

# Elmore County Board of Education

Every Student Empowered



Every Student Succeeds



## Substitute Teacher/Volunteer Handbook

If you have any questions regarding the contents of this handbook, please contact:

Human Resources Department

Susanne Goodin  
Director  
334-567-1210

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## *A note from the Superintendent*

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Substitute Teachers/Volunteers:

This handbook is designed as your guide for a successful experience as a substitute teacher/volunteer in the Elmore County School System. The contents are arranged to guide you through different processes and help you find answers to questions and/or concerns you may have.

We believe substitute teachers/volunteers can be a positive influence for our school system by adding variety and fresh approaches to our academic excellence. We sincerely hope the information in this handbook will serve to stimulate greater goals for our system's substitute teaching/volunteer program.

As a substitute teacher/volunteer, you are one of the most vital parts of our school system. It takes a special kind of person to be a successful substitute teacher/volunteer – a person, who earnestly cares about children, is patient, creative, and versatile.

As you perform your work in the classroom, you may find that you have suggestions that may contribute toward the improvement of our schools, and we strongly encourage you to submit these suggestions. We feel confident you will do everything possible to meet the high standards required for teaching in our schools and wish to extend our most sincere and best wishes as you join us in empowering every student to see success.

Sincerely,

Richard Dennis  
Superintendent

## Being a Volunteer with the Elmore County Public Schools

Volunteers provide a valuable service by assisting with operational functions and by being role models for the students. To provide students with a safe environment and to allow for a variety of opportunities for volunteering, volunteer participation is classified into two tiers. Tier 2 volunteers, who would have the potential for unsupervised access to students, will be subject to a Level 3 background check through Raptor Technologies at a cost of \$25.

**Tier 1** – Volunteers or visitors who enter a school for a one-time event and/or have no direct unsupervised exposure or contact with children. Typical examples include visitors for lunch, guest speakers, guest readers, concession stand workers, office helpers, non-classroom assistants, Field Day assistants, day field trip volunteers and volunteers present for functions associated with PTA, Booster Clubs and helping certified teachers. Tier I volunteers must always be under the direct supervision of certified personnel.

### Screening Requirements:

- Be able to provide some form of current government-issued photo identification (driver's license, military ID, or other US Government identification).
- Sign in using the district approved Raptor system. This system checks against the sex offender registry of all 50 states.
- Upon approval, the volunteer will be provided an identification badge.
- After your volunteer work, please be certain to sign out at the front desk.

**Tier 2** – Volunteers with unrestricted exposure, who work with children and may be unsupervised by school staff. Typical examples include: regularly scheduled class and or student volunteers, interns, 1 to 1 tutors, student mentors and overnight field trip chaperones.

### Screening Requirements:

- All requirements of Tier 1 plus the following:
- Submit a district-approved "School Volunteer Application" to the site principal (can be obtained through Human Resources Department/Elmore County website [www.elmoreco.com](http://www.elmoreco.com) )
- \$25 Raptor Technologies Level 3 background screening OR obtain a background check through Cogent (interns/substitutes \$45)

## **Becoming a Substitute with Elmore County Public Schools**

Individuals interested in substituting within the Elmore County School District can get a packet from the Human Resources office at the Board of Education. Individuals will need the following:

- \$30.00 money order payable to State Department of Education (license fee)
- Driver's License
- Social Security card
- Proof of graduation from High School
- Receipt from Background check- See [www.cogentid.com/alabama](http://www.cogentid.com/alabama) for fingerprinting

The items listed above must be submitted to Vivian Crosby in Human Resources. Please call 567-1210 if you have questions.

Substitutes receive \$62/day for certified staff and \$55/day for support staff. Long-term substitutes are certified individuals that serve on an assignment for more than 20 days; they receive \$90/day. Long term substitutes must be recommended by the principal and must sign a contract.

Once you receive your substitute card, you should then take it to the schools that you would like to substitute for. They will make a copy of the card and get your contact information. If you do not take your substitute card by the school, then you will not get phone calls to substitute at that school. You are not required to leave your card at every school, but only those that you are interested in working with.

