and updated*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Street Address City, Zip Code

Daytime Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Employer: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name Relationship

Emergency Contact Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

**The following information will assist us in providing you an appropriate placement. However, please know we may be unable to provide your first choice for all volunteer assignments.**

**Preferred Grade Level:**    -- K to 3<sup>rd</sup>                      4<sup>th</sup> —5<sup>th</sup>                      6<sup>th</sup>—8<sup>th</sup>

**Preferred Teacher/Staff Member:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Volunteer Areas of Interest**

1-on-1 Tutoring                      General Classroom Volunteer                      Work from home  
 Assisting in office                      Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Volunteer Activities & Subjects of Interest (Check all that apply)**

Mathematics                      Science                      Literacy                      Music  
 Art                      History/Social Studies                      Physical Ed (P.E.)  
 Classroom Presentations                      Play Yard Monitoring                      Field Trips  
 Campus Improvements                      Classroom Projects                      School projects

**Availability (Provide any hours you are available for volunteer assignments)**

Monday: \_\_\_\_\_ Tuesday: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Wednesday: \_\_\_\_\_ Thursday: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Friday: \_\_\_\_\_

## Odyssey Charter School Confidentiality Agreement

Perhaps one of the greatest obstacles in the path of effective use of volunteers is the concern on the part of the school regarding the possible misuse of privileged information. Once anyone begins to work in a school setting, he/she becomes privy to knowledge and children's behavior, academics, emotional maturity, relationships with others, etc. In many cases this information is acquired in the course of frequent contact at the school.

Additionally, volunteers are in a position to learn more about staff members than would normally be learned from their daily public image. The knowledge about students and staff should never be shared in the community or with anyone who does not have a legitimate need to know. Similarly, care must be taken not to make comments harmful to the reputation of any pupil, school staff, parent, or other volunteer.

A volunteer has every right to expect that his or her participation will be treated with the same confidentiality and respect. If problems develop, the line of communication regarding a situation in the school is always first with the staff member concerned and then, if necessary, with the Executive Director.

As part of Odyssey Charter School's compliance with its Governing Board Volunteer Policy, please respond to the following questions:

- |  |     |    |
|--|-----|----|
| 1. Have you ever been convicted of a felony?               | Yes | No |
| 2. Have you ever been charged with child abuse or neglect? | Yes | No |

If you will be transporting children, please answer the following questions:

- |  |     |    |
|--|-----|----|
| 1. Do you have a current driver's license?                                     | Yes | No |
| 2. Has your driver's license been suspended or revoked in the past five years? | Yes | No |
| 3. Can you provide proof of insurance?   | Yes | No |

### Acknowledgement

By signing below, you acknowledge you have read and understand the guidelines and policies regarding the campus confidentiality standards. You agree to withhold any information regarding students' performance and agree to share any information a child shares that may be harmful to himself or herself or any other individual.

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Odyssey Charter School Volunteer Guidelines Statement

As a volunteer at Odyssey Charter School I agree to the following:

1. I will sign in and sign out at the school office when I arrive on campus and depart from campus
2. I have read and am familiar with the school policies and procedures and will follow the school and classroom policies
3. I will support the teachers' instructional programs and classroom discipline plan
4. I will remind students of appropriate behavior, however I recognize that all children learn at different rates. When working with a student I will be encouraging and support their learning process in a positive manner
5. I will maintain confidentiality of student behavior and academic performance that I observe while volunteering
6. I understand that my volunteer assignment is at the discretion of the classroom teacher. My services will be used where they are felt to be most appropriately matched with school/classroom needs
7. I understand that my volunteer activities must be under the supervision of a staff member at all times
8. I understand that it is required that I provide a current Tuberculosis (TB) test
9. I have read the Volunteer Handbook and will follow all the guidelines, policies and procedures stated within.

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Odyssey Charter School

## Governing Board Volunteer Policy

### Screening

Any volunteer working directly with students, or transporting students, must fulfill state law requirements regarding TB testing and fill out a confidential form containing the following information:

Have you ever been convicted of a felony?

Have you ever been charged with child abuse or neglect?

In order to preclude situations which could bring about a conflict of interest a volunteer shall not ordinarily be appointed to a position, or be involved in volunteer activities, where a member of his/her immediate family maintains supervisory or evaluation responsibilities for the position. However, immediate family members may be employed or volunteer at the School with the approval of the Director.

### STANDARDS:

- ❑ Volunteer services are available to the students as a whole, and are based upon the assessment of the students' needs. These may include, but are not limited to, teaching facilitating or mentoring (with appropriate credentials or supervision), supervision of enrichment and Student Government activities, and transportation.
- ❑ Volunteer activities may also include services that support the School's needs and goals; including, but not limited to, fundraising, public relations, clerical, construction and maintenance.
- ❑ Volunteer services are offered in accordance with the needs of the School, under the authority of the Governing Board.
- ❑ Volunteers must be able to work without direct supervision. Overall direction and monitoring of volunteer activities will be under the supervision of the teacher or other staff, as appropriate.
- ❑ When working with students and families it is inevitable that volunteers will encounter confidential information protected by federal law. This could occur by overhearing students' conversations, witnessing conflicts between students and teachers, or encountering a student with a medical, social, financial or educational problem. Volunteers must adhere to the same standards of confidentiality as professional staff. Volunteers are expected to maintain confidentiality when speaking about other people's children in front of their own children, or in front of others who have no need to know.
- ❑ Volunteers may transport students only with permission of the School. If volunteers transport students to and from official events they must have a valid California driver's license, and provide proof of automobile liability insurance and have a seat belt for every child

- ❑ Volunteers shall not be in possession of or under the influence of, alcoholic beverages and/or illegal drugs or in possession of firearms while serving in a volunteer capacity.
- ❑ When serving as a chaperon at an official School event, the volunteer will not leave the grounds unless approved by the staff in charge of the event.
- ❑ Volunteers shall not meet privately with one student at a time. Other students, or staff, must be present.
- ❑ Volunteers shall not use obscene or discriminatory language at any School event.
- ❑ Volunteers shall not sign any agreements on behalf of the School. If they are asked to sign such an agreement they should contact the Director for assistance.

VIOLATIONS: Failure to meet any standards may result in the Board discontinuing any further volunteer activity by that individual.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

I acknowledge that I have read and agree to abide by the standards in this document and that I understand that my continued volunteer work is contingent upon signing this document. Further, that failure to comply with these standards may result in termination as a volunteer. In addition, Odyssey agrees to hold harmless and indemnify volunteers for any and all liability resulting from their volunteer service.

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date