



SPRINGSPIRIT BASEBALL VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

Introduction

SpringSpirit Baseball's mission is to provide safe pathways for youth to realize life opportunities through sports, education and mentoring programs that are based on Christian principles. We accomplish our mission through four distinct, yet interconnected, pathways: (1) providing programs, combined with the teaching of the gospel, designed to grow the mind, body and soul, (2) delivering a first-class sports training and future education complex in the heart of the North Spring Branch community, (3) pairing compassionate and caring mentors with our youth, and (4) finding life opportunities that can help our participants contribute to their community and society and act as stewards for others. We can only be successful with the help of volunteers who have a heart for helping children.

The following procedures have been developed by SpringSpirit Baseball and are designed to protect both participants and volunteers. These volunteer guidelines are designed to protect children from harm and to prevent even the appearance of impropriety on the part of the individual mentors, volunteers and children participating in SpringSpirit Baseball programs.

Acceptance of and adherence to these procedures and guidelines is mandatory to serve as a volunteer with SpringSpirit Baseball. Please know that we appreciate your participation. If you have additional questions, please contact Rachel Owens at rachel.owens@springspiritbaseball.org.

Volunteering with SSB

Volunteers are the backbone of SpringSpirit Baseball's programming and vital to our ability to grow and reach more youth. Every additional volunteer allows us to add 5-10 participants to our program. Volunteers do not need to have baseball experience but should have a heart for helping children and be comfortable with Christian content. We accept volunteers as young as 14 years of age for our fall and spring sessions and as young as 13 for our summer sessions.

Volunteer positions include but are not limited to:

- Head Coaches for league teams
- T-ball coaches
- Activity Coaches for recreation
- Homework Helpers
- Field maintenance
- Attendance/Registration

If you have a specific interest and do not see a volunteer opportunity that fits your interest, please let us know.

Child Protection Policy

SpringSpirit Baseball believes that protecting our children is our most important responsibility. We have a zero-tolerance policy for incidents of sexual abuse and neglect of children. We understand that for SpringSpirit to achieve its mission, we must ensure the safety of those who participate in our programs. Accordingly, EVERY reported or suspected incidence of sexual abuse or neglect will be treated with absolute priority, and SpringSpirit will do everything in its power to ensure the successful prosecution of any perpetrator to the fullest extent allowed by law.

All volunteers must complete a volunteer registration form and volunteers age 17+ will be subjected to a national criminal background check (at a minimum) on an annual basis. Volunteers are required by law to report certain information and a report must be submitted to the SSB Compliance Officer within 24 hours of knowledge of the incident. Volunteers will be provided a copy of SpringSpirit Baseball's Child Protection Policy which details the reporting requirements and process. All volunteers must read and sign the acknowledgement form indicating that they have read and understand the Child Protection Policy.

General Expectations

1. **Timeliness:** Be a few minutes early so you will have time to park, find the volunteer coordinator on-site and greet the participants.
2. **Respect.** Volunteers will be respectful of other volunteers, coaches and participants' cultural, social, and religious differences. Openness, honesty and respect are a necessity.
3. **Discipline or Other Concerns.** Report discipline, academic or social/emotional concerns to SSB Volunteer Coordinator, Saul Cortez, immediately in person or by calling 713-542-1648.
4. **No Smoking or Chewing Tobacco.** All SSB facilities are tobacco-free zones.
5. **Dress Code.** Dress modestly. Remember, you are a role model for our children.
 - Male volunteers: T-shirts allowed (no liquor, beer, or tobacco product advertisements will be allowed). No muscle shirts. Loose fitting athletic shorts, slacks, jeans or sweats are acceptable.
 - Female volunteers: T-shirts allowed (No liquor, beer, or tobacco product advertisements will be allowed). Halter and tank tops are unacceptable for women volunteers. Loose fitting shorts, slacks, jeans or sweats are acceptable.
6. **Non-School Age Children.** Only bring your non-school age children with you if approved by the volunteer coordinator prior to volunteering.
7. **Sign-Up:** Sign up online or submit your name to your organization's service coordinator before volunteering. It is important that we know that you are coming to volunteer ahead of time. This will also allow us to contact you in the event of a change in the schedule.

Guidelines for Working with Youth

Meeting with SSB participants in your role as a volunteer

1. SSB does not permit a volunteer to be alone with a child under any circumstances!

2. All meetings and/or activities with participants must take place on the SSB campus or as part of a SSB program or related activity such as a field trip.
3. All activities with a participant or participants must take place in a space with open visibility to the public or on the SSB campus in sight of SSB staff.
4. Off campus contact between volunteers and participants is strictly prohibited unless under the direct supervision of a SSB staff member.
5. Do not give gifts to individual children unless done as part of a SSB program and/or event.
6. Any participant needs communicated to a volunteer should be referred to an appropriate staff person.

Transportation

1. Transporting a child in your personal car is prohibited. Sometimes a parent may provide written consent for you to transport the parent's child. That will not protect you, the volunteer, from liability.
2. Participants must be transported in a SSB vehicle (field trips) or in the vehicle of a parent or legal guardian.
3. Do not put yourself in the position of being alone with any child in any vehicle.

Physical Contact

1. Restrict physical contact.
2. Physical contact should be limited to holding hands in a prayer circle, a handshake, giving a soft pat on the back or sharing a sideways-hug in full view of SSB staff and/or other volunteers.
3. Remember that what you see as simple, friendly affection between you and the child may be viewed as something entirely different by someone else.
4. Be aware that some children may not be comfortable with basic affection such as a pat on the back or sideways-hug. Respect each child's comfort level.

Positive, Respectful Role Model

1. Criticizing parents, coaches, other volunteers or guidelines publicly or with the participants is forbidden. If a problem arises, consult with the volunteer coordinator or the Program Director.
2. If you need help with a child, discuss the matter professionally with the SSB staff. Do not discuss the children and their problems publicly or with others.
3. Address the children directly and with sensitivity, be honest, make eye contact and model an appropriate manner. You must treat all children equally at all times. Make a point of looking at every child when speaking to a group and give each child an opportunity to answer questions.

Acknowledgement

If they have not already done so, all volunteers participating in an event where direct contact with youth is anticipated must read this Volunteer Handbook and deliver a signed copy of this acknowledgment to the SpringSpirit Baseball Compliance Officer. Volunteers will not be given permission to participate in any event where children are present without signing the policy and waiver.

BY SIGNING BELOW, I ACKNOWLEDGE THAT I HAVE RECEIVED, READ AND AGREE TO ABIDE BY THE SPRINGSPIRIT BASEBALL VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK.

Signature: _____

Printed Name: _____

Date: _____