



VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK
2021-2022 School Year
www.lawyersforlearning.org

MISSION STATEMENT

Lawyers for Learning (“LFL”) is dedicated to offering and supplementing educational opportunities for students throughout the City of Buffalo, with a focus on students at Buffalo Public School 18. LFL strives to promote better educational opportunities through direct and indirect volunteer support. LFL is committed to providing this support to at-risk children and their families through tutoring and mentoring students, investing in the surrounding neighborhood and community, and ensuring academic and social support for those most in need. LFL’s volunteers seek to inspire and enable students to realize their full potential as productive, responsible, and caring citizens. The support of our volunteers, school administration, staff, and community partners are the keystone of our continued success in serving the students and the community.

A central focus of LFL’s efforts is its tutoring program. Volunteer tutors from the Buffalo legal community engage students at School 18 and provide opportunities for them to build the skills necessary to succeed academically, develop personally, and become responsible, contributing members of the community.

BOARD MEMBERS

Committee members help with the administrative and operational aspects of Lawyers for Learning. The Lawyers for Learning Committee meets on the third Thursday of every month. Volunteers may be involved with tutoring, the Committee, or both. If you are interested in working with the Lawyers for Learning Committee or joining the Board of Directors, please contact the Lawyers for Learning President, Kara Eyre, at KME@Hurwitzfine.com.

I. INTRODUCTION

Thank you for volunteering to work as a tutor with the students at Buffalo Public School 18! This Handbook is designed to answer basic questions and to help you make the best use of your time at School 18. For more than 20 years, Lawyers for Learning has worked to strengthen the ties between Buffalo's legal community and our city's youth by providing valuable outreach and leadership in a public-school setting. Lawyers for Learning partners members of the legal community with students at School 18, providing the students with valuable attention, especially in the areas of reading and writing. Our experience has been that the weekly tutoring by a non-relative volunteer improves each student's self-esteem, morale, academic performance, and attendance.

Lawyers for Learning is open to lawyers in private and public practice, judges and their staff, secretaries, title examiners, paralegals, retirees, recent law school graduates, law students, and other members of Buffalo's legal community. Each tutor is required to undergo a background check, completed at the time of registration. As with any such endeavor, the tutoring program's success turns on the commitment of volunteers and the support of their employers, as well as on the organization of the program itself.

Long associated with the Bar Association of Erie County, Lawyers for Learning incorporated as a non-profit in 2004 in order to provide even greater programming support to School 18. If you are interested in helping to recruit tutors or plan events, please contact Lawyers for Learning President, Kara Eyre, at KME@Hurwitzfine.com.

II. ABOUT SCHOOL 18

Buffalo P.S. 18, the Dr. Antonia Pantoja Community School of Academic Excellence, is an elementary school located on the city's west side, spanning grades Pre-Kindergarten through Eighth. There are approximately 520 students enrolled in the neighborhood school.

All tutoring will take place in-person this school year, unless otherwise agreed upon.

General information about the school, including contacts, and address is below:

<i>School Address and Telephone</i>	Public School # 18 750 West Ave Buffalo, NY 14213 PH: 716.816.3160 Fax: 716.888.7036
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<i>Principal</i>	Aakta Patel
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<i>Assistant Principal</i>	Tracy Folts
<i>Assistant Principal</i>	Jessica Emmerson

Days and Hours

The school day at School 18 runs from 9:00AM until 3:55PM. Breakfast is served to all children at the school between 9:00AM and 9:15AM. This schoolyear, tutors will meet with their students during the hour before the school day formally begins (8:00-8:55AM, any day Monday through Friday). Tutors are assigned a day that is most convenient for both the student and the tutor. After the student and tutor meet and get to know one another, any necessary changes in meeting times can be arranged between the student and tutor, or coordinated through Tracy Folts at tcotter@buffaloschools.org and Taylor Schubauer at lawyersforlearning@gmail.com.

III. THE ROLE OF VOLUNTEERS

Tutors

Tutors commit to meeting with a student for one-hour per week to help the student with his or her basic academic skills — e.g., reading and writing — as well as specific homework assignments. These sessions will take place immediately before the school day. Some of the students in the tutoring program will need only general guidance and encouragement with their schoolwork. A different approach may be called for with students who are struggling with their class work and perhaps issues outside the classroom.

