

Volunteer Agreement & Participation Waiver

Mentors, Speakers & Judges | Collegiate and High School Programs

Connect-IT 360, Inc. ("Connect-IT 360"), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, operates SharkMakers, an educational incubator designed to bridge the skills gap between education and the workforce. This Agreement establishes the requirements for mentors, speakers, and judges serving the SharkMakers High School and Collegiate Programs.

1. Programs Addressed in This Agreement

This Agreement addresses volunteer service in two SharkMakers programs: the High School Program and the Collegiate Program. General requirements apply to all volunteers. Additional requirements specific to each program are stated in the sections below.

2. General Volunteer Requirements

- Follow all SharkMakers program terms, rules, Code of Conduct, event requirements, and reasonable directions from Connect-IT 360 staff or authorized program representatives.
- Complete all required onboarding before beginning volunteer service.
- Maintain professional conduct, confidentiality, appropriate boundaries, and responsible platform use.

3. Collegiate Program Requirements

- Follow university, host-site, and partner requirements that apply to collegiate activities.
- Keep all communication with collegiate participants professional, respectful, and connected to the volunteer's authorized role.
- Do not use program access to pursue an inappropriate personal, romantic, exploitative, or coercive relationship with a collegiate participant.
- Do not move confidential project discussions to unapproved channels when the program has designated an authorized platform or process.

4. High School Program Requirements

- Volunteers may be required to complete a background check or other screening required by Connect-IT 360, a school district, a host site, or applicable law before working with minors.
- Follow all Connect-IT 360, school-district, host-site, and state child-safety policies.
- High-school volunteer service may be delayed or suspended until any required screening or clearance is completed.
- Do not request or use a minor student's personal phone number, personal email, social-media account, or private messaging channel.
- Do not meet, communicate with, transport, photograph, record, or otherwise connect with a minor outside approved events, supervised sessions, or authorized program platforms.
- Do not engage in one-to-one private communications with a minor unless expressly authorized and conducted through an approved, observable program channel.

5. Role of SharkMakers Volunteers

SharkMakers mentors support student teams by modeling professional behavior and helping students develop business, innovation, product, accessibility, and workforce skills. Mentors agree to:

- Listen actively and serve as a sounding board.
- Model professionalism, ethics, inclusion, accessibility, and respect.
- Provide honest, constructive feedback while allowing students to retain ownership of decisions and outcomes.
- Maintain consistent communication and attend scheduled meetings.
- Teach skills and guide the process without directing, controlling, or completing student work.
- Respect student ideas, abilities, backgrounds, and viewpoints.
- Uphold confidentiality, safety, and appropriate boundaries at all times.

Speakers and judges are held to the same Code of Conduct, confidentiality, safety, and professional-boundary standards. Judging may be a one-time commitment; mentors are expected to meet the participation expectations communicated for the program in which they serve.

6. Prohibited Conduct & Grounds for Removal

To protect students and the integrity of the program, volunteers must not:

- Discourage students from using SharkMakers processes or curriculum.
- Demean, belittle, discriminate against, harass, or devalue student ideas, identities, capabilities, or contributions.
- Use inappropriate, discriminatory, offensive, threatening, or sexually suggestive language, gestures, content, or behavior.
- Complete student work, misrepresent a student contribution, or attempt to control a project's direction.
- Use student ideas, project information, relationships, or access for unauthorized personal, professional, financial, or commercial gain.
- Request money, gifts, investments, employment, equity, confidential credentials, or favors from a student outside an expressly authorized program opportunity.
- Engage in conduct that violates Connect-IT 360 standards, applicable school or university requirements, host-site rules, or law.

A violation may result in immediate removal, loss of platform access, notification to a school, university, parent or guardian when applicable, host organization, or law enforcement, and potential legal action.

7. Confidentiality & Non-Disclosure

- Student ideas, projects, discussions, documents, demonstrations, strategies, and nonpublic materials are confidential.
- No project information may be shared, posted, copied, disclosed, or used without written permission from the SharkMakers Program Director and the student or team. For a minor, parent or guardian permission may also be required.
- Information learned through one program may not be used in the other program unless the Program Director and the affected student or team authorize it.
- Unauthorized use or disclosure may result in removal, legal action, or a permanent bar from future participation.
- Confidential information does not include information already lawfully public, independently developed without use of confidential information, or lawfully received without a duty of confidentiality.

8. Curriculum, Materials & Platform Use

- Any SharkMakers platform, workspace, communication channel, or account is for authorized program use only and for the period access is granted.
- Access credentials may not be shared, copied, transferred, or used for another purpose. Volunteers serving in both programs must use only the workspaces and information assigned to them.
- Program curriculum, templates, recordings, branding, and materials remain the property of Connect-IT 360 or their respective owners and may not be reproduced, distributed, taught, published, or used outside SharkMakers without written permission.
- Connect-IT 360 may monitor, restrict, or terminate access to protect students, confidential information, program operations, and platform security.

9. Assumption of Risk & Consent

- Participation in in-person and virtual SharkMakers activities involves ordinary and inherent risks.
- The Volunteer assumes responsibility for injury, loss, or damage relating to voluntary participation.
- The Volunteer releases Connect-IT 360 from liability for personal property loss or personal injury arising from ordinary risks, except where prohibited by law.

10. Waiver of Liability & Indemnification

- The Volunteer releases, waives, and forever discharges Connect-IT 360, its officers, directors, employees, contractors, agents, volunteers, partners, and affiliates ("Releasees") from claims, demands, or liability arising from the Volunteer's participation, to the fullest extent permitted by law.
- The Volunteer agrees to indemnify and hold harmless the Releasees from claims, costs, damages, or expenses, including reasonable attorney fees, arising from the Volunteer's actions, misconduct, or negligence.
- This provision survives termination of this Agreement.

11. Media Release

- The Volunteer permits Connect-IT 360 to photograph, film, record, and interview the Volunteer during SharkMakers activities.
- Connect-IT 360 may use the Volunteer's name, likeness, voice, professional information, and recorded participation in educational, promotional, fundraising, documentary, website, social-media, press, and nonprofit communications without additional compensation.
- If the Volunteer records content as part of an authorized role, the Volunteer grants Connect-IT 360 an unlimited, irrevocable license to use the captured material, subject to student privacy, confidentiality, and applicable consent requirements.

12. Miscellaneous

- This Agreement is the complete understanding concerning the Volunteer's participation in SharkMakers programming.
- Changes must be in writing and approved by Connect-IT 360.
- Florida law governs this Agreement, with exclusive jurisdiction in the state or federal courts of Pinellas County, Florida.
- If a provision is found unenforceable, the remaining provisions remain in effect.

13. Acknowledgment & Electronic Acceptance

By electronically accepting this Agreement, the Volunteer confirms: "I have read, understood, and accept the SharkMakers Volunteer Agreement & Participation Waiver." The Volunteer further acknowledges that participation is voluntary and without expectation of payment. Electronic acceptance has the same effect as a handwritten signature.

Connect-IT 360, Inc. | SharkMakers

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