

Community Relations

SUBJECT: SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS

The Board recognizes the need to develop a school volunteer program to support District instructional programs and extracurricular activities. The purpose of the volunteer program will be to:

- a) Assist employees in providing more individualization and enrichment of instruction;
- b) Build an understanding of school programs among interested citizens, thus stimulating widespread involvement in a total educational process;
- c) Strengthen school/community relations through positive participation.

Volunteers are persons who are willing to donate their time and energies to assist building principals, teachers, and other school personnel in implementing various phases of school programs. Volunteers will serve in that capacity without compensation or employee benefits except for liability protection under the District's insurance program.

An application must be filled out by each prospective volunteer and forwarded to the District Office for evaluation. All volunteers must complete the application and provide knowing written consent to criminal record checks by the District and the Wayne-Finger Lakes BOCES so that the District can make reasonable and practicable efforts to identify individuals with criminal convictions bearing upon fitness to serve as volunteers in an educational setting, and applicants must be approved by the District.

Approval of volunteer applications is in the sole discretion of the District. The building principal will forward his or her decisions concerning selection, placement and replacement of volunteers to the Superintendent for final evaluation. Following approval from the Superintendent, volunteers selected for work in the District will be placed on the list of approved volunteers. However, the Superintendent retains the right to approve or reject any volunteer applications submitted for consideration. The Superintendent may revoke approval of a volunteer at any time, without prior notice.

Volunteers shall at all times when on duty on school property or at school-sponsored activities sign in and wear their visitor's badges, and shall be subject to District school-visit security procedures. When acting as a volunteer, they are expected to abide by all district policies and regulations, and with the directions of the administrators and faculty in charge of the activities to which the volunteers are assigned. This is true for in-district activities as well as out of district activities such as field trips.

Volunteer Protection Act of 1997, 42 USC § 14501 et seq.
Education Law §§ 3023 and 3028
Public Officers Law § 18

NOTE: Refer also to Policy #6540 -- Defense and Indemnification of Board Members and Employees

Adoption Date: 07/25/17

Community Relations

SUBJECT: SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS

A school volunteer is an unpaid person who assists District staff, including, but not limited to, instructional personnel, and in curricular, co-curricular, or extracurricular programs.

The District has a long-standing set of expectations for conduct on school property and at school functions. These expectations are based on the principles of civility, mutual respect, citizenship, character, tolerance, honesty and integrity. Consistent with those expectations, the District is committed to take the steps, within legal authority and the District's capacity, that it believes a reasonable parent would take to screen potential volunteers prior to accepting their volunteer service.

General Guidelines

- 1) Use of volunteers will not replace any duly appointed or authorized District personnel or conflict with the duties or job responsibilities of these personnel. Any information gained through volunteering must be held in strict confidence with the building principal or designee assuring that the volunteer has no access to confidential student or personnel data unless designated by a school official in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).
- 2) Volunteers may assist on an occasional or regularly scheduled basis, however, they may not teach or provide the initial instruction for accomplishing educational objectives; but may reinforce skills taught by the professional staff.
- 3) Volunteers may not provide transportation to students in their personal automobiles for any school sponsored activities.
- 4) Volunteers may not be assigned the responsibility for disciplining students but may assist the teacher in maintaining proper behavior of students and report behavioral problems to the teacher.
- 5) Volunteers may not supervise a class in the absence of the teacher.
- 6) Volunteers will not contact parents regarding the performance of students or write comments on any papers or school work sent home.

Implementation of the Volunteer Program

- 1) General administration of the volunteer program in the District will be the responsibility of the Superintendent or designee with building principals assuming general authority over volunteers.
- 2) The need for volunteers will be determined by the building principal and other designated personnel.
- 3) Each prospective volunteer must complete an application and a Consent to Criminal Record Check, to give informed consent for a records check, which will be forwarded to the District Office for review. All regularly scheduled volunteers will, at a minimum, complete an

SUBJECT: SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS

application, provide authorization for a criminal record check, and be screened and interviewed by the building principal or designee.