## Tips for new Substitute Teachers

1. Substitute teachers should always have a back-up plan for routines, procedures, rules, and appropriate instructional activities.
2. They should review and familiarize themselves with the plans left by the regular teacher and look for posted rules, routines, schedules, procedures, seating charts, and a grade-level chair or same-subject teacher on the hall for support.
3. They should stand at the door and greet students as they enter, directing them to put things away properly and to organize their materials and start on any assigned work left by the regular teacher.
4. They will collect any notes sent by parents, guardians, or other teachers.
5. The substitute will introduce himself or herself with a confident, assertive, and pleasant voice.
6. The professional substitute will be positive and treat students with respect and let them know expectations at the beginning of the day or class period.
7. They will be firm, fair, and consistent.
8. They should try to learn the students' names and call them by their names as quickly as possible.
9. They should also establish a signal for transitioning from one activity to the next.
10. A substitute teacher must focus consistently on positive behavior and think prevention. He or she should be aware of potential problem behaviors.
11. A substitute should always address the problem, not the student, when dealing specifically with the negative behavior.
12. The substitute should minimize reactions to difficult situations, trying to stay calm and not speaking or acting in a hurtful way toward students. It is never a good practice to make an example of another student.
13. One should try to speak to disruptive students in private or at least away from other students.
14. Proximity to students helps the teacher control the classroom environment. Walk around the classroom frequently.
15. Substitutes should move among students aiding and giving reminders as needed.
16. The school day should be structured so that there are time frames provided for transitioning between activities or classes.
17. Make sure to have the attention of all students when instructing, keeping perspective and maintaining a good sense of humor.
18. It is helpful to the classroom teacher if you leave a note regarding the day's events. Let the teacher know about any behavior problems or work that was not completed.

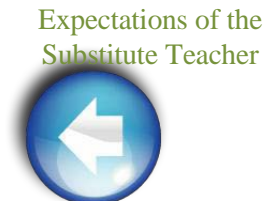
Disclosure of private information is prohibited by the federal *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act* (FERPA). This includes discipline information, academic, and/or medical conditions. If a substitute has a doubt about what is confidential, it is confidential. A substitute should know that students are not allowed to leave the campus during the school day without the expressed permission of the administration. Also, only a nurse or appropriate health care personnel should administer medication, whether prescription or over-the-counter.

### Professionalism in Attire

All employees are expected to dress in a manner becoming of their status as Elmore County Public School System employees. It shall be the responsibility of the principal or immediate supervisor to discuss appropriate dress with employees. All substitutes should wear their school-issued name badge every day while working at the school.

# SUCCESSFUL SUBSTITUTE TEACHING IS ...

## A TWO-WAY COMMITMENT



### Expectations of the School System

Given the qualifications, training, credentials, and code of conduct/professionalism and ethical standards for a substitute, the local school district (also known as the school system or local education agency/LEA) expects the substitute to meet the following conditions.

1. The substitute teacher needs to know how to find the location of the school and to be punctual. (A map of the school can be requested in the principal's office, upon arrival, to locate the classroom.)
2. The substitute teacher needs to be punctual and is required to stay at the school for the full assignment unless there is an extenuating circumstance that prompts an approved release by the principal.
3. The substitute teacher is required to dress professionally and appropriately for the assignment.
4. The substitute teacher is expected to follow the guidelines for classroom management, attire, and ethics. (**Substitute teachers should not leave students unattended at any time.**)
5. The teacher's routine and lesson plan are expected to be followed by the substitute teacher.
6. The substitute teacher should refrain from eating food and drinking beverages in the classroom during classroom time.
7. The substitute teacher is expected to have technical skills for maintaining discipline.
8. It is expected that cell phones and computers for personal business will not be used by the substitute teacher during scheduled classes.
9. A request for assistance is expected from the substitute teacher when lesson plans are not understood, accidents occur, or student behavior is not manageable.
10. An evaluation of the day's assignment may be expected to build upon success and to correct undesirable conditions.

## CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

- o Be firm, fair, and consistent.
- o Always take class attendance, writing the names of students who are tardy.
- o Move around the room. If there is a pocket of disruption or noise, move closer to those students.
- o Avoid making an example of a student or group of students. Students do not react to this method of discipline. Remain calm and learn which battles to pick. If possible, speak to a disruptive student in private, not giving him or her an audience of peers.
- o Know when to ask for help.
- o If a dangerous situation occurs, call the office for help (a telephone is available in each classroom).
- o Become familiar with the referral/detention procedures of the school (see Assistant Principal for this information). If a student fails to comply with a directive or violates a school/class rule, leave notification for the teacher, write a referral to the office, or call for assistance, if needed.
- o Let the teacher know about any class management issues that occurred during the day. It is also a good idea to let the teacher know if there were no issues.

