



YOUNG SCHOLARS
CHARTER SCHOOL

School Volunteers

Purpose

The Board of Trustees (“Board”) recognizes that volunteers make valuable contributions to the School and play an important role in enhancing the educational experience of its students.

The Board supports the involvement of parents/guardians and community volunteers to enhance the School’s educational program by assisting the teaching staff in providing positive and productive learning experiences for all students. Teachers are encouraged to provide a variety of opportunities for parent/guardian and community involvement and to strengthen the partnerships between school, home, and community.

Definitions

Direct volunteer contact –the care, supervision, guidance or control of children and routine interaction with children.

Routine interaction with children –regular and repeated contact that is integral to a person’s volunteer responsibilities.

Person responsible for a/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. This includes any person who has direct or regular contact with a child through any school-sponsored program, activity, or service.

Program, activity, or service –any of the following in which children participate and which is sponsored by the School: youth camps or programs, recreational camps or programs, sports or athletic programs, community or social outreach programs, enrichment or educational programs, and troops, clubs, or similar organizations.

Guidelines

In order to ensure the safety and welfare of all students, and in order to support the operation of an effective instructional program, volunteer opportunities will be made available only when requested by school staff.

Volunteers are expected to follow the guidelines set forth in this Policy. The ability to volunteer at the School is not a right, but rather, a privilege. As such, any volunteer position may be eliminated and/or the services of any volunteer may be terminated at any time at the sole discretion of the CEO or designee for failure to abide by established procedures or applicable policies, failure to abide by the directives of the CEO or designee, or where the CEO or designee determines that the volunteer's actions or presence constitute a danger or threat to the health, safety, or welfare of students, staff, or other School stakeholders.

Requirement to Obtain Certifications & Confidentiality

Pursuant to Pennsylvania law, certain adult volunteers (individuals 18 years of age or older) are required to obtain FBI, State Police, and Department of Human Services (DHS) certifications ("certifications") and will be required to renew those certifications every sixty (60) months.

The School respects the privacy of volunteer applicants and will hold all certification results in strict confidence to the extent permitted by law. There will be only limited personnel access approved by the CEO or designee to certification files on a "need-to-know" basis.

Volunteers who will either be responsible for a child's welfare or have direct volunteer contact with children must obtain the certifications referenced above prior to commencing volunteer services to the School and renew them every 60 months from the date of their oldest certification. Volunteers who will not be responsible for a child's welfare and will not have direct volunteer contact with children do not need to obtain certifications, as contemplated herein.

The CEO or designee shall be responsible for approval of all volunteers. No person may be approved as a volunteer who will either be responsible for a child's welfare or have direct volunteer contact with children if their certifications indicate that they have been convicted of any offense which would disqualify a current or prospective employee from employment at the School. The CEO or designee shall maintain a record of all approved volunteers and track their certification renewal dates in order to facilitate reminders to approved volunteers when their certifications are subject to expiration.

If a volunteer who is required to obtain certifications has been a resident of Pennsylvania for the entirety of the previous ten-year period and swears or affirms by properly executing the School's affirmation form that they are not disqualified from service and have not been convicted of a prohibited offense listed in existing law or a similar offense in another jurisdiction, only the State Police and DHS certifications will be required. If the volunteer is a resident of Pennsylvania but has not resided in Pennsylvania for the entirety of the previous ten-year period, that individual must obtain an FBI criminal history background check only once, and not at successive intervals until that individual has satisfied the ten-year continuous residency requirement in Pennsylvania.

Volunteers who are required to obtain certifications must report new arrests or convictions for any offense that would create a ban on volunteer work with children to the CEO or designee in writing within seventy-two (72) hours. If a person responsible for volunteer decisions has a reasonable belief that any volunteer was arrested for or convicted of an offense that would constitute grounds for denying volunteer work, or was named as a perpetrator in a founded or indicated report of child abuse, or the volunteer has provided notice of such, the CEO or designee must immediately require that

individual to submit current FBI, State Police, and DHS certifications. If any volunteer does not disclose arrests or convictions as required, they will be terminated immediately from all services to the School.

Other Volunteer Guidelines

No volunteer shall be permitted access to confidential student information unless the CEO or designee has determined that such access is necessary for the volunteer to fulfill their responsibilities. Volunteers with access to confidential student information shall maintain the confidentiality of that information in accordance with Board Policy and applicable law. If a volunteer has questions about the confidentiality of student information, the volunteer should consult with the CEO or principal.

All volunteers will be expected to follow the guidelines stated below:

1. Respect the authority of the teacher or School-employed supervisor as the decision-maker and person responsible for the instructional program, all classroom or school-related activities, and the well-being of all children in the classroom or school.
2. Report all incidents of inappropriate behavior or situations in which students might be in danger to the teacher or other individual in charge of the activity. Volunteers are not empowered to regulate student behavior or impose disciplinary measures. Volunteers are expected to report all incidents of suspected child abuse in accordance with applicable law. Questions regarding suspected child abuse shall be directed to the CEO or designee.
3. Respect the privacy and anonymity of each child by maintaining the confidentiality of information regarding students. Information regarding student classroom performance and/or behavior, and information contained in student records may not be shared with anyone other than school staff with an education need to know the information, as determined by the CEO or designee.
4. Maintain a professional relationship with students.
5. Courteously inform your supervising teacher or staff member if you are unable to attend a volunteer activity

Volunteers must undergo a tuberculosis examination in accordance with the regulations of the Pennsylvania Department of Health.

No volunteer will be requested or required to transport students in School and/or personal vehicles as part of their duties as a volunteer. Volunteers who transport students in personal vehicles are not covered by insurance provided by the School. Any volunteer so doing assumes any and all liability and any insurance coverage in this situation shall be provided through the volunteer's own insurance carrier. Volunteers must request and obtain prior approval from the CEO or designee in order to transport students in personal vehicles and such requests shall be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

At the discretion of the CEO or designee, volunteers may be required to attend orientation and training sessions offered by the School, as appropriate to the nature of their volunteer service.