

Community Relations - Instruction

School Volunteers

The Board of Education recognizes that volunteers can make many valuable contributions to our schools. The Board endorses a program encouraging community residents to take an active role in improving schools and to become school volunteers in schools subject to suitable regulations and safeguards. Appropriate recognition of volunteer services shall be made by the Board and school district administration. The Board further acknowledges that it may, from time to time, be asked to provide learning experiences for student teachers or interns within the school environments.

Annually, Principals shall submit a list of all regular volunteers in the district (chaperones on field trips, aides, library and classroom volunteer assistance, grandparents, assistance at athletic events, field days, etc.) to the Superintendent of Schools.

Volunteers, interns and other such non-employees working within the schools (“volunteers”) must work under the supervision of Stafford Public Schools staff. Volunteers are held to the same standards of conduct as school staff and must observe all Board of Education policies, including applicable policies on the confidentiality of student information.

Volunteers may be required to submit to state and federal criminal record checks and a record check of the Department of Children and Families (“DCF”) Child Abuse and Neglect Registry. No person who is required to register as a sex offender under state or federal law, or whose name is currently listed on the DCF registry, may volunteer in the Stafford Public Schools.

No employee of the Stafford Public Schools shall serve as a volunteer in any capacity, except as may be approved by the Superintendent or his/her designee based on the specific situation.

Persons interested in volunteering their services should contact the school principal.

(cf. 6164.2)

Legal Reference:

Connecticut General Statutes § 10-4g
Connecticut General Statutes § 10-220
Connecticut General Statutes § 10-235
Connecticut General Statutes § 54-250 et seq.

Policy adopted: November 1, 1999
Policy revised: November 16, 2009
Policy revised: February 27, 2012
Policy revised: June 8, 2015

STAFFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Stafford Springs, Connecticut

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Securing and Screening Volunteers

The following procedure has been established for screening volunteers, interns and other non-employees (“volunteers”) within the Stafford Public Schools. For the purpose of this procedure, volunteers are defined as those individuals who volunteer their time to assist in schools for the benefit of the student body with the express knowledge, consent and direction of a Stafford Public Schools employee. Student interns are defined as individuals currently enrolled in a post-secondary program for which an authorized internship is required or for which the student may be granted credit as part of an approved course of study. As with other volunteers, all student interns must be approved in advance by the building administrator or his/her designee and must be under the direction of a Board employee.

This procedure identifies those situations in which an individual may be required to submit to state and federal criminal record checks and a record check of the Department of Children and Families (“DCF”) Child Abuse and Neglect Registry within 10 days of application and/or request to volunteer within the Stafford Public Schools. All results must be received by the Human Resources Specialist before the volunteer may commence his or her services. No person who is a required to register as a sex offender under state or federal law, or whose name is currently listed on the DCF registry, may volunteer in the Stafford Public Schools.

The Building Principal or his/her designee directs the use of volunteers within the school. Specifically, the Principal or designee directs volunteer recruitment, screening, placement, and training in accordance with the following perimeters and procedures:

1. **Qualifications.** Volunteers may come from all backgrounds and all age groups. The main qualification for a volunteer is that he or she has a desire to give his or her time and talent in order to enrich student learning opportunities and the school community generally.
2. **Recruitment.** School personnel may recruit volunteers through the following resources: parent(s)/guardians, parent organizations, retired teachers and other senior citizen groups, community businesses, local volunteer centers, and universities. If a staff member, other than the Principal, recruits a volunteer, the staff member must provide the volunteer’s name and address to the Principal for appropriate screening.
3. **Role.** Volunteers serve only in an auxiliary capacity under the direction and supervision of a staff member; they are not a substitute for a member of the school staff. Volunteers do not have access to confidential student school records.

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4. **Selection, Placement, and Supervision.** Volunteer selection and placement shall be on the basis of the volunteer's qualifications and availability and the school's needs. A volunteer will be assigned to a teacher's classroom only with the teacher's consent.
5. **Training.** Each academic year, when a person first completes the volunteer registration form, the Principal or designee should give the person a copy of this administrative procedure along with other pertinent information.