IV. PROCEDURES FOR VOLUNTEERS

Parking & Door

Volunteers should park and secure their vehicles in the parking lot at the school, located between Fargo and West Avenue. Please note, the entrance in the parking lot will be locked. Tutors should buzz in at the door and identify themselves as there for Lawyers for Learning.

Masks and Social Distancing

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, both tutors and students are required to wear masks while inside School 18 as well as maintain 3-feet of social distancing.

Sign-in Procedure

Volunteers must register at the school's main office each time they enter the school building. There is a visitor QR Code to complete. You will meet your student in the office and then go to the library.

Attendance

Regular attendance of the volunteers is expected. Because the students look forward to your visits, please make every effort to come when you are expected. Consider obtaining your student's home contact information so that you can contact your student's parent/guardian if you cannot tutor. If you are unable to tutor one day, please call the school office at 716-816-3160 as soon as possible or email Mrs. Folts at tcotter@buffaloschools.org

Sometimes your student may miss school and therefore tutoring. If this becomes an issue, please contact Taylor Schubauer at lawyersforlearning@gmail.com. You may consider giving your contact information to your student parent/guardian so that he or she can contact you directly if he or she is going to miss school and/or tutoring.

Some tutors choose to sign up with a friend, creating a "tutoring team." In such cases, the two tutors decide between them who will be responsible for which weeks. This arrangement has the advantage of affording the tutors greater flexibility.

Communicating with the Teachers

The teachers of the students enrolled in the Lawyers for Learning program are supportive of the program. Tutors are encouraged to introduce themselves and get to know their student's teachers to obtain guidance as to how best to address their student's needs. Open communication is important for determining your student's strengths and weaknesses and to apprise the teacher of the student's progress or problems the student may be experiencing. We will provide teacher email addresses to tutors and tutors should feel free to reach out with questions about assignments.

Notices and Announcements

Nearly all of our contact with the volunteers will be via email. **We ask that you provide us with a current email address that you check regularly.** We will email important announcements whenever necessary.

V. SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES FOR TUTORS

You will be assigned to work with one or two children for one hour a week. Some teachers will give you guidance as to how best to use the time, although, at the suggestion of the school, we recommend helping your student with his/her homework as often as possible. Some students need emotional support more than academic help. Some students need enrichment activities. Some students need help with basic skills. Almost all of the students need to focus on reading and writing. All of the children will benefit from the one-on-one care and attention you will provide.

There will be LFL “resources” in the closet and cabinets in the tutor room consisting of games, books, and learning tools for every age, and is a great resource for all tutors.

The following ideas may help you get started:

- Read a book to the child, or take turns – you read a page and the student reads a page. Reading to a child builds vocabulary and increases the child’s interest in books.
 - With older students, have them read to you exclusively.
- Educational games are available in the resource closet and can be taken to the library. Also, feel free to bring in a favorite educational game to use or add to our collection.
- Always check with the teacher to see if there is something in particular your student needs help with.

- Students have a 1 to 1 device where they can log into MyON for books, Lexia for work on ELA, MobyMax for math work or into Schoology for current assignments from teachers.
- The 1 to 1 device can also be used to find mindfulness activities or movement break videos.

Topics of Conversation

- Fun childhood memories
- Superheroes – who would you want to be and why?
- What do you like doing in your free time?
- Describe your favorite vacation.
- What is the best/worst thing about....
- What types of music/movies/tv/food do you like?
- What do you want to be when you grow up? How might you get there?
- What are your greatest fears/accomplishments?
- What is the greatest parts of who you are?

VI. WHAT LAWYERS FOR LEARNING EXPECTS FROM YOU

As a volunteer, your role is to provide students with positive reinforcement and encouragement. Be respectful of the students, making whatever suggestions or corrections you have with tact and care. Use humor. Listen to what the child says, as well as what they don't. Come every week because the students look forward to – and count on – your visit. It is best if tutors commit for the entire academic school year. If you find that you are not able to continue, let us know as soon as possible and we will find a replacement. We also ask if you are unable to continue, that you personally let your student know so you can close out the relationship.

Avoid being judgmental about a child's situation or family, and refrain from asking too many personal questions. Keep the focus on the student and school. Be mindful that, in most instances, these students come from backgrounds very different from your own.

