

## VOLUNTEERS

### Policy Statement

The Trumbull Board of Education recognizes that volunteers can make many valuable contributions to our schools. The Board encourages the use of volunteers to: (1) enhance students' learning; (2) provide enrichment opportunities for students; (3) increase the effective utilization of staff time and skills; (4) give more individual attention to students; and (5) promote greater community involvement.

While the Board values these contributions, it must also protect the safety and welfare of its students and staff. To this end, the principal of each school shall administer volunteers in accordance with regulations established by the Superintendent of Schools. On an ongoing basis, each principal shall submit a list of all volunteers in the school (chaperones on field trips, aides, library and classroom volunteer assistants, assistants at athletic events, field days, etc.) to the Superintendent of Schools.

The Superintendent shall establish procedures for securing and screening volunteers. No person who is a "sex offender," as defined by Public Act 98-111, An Act Concerning the Registration of Sexual Offenders shall be used.

Volunteers working within the schools must work under the supervision of District staff. Volunteers must adhere to all policies, regulations, and procedures of the Board of Education and each of its schools, including applicable policies on the confidentiality of student information.

Adopted: 4/22/2008  
Revised: 3/13/2012, 8/22/2017,  
11/15/2022

### References

- Connecticut Public Act 98-111, "An Act Concerning the Registration of Sexual Offenders" □ Connecticut General Statutes §§ 10-4g, 10-220, 10-235, 54-250 et seq.
- Trumbull Board of Education Policy Code 1212.1: Volunteers
- Trumbull Board of Education Policy Code 4212.5: Security Checks
- Trumbull Board of Education Policy Code 5125: Confidentiality and Maintenance of Student Records
- Trumbull Board of Education Policy Code 6131: Guest Speakers

## **Regulations**

Trumbull Board of Education recognizes 2 categories of volunteers: Tier I and Tier II. Unless otherwise advised in writing by an administrator, TPS staff are to consider all volunteers who have gained access through the process, as Tier I volunteers.

### **Tier I**

Volunteers will be classified in Tier I when they engage in activities in the presence of a Trumbull Public Schools employee. Tier I volunteers are those who engage in the activities listed below:

- assisting in a classroom, cafeteria, or library when a staff member is present
- accompanying a class on a field trip during the school day with a teacher
- helping in the school office during regular school hours
- assisting in the cafeteria or library during regular school hours
- extra-curricular events, i.e., dances, fairs, open house, etc.

### **Tier II**

Volunteers will be classified in Tier II when they provide services to students when not in the direct presence of a Trumbull Public Schools employee. People who wish to be considered as Tier II volunteers should complete appropriate papers by October 1<sup>st</sup>. The form should be completed each school year regardless of past approval. Tier II volunteers will be required to complete a consent form regarding the release of information concerning any prior or pending criminal offenses, and such volunteers will be required to submit to a record check of the Department of Children and Families (DCF) Abuse and Neglect Registry. Tier II volunteers are those who engage in the activities listed below:

- accompanying a class on a field trip in which the plans include that students be divided into small groups supervised solely by the volunteer chaperone for any length of time
- chaperoning an overnight field trip
- working in direct contact with students without the direct presence of a Trumbull Public Schools employee
- coaching

A list of all approved Tier II volunteers will be maintained by the Superintendent or Designee. Only volunteers on the approved list may be utilized by the District. Principals and applicants will be notified of the registry and records checks results to ensure that only those approved can begin participating as Tier II volunteers

Upon receipt of DCF Abuse and Neglect Registry results indicating that the volunteer is involved in an abuse or neglect investigation or that the volunteer is listed as a perpetrator of abuse or neglect on the Registry, the Superintendent or his designee will notify the volunteer and the principal in writing of the results of the Registry check and will provide an opportunity for the volunteer to respond to the results of the Registry check. If warranted by the results of the Registry check and any additional information provided by the volunteer, the Superintendent or designee shall not allow the individual in the schools.

When a criminal record check of a volunteer reveals a criminal conviction, whether disclosed or undisclosed on the volunteer's consent form, the Superintendent will make a case-by-case determination as to whether to allow the individual to volunteer in the schools. Prior to any such decision by the Superintendent or designee, the Superintendent or designee shall inform the volunteer in writing and shall provide an opportunity for the volunteer to respond. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the falsification or omission of any information on a volunteer consent form, including but not limited to information concerning criminal conviction or pending criminal charges, may be grounds for the Superintendent or designee to prohibit the individual from becoming a volunteer.

