

Building the Future



Carroll County Public Schools

Volunteer Program Handbook

**Resources to build, strengthen,
and maintain meaningful partnerships**

A Message from the Superintendent of Carroll County Public Schools

On behalf of the students and staff of Carroll County Public Schools, I want to thank you for your interest in volunteering in our schools. I know your time is valuable, and your willingness to contribute some of that valuable time to our school system shows your commitment to the education and well-being of our students.

Volunteers are a vital part of our school system. We cannot do it alone. We greatly depend on the time, talents, and energy you are willing to share to help us meet the needs of our students.

When you volunteer for Carroll County Public Schools, you become an important part of a team that works to ensure the highest standards of academic, social, and emotional growth for our students. As a volunteer, you will assist teachers and students in their day-to-day activities and provide a valuable resource for our school system.

Volunteers touch many lives and have a tremendous impact on the success of both our students and staff. Please know that every employee in our school system appreciates your contributions as a school volunteer. When schools, families, and our community work together, everyone benefits.

Sincerely,

Cynthia A. McCabe
Superintendent of Schools

Volunteer Program Standards & Definitions

The school system welcomes volunteers and encourages them to support student achievement through their service. During the school year, registered volunteers donate thousands of service hours to support educational endeavors. The valuable contributions of volunteers are recognized and appreciated by students and staff.

The partnership between the school system and those who volunteer, promote standards of mutual respect and trust, individual talents and skills utilization, diversity acceptance, and cooperative and friendly relationships.

Volunteering is an acceptable reason to visit a school. It is important that such visits not interrupt instruction, distract students or staff, or interfere with student's right to privacy.

A **volunteer** is a person who offers Carroll County Public Schools his/her services without receipt of monetary compensation or student-learning hours (except students who serve as mentors, tutors, interns, or volunteer for consecutive school days).

Volunteers include, but are not limited to: classroom helpers, chaperones, tutors, mentors, club leaders, guest speakers, readers, and presenters.

Volunteer Program Standards & Definitions (cont'd)

Supervision of volunteers can occur in three different situations depending on the activity:

1. **Direct Supervision** occurs when a CCPS staff member is overseeing or directing the activities of the volunteer at all times and is physically in the same area.
2. **Limited Supervision** occurs when a CCPS staff member is overseeing or directing the activities of a volunteer but is not always physically in the same area.
3. **Unsupervised** volunteers are in an area where a CCPS staff member cannot easily access a restricted area.

Student Contact occurs when an activity brings a volunteer and the student together with or without physical contact.

Being a Volunteer

Carroll County Public Schools welcomes volunteers and encourages them to support student achievement through their service. During the school year, registered volunteers donate thousands of service hours to support educational endeavors. The valuable contributions of volunteers are recognized and appreciated by our students and staff

Becoming a Volunteer

(cont'd)

Types of Volunteers

There are three types of volunteers in Carroll County Public Schools:

- A. **Level I Volunteers** are under direct supervisor of a CCPS staff member at all times. Examples of a Level I volunteer include guest speakers, presenters, readers, event ticket collectors, and concession operators.
- B. **Level II Volunteers** participate in activities under direct or limited supervision. There may also be times in which a Level II volunteer is unsupervised with students. Examples of a Level II volunteer include classroom helpers, tutors, chaperones, and mentors.
- C. **Student Volunteers** are students enrolled in Carroll County Public Schools, another public school system, a private school or non-public school, or students who are home-schooled. Student volunteers serve as mentors, tutors, and interns.

Becoming a Volunteer (cont'd)

Annual Application

Approval status expires on the last day of each school year. Volunteers are required to complete a Volunteer Application Form each school year. New forms will be available on-line August 1st.

Volunteer Screening

The screening of all volunteers is important to ensure the safety of students, staff, and other volunteers. Requests to volunteer are delayed until the screening process is completed. Once the screening process is completed, volunteers will be emailed at their personal email address provided on the Volunteer Information Form to confirm their volunteer status. This may take up to 5 days.

All potential volunteers are expected to provide a true and accurate response to the Criminal History Statement on the Volunteer Information Form. Information collected on this form will be kept confidential. A record of conviction does not automatically exclude an individual from being considered for volunteer service. However, individuals who have not satisfied the specifics outlined by the court system (e.g. probation) may experience a delay in their ability to volunteer.

Becoming a Volunteer (cont'd)

All requests to volunteer are subject to a background check. Carroll County Public Schools reserves the right to reject any individual who willfully misrepresents information on his/her Volunteer Information Form.

