

Student Tips for Volunteering

When you are involved in a volunteer activity, you not only represent yourself, you also represent your high school and the agency you are volunteering for. Many students have been able to use their experiences as a stepping-stone to paid employment and references for scholarships, jobs and continued volunteer opportunities. This is why it is important that you put your best self forward. The following are tips to follow:

1. If you sign up for an activity, be sure to attend or know the number to call if you cannot attend or will be late.
2. In a paid job situation, calling friends or texting on your phone is frowned upon. Leave your cell phone at home or be sure to turn it off when at the site.
3. Dress appropriately for the activity. If you are unsure of what is appropriate, call and ask. A volunteer position is not a fashion opportunity. Consider your dress to be a uniform for the volunteer work you are doing that day.
4. Smoking is not permitted.
5. Verify the person you will be working with and take a blue verification sheet with you for their signature.
6. In the job market, arriving late or leaving early does not make a good impression. Go the extra mile and strive to arrive a few minutes early and leave a few minutes late or when the volunteer coordinator says you can go.
7. Thank the person who has given you the opportunity to volunteer. It really makes a good impression.
8. If you sign up to volunteer with a friend, boyfriend or girlfriend, make sure that you both act professionally. Put the volunteer work ahead of your relationship. Personal displays of affection reflect poorly on both parties even if only one person is starting them.
9. Be flexible. Weather and staffing situations sometimes change. Sometimes trying something new leads to new opportunities.
10. Don't be afraid to say, "I don't know" or "Could you tell me again." In the workplace these statements help open the lines of communication.