Every time a new notification/online posting of registered sex offenders is received by a school principal, the principal or his/her designee shall review it for any person's name who has submitted a Tier II "School Volunteer Security Check" form during that school year; if a match exists between names, the person's opportunity to volunteer shall terminate immediately, and the principal shall notify the Human Resources Office.

The District will indemnify and hold harmless volunteers from civil liability in most situations as long as the volunteer is acting within the scope of his or her responsibilities in an activity approved by the Board of Education and is under the direction of a certified staff member. Willful and/or malicious conduct on the part of the volunteer is not covered under Connecticut General Statutes §10-235.

#### 1. Qualifications for Volunteers

Volunteers may come from all backgrounds and all age groups. The main qualification for a volunteer is that he/she has a desire to give his/her time and talent in order to enrich student learning opportunities and the school community generally.

#### 2. Persons Not Allowed to Serve as Volunteers

Prior to beginning volunteering in the Trumbull Public Schools, and annually thereafter, all potential volunteers are required to fill out and sign the "School Volunteer Security Check" form developed by the Human Resources Office. Volunteers are encouraged to fill out the form online on the Trumbull Public Schools website ([www.trumbullps.org](http://www.trumbullps.org)). The form is also available at each school and the Human Resources Office. If there are any questions raised from the background check, the matter will be referred to the Superintendent and/or his/her designee for review.

Screening volunteers includes, but is not limited to, preventing volunteer participation of a "sex offender" as defined by Public Act 98-111, "An Act Concerning the Registration of Sexual Offenders."

- Individuals seeking approval as Tier I volunteers will be required to have their identification checked by school personnel and participate in any school procedures such as, but not limited to, placing state licenses and/or state issued identifications into the

school's *School Gate Guardian* or like-device to scan for necessary background checks that ensure school safety.

- Individuals seeking approval as Tier II volunteers will be required to submit to a record check of the Department of Children and Families (DCF) Child Abuse and Neglect Registry, to confirm their lack of registration as a sex offender under state or federal law, and to submit to state and national criminal history records checks.

### 3. Recruitment of Volunteers

School personnel may recruit volunteers through resources including, but not limited to, parents/guardians, parent organizations, retired teachers and other senior citizen groups, community businesses, local volunteer centers, and colleges/universities.

### 4. Role of Volunteers

Volunteers serve only in an auxiliary capacity under the direction and supervision of a staff member; they are not substitutes for members of the school staff. Volunteers do not have access to confidential student school records.

Tier I volunteers are not to be left alone with individual students or groups of students at any time. Tier II volunteers are not to be left alone with individual students, 1-to-1, at any time.

Volunteers may not bring other children to their volunteer obligations without prior approval of the classroom teacher and the school principal or his/her designee.

### 5. Selecting and Placing Volunteers

Volunteer selection and placement shall be on the basis of the volunteer's qualifications and availability and the school's needs. A volunteer will be assigned to a staff member only with the staff member's consent. The relationship between a volunteer and staff member should be one of mutual respect and confidence.

### 6. Monitoring Volunteers

Monitoring volunteers is critical because of the vulnerability of the population served by the District.

Each volunteer must report to the school's main office to register at the beginning of each visit and must wear a nametag while in the building.

Each volunteer must sign out in the school's main office immediately prior to his/her departure from school.

A request to volunteer or to continue volunteering will be denied by the principal, the principal's designee, and/or a central office administrator if the volunteer behaves in any manner that demonstrates that the volunteer is not a good role model or is otherwise detrimental to the school environment. Volunteers must adhere to all policies, regulations, and procedures

of the Board of Education and each of its schools, including applicable policies on the confidentiality of student information.

If a principal or the principal's designee requests that a volunteer leave the school and school grounds, the volunteer must leave. If the volunteer refuses to leave, the principal or the principal's designee shall contact the police to remove the volunteer from the school and school grounds, and the volunteer shall be terminated from future volunteering in the District.