Volunteering

Once approved, volunteers may begin their service with the students and staff of Carroll County Public Schools. Volunteer registration information will be added to our Volunteer Database in preparation for when volunteer service begins

Volunteer Registration

When arriving to the school, all volunteers will need to present a valid government issued photo identification. School personnel will provide the volunteer with a badge that should be displayed on the person for the duration of the volunteer service, and returned upon completion.

Volunteers will then need to log in to the Volunteer Tracking System to assure that service is properly tracked. Upon completion of the volunteer service, volunteers will need to log out of the Volunteer Tracking System and return the badge to school personnel.

Volunteering (cont'd)

Reasonable Attire

All volunteers, working in schools and/or with students who attend Carroll County Public Schools, are expected to dress in a manner that is appropriate for the setting.

Orderly Learning Environment

In an effort to support a school environment that is conducive to learning, volunteers shall refrain from bringing a child or children with them to the location where the adult is volunteering. This may include siblings of an enrolled child or an enrolled child who is not in attendance on a given day.

Additionally, volunteers should refrain from interrupting the learning environment. Volunteers are asked to stay within their assigned volunteer area.

Volunteering (cont'd)

Acceptable Volunteer Behavior

Volunteers are role models for students and should adhere to both school system and school-based policies and procedures. If a concern does arise, the volunteer should make an appointment with the building level administrator to discuss his/her concerns. Acceptable volunteer behaviors include:

- Abiding by CCPS and School policies/directions from school personnel.
- Addressing concerns in an appropriate manner with building level administrators.
- Supporting an orderly learning environment.
- Using appropriate language with staff, students, other volunteers and visitors.
- Engaging appropriately with staff, students, other volunteers and visitors.
- Demonstrating the ability to fulfill assigned volunteer responsibilities.

Carroll County Public Schools will not tolerate unreasonable or unacceptable behavior, bullying, harassment, intimidation, discrimination, or hazing by volunteers toward students, employees, bus drivers, bus assistants, other volunteers, and/or visitors. Volunteers who demonstrate these unacceptable behaviors will find that their actions result in a change in their volunteer status.

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Volunteering (cont'd)

Serious Threats and Violent Acts

A serious threat of violence is a verbal or nonverbal declaration of intent to inflict significant injury to persons or damage to property with the perceived intent to carry through on the threat. Serious threats of violence against any individual in the Carroll County Public Schools community will not be tolerated. Violent acts committed against another individual on Carroll County Board of Education owned or leased property, on a school or coach bus, or at any school system sponsored related trip or activity will be handled as illegal actions. Serious threats and violent acts will result in a change of volunteer status.

Weapons and Firearms

Ensuring a safe school environment for students, staff, volunteers, and visitors is a responsibility of all involved. Any volunteer with knowledge of the presence of a weapon on school property or at school-related events should report the incident to school-based administrative staff as soon as possible. Maryland Law prohibits possession of a firearm, knife, or deadly weapon on school property by individuals other than law enforcement officers. Please remember parking lots are also part of school property and covered under the provisions of this law

Volunteer Responsibilities

Volunteers are expected to:

Maintain the Confidentiality of Student Information

Student information is protected by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) as well as through state regulations. Confidentiality refers to the obligation not to disclose or share student information with unauthorized parties. Student records are identified as confidential, and must be treated in accordance with federal law and state regulations. All CCPS employees and volunteers are held accountable to maintain this level of student privacy.

CCPS personnel may share confidential student information with volunteers on a need-to-know basis. Volunteers are required by law to protect the confidentiality of all student information. At no time is it appropriate to share student information through social media platforms.

Volunteers should:

- Only discuss confidential student information with CCPS personnel.
- Not be allowed access to student records.
- Not be asked by staff to evaluate student work, record student grades, or analyze individual student data.

Volunteer Responsibilities (cont'd)

Volunteers must refrain from:

- Sharing student information with non-CCPS people.
- Following a student and/or conversations to other school settings.
- Using a portable electronic device or social media platform to share student information or school-related matters.

If a volunteer feels that a student's right to privacy has been violated, the concern should be brought to the attention of the school-based administrator.

Engage in Appropriate Student Relationships

The relationship between students of any age and an employee in any position with Carroll County Public Schools is to be one of a professional nature at all times. Volunteers are expected to regard relationships with students in the same professional manner as school system employees.

The following behaviors directed toward students enrolled in Carroll County Public Schools will not be tolerated:

- Child abuse, sexual abuse, or mental injury
- Sexual harassment
- Personal or intimate reference to self or others
- Intimate or inappropriate gifts
- Communications of an intimate or non-professional nature
- Meeting a student for non-professional reasons
- Dating and sexual relations
- Condoning or participating with students committing illegal acts or acts in violation of school rules.
- Initiating, encouraging, or engaging in obscene or pornographic discussions or displays with students.

