

Community Relations

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.

Screening volunteers is critical because of the vulnerability of the population the school serves. Each volunteer must register in the main office at the beginning of each visit and wear a name tag while in the building. Unless he or she has already done so during the current academic year, the volunteer must complete an Volunteer Information Form. Absent any indication on the form that the volunteer may not qualify, e.g. the volunteer is a convicted felon, the principal or designee will allow the volunteer to proceed to the assigned activity.

A request to volunteer or to continue volunteering will be denied if the volunteer behaves in a manner that demonstrates he or she is not a good role model or is otherwise detrimental to the school environment. Examples of such behavior include: inappropriate language, failing to be dependable, failing to follow the supervisor's instructions, committing any criminal act on school grounds or at a school activity, touching a student in a rude or overly forceful manner, failing to dress in an appropriate manner, or violating any school rule.

The Pomfret Community School has identified two categories of volunteers: Category I and Category II.

Category I

Volunteers will be classified in Category I when they assist school staff members with school activities in the presence of a Pomfret Community School employee. Category I volunteers will be required to complete the Volunteer Information Form and may be required to submit to records checks required of Category II Volunteers at the discretion of the administration. Category 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.

Category II

Volunteers will be classified in Category II when they provide services to students when not in the direct presence of a Pomfret Community School employee. Category II volunteers will be required to complete the Volunteer Information Form and such volunteers will be required to submit to a record check of the Department of Children and Families (DCF) Abuse and Neglect Registry. A criminal background check may be required at the discretion of the administration. Category II volunteers are those who engage in activities such as those listed below:

- 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 Pomfret Community School employee; or
- d. working as a student intern; or
- e. coaching

Upon receipt of the 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 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 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 Pomfret Community School. When a criminal record check of a volunteer reveals a criminal conviction, whether disclosed or undisclosed on the volunteer's information form, the Superintendent or designee will make a case-by-case determination as to whether to allow the individual to volunteer in the Pomfret Community School. 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 Information 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-employees working in the school) must be approved in advance by the principal or other administrative designee. The school reserves the right to discontinue or disallow the services of any volunteer at any time at the discretion of the administration.

Annually, the Principal 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.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

10-4g Parent and community involvement in schools; model programs;
school-based teams

10-235 Indemnification of teachers, board members, employees and certain
volunteers and students in damage suits; expenses of litigation.

54-254 Registration of person who has committed a felony for a sexual
purpose

10-220 Duties of boards of education

Policy adopted: August 27, 2008
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POMFRET PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Pomfret, Connecticut