

Cecil County Public Schools

Volunteer Handbook



September 2022

“Volunteerism is the voice of the people put into action. These actions shape and mold the present into a future of which we can all be proud.”

-Helen Dyer

Volunteer Handbook

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Thank you for choosing to be a volunteer in the Cecil County Public Schools!

This handbook contains information that will assist you in performing your volunteer duties. We hope you find it helpful.

If you need additional information or have any other questions, please feel free to contact the school volunteer coordinator.

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CODE OF ETHICS FOR VOLUNTEERS

School volunteers are very special people. They provide students with an extra measure of personal warmth and attention. They also provide an extra pair of hands to the faculty and staff.

Every volunteer is a member of the educational team and as such must be professional in all phases of the program. Some key points to keep in mind are:

- Be prompt and reliable.
- Treat all professional and personal knowledge about children and schools as confidential information.
- Follow school policies and procedures.
- Discuss any problems that arise directly with the teacher, the school volunteer coordinator, or the principal.
- Call the appropriate person if you are unable to fulfill an assignment.
- Refrain from imposing your own religious or political views upon students; exhibit a broad-minded, tolerant attitude toward all groups and individuals.
- Respect those with whom you work.

VOLUNTEER'S COMMITMENT

I agree to abide by all school rules and Board of Education regulations.

I understand the importance of confidentiality regarding students, staff, and schools.

I agree to attend a required annual orientation meeting at the school where I volunteer.

If I am unable to keep my commitment to a school on any given day, I will notify the school as far in advance as possible.

I agree to foster high standards and high expectations for all students.



COMMUNICATION *An Open Line*

Communication is vital to the volunteer-teacher-student relationship. Targeted programs and activities best suited to the individual needs of each student are the result of effective, open communication between the teacher and the volunteer. The fact that everyone in the school is impacted by the volunteer's efforts makes taking the time to communicate even more vital.

At the outset of the volunteer's service, the teacher and volunteer need to decide how to communicate with each other. They need to jointly establish a regular procedure for effecting this communication so that the process is ongoing.

The teacher needs to clearly delineate the volunteer's roles, responsibilities, and parameters. The teacher needs to ask on a regular basis about student progress, volunteer comfort with the assignments, and any additional needs that must be met.

The volunteer needs to communicate student progress, work progress, and any confusion that may arise either with the teacher's directions or with the student's work. The teacher needs to hear about behavioral issues, academic needs or strengths, what works and does not, and any concerns about the instructional setting or time allocations.

Whether the communication is oral or written, neither party should hesitate to make sure that any area of uncertainty is made clear, since the student may be negatively impacted by misunderstanding. With open lines of communication, all persons involved in the volunteer program will feel a true sense of accomplishment with their roles in this critical partnership.

CONFIDENTIALITY: *What Does It Mean?*

Webster's Pocket Dictionary of the English Language defines the word *confidential* as "hold as secret; having another's entrusted confidence on spoken or written matters." It is easy to read the definition; it is more difficult to determine clearly the relationship of this definition to the context of our public schools, and even more difficult to remember to apply the definition at all times.

Once a volunteer makes a commitment to a school or schools, the volunteer in effect becomes a member of the school staff and must be sensitive to the fact that he or she represents the school within the community. During the course of working with a student or students, the volunteer can and probably will encounter a variety of information about students or about the school. This may be information that certain students have learning difficulties, behavioral problems, or home situations that are unfortunate. Or, it may be information regarding the volunteer's personal feelings about the way in which teachers or administrators interact with each other or with students. Yet again, it may be information regarding the reasons for disciplinary actions being imposed on particular students. Or to look in another context, it may be information about how well certain students perform, how they have improved, the fact that they've received all A's on the report card, the fact that their behavior is exemplary, or the way in which teaching styles differ from staff member to staff member.

In all cases, specific information related to the school, the staff, the students or their parents must not be conveyed outside the school. Confidentiality can be breached, and the volunteer and school held liable for that breach, even in the most innocent of contexts. It is very human to want to share your feelings of concern for a child who has a difficult home life. It is understandable to want to communicate your feelings of concern for a child with a learning disability.

HELPFUL HINTS FOR VOLUNTEERS

It is normal to wish to defend the school administration's disciplinary code by sharing information that explains why an action was taken. However, doing any of these things can violate the principle of confidentiality.

How can a volunteer avoid breaching the code of confidentiality? Discussing information or issues with the school administrator or counselor can help determine whether or not they can be shared with others in the community. If community members or friends ask questions about school matters, the best recourse is usually to recommend that they call the appropriate administrator or teacher to discuss such issues.



As a school volunteer, you are an individual who gives freely of your time and talents to serve as a member of the educational team of the school.