## HANDLING DIFFICULT SITUATIONS

If a student has difficulty with getting started on work, try to stand close to the student, praise other students who are on task, assist and provide reminders/clarify directions, break the task into timed chunks, and/or ask the student if he or she needs help.

If a student has difficulty with staying on task, try to stand close to the student, praise other students who are staying on task, have students work on a clear work space containing only necessary supplies; and/or relocate the student to a quieter area in the room (a safe place).

If a student has difficulty with following directions, try to provide brief, clear directions; provide examples of the directions; have the student repeat and explain the directions; restate the directions; and/or praise other students who are following the directions.

Overall, please be sure to follow the school's procedures and Elmore County Code of Conduct when dealing with student misbehavior. Know, in advance, where office referrals are located and whom to contact in the event a student needs to be removed from the classroom.

## ON CAMPUS EMERGENCIES

All classrooms are equipped with telephones. If the need arises, please don't hesitate to contact the main office.

Evacuation and safety maps are in each classroom. Identify the maps and locate "safe" areas in advance, in case the need arises while you are substituting/volunteering.

Each school has procedures in place for handling situations that warrant the school being placed on lockdown, fire, and severe weather. Please check the substitute plan for emergency procedures/talk with your local school administrator.

All schools have in place effective modes of communication in the event of an emergency. Student safety is our #1 priority. Cooperation among all is needed to ensure students are kept safe. It is your responsibility to review safety plans for the school where you will be substituting. Please also talk with school administration so that you are added to the REMIND communication system.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**Q: May I substitute for a class where my child is a student?**

A: If you are called on to substitute, notify the administration and they will determine if they need to change your teaching assignment.

**Q: Do substitute teachers receive unemployment compensation during the summer months?**

A: No, substitute teachers do not receive unemployment compensation during the summer months.

**Q: Is it permissible to work at a select number of schools only?**

A: Yes. Once you are issued a substitute card, you will then contact the various schools in which you're interested in working and show them proof of your substitute card. They will get your contact information and add you to their list of substitutes.

**Q: Do I have to be available each day of the week to maintain my eligibility to work as a substitute teacher?**

A: When presenting your substitute card to the schools where you're interested in working, you can then inform them of the specific days you're available to work. You do not have to work every day to maintain eligibility.

**Q: If I am given one assignment before I arrive at the school and then I am given another assignment after I arrive at the school, do I have to accept the change?**

A: You are strongly encouraged to be flexible. Remember, your position as a substitute teacher is one of support for the teaching and learning process. The administrators may have to make changes to benefit the students.

**Q: What should I do if I report to a classroom and the teacher has not left any work for students?**

A: If you report to a classroom and the teacher has not left work for students, you should notify the administration immediately.

**Q: What if I forget my driver's license when I arrive to volunteer at the school?**

A: Volunteers/visitors will not be able to enter the building without gaining access through the Raptor system using their driver's license/military ID. If you have previously been scanned into the Raptor system, then you will be able to volunteer. You will only need to scan your driver's license/military ID once at each school to gain access.

## Boards Disclaimer

This Substitute/Volunteer Handbook contains only general guidelines and information related to policy and procedures of the Elmore County Board of Education. It is not intended to be comprehensive or to address all the possible applications of, or exceptions to, the general policies and procedures described. For that reason, any questions concerning eligibility for a benefit, or the applicability of a policy or practice, should be addressed to the Human Resources Director, Susanne Goodin. Neither this handbook nor any other Elmore County Board of Education document confers any right, either expressed or implied, to remain in the Systems employ, nor does it guarantee any fixed terms or conditions of employment.



Some of the subjects described in this handbook are covered in detail in official policy and procedure documents. Substitutes/volunteers should refer to these documents for specific information, since this handbook only briefly summarizes those benefits. The procedures, practices, policies, and benefits described here may be modified or discontinued from time to time. Attempts will be made to inform you of changes as they occur. However, it is the substitute/volunteer's responsibility to keep current of all Elmore County Board of Education Policies and procedures. It is each substitute/volunteer's responsibility to review the system policies and procedure in detail and to request any clarification needed from the supervisor or the Human Resources Director. Violation of system policies or procedures may result in disciplinary action, up to and including being removed from the Active Substitute List. You can find Elmore County policy and procedure information on our school system website at [www.elmoreco.com](http://www.elmoreco.com) under publicati

