

Sylvan Height Science Charter School

Policy Number: 916

Policy Title: Volunteers

Approved: April 20, 2015

Revised: November 25, 2019

Purpose

The Board of the Sylvan Heights Science Charter School (School) recognizes that community volunteers can make valuable contributions to the educational program. The use of community volunteers is endorsed by the Board, subject to legal requirements, this policy, and administrative procedures. In all cases, the use of parent, community, or pupil volunteers is made by the Principal/Chief Academic Officer (CAO).

Authority

The Board authorizes the selection and use of parents/guardians, community members, and others as volunteers to assist and supplement regular school staff. The basic requirement of volunteer service shall be an interest in the educational program, enjoyment in helping children, and a sincere belief that by volunteering, a contribution will be made to the learning process.

All volunteers shall be expected to maintain professional, moral, and ethical relationships with students that are conducive to an effective, safe learning environment.

Definitions

Adult is an individual eighteen (18) years of age or older.

Certification refers to the child abuse history clearance statement, the state criminal history background check; and where applicable, the federal criminal history background check, required by the Child Protective Services Law.

A **volunteer** is one who voluntarily offers a service to the School without compensation, remuneration or other consideration and who otherwise meets the requirements of this policy.

A **volunteer having direct contact with children** is an adult applying for/serving in an unpaid position as a volunteer responsible for the welfare of a child or having direct contact with children (care, supervision, guidance or control of children and routine interaction with children).

Volunteers having direct contact with children are those who care for, supervise, and guide children. This includes, but is not limited to, those who chaperone field trips and serve as classroom helpers, tutors or aides.

Delegation of Responsibility

The Principal/CAO or designee shall develop administrative guidelines to assure the proper support for the volunteer programs of the School.

Appropriate portions of this policy statement shall be placed in the Parent-Student handbook and also posted at the reception area of the School.

Guidelines

General

Volunteers shall be required to submit / complete the following:

- (1) An application;
- (2) A report of criminal history from the Pennsylvania State Police, dated less than twelve (12) months old;
- (3) A Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance from the Department of Human Services, dated less than twelve (12) months old;
- (4) Disclosure Statement for Volunteers, which is a statement swearing or affirming that the applicant has not been disqualified from service by reason of conviction of designated criminal offenses or being listed as the perpetrator in a founded report of child abuse.
- (5) Results of a TB test, when required by and in accordance with regulations and guidance from the Pennsylvania Department of Health; and
- (6) In some circumstances, a fingerprint-based federal criminal history (FBI Clearance), dated less than twelve months old (See **Exemption** Section, below).

If, under pertinent laws or regulations, a volunteer applicant's criminal history/child abuse report would preclude him or her from being hired as an employee, that person may not be a volunteer.

Clearances described in numbers (2), (3) and (6) above must be repeated every sixty (60) months.

The Principal/CAO shall review all applications for either approval or denial. Approval shall be required prior to beginning service as a volunteer.

If a volunteer is arrested for or convicted of any misdemeanor or felony, after commencement of volunteer service, the volunteer shall provide the Principal/CAO or designee with written notice not later than seventy-two (72) hours after such arrest or conviction.

The Principal/CAO shall immediately require a volunteer to submit new certifications if the Principal/CAO has a reasonable belief that the volunteer was arrested for or convicted of a misdemeanor or felony, was named as a perpetrator in a founded or indicated report, or has provided written notice of such occurrence.

Failure to accurately report such occurrences may subject the volunteer to disciplinary action up to and including denial of volunteer service and criminal prosecution.

Exemption

There are three parameters that a volunteer having direct contact with children must meet in order to be excused from the FBI Clearance requirement:

1. The position the prospective volunteer is applying for is unpaid;

2. The prospective volunteer has been a resident of this Commonwealth during the entirety of the previous ten-year period;
3. The prospective volunteer swears or affirms in writing (on a form provided by this School) that he or she is not disqualified from service pursuant by reason of criminal history; such applicable crimes as listed in Section 6344(c) of the Child Protective Services Law, and in the **Denial** section.

General

Following the completion of all required paperwork, a list of approved volunteer names will be maintained for school-wide use.

Volunteers shall not be asked to assume the professional responsibilities of the school staff.

Volunteers may provide assistance that is supportive, when under the direction of a staff member.

Volunteers will not be permitted to directly administer student discipline nor will they be permitted to administer first aid, except in the case of an emergency. Volunteers shall report all student disciplinary issues or concerns to the classroom teacher, instructional assistant, student activity advisor or building principal.

The Principal/CAO shall be responsible for overseeing the training of volunteers to perform the specific duties associated with their assignments and shall assume general authority and responsibility over all volunteers serving at that site.

Under no circumstances shall a volunteer be considered an employee of the School. A volunteer shall receive no wages from the School. The volunteer position is not a right, but rather a privilege that is conferred by the Board and the administration. As such, any volunteer position may be eliminated at any time for any reason. In addition, any volunteer may be removed from a volunteer position for any reason.

Transportation

Volunteers shall not transport students in personal vehicles.

Registration Procedures

Upon furnishing proof of the TB test, by completing the volunteer application and signing the School Volunteer Disclosure Statement, and while in the 30-day period awaiting results of the background checks, volunteers will receive a Volunteer Manual.

Volunteers shall meet any standards that may be established by federal, state or local government, or by the Board or administration, from time to time. The volunteer must agree to be bound by all applicable privacy laws and regulations.

In addition, the volunteer shall adhere to all rules and regulations and administrative guidelines governing the conduct of the School's professional employees.

Duty To Report

All volunteers who have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is the victim of child abuse shall make a report of suspected child abuse in accordance with applicable law, Board policy 806 and any applicable administrative regulations. All volunteers will be given a copy of Board policy 806, with an overview of the same, and will be required to sign off that they understand Board policy 806 and are willing and able to comply.

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 or her responsibilities. Volunteers with access to confidential student information shall maintain the confidentiality of that information in accordance with School policies and procedures and applicable by law. If a volunteer has questions about the confidentiality of student information, the volunteer should consult with the Principal/CAO.

Reimbursement for Expenses

Volunteers will only be reimbursed for expenses incurred in the course of their volunteer service when authorized in advance by the Principal/CAO.

References:

24 P.S. Sec. 111

23 Pa. C.S.A. Sec. 6301 et seq.

22 PA Code Sec. 8.1 et seq.

28 PA Code Sec. 23.44