Screening Procedure Definitions

The District has identified two classifications of volunteers: Group I and Group II.

Group I

Volunteers will be classified in Group I when they assist school staff members with school activities in the presence of a Stafford Public Schools employee. Group I volunteers must complete the Volunteer Information Form and Waiver of Liability and a DCF background check form. Criminal background checks (i.e. security checks/fingerprints) will not be required of Group I volunteers. Group I volunteers are those who assist school staff members with school activities such as those listed below:

- a. assisting in a classroom, cafeteria, or library when a staff member is present; or
- b. accompanying a class on a field trip during the school day with a staff member; or
- c. helping in the school office during regular school hours; or
- d. assisting in the cafeteria or library during regular school hours; or
- e. assisting during extracurricular events, i.e., dances, fairs, open house, sporting events, etc.

Group II

Volunteers will be classified in Group II when they provide services to students when not in the direct presence of a Stafford Public Schools employee. Group II volunteers must complete the Volunteer Information Form and Waiver of Liability and DCF background check form. Group II volunteers will be required to complete a consent form regarding the release of information concerning any prior or pending criminal offenses as indicated on the Volunteer Information Form and Waiver of Liability, and submit to a criminal background check which includes but may not be limited to fingerprinting. Group II volunteers are those who engage in activities such as those listed below:

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Screening Procedure Definitions (continued)

- a. accompanying a class on a field trip in which the plans include that students be divided into small groups supervised solely by the volunteer chaperone for any length of time; or
- b. chaperoning an overnight field trip; or
- c. working in direct contact with students without the direct presence of a Stafford Public Schools employee;
- d. working as a student intern; or
- e. coaching.

Department of Children and Families Abuse and Neglect Registry Check

All volunteers (in Group I or Group II) will be required to submit to a record check of the Department of Children and Families (DCF) Abuse and Neglect Registry.

Upon receipt of DCF Abuse and Neglect Registry results indicating that the volunteer is involved in an abuse or neglect investigation or that the volunteer is listed as a perpetrator of abuse or neglect on the Registry, the Superintendent or his or her designee will notify the volunteer of the results of the Registry check and will provide an opportunity for the volunteer to respond to the results of the Registry check. No person who is a required to register as a sex offender under state or federal law, or whose name is currently listed on the DCF registry, may be approved to volunteer within the Stafford Public Schools.

When a criminal record check of a volunteer reveals a criminal conviction, whether disclosed or undisclosed on the volunteer's consent form, the Superintendent will make a case-by-case determination as to whether to allow the individual to volunteer in the Stafford Public Schools. Prior to any such decision by the Superintendent or designee, the Superintendent or designee shall inform the volunteer and shall provide an opportunity for the volunteer to respond. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the falsification or omission of any information on a volunteer consent form, including, but not limited to, information concerning criminal convictions or pending criminal charges, may be grounds for the Superintendent or designee to prohibit the individual from becoming a volunteer.

Prior Approval Required

All school volunteers (including student interns or other non-employee working in the schools) must be approved in advance by the building principal or other administrative designee. The school district, acting through the appropriate building administrator or his/her designee, reserves the right to discontinue or disallow the services of any volunteer at any time at the discretion of the administration.

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Sign-in Procedure

All volunteers must report to the school office upon arrival to sign in and must report to the office prior to departure to sign out. A sign-in/sign-out log will be maintained in each school office. Volunteers must indicate the purpose of their visit and include any other information (i.e. destination; provide proof of identification etc.) as may be required by the log. Additionally, volunteers will be provided with identification badges, which must be displayed during each visit.

(c.f. 4112.5 – Security Checks/Fingerprinting)

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes
 Connecticut General Statutes § 10-4g
 Connecticut General Statutes § 10-220
 Connecticut General Statutes § 10-235
 Connecticut General Statutes § 54-250 et seq.

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