



Acton Chinese Language School
P. O.Box 2239
Acton, MA 01720-6239

ACLS High School Volunteer Handbook

Thank you for volunteering your time to support our students and teachers. Your role is essential in maintaining a positive and safe learning environment. This handbook outlines the guidelines and responsibilities for all volunteers, including those assisting in the classroom.

1. Volunteer Conduct & Attendance Policy

A. Responsibility and Accountability

- Volunteers must take their assigned duties seriously and carry them out responsibly.

B. Punctuality and Professional Conduct

- Volunteers are expected to report to their assigned location on time and behave respectfully. Avoid unnecessary conversation beyond what is appropriate.
- Volunteers are only permitted to enter the classrooms they have been assigned to support. Please do not enter other classrooms.
- If you need to switch to a different classroom, please ask the Volunteer Coordinator for approval first.

C. Absence Notification

- Except for emergencies, notify the Assistant Principal at least **7 days in advance** if you cannot attend your scheduled time.

D. Absence Policy

- No more than **one unexcused absence** is allowed. A second unexcused absence results in suspension from the role, and **no credit** will be given.
- No more than **five excused absences** are allowed. Exceeding this limit will result in suspension and **no credit** will be awarded.

E. Timesheet Submission

- Volunteers are responsible for completing and submitting their timesheet each month to receive recognized credit for service hours.

2. General Expectations

- Arrive on time and stay for the full volunteer shift.
- Wear comfortable, appropriate clothing.

- Behavior Expectations
 - Treat all students and fellow volunteers with respect and fairness.
 - Name-calling, teasing, or disrespectful language is never acceptable.
 - No horseplay, pushing, running, or physical contact — during class or breaks.
 - Encourage kindness, inclusion, and mutual respect in all interactions.
 - Prevent others from violating above behavior expectations. If the behavior continues, report it immediately to the classroom teacher and the school administration team.
 - Keep your phone away during volunteer time unless it's an emergency or approved use.
 - Always follow the lead of the classroom teacher or school staff.
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3. Your Role as a Volunteer

As a classroom volunteer, you are expected to:

- Support teachers by helping manage classroom behavior.
 - Help students who need extra attention.
 - Assist in transitions like restroom breaks and movement between activities.
 - Be an extra set of eyes and ears in the classroom.
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4. Classroom Responsibilities

A. Maintain Classroom Order

- Use kind but firm language to help students stay on task.
- Encourage students to follow classroom rules.
- Gently redirect students who are distracted or disruptive.
- If a student repeatedly causes disruption, report it to the teacher.

B. Support Students with Challenges

- Some students may struggle emotionally, behaviorally, or academically.
- Offer patience, encouragement, and positive reinforcement.
- Work quietly with them as directed by the teacher.
- If a student becomes distressed, inform the teacher promptly.

C. Restroom Procedures

- Volunteers should not enter any enclosed stall or private area (e.g., toilet stalls with doors) when accompanying children to the restroom.
- In boys' restrooms with open urinals, volunteers should not enter the restroom and must wait outside the door to monitor timing and general safety.
- **Always inform the teacher** before taking students to the restroom.
- **Safety monitoring and report**
Volunteers should promptly report any hazards, concerns, or emergencies to the teacher or school staff. These may include:
 - A student taking longer than expected to return
 - A student who appears injured or unwell

- Wet or slippery floors
 - Flooding or clogged toilets
 - Broken soap dispensers or sinks
 - Lights not working, or light is turned off
 - Inappropriate student behavior (e.g., playing, hiding)
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4. Behavioral Issues

A. Warning Troubled Behavior

- Give gentle verbal reminders (e.g., “Let’s stay in our seat, please.”).
- If a student continues acting out, let the teacher handle situations.
- Never physically discipline or raise your voice at a student and anyone in the classroom

B. Be Vigilant for Warning Signs

- Watch for signs of emotional distress, bullying, or health concerns.
 - Let the teacher or principal know immediately if something feels wrong.
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5. Communication and Reporting

- Always report serious incidents (e.g., a student hits another, runs away, has a meltdown).
 - Use discretion and respect privacy. Don’t discuss student behavior with other students or volunteers.
 - When in doubt, ask the teacher or supervising adult.
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6. In Case of Emergency

Fire or Evacuation

- Stay calm.
- Follow the teacher’s directions immediately.
- Help ensure all students exit the room quietly and quickly.
- Stay with the class and help keep students calm.

Medical Emergency

- Do not attempt to treat injuries.
- Inform the teacher immediately.
- If the teacher is not present, send another student to get help while you stay with the student in need.

Lockdown or Security Alert

- Follow school procedures as instructed by the teacher.
 - Help keep students quiet and calm.
 - Do not open doors unless directed by a school official.
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7. Dismissal Policy

We deeply value every volunteer and see volunteering as a learning and growth opportunity. However, to keep everyone safe, maintain program quality, and respect everyone's time, we sometimes need to end a volunteer placement.

Grounds for Ending Volunteer Service

A volunteer's service may be ended immediately for serious reasons, including but not limited to:

- Any behavior that endangers the safety or well-being of children, other volunteers, staff, or themselves
- Bullying, harassment, discrimination, or repeated disrespectful behavior
- Repeated failure to follow safety rules or staff instructions
- Sharing confidential information
- Theft, vandalism, or intentional damage to property
- Falsifying records or hours

Steps from least serious violations to the most serious violations against our volunteer guidance

Step 1: A verbal reminder will be made with the volunteer and the parent

Step 2: A written notice will be sent to parents with requirements to improvements and timeline

Step 3: A formal meeting will be held with the volunteer, parent/guardian, volunteer coordinator and program director

Step 4: ACLS will take back the volunteer placement from the student

Guidelines when ACLS terminate a volunteer placement

At least two adult staff members will be present when speaking with the student volunteer.

- Parents/guardians will be informed the same day (by phone and in writing).
- We will explain the reason clearly, calmly, and in an age-appropriate way.
- We will listen to the stories from all sides and take them seriously.
- A short written summary of the decision will be given or emailed to parents within 48 hours.
- If the student volunteer is earning school community-service hours, we will notify the school coordinator only that the placement has ended (we will not share private details without parent permission).
- The student volunteer must return any organization property immediately.

Immediate Dismissal (No Warning Steps)

Certain behaviors require **immediate dismissal** and possible report to authorities: physical violence, sexual harassment, bringing weapons or illegal substances, or

any suspected child abuse (staff are mandated reporters under Massachusetts law).

Right to Appeal

Within 7 days of receiving the written notice, the student volunteer and parent/guardian may request one appeal meeting with the Chairman of the ACLS Board (or Board President if the Executive Director made the original decision). The appeal decision is final.

Positive Closure When Possible

If a student volunteer chooses to stop volunteering or the placement simply isn't a good fit, we will thank them, provide a general letter confirming their hours and contributions (if requested), and keep the door open for future opportunities when the time comes.