Be patient with yourself, the students, and the learning process. Progress sometimes seems slow, but often things are going on that we just don't see right away. Learning takes place in an atmosphere of acceptance and trust that often takes time to develop. Accept the students as they are and let them know you are truly interested in them.

VOLUNTEERS MAY BE:

- parents, grandparents, students, senior citizens, or any interested member of the community.
- from any economic, racial, or ethnic group.

VOLUNTEERS SHOULD BE:

- genuinely interested in children.
- dependable and reliable.
- friendly and cheerful.
- conscientious about keeping commitments.
- flexible and open minded.
- cooperative.

VOLUNTEERS WILL:

- assist the needs of the school from their home, their workplace, or at the school.
- give an agreed upon amount of time.
- communicate well with others.
- accept the principle that every child should have the opportunity to develop to his or her own potential.
- help foster an additional expectation of high standards and accomplishments.

VOLUNTEERS MUST:

- sign in and out when reporting to or leaving the school.
- follow established procedures of the school volunteer program.
- follow all school policies.

VOLUNTEERS HAVE THE RIGHT TO:

- be treated as a co-worker.
- receive sound guidance and direction.
- ask for advice or support when needed.
- have their opinions respected.
- receive encouragement, respect, and recognition.

VOLUNTEERS DO NOT:

- replace professional staff but work under their direction.
- diagnose student needs.
- counsel students.
- prescribe instructional programs.
- present initial lessons.
- make any decisions about disciplinary procedures.
- evaluate student progress and achievement.
- work one-on-one with any student behind closed doors.

SAMPLE ACTIVITIES FOR VOLUNTEERS

Instructional Activities

- Assist a small group or an individual student under the direction of a teacher
- Read aloud to a group or an individual student
- Listen to an individual or a group read aloud
- Record student dictation
- Assist non-English speaking students
- Supervise learning centers
- Help absentees with make up work
- Help students with special needs
- Read tests and instructional materials to students
- Review materials with students
- Use various types of equipment to guide the learning process

Non-Instructional Activities

- Prepare and/or collect learning activities
- Keep records
- Type materials for student use
- Laminate materials
- Assist in the school cafeteria, school store, or media center
- Record stories and/or assignments
- Change and create bulletin boards
- Catalogue and/or file materials
- Bind student stories into books



REFLECTING ON YOUR EXPERIENCE

At the beginning and end of each school year, you may be asked to reflect on your volunteer experiences. Your school may ask you to fill out a program evaluation or you might be given a reflection questionnaire like the one below:

- | | YES | NO |
|---|-----|-----|
| 1. Do you have good communication with the teacher?
<i>Comments:</i> | ___ | ___ |
| 2. Do you feel accepted by the students and staff?
<i>Comments:</i> | ___ | ___ |
| 3. Do you enjoy working in your present position?
<i>Comments:</i> | ___ | ___ |
| 4. Would you like to be placed in a different position?
<i>Comments:</i> | ___ | ___ |
| 5. Do you feel you need further training in certain areas?
<i>Comments:</i> | ___ | ___ |
| 6. Do you feel your volunteering experience has been rewarding?
<i>Comments:</i> | ___ | ___ |
| 7. Please share any additional suggestions or comments below: | | |



APPENDIX A

Links to Related Guidelines

Annotated Code of Maryland - Education Article

- [§6-106. Volunteer aides](#)

Cecil County Public Schools Policies and Regulations

- [Policy JHG - Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect](#)
- [Admin. Regulation JHG-RA - Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect](#)
- [Exhibit JHG-EA Child Abuse and Neglect](#)
- [Policy ACAA - Sexual Harassment](#)
- [Admin Regulation ACAA-RA - Sexual Harassment Complaint Procedure](#)
- [Exhibit ACAA-EA - Sexual Harassment Report Form](#)

APPENDIX B

Legal and Financial Information for Volunteers

Clarification of the legal status of volunteers and provision for comprehensive liability insurance can be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article §4-105 and §4-106. Volunteers receive specific coverage for general liability insurance under the commercial policies of the Board of Education.

A number of tax benefits may be available for volunteers under the general charitable contribution deduction of the Internal Revenue Code. Volunteers may be able to deduct unreimbursed expenditures made as a result of providing services to a qualifying organization such as a school.

The Board recommends that the volunteer contact his/her tax advisor to determine the deductible status of any expenditures made in the course of his or her volunteer service.

Annotated Code of Maryland - Education Article

- [§4-105. Comprehensive liability insurance; defense of sovereign immunity](#)
- [§4-106. Immunity of county board employees, volunteers, and board members](#)

APPENDIX C

Computer Security

In today's world, computer information is a significant resource for the entire school system. This information consists of public material that can be found on the Internet as well as confidential information relating specifically to the schools. Safeguarding the security and confidentiality of all materials and information ensures that the computer and the Internet remain valuable resources.

