

THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA

SECTION: COMMUNITY

TITLE: VOLUNTEERS

ADOPTED:

REVISED: June 15, 2017

916. VOLUNTEERS

Purpose

The School Reform Commission supports and encourages the participation of parents/guardians, community residents, and school partners to enhance the educational, co-curricular and extracurricular programs of the district.

Authority

The SRC may adopt and enforce reasonable rules and regulations governing volunteers and their participation in the activities of the district.

The SRC directs that all volunteers shall be informed of conduct that is prohibited and the disciplinary actions that may be applied for violation of SRC policies, administrative regulations, rules and procedures.

All volunteers shall be expected to maintain professional, moral, and ethical relationships with district students that are conducive to an effective, safe learning environment. [1]

Definitions

The following words and phrases, when used in this policy, shall have the meaning given to them in this section:

Adult - an individual eighteen (18) years of age or older.[2]

School Partner – an organization providing volunteer services without compensation from schools or the district for those services.

Certifications/Clearances - refers to the child abuse history clearance statement; the state criminal history background check; Act 126 mandated reporter training; and where applicable, the federal criminal history background check, required by the Child Protective Services Law.[3][4]

Direct volunteer contact - the care, supervision, guidance or control of children and routine interaction with children.[2]

Person responsible for the child's welfare - a person who provides permanent or temporary care, supervision, mental health diagnosis or treatment, training or control of a child in lieu of parental care, supervision and control.[2]

Routine interaction - regular and repeated contact that is integral to a person's volunteer responsibilities.[2]

Visitor - a parent/guardian, adult resident, educator, official or other individual who is not a school employee or independent contractor, and who visits a school or attends or participates in an event or activity at a school, but whose role is less substantial than would be sufficient to meet the definition of volunteer for purposes of this policy.[5]

Volunteer – an adult applying for or holding an unpaid position with a school or program, activity or service or a person responsible for a child's welfare or having direct volunteer contact with children. A volunteer is not a school employee.

Delegation of Responsibility

The Principal or appropriate Administrator shall be responsible for the selection and management of volunteers and for ensuring compliance with SRC policies, administrative regulations, rules and procedures.

At the discretion of the Principal or appropriate Administrator, a volunteer's service may be discontinued at any time.

The Superintendent or designee shall develop administrative regulations to implement this policy and manage the selection, use and supervision of volunteers.

Mandatory Regulatory Procedures

Certifications

Prior to approval, all position volunteers shall submit the following information:

1. PA Child Abuse History Certification - which must be less than sixty (60) months old.[4]
2. PA State Police Criminal History Record Information - which must be less than sixty (60) months old.[4]
3. Disclosure Statement for Volunteers - which is a statement swearing or affirming the applicant has not been disqualified from service by reason of conviction of designated criminal offenses or being listed as the perpetrator in a founded report of child abuse.[3][4][6]

4. If a volunteer has not been a resident of Pennsylvania during the entirety of the previous ten (10) year period, the position volunteer must also submit the following information:[4]
 - Federal Criminal History Report - issued at any time since the volunteer established residency.

The principal or appropriate Administrator shall review the information and determine if information is disclosed that precludes service as a volunteer.

Approval of all clearances shall be required prior to beginning service as a volunteer.

5. Act 126 - which is training for mandated child abuse reporters. Must be obtained within the first 45 days of volunteering.

Position volunteers shall obtain and submit new clearances/certifications every sixty (60) months.[7]

A student, eighteen (18) years of age or older, who is volunteering for an event or activity sponsored by the school in which the student is enrolled and occurring on the school's grounds, shall not be required to submit certifications except when the event or activity is for children in the care of a child-care service or the student will otherwise be responsible for the welfare of a child.[4]

Arrest or Conviction Reporting Requirements

Position volunteers shall report to the Principal or appropriate Administrator, in writing, within seventy-two (72) hours, an arrest or conviction required to be reported by law or notification that the volunteer has been named as a perpetrator in a founded or indicated report pursuant to the Child Protective Services Law.[6]

The Principal or appropriate Administrator shall immediately require a position volunteer to submit new certifications if the Principal or appropriate Administrator has a reasonable belief that the volunteer was arrested for or has been convicted of an offense required to be reported by law, was named as a perpetrator in a founded or indicated report, or has provided written notice of such occurrence.[6]

Failure to accurately report such occurrences may subject the position volunteer to disciplinary action up to and including denial of volunteer service and criminal prosecution.[6]

Child Abuse Reporting

All volunteers who have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is the victim of child abuse shall make a report of suspected child abuse in accordance with applicable law, Act 126 mandated child abuse reporting, SRC policy and administrative regulations.[10][11]

Oversight

Each volunteer shall be under the direction of a designated school administrator, teacher or other member of the school staff.

Training

Volunteers shall attend orientation and training sessions, as appropriate to the nature of their volunteer service. When training is provided for school employees relating to the legal obligations of employers and educational institutions, consideration shall be given to which volunteers should also receive that training, including Act 126.[11][12][13][14]

Confidentiality

No volunteer shall be permitted access to confidential student information unless the supervisor has determined that such access is necessary for the volunteer to fulfill his/her responsibilities. Volunteers with access to confidential student information shall maintain the confidentiality of that information in accordance with district policies and procedures and applicable law. If a volunteer has questions about the confidentiality of student information, the volunteer should consult with the building Principal or appropriate Administrator.[15]

Appeals

Any volunteer who is barred from volunteering in a school as a result of a clearance may appeal that school-based decision to parentappeals@philasd.org.

Any school partner who is barred from volunteering in a school as a result of a clearance may appeal that decision to arosen@philasd.org.

Legal References:

1. Pol. 824 - Maintaining Professional Adult/Student Boundaries
2. 23 Pa. C.S.A. 6303
3. 23 Pa. C.S.A. 6344
4. 23 Pa. C.S.A. 6344.2
5. Pol. 907 - School Visitors
6. 23 Pa. C.S.A. 6344.3
7. 23 Pa. C.S.A. 6344.4
8. 24 P.S. 1418
9. 28 PA Code 23.44
10. 23 Pa. C.S.A. 6311
11. Pol. 806 - Child Abuse
12. Pol. 123 - Interscholastic Athletics
13. Pol. 123.1 - Concussion Management
14. Pol. 123.2 - Sudden Cardiac Arrest
15. Pol. 216 - Student Records

Related Information:

24 P.S. 510

23 Pa. C.S.A. 6301 et seq

Philadelphia Home Rule Charter - 12-300