If you have something to share, please offer your feedback and suggestions for growth and improvement of our program to any member of the Lawyers for Learning Board.

Let the student do his or her own work; there is no educational value in an assignment if you are going to provide all the answers! Your goal is to help the child become a critical thinker, not a person who depends on others to provide the answer.

VII. IF THERE ARE PROBLEMS . . .

As a first resort, please email Taylor Schubauer at lawyersforlearning@gmail.com. Taylor will start a dialogue with Tracy Folts. Alternatively, you can reach out to Tracy directly and must do so if you believe it is a serious issue

Tardiness or Absences

The most common problem that tutors will encounter is that a student may be late or chronically absent. It may be helpful to call your student at 7:30AM before either of you comes to school. If a student is habitually late, please discuss it with Tracy Folts or Taylor Schubauer. Attendance may improve if the time slot is adjusted. Please alert someone at the school if a student misses two sessions in a row with you. A new tutor-child assignment will be made if necessary.

If you as the tutor are going to be late or cannot attend, please contact Tracy Folts. If you can contact the day before, that is most helpful as then the students are not brought to school before the day begins.

Personality Conflicts

Once in a while, a student and a tutor may have a personality conflict. If so, it may be best for everyone if the student and tutor are reassigned. It always takes a few weeks for a student and

a tutor to get to know each other. However, if after a few weeks, you find that you and the student are not getting along, the chemistry is not quite what you hoped for, or your student is not present at the time scheduled, please discuss the situation with Taylor Schubauer or Tracy Folts.

Behavior Problems

As a tutor, you are responsible for making sure that your student remains with you for the entire session. Students are not permitted to wander about the school by themselves. It is possible, but not likely, that a student will report something to you that makes you concerned about his or her safety or welfare. Any discussion of someone harming your student, a student self-harming, or your student harming another student should be disclosed **immediately** to Tracy Folts.

VIII. LAWYERS FOR LEARNING GUIDELINES, POLICIES AND RULES OF CONDUCT

Please take time to review this form. These policies are effective immediately. Every volunteer tutor is expected to know and comply with these policies.

1. The policies and procedures outlined in this form are to be regarded as guidelines, which may require amendment and/or modification from time to time. LFL retains the right to make decisions involving a volunteer as needed in order to conduct its work in a manner that is beneficial to the students we serve.
2. This policy enables the organization to terminate the relationship at any time for any reason. The only recognized deviations from these policies, practices, and benefits are those authorized by the Board of Directors.
3. All information relating to students and their families is confidential. Volunteers must refrain from any discussion of students or their families outside of this program.
4. This is an in-school program, inasmuch as tutoring takes place during school hours. Tutors are not permitted to meet with the children outside of school, except with the explicit permission of the student's parent or guardian.
5. Tutors should not provide transportation for the children before or after school.

6. Gifts should be kept to a minimum. If a student seems to need some school supplies, you may decide to bring some to use during your sessions or you may wish to remember a child's birthday with a token gift.
7. We demand that all of our volunteers maintain the highest ethical standard when dealing with the people we serve. All volunteers are to avoid any activity that might create a conflict between their loyalty to our organization or its mission and their own or someone else's private interests. All volunteers are required to observe all government laws and regulations.

RULES OF CONDUCT

The following should not be viewed as a complete list. We expect our volunteers to exercise good judgment in all situations. The following behaviors are prohibited:

1. Abusing individuals served, physically, verbally, psychologically, sexually, or through mistreatment or neglect.
2. Use of corporal punishment, seclusion, unauthorized or inappropriate use of restraint, aversive conditioning, or time-out upon those served.
3. Threatening, intimidating, or coercing individuals and/or their families or caretakers.
4. Harassment against individuals and/or their families/caretakers for any reason including race, color, religion, age, marital or veteran status, or the presence of any medical, mental or disabling conditions.
5. Failing to provide a safe environment, or failing to provide supervision causing potentially hazardous conditions to exist for individuals.
6. Modeling inappropriate or unacceptable behavior to a person served.
7. Failure to treat all information about any person served as confidential and utilize such information in an unprofessional manner.
8. Distributing, selling, possessing, purchasing, consuming, or being under the influence of illegal substances, alcohol, or a controlled substance while volunteering for this program.