Board of Education Policy IIBH and related Administrative Regulation IIBH-RA - *Responsible Use of Technology* - provide clear guidelines as to the responsibilities of all who use or monitor student use of computer technology.

It is prohibited for any adult or student to use or import offensive, threatening, obscene, libelous, disruptive, or inflammatory language, images, or other material on any computer or network within the Cecil County Public Schools.

In addition, persons who monitor student use of computers must assure that students do not violate the provisions of the above mentioned policy and regulation.

Cecil County Public Schools Policies and Regulations

- [Policy IIBH - Responsible Use of Technology](#)
- [Admin. Regulation IIBH-RA - Responsible Use of Technology](#)

APPENDIX D

Universal Precautions

Bacteria and viruses that cause diseases are around us every day, particularly in areas that house large numbers of people, such as schools. It is important to follow certain precautions to ensure that not only do you stay healthy, but that you also help to prevent the potential spread of illness.

- First and foremost, always wash your hands before eating and drinking, before and after handling food, and before and after using the restroom.
- In order to prevent contact with possible bloodborne pathogens, always call the office and request immediate custodial assistance in cleaning up after accidents such as a student injury that results in a blood spill or a student illness that results in soiling of the floor or other areas.

Should you come into contact with any body fluids, report this contact immediately to the School Nurse.

Cecil County Public Schools Policies and Regulations

- [Admin. Regulation GBE-RB - Staff Health and Safety: Bloodborne Pathogens Control Plan](#)

APPENDIX E

Dress Code

While there is no specific dress code policy approved for adults connected with the Cecil County Public Schools, we do ask our volunteers to comply with the approved student dress code. Certain clothing types and styles are deemed not appropriate as school-day attire and may present an unhealthy or unsafe environment.

Prohibited clothing and accessories are those that:

- Are not acceptable to the work or learning environment.
- Pose a safety or health hazard.
- Interfere with or disrupt the educational process.
- Advocate unsafe or inappropriate behavior.
- Are vulgar, obscene, revealing or offensive.
- Demean others on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, gender, disability, or other attribute.
- Promote the use of tobacco, drugs, or alcohol.

Examples of prohibited clothing may include such things as:

- Head coverings except those used for religious or medical purposes.
- Clothing that drags on the floor.
- Clothing that is vulgar or obscene or that reveals private body parts or those parts of the body that are normally covered by underclothing.
- Make-up or body painting that displays offensive messages or symbols.
- Items that may be used as weapons or present a danger to self or others.

Cecil County Public Schools Policies and Regulations

- [Policy JFCA - Cecil County Student Dress Policy](#)
- [Admin. Regulation JFCA-RA - Cecil County Student Dress Code](#)

APPENDIX F

Safe Schools Procedures

Everyone - students, staff, and parents - wants to feel that our community's schools are safe havens where students can learn in an environment that is safe and welcoming. The unfortunate reality is that in today's world we can no longer assume that no one will do anything to violate the security and sanctity of our school buildings and classrooms.

Our schools have adopted Crisis Response plans to help staff and students react quickly and safely in the event of an emergency. In addition, central office and school staff regularly participate in drills and exercises that help schools learn how to respond to a wide variety of possible crises.

We ask each volunteer to make sure that he or she asks the appropriate school administrator about safe school procedures in any building in which he or she may be serving. In addition, the volunteer should ask the principal for a copy of the [Emergency Procedures Guide](#), which provides a quick overview of expected actions for staff members to take in specified emergencies.

Procedures that relate directly to personal safety for all staff and students, and that are expected to be followed the same in all school buildings, are our secure status Code Yellow and Code Red procedures. They are described below.

The Code Yellow secure status alert is initiated when a situation outside the building may dictate the need for a heightened level of care and awareness, and we want all staff to be aware of that need.

The Code Red secure status alert is initiated when a situation exists that presents the potential for imminent bodily harm or severe danger to employees or students. In such a situation it is essential that all persons take shelter in a safe location until the situation is remedied.

These and other safety procedures are described in detail in the CCPS [Emergency Procedures Guide](#) found in all classrooms and work areas.

NOTES

Cecil County Public Schools Policies and Regulations

- [Policy EBA - Safe Schools](#)
- [Admin. Regulation EBA-RA - Expectations for Safe Schools](#)



We express our thanks to the Anne Arundel County Public Schools and to the Governor's Office on Service and Volunteerism, both of whom provided materials and information for our use in this handbook.



Please direct all inquiries regarding this document to:
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