

Teacher FAQ

Vanderbilt Volunteers for Science

Spring 2020

- **How do I begin to participate with VSVS?**
 - For standard VSVS teams teachers *and* volunteers must fill out a new application for each semester if they wish to participate. Applications always come out at the beginning of each semester. Getting applications in early is recommended, as spots fill up quickly!
- **How close do participating schools need to be in order to qualify?**
 - All participating schools must be within a 5-mile radius of Vanderbilt. We are unable to accommodate classrooms beyond this distance for our standard teams because of the traffic patterns in Nashville. If you are beyond this distance, please feel free to look into some of our other events!
- **What else do I need to know in order to get started?**
 - Every participating school must have a 3rd Party Compliance form on file for the current school year. If this form is not completed and returned to Vanderbilt before the application due date, teams will not be matched with any classes in the school.
 - Every teacher must sign and send in a copy of the Teacher FAQ agreement page at the end of this document. It can be attached to your application and must be submitted on or before the due date.
- **How does VSVS work?**
 - VSVS teams are meant to come to the *same* classroom for four consecutive weeks at the same time each week. This is important to the relationship building and mentorship abilities between students and their VSVS team members. We do not accommodate requests to place teams in situations that disrupt this connection (every other week, split class periods, certain A/B scheduling, etc.). If you have questions about whether or not your schedule will be accepted before submitting your application, please reach out! We're happy to work with you where we can.
- **How long are VSVS lessons?**
 - Each lesson is between 45-60 minutes long. In order to have a VSVS team placed with your class, the block of time given in your schedule must be 60 minutes or longer. No exceptions are made for this.
- **Is there a chance I'll put in an application and not be accepted even if I meet the requirements?**
 - Yes. Occasionally, a class will not match up with any of our available volunteers and will not be able to be matched with a VSVS team for the semester. If this is the case, we will follow up with you and, of course, we would invite you to re-apply the following semester.
- **How are lessons chosen? Will they align with what I'm teaching?**

- VSVS teams are placed with classes in grade levels 5-8. Each grade level follows a specified selection of lessons for the current semester. Accommodations to the order of lessons or changes to the lesson schedule are not possible for our standard teams. Lessons are designed to either introduce or reinforce something students will learn in their grade level as specified in the Tennessee Academic Standards for Science. This may or may not align with the specific curriculum of your individual classroom. Due to the fact that we serve over 100 classrooms each semester, it is not possible to plan when would be best for each lesson to appear in every classroom in order to connect with individual teacher's schedules.
- **How can I find out which lessons will be used in my grade level for the coming semester?**
 - The selection of lessons in each grade for each semester can be requested by sending an email to the EC. Keep in mind that because we only have between 4-8 copies of each kit (storage space is tight!), lessons are on a rotating schedule. We cannot provide your classes specific schedules until after teams have been assigned (at that point you can contact the EC to request the order).
- **Where can I get a schedule for VSVS?**
 - The semester calendar for VSVS can be found at studentorg.vanderbilt.edu/vsvs/calendar. This will tell you which weeks our volunteers are scheduled to be in classrooms as well as which weeks are available for make-up lessons in the case of rescheduling throughout the semester (due to illness, changing school schedules, etc.). If you know that one of your lesson dates will be affected in advance (think field trips, large scale school events, scheduled absences, etc.) please let us know as soon as possible so we can adjust your classes schedules accordingly.
- **What other offerings does VSVS have?**
 - VSVS hosts a variety of events throughout the semester. If you'd like to catch us out in the community, take a peek at our calendar to see where we'll be coming up! If you'd like to apply to have an event hosted at your school, please contact the EC. We're happy to host science nights or other afterschool events with you! We can bring in a sampling of our over 100 lessons and some of our volunteers to man the event.
 - We also offer afterschool science club groups and robotics groups outside of our standard classroom offerings. For these, just note your interest on your application.
 - The VSVS Rural Outreach Program works with teachers outside of Davidson county. If you are too far for us to send teams of volunteers to, we may still be able to loan you some of our lesson kits! More information can be found on the sign-up page.
- **What if one (or more) of the volunteers assigned to my classroom quits?**
 - Because VSVS is a volunteer organization, we occasionally have the unfortunate issue of members quitting mid-semester. Please keep in mind that if this happens, we will try our very best to accommodate you by offering the slot to

late addition volunteers and/or leaving a kit in your classroom so that you may complete the lesson with the class period affected (if the entire team dissolves), but these accommodations may not pan out. If your team dissolves because of scheduling or other issues, we are very sorry for the inconvenience caused and invite you to re-apply in the following semester. We *will not* force members of existing groups to leave their classrooms and take over yours though. This would again disrupt the mentorship and relationship building facet of the lessons.

- **Where can I direct questions not covered in this document?**
 - All questions and issues should be directed to the VSVS Educational Coordinator (EC), Paige Ellenberger, who may be reached by phone at 615-343-4379 or email at paige.ellenberger@vanderbilt.edu between the hours of 9a and 5p, Monday through Friday. Team scheduling issues that need to be addressed outside of these hours should be sent to the team leader assigned to the affected classroom (with EC cc'd so that they can make official schedule changes when they return to the office).



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Teacher Agreement

I, _____, certify that I have read the above FAQ document and understand the basic expectations and limitations of the Vanderbilt Student Volunteers for Science classroom program. I will return this form along with my application and the 3rd Party Compliance form (if not already on file) for my school before the due date for the coming semester to be considered for team placement.

Signed

Date