

Instruction

School Volunteers

General Guidelines

School volunteers are adults approved by Principals, which, for purposes of this regulation shall include building principals and directors, to serve in various designated capacities under the direction and supervision of the certified staff.

School volunteers are expected to support the local educational program and do the following:

1. Serve under the direction and supervision of certified staff members.
2. Refer suggestions and concerns in the first instance to those staff members.
3. Refer matters regarding student discipline to the staff member in charge.
4. Maintain strict confidentiality in dealings with staff and students.
5. Carry out duties conscientiously, especially in regard to meeting assignments on time and giving proper advance notice in the event of not being able to do so.
6. Exercise responsibilities objectively for the advancement of the school program for all concerned. However, this provision does not in any manner deprive volunteers of their right as parents and/or citizens to seek improvement in the schools through proper channels.

Recruitment and Screening

Service as a volunteer is a privilege, not a right. Before serving as a volunteer, each individual must be formally approved by the Principal. The Principal has complete discretion to accept or reject any applications, to remove any individual from the list of approved volunteers, and to specify in what capacity volunteers will serve.

All persons wishing to serve as volunteers in the New London Public Schools shall complete the attached Application Form. The Application Form will be available in all school buildings in English and Spanish, and shall be included in the Student Handbook. Parents who volunteer (outside their role as a parent) must meet the volunteer requirements and complete an Application Form. Completed Application Forms shall be kept in the appropriate building and a copy shall be sent to the Central Office.

No person who is a “registered sex offender” may serve as a volunteer. The Principal or designee shall periodically check the list of approved volunteers against the state’s sex offender registry and shall check the name of each new applicant against the registry.

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School Volunteers (continued)

The Principal may run a criminal background check on any existing volunteer or applicant. The Principal shall review the results of each background check on a case-by-case basis. Criminal convictions other than sex offenses shall not automatically preclude service as a volunteer provided the Principal determines that the volunteer meets the qualifications of a volunteer despite any convictions. In the event a background check is conducted, the results of the check will be reviewed only by the Principal and Superintendent. The Principal will send a copy of the results in a confidential manner to the Superintendent, and the Principal and Superintendent will store the results in areas accessible only to them. The Superintendent may maintain a list of persons for whom background checks have been run, but said list shall not include any substantive results nor shall it state whether the person was accepted or rejected as a volunteer. The background check results may be sent to a Principal for review in the event the person applies again to volunteer.

The Principal shall deny any application, and shall remove any person from the list of approved volunteers if the person behaves in any manner that demonstrates he or she is not a good role model or is otherwise detrimental to the school environment. Examples of such behavior include: swearing, failing to be dependable, failing to follow the supervisor's instructions, committing any criminal act, touching a student in an inappropriate manner, failing to dress in an appropriate manner or violating any state statute, school rule or Board Policy.

This policy does not preclude students from New London and other districts from volunteering in the New London Public Schools under appropriate supervision, as determined by the Principal.

Volunteer Orientation

The Principal or designee shall meet with volunteers new to the system or to a particular school to inform them of program goals and volunteer responsibilities. No one may begin serving as a volunteer until the Principal determines that the person is prepared to do so. The extent of volunteer orientation shall take into account the proposed duration of the volunteer's service, the nature of the volunteers' duties, the level of staff supervision and the nature of the specific program.

Activities considered appropriate for volunteers include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Volunteers may perform such tasks as are prescribed and supervised by the immediate staff member in charge; but, they may not diagnose student needs, determine learning activities on their own or engage in instructional work which is legally the responsibility of certified staff. However, if a volunteer has a valid Connecticut teacher's certificate, he or she may assist in instruction on a one-to-one or small group basis, as arranged with the supervising teacher and the Principal, who remain the responsible agents.

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Volunteer Orientation (continued)

2. With proper supervision volunteers may engage in instruction-related activities such as: helping students with class assignments, assisting in independent study and special projects, helping locate and use materials, assisting in drill reinforcement, preparing areas for instructional activities or playing education games with students.
3. Volunteers may engage in clerical activities such as: copying materials, preparing forms, recording attendance, filing materials, answering office telephones or serving as receptionist.
4. Volunteers may carry out library tasks such as: checking books in and out, shelving and arranging books, gathering special collections for individual students or for class use, helping process books, conducting story-time for students or maintaining and servicing audio-visual equipment.
5. Volunteers may serve as resource persons. For example, they may make presentations about matters in which they are expert or unusually knowledgeable; serve as leaders of hobby clubs and activities or assist in fund-raising activities.
6. Volunteers may engage in certain student management activities. For example, they may acquaint new students with the school, assist on field trip or accompany students about the buildings or grounds.

Structure and Functions of the Volunteer Coordinating Committee

Each principal may establish a Volunteer Coordinating Committee, which may consist of at least the following persons: the school principal (chairman), teacher representatives, school liaison and volunteer representatives. Such a committee may:

1. Organize, coordinate and implement orientation sessions for volunteers and teachers. Such meetings will be informational so as to insure that everyone understands the program's objectives and procedures;
2. Organize, coordinate and implement workshops for volunteers regarding topics of need and interest;
3. Serve as liaison for the processing of suggestions and concerns of volunteers and teachers bearing directly on the volunteer program; and
4. Assist in evaluating the program and in recommending changes.

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School Volunteers (continued)

Role of the Superintendent

The Superintendent or designee will coordinate the volunteer program at the system wide level, including the screening of potential volunteers. The Superintendent shall review the volunteer program annually and report the findings to the Board. The Superintendent is accountable for the district-wide volunteer program.

Role of the Principal

The Principal will: (1) insure that all volunteers are properly screened and meet the qualifications of school volunteers; (2) insure that all volunteers receive sufficient orientation; (3) serve as Chairman of the Volunteer Coordinating Committee, if applicable; (4) coordinate all volunteers activities in his or her building; (5) review the program annually and report to the Superintendent; and (6) be accountable for the volunteer program at the building level.

Role of the Teacher

The teacher will: (1) be responsible for the planning and implementation of activities of volunteers in his or her classes; (2) be involved in evaluating the program and making recommendations to the Principal; and (3) be accountable for volunteers under his or her direct supervision;.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes
 10-4g. Parental and community involvement in schools; model program; school-based teams.
 10-28b. School volunteers; information and assistance about; state wide coordinator; state plan.
 10-235. Indemnification of teachers, board members, employees and certain volunteers and students in damage suits; expenses of litigation.
 Chapter 969 Registration of Sexual Offenders