

VOLUNTEERS

Policy

The Trumbull Board of Education recognizes that volunteers can make many valuable contributions to our schools. The Board of Education encourages the use of volunteers to: (1) enhance students' learning achievement, (2) provide enrichment experiences for students, (3) increase the effective utilization of staff time and skills, (4) give more individual attention to students, and (5) promote greater community involvement. While we value this contribution, we must also protect the safety and welfare of our pupils and employees. To this end, the Principal of each school shall administer volunteers in accordance with regulations established by the Superintendent of Schools. On an on-going basis, Principals shall submit a list of all volunteers in the district (chaperones on field trips, aides, library and classroom volunteer assistance, assistance at athletic events, field days, etc.) to the Superintendent of Schools.

The Superintendent shall establish procedures for securing and screening volunteers. Screening includes, but is not limited to, preventing volunteer participation of a "sex offender" as defined by Public Act 98-111, An Act Concerning the Registration of Sexual Offenders.

Adopted: 4/22/08
Revised 3/13/12

Regulations

1. A volunteer is defined as an individual, other than an employee, who works with the students at any of the Trumbull Public Schools. An example of a volunteer is a parent or guardian who assists the classroom teacher during student learning centers or chaperones a school trip. Volunteers serve only in 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. 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.

No person who is a “registered sex offender” may serve as a volunteer; a request to volunteer or to continue volunteering will be denied if the volunteer behaves in any 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: swearing, failing to be dependable, failing to follow the supervisor’s instructions, committing any criminal act on school grounds or at a school activity, inappropriately touching a student, failing to dress in an appropriate manner, or violating any school rule.

2. All volunteers are required to fill out and sign the School Volunteer Security Check form for the purpose of submitting to a background check. Volunteers are encouraged to fill out the form online (preferred method) on the Trumbull Public Schools website (www.trumbullps.org). These forms are also available at each school and the Trumbull Board of Education Human Resources Office. If there are any questions raised from the background check, the matter will be referred to the Superintendent and/or his/her designee for review. Principals and applicants will be notified of the security check results to ensure that only those approved can begin participating as a volunteer.
3. Volunteer selection and placement shall be on the basis of qualifications, availability and the school’s needs. A volunteer will be assigned to a staff member only with the staff member’s consent. The relationship between a volunteer and staff member should be one of mutual respect and confidence.
4. The Principal and/or his/her designee has the responsibility and authority to set reasonable conditions for each volunteer at his/her school. The staff member to whom the volunteer is assigned is responsible for explaining his or her specific expectations of the volunteer. The Principal or designee will arrange appropriate training opportunities for those volunteer activities requiring a skill or knowledge base.
5. All volunteers are required to report to the school’s main office to sign in and receive a visitor’s badge, which must be prominently displayed at all times while volunteering. All volunteers must sign out at the main office immediately prior to their departure from school.
6. The Principal and/or his/her designee will provide volunteers with a copy of these regulations and guidelines. Any volunteer who refuses to abide by the regulations and guidelines shall be requested by the Principal and/or his/her designee to leave the school and school grounds. If the volunteer refuses to leave, the Principal and/or his/her designee shall contact the police to remove the volunteer from the school and school grounds.

Regulations continued

7. No single volunteer will be left alone with a child or group of children.
8. Volunteers may not bring younger siblings to their volunteer obligations without prior approval of the classroom teacher and/or Principal.

Guidelines

Sign in at the Office and Wear a Visitor Badge

Volunteers must check in at the school's main office, sign the visitor's log, fill out and wear a visitor's badge. The badge lets teachers, students and other volunteers know that one is legitimately volunteering at the school.

Confidentiality

All volunteers must maintain confidentiality outside of class. If parents ask about a student's performance or behaviors, please refer them to the teacher. It is inappropriate to discuss situations observed anywhere while acting as a volunteer. When a question arises about a specific child, ask the teacher in confidence and privacy, not in the presence of other staff members, parents or students.

