

THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA

No. 916

Section: Community

Title: Volunteers

Adopted: June 15, 2017

Revised: March 28, 2019

916 Volunteers

Authority

The Board of Education (“Board”) may adopt and enforce reasonable rules and regulations governing volunteers and their participation in the activities of the district.

The Board directs that all volunteers shall be informed of conduct that is prohibited and the disciplinary actions that may be applied for violation of Board 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 that provides services, programming or both to schools at no cost to schools or the district.

School Partner Staff - individuals engaged by the School Partner, including subcontractors or agents of the School Partner, paid or unpaid, who are 1) responsible for a child's welfare or, 2) have direct volunteer contact with students.

Certifications/Clearances - refers to the child abuse history clearance statement; the state criminal history background check; completion of Mandated Reporter Training or Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse (an alternative training available to individual family member volunteers only); 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 a 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. Visitors do not need to provide any clearances or obtain any background checks.

Volunteer - an adult applying for or holding an unpaid position with a school, or with a program, activity or service, 1) as a person responsible for a child's welfare, or 2) having direct volunteer contact with children, as defined under this Policy and Administrative Procedures. A Volunteer is not a school employee. A Volunteer routinely interacts with children in the absence of a District employee. Volunteers need to provide the clearances and obtain the background checks listed in the "Certifications" section of this policy.

Delegation of Responsibility

The principal or appropriate administrator shall be responsible for establishing volunteer opportunities, selecting and managing volunteers, ensuring compliance with, and enforcing, Board policies, administrative regulations, rules and procedures. The principal shall designate a designee to assist prospective volunteers as needed with uploading all files to the electronic volunteer clearance database. The Office of Employee Records shall review clearances submitted through the electronic volunteer clearance system to determine volunteer eligibility, with an additional review by the Deputy Chief of Student Rights and Responsibilities or his/her designee as deemed necessary. Central office staff members shall maintain an electronic current volunteer list in a centralized data system and audit clearances on an annual basis.

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.

Required Certifications for Volunteers

A prospective Volunteer shall submit the following information prior to commencing a Volunteer position with the District:

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. Federal Criminal History Report - which must be less than sixty (60) months old.[4]

A prospective Volunteer is not required to submit a Federal Criminal History Report if:

1. The prospective Volunteer has been a Commonwealth resident during the entirety of the previous ten (10) year period, or, if not a resident during the the entirety of the previous ten (10) year period, has received a Federal Criminal History Report certification at any time since establishing residency in the Commonwealth and provided a copy of the certification to the District; and
2. The prospective Volunteer affirms in a notarized Volunteer Affidavit that the prospective Volunteer is not disqualified from service due to any child abuse offense under Pennsylvania law, has not been listed as a perpetrator in a founded report of child abuse within the past five (5) years, and has not been convicted of any crime in another state or foreign nation similar to the offenses disqualifying a Volunteer from service under Pennsylvania law.[3][4][6]

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

The District will accept Federal Criminal History certifications obtained through the Department of Human Services for volunteer purposes. 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

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 volunteer to submit new certifications through the electronic employee clearance system if the principal or 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 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 are encouraged to make a report of suspected child abuse, and School Partner Staff must make a report of suspected child abuse in accordance with applicable law, mandated child abuse reporting, Board policy and administrative regulations.[10][11]

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. [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.

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