- 4) The building principal will forward his or her decisions concerning selection, placement, and replacement of volunteers to the Superintendent for final evaluation. Following approval from the Superintendent, volunteers selected for work in the District will be placed on the list of approved volunteers. However, the Superintendent retains the right to approve or reject any volunteer applications submitted for consideration. The Superintendent or his/her designee will not recommend an applicant for approval unless all application forms and background checks have been executed and been reviewed by the staff member(s) designated to review applications.
- 5) Updating information.
 - (a) Criminal Convictions. Each applicant and volunteer must notify the District immediately if convicted of a felony or misdemeanor in any jurisdiction so that a determination may be made about the nexus between the conviction and service at the District,
 - (b) Criminal Charges. Each applicant and each approved volunteer must notify the District immediately if he or she is charged with a felony or misdemeanor in any jurisdiction, so that a determination may be made of the nexus between the actual charge(s) and the volunteer's duties; any appearance of impropriety; or with the efficient, effective operation of the District. A volunteer may, in the sole discretion of the Superintendent, be suspended pending the resolution of such charges, in the interests of student safety. A ticket or appearance ticket for a matter which is categorized under the Penal Law as a violation (e.g., littering) will not result in suspension.
 - (c) Absences. Because the attendance of a volunteer where and when expected is important to the operations of the Schools, volunteers are expected to provide information regarding any change of preferred phone number or email address, or any change of address as soon as may be practicable. In addition, in the event of illness or other incapacity, volunteers are requested to give notice of anticipated absence as far in advance as practicable.
- 6) Building principals will assume final responsibility for the assignment of volunteers from the approved list.
- 7) Orientation and in-service training will be provided to volunteers by appropriate District staff.
- 8) Volunteers will work under the supervision of appropriate staff and are expected to comply with all District rules and regulations.
- 9) An accurate list of volunteers will be kept by each building principal or supervisor and forwarded to the Superintendent. Also, a copy of each building's volunteer registry file will be forwarded to the Personnel Office.

Community Relations

SUBJECT: SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS

- 10) The District does not carry health or accident insurance or Workers' Compensation on volunteers. Approved volunteers are covered for their actions or omissions within the scope of their approved authority under the liability section of the District's umbrella policy.
- 11) Volunteers must sign in and out in the school office.
- 12) Each school will keep a volunteer registry which will include, but not be limited to, the following information: name, address, telephone number, and emergency contact.
- 13) Volunteers must wear appropriate identification, as determined by the Superintendent, or building principal or supervisor, or designee, to ensure immediate recognition as persons whose specific purpose is helping students and staff.
- 14) The Superintendent of Schools, or person acting in that capacity in the absence of the Superintendent, may revoke approval of a volunteer at any time, without prior notice.

Vetting Volunteers: Applications & Review

- (1) Application Materials. The prospective volunteer will receive (a) a Volunteer Application Form; (b) a Volunteer Availability form, to assist in appropriate placement; and (c) a Consent to Criminal Record Check, to give informed consent for a records check. All forms must be signed and returned for District review before a volunteer will be approved and appointed.
- (2) Consent to Criminal Record Checks. Every prospective volunteer must, as a precondition to appointment, provide a signed consent to a criminal record check, on a form to be provided by the District. The District shall have the right, in its sole discretion, to use any method legally available to it to perform a criminal record check of an applicant (a) as a universal practice; or (b) on a random sample basis; or (c) where it has reasonable cause to believe that information provided by the applicant or references is incomplete or inaccurate, or (d) has an articulable basis to believe that additional scrutiny is in the best interests of students; or (e) makes the determination that a particular volunteer assignment provides an opportunity for a volunteer to have regular or substantial unrestricted or unsupervised contact with students.
- (3) Criminal Convictions or Pending Charges.
 - (a) Where the District has information, either from the applicant and references; from a criminal record check; or from other sources that an applicant or appointed volunteer has been convicted of a felony or misdemeanor, then the Superintendent or his/her delegate will make a determination consistent with New York State law, based upon the nature of the charge, and the age of the charge as to whether the volunteer may be appointed, or may be continued in service. A conviction for crime such as (but not limited to) commission or attempt to commit child abuse, sex offenses, murder, manslaughter, rape, kidnapping, etc. shall disqualify an applicant from volunteer service. Other crimes will be assessed based upon the nature of the crime, the time elapsed, and the nature of the volunteer service and

Community Relations

SUBJECT: SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS

proximity to children. For example, a conviction for fraud or for computer hacking will disqualify a candidate from service in the business office;

- (b) Where the District has information, either from the applicant and references; from a criminal record check; or from other sources that an applicant or appointed volunteer has been charged with a crime classified as a felony or misdemeanor, the District may immediately suspend the application, or the service of the volunteer, until evidence is tendered by the volunteer sufficient to demonstrate that the charges have been withdrawn or resolved without conviction, for the protection of students and to avoid any appearance of impropriety. The volunteer is welcome to seek reconsideration of an application, once the charges have been withdrawn or resolved without conviction.
- (4) Additional Review at Discretion of District. The nature and extent of background screening may vary, at the sole discretion of the District. Such discretionary additional review may be as a uniform practice, within the limitations of budget and legal authority; or on a random basis; or in particular cases for any nondiscriminatory reason. Some factors which may trigger additional review may particular to an individual's criminal history [see previous paragraph (3)]; or may be the extent to which a volunteer's duties or proposed duties may present an opportunity for regular and substantial unrestricted or unsupervised contacts with students. For example, where a volunteer comes in to present a program to a class, or will provide support within a classroom under the direct observation of teachers and teaching assistants, the opportunity for unsupervised contact is less that may be the case of a chaperone on a trip extending several days.
- (5) Coaches. Any person approved to serve as a volunteer coach shall, in addition to these regulations, meet all training, certification and related requirements applicable to volunteer coaches under the regulations of the New York State Commissioner of Education, as they may exist at the time of such service.