Volunteer Responsibilities (cont'd)

- Participation in the transfer, or attempted transfer, or attempted transfer of alcohol or drugs with or without the exchange of money or other valuables

Report Child Abuse and Neglect

Child abuse and child neglect are illegal. Volunteers are required by law to report suspected abuse or neglect. A report must be made if there is 'reason to believe' that abuse or neglect possibly occurred. Information should be reported without further investigation, interrogation, or other verification of the allegation.

Volunteers who have reason to believe that abuse or neglect has occurred, should request assistance from a school-based administrator or member of the school's Guidance/Counseling staff to complete a required written report. CCPS staff will then assist the volunteer with the steps required to contact the Carroll County Department of Social Services, Protective Services, at 410-386-3434 to complete the oral report.

Maintain a Smoke and Drug-Free Workplace

The use of tobacco products and electronic cigarettes, in any form, is prohibited in or on Carroll County Public Schools' owned or leased facilities and properties at all times. Volunteers should refrain from bringing or using tobacco products, electronic cigarettes, alcohol, inhalants, or illegal drugs on or within school property, school or coach buses, or at school-related activities and events.

If a volunteer must have ready access to his/her prescription or over-the-counter medication, such items should be placed in a secure location to avoid access and exposure to students.

Volunteer Responsibilities (cont'd)

Refrain From the Use of Portable Electronic Devices

Portable electronic devices should only be used in an emergency situation during volunteer service.

Volunteers are asked to turn off the audible notification on portable electronic devices when visiting a school, supervising students, participating in an activity with students, or chaperoning a field trip or class activity. Volunteers should refrain from electronically communicating with students.

Additionally, volunteers should refrain from photographing, videotaping, and audiotaping students or student activities.

Volunteers should not post or send student photographs or images through social media, the internet, etc. Not all parents grant CCPS permission to allow their child's voice to be reproduced or to have his/her image appear in such things as a video, a photograph, or social media websites.

Adhere to Standard Health Precautions

The likelihood of exposure to blood borne pathogens in a school is minimal. Blood borne pathogens include the organisms that cause HIV, Hepatitis B, and Hepatitis C. If assisting a staff or student with an injury, remember to put a protective barrier between yourself and the blood, bodily fluid, or body tissues that may be present from the injury.

Any direct contact with blood, bodily fluids, or body tissues should result in immediately washing the exposed area, and reporting the exposure to the school nurse and school-based administrator. Any injury to a student, staff member, or volunteer should be reported immediately to the school nurse and school-based administrator.

Volunteer Responsibilities (cont'd)

Respect Allergies and Sensitivities

Increases in food allergies and sensitivities can have serious health implications. As a result, food may not be brought to school or school-related events and activities to share. The sharing of food items is prohibited.

Simply restricting consumption may not be enough for some individuals. Any contact with an 'unsafe' food, cross-contamination, and hidden trace ingredients can also pose a serious health implication for some students or staff members. Volunteers should also refrain from purchasing any food and/or beverages for students when chaperoning student activities.

Additionally, please limit the use of perfumes, colognes, and lotions when volunteering. These items can also be known to cause allergic and sensitivity reactions for some individuals.

Field Trips

Field trip chaperones are selected by school personnel.

Chaperones must meet the following requirements:

- Be at least 18 years of age for elementary and middle school; be at least 21 years of age for high school
- Have an approved volunteer status
- Comply with all CCPS policies and school procedure.
- Demonstrate standards of acceptable behavior prior to and throughout the entire trip or activity.
- For overnight field trips all chaperones must be at least 21 years of age.

Volunteer Responsibilities (cont'd)

Chaperones are expected to supervise student behavior and activities during the course of the trip/activity. This responsibility includes oversight of the health and safety of the students assigned to your group.

Only students, staff, and volunteers who have been approved to attend the trip and travel with the group to the activity are eligible to participate in the activity. Individuals who might be present at the activity location, but were not approved or selected to serve as a chaperone may not 'shadow' the group or participate in the scheduled activities. Students are to stay in their assigned groups unless there is an emergency that requires students to disperse from their assigned groups. Additionally, there must be at least one (1) staff member and one (1) chaperone on each bus or unit of transportation. Chaperones should display proper bus riding procedures and encourage the same behavior from students.

Overnight Trips/Activities

Volunteers with an approved volunteer status, who have been selected as chaperones for overnight trips/activities, are subject to a background check in addition to the annual volunteer training.

Background check applications must be submitted to the County Volunteer Program Coordinator at least 30 days prior to the scheduled trip/activity. Background check reports are only valid for 30 days from the date of the current trip/activity.