Names and Labels

Every child brings to school his or her own specific skills and abilities. Please do not make value judgments or label the abilities or skills of any child. Please be careful not to compare one's child to another in the class as they are all unique individuals. Everyone is unique and special in their own way. Some learn quickly; some come to school with less developed skills. Each child grows and learns at his/her own pace, and come just the way they are supposed to be. The Trumbull Public Schools are here to help them grow as fast as they can.

Questions and Issues

Discussing issues in the middle of the class or with other staff members or parents is not appropriate. Trumbull Public Schools does not expect a volunteer to agree with everything a teacher does in class; but each teacher's job is to make decisions in the best interest of the whole class. If one has a problem, issue or disagreement with a teacher, please bring it to the teacher's attention privately at an appropriate time. Clear, open, and direct communication is vital to the Trumbull Public Schools community.

Accept and Value Diversity

Parents come from different backgrounds and cultures. They all have their own ideas and experiences about raising children. Volunteers are asked to accept children and respect their beliefs and requests. The diversity of people, values, cultures, and beliefs is what makes such a rich experience for all.

Discipline

The school, and each classroom, has an established discipline policy. When issues arise concerning inappropriate student behavior, volunteers will check with the teacher for the appropriate action and to

Guidelines continued

support students by encouraging them to make good choices and demonstrate appropriate behavior. The efforts of volunteers are appreciated but matters such as these should be referred to a teacher whenever possible.

Helping the Teacher and Class: A Volunteer’s Primary Responsibility

Parent volunteers work under the direction of the classroom teacher who defines the volunteer’s duties and expectations. A volunteer’s primary responsibility in the classroom is helping the class as a whole. By supporting the class, a volunteer will be building their own child’s self-esteem. Please try to keep the role as volunteer and parent separate in the classroom. If the volunteer cannot separate these roles, the Principal will determine appropriate action. If one’s child has a problem, let the child work out the problem with others and the teacher through established classroom routines and procedures. A volunteer should not try to solve problems for their own child while in class; that takes power away from one’s child. Trumbull Public Schools strive to help students become more independent and self-sufficient.

Keeping Commitments

It is important that volunteers adhere to the scheduled time to assist a teacher in his/her classroom. Whenever possible, please call the day before (or at least send a note the morning of one’s commitment) if a volunteer is not going to be able to be in the classroom at the scheduled time. The teacher is counting on the volunteer and needs adequate time to adjust the class plans.

Support the classroom teacher to maximize instructional time. When volunteering in a classroom where several volunteers are present, please keep adult conversations to a minimum. This will assist students in staying focused on the classroom lesson or activity. Volunteers need to follow the same policies and procedures as any student or teacher in the school. For example, no cell phones or electronic devices can be used inside the school during school hours.

Final Notes

Please review the individual school’s handbook for additional policies and procedures. For any other questions, comments or concerns, please contact the school principal.

References

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

**TRUMBULL PUBLIC SCHOOLS
TRUMBULL, CONNECTICUT**

SCHOOL VOLUNTEER SECURITY CHECK

***Please print clearly**

NAME: _____

RELATIONSHIP TO STUDENT(S) _____

NAME OF STUDENT(S) IF APPLICABLE _____

ADDRESS: _____

HOME PHONE: _____ CELL PHONE: _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

DATE OF BIRTH: _____

SCHOOL(S) YOU VOLUNTEER AT:

I give permission for the Trumbull Public Schools to complete a security check to verify that I have not been prosecuted for any criminal charges that would jeopardize the safety and security of children in the Trumbull Public Schools. All information obtained will be kept confidential and filed in the Trumbull Public Schools Human Resources Office.

SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____

Completed form must be sent to the Human Resources Office, Trumbull Public Schools, 6254 Main Street, Trumbull, CT 06611 for processing. Volunteers must not begin volunteering until receiving notification of approval.