BASE SCHOOL DISTRICT APPLICATION FOR VOLUNTEERS

Personal Information

Date _____

Name _____
(Last) (First) (Middle)

Address _____
(Street) (City) (State) (Zip)

Phone No. _____
(Home) (Work)

General What volunteer services are you willing to perform? _____

Employer List below your current and previous employers.

DATE, MONTH, AND YEAR	NAME AND ADDRESS OF EMPLOYER	POSITION	PHONE #
From			
To			

Previous Employer

DATE, MONTH, AND YEAR	NAME AND ADDRESS OF EMPLOYER	POSITION	PHONE #
From			
To			

References List below three persons, not related to you, who you have known for at least one year.

NAME	ADDRESS	YEARS ACQUAINTED	PHONE

Have you ever been convicted of a crime? (felony or misdemeanor) [☐]Yes [☐]No

If yes, please explain: _____

(Continued)

**BASE SCHOOL DISTRICT
APPLICATION FOR VOLUNTEERS (Cont'd.)**

Emergency Information In case of emergency, please notify:

_____ Name _____ Address _____ Phone _____

My signature below permits the District to contact any or all references listed if necessary.

Date _____ Signature _____

DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE -- OFFICE USE ONLY

Reviewed by _____ Date _____

REMARKS: _____

Approved []

Not Approved []

**BASE SCHOOL DISTRICT
CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT FOR SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS**

Your service as a volunteer in our schools is greatly appreciated. In your association with teachers and students, you may have access to student information that is not to be shared or discussed with anyone other than designated personnel. Confidentiality is of the utmost importance in your work with teachers and students. You may not discuss a child even with that child's parents or guardians; nor are you to contact parents or guardians regarding the behavior or performance of students. You must always refer any questions regarding students to the student's teacher or the building principal. If you need help with a student, discuss the matter professionally with the child's teacher or other designated school official. Before beginning service as a volunteer in our District, it is requested that you acknowledge your intent to fulfill this responsibility by endorsing the statement below.

- 1) I will not discuss with others, when serving as a volunteer or when no longer in a volunteer role, the content of any confidential student information which was learned in the course of or because of my volunteer work in the school; nor will I disclose or permit to be disclosed, directly or indirectly, student education records, personally identifiable student information in those records, or other confidential information regarding any student. Exceptions to this rule include my ability to discuss student information with designated staff members and/or as authorized by administration.
- 2) The confidentiality of student information will include, but not be limited to, the following topics:
 - a. Academic standing (including student grades and test scores);
 - b. Attendance;
 - c. Financial status;
 - d. Physical or mental health identity and history;
 - e. Disciplinary status or records.
- 3) I further understand that, in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, "education records" (generally defined as "those records, files, documents, and other materials which contain information directly related to a student; and are maintained by an educational agency or institution or by a person acting for such agency or institution") cannot be released, except as enumerated in law, without parent or guardian permission.
- 4) As a volunteer, I understand that I am not authorized to examine, release, or comment on student records or information unless expressly authorized by school officials in accordance with applicable law.
- 5) While in the possession and control of confidential student data, I understand that I must protect those documents from being viewed or obtained by non-authorized individuals.
- 6) I will never take any confidential student data off campus unless authorized by the building principal or designee.

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**BASE SCHOOL DISTRICT
CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT FOR SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS (Cont'd.)**

- 7) Concerns or questions regarding student records or issues of confidentiality should be brought to the attention of the school administrator and/or staff member that supervises the volunteer.
- 8) I must report any breach or suspected breach in this confidentiality agreement to the building principal or designee.

Volunteers in our District will perform tasks only under the supervision and guidance of appropriate staff, and are expected to comply with all District rules and regulations. Orientation and inservice training will be provided by appropriate staff to help ensure volunteer awareness of their duties, responsibilities, and expectations; and will stress the issues and importance of confidentiality of student information. Volunteers will be given selected materials, including applicable Board policies and/or administrative regulations, that address the role of the volunteer.

Violation of these guidelines may result in termination of the volunteer's services. The Superintendent or designee is responsible for decisions concerning continuation or discontinuance of a volunteer's activities.

Volunteer Confidentiality Agreement and Signature (required for all volunteers)

By signing, I acknowledge that I have read, understand, and will comply with the Confidentiality Statement above.

Name of Volunteer (please print)

Signature of Volunteer

Date

Signature of Administrator

Date

This Confidential Agreement will be kept on file in the Main Office of the building to which the volunteer is assigned. A copy of the Agreement will be provided to the volunteer.