## 7. Training Volunteers

Each school year, after a person has been approved for volunteering, the appropriate school principal or his/her designee must provide the person a copy of this policy with its procedures and guidelines, along with other pertinent information. The principal and/or his/her designee has the responsibility and authority to set reasonable conditions for each volunteer at his/her school. The staff member to whom the volunteer is assigned is responsible for explaining his/her expectations of the volunteer. The school principal or his/her designee should arrange appropriate training opportunities for those volunteer activities requiring a specific skill or knowledge base, such as assisting students using technology.

## 8. Guidelines for Volunteers in the Schools

The following guidelines have been designed to assist volunteers in their service. They are not designed to be comprehensive; volunteers must adhere to all policies, regulations, and procedures of the Board of Education and each of its schools, including applicable policies on the confidentiality of student information. In the event of any conflict between these guidelines and Board policies, regulations, or procedures, Board policies, regulations, or procedures must prevail.

### A Confidentiality

All volunteers must demonstrate strict compliance with Board of Education Policy 5125, "Confidentiality and Maintenance of Student Records." All volunteers must maintain confidentiality within and outside of class. If parents ask about a student's performance or behaviors, please refer them to the teacher. It is inappropriate to discuss situations observed anywhere while acting as a volunteer. When a question arises about a specific child, ask the teacher in confidence and privacy, not in the presence of other staff members, parents, or students.

No photographing or videotaping by visitors is permitted unless specifically authorized by the Principal or his/her designee, and any such photographing or videotaping shall adhere to Board of Education Policy 5125, "Confidentiality and Maintenance of Student Records," and must not disrupt the school, its programming, or students or employees in any way.

### B Names and Labels

Every child brings to school his/her own specific skills and abilities. Please do not make value judgments or label the abilities or skills of any child. Please be careful not to compare one's child to another in the class, as they are all unique individuals. Everyone is unique and special in his/her own way. Some learn quickly; some come to school with less developed skills. Each child grows and learns at his/her own pace, and comes just the way he/she is supposed to be. The Trumbull Public Schools are here to help each child grow as fast as he/she can.

#### C Questions and Issues

Discussing issues in the middle of the class or with other staff members or parents is not appropriate. Trumbull Public Schools does not expect a volunteer to agree with everything a teacher does in class, but each teacher's job is to make decisions in the best interest of the whole class. If one has a problem, issue or disagreement with a teacher, please bring it to the teacher's attention privately at an appropriate time. Clear, open, and direct communication is vital to the Trumbull Public Schools community.

#### D Accepting and Valuing Diversity

Parents come from different backgrounds and cultures. They all have their own ideas and experiences about raising children. Volunteers are asked to accept children and respect their beliefs and requests. The diversity of people, values, cultures, and beliefs is what makes such a rich experience for all.

#### E Discipline

The District, each school, and each classroom has an established discipline policy. When issues arise concerning inappropriate student behavior, volunteers should check with the teacher for the appropriate action and should support students by encouraging them to make good choices and demonstrate appropriate behavior. The efforts of volunteers are appreciated, but disciplinary matters should be referred to a teacher whenever possible. If circumstances require immediate intervention by a volunteer, the teacher should be notified as soon as possible of the circumstances as well as the actions taken by the volunteer.

#### F Helping the Teacher and Class: A Volunteer's Primary Responsibility

Parent volunteers work under the direction of the classroom teacher, who defines the volunteer's duties and expectations. Please try to keep the role as volunteer and parent separate in the classroom. If the teacher or Principal concludes that the volunteer cannot separate these roles, the Principal will determine appropriate action. If one's child has a problem, one should let the child work out the problem with others and the teacher through established classroom routines and procedures. A volunteer should not try to solve problems for his/her own child while in class; that takes power away from one's child. Trumbull Public Schools strives to help students become more independent and self-sufficient.

#### G Keeping Commitments

It is important that volunteers adhere to the scheduled time to assist a teacher in his/her classroom. Whenever possible, a volunteer should please call the day before (or at least send a note the morning of one's commitment) if not able to be in the classroom at the scheduled time. The teacher is counting on the volunteer and needs adequate time to adjust the class plans.

Volunteers should support the classroom teacher to maximize instructional time. When volunteering in a classroom where several volunteers are present, please keep adult conversations to a minimum. This will assist students in staying focused on the classroom lesson or activity.

#### H For Additional Information

Please review the individual school's handbook for additional policies, regulations, and procedures. For any other questions, comments, or concerns, please contact the school's principal.