# 9180 - VOLUNTEERS

**Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to promote and encourage school volunteers in order to expand and enhance parental, community, and civic involvement within schools while maintaining an adequate level of school safety and security. This policy establishes the framework for volunteer service in schools through the Office of Strategic Partnerships.

**Applicability and Scope**

This policy applies to all volunteers and volunteer applicants in the District.

This policy shall not apply to a person who visits a school for a one (1) time special event, such as guest speakers; celebrity readers; persons attending student performances; parent or family members who have lunch with their own child; career day special guests; and attendance at parent conferences. These people are considered school visitors. They must sign in as visitors in the main office and school staff should provide them with appropriate direction.

The use of volunteers in schools of the District enhances the educational process for students and promotes community involvement in education. The School Board encourages volunteer participation by individuals and groups in Board sponsored programs in local schools, in District and area offices, and for Board sponsored and supervised off-school campus activities before, during, and after regular school hours.

A volunteer is a non-paid person functioning under the sponsorship of the District. The Board authorizes the Superintendent to approve volunteers to assist in organized school programs following the submission of an application, completion of a background check as provided herein, and upon successful completion of a volunteer orientation and training program, in accordance with State Board of Education rules and laws of the State of Florida.

**Enrollment Procedures for Volunteers**

Prospective volunteers must complete all registration forms and a volunteer release as provided by the Office of Strategic Partnerships. False or misleading statements/answers or omissions made by an applicant may result in denial or, if discovered after appointment, may result in discontinuance of services.

**Status of Volunteers**

Volunteers may be used to assist District personnel in local schools and District programs. However, instructional personnel retain responsibility for supervising, diagnosing, prescribing, instructing, and evaluating students.

The acceptance and utilization of the services of any person on a voluntary basis shall be at the discretion of the District, and the District may discontinue the utilization of such services at any time. Persons have no right to volunteer in District schools, and the discontinuance of the utilization of such services shall not affect any substantial interest.

Volunteers shall not engage in political or religious activities while on District premises and while performing District duties.

**Criminal Background Investigation**

In order to protect the safety and security of students and staff, volunteers must submit to a background screening consisting of answering of arrest and criminal history questions on the application form, a search of that person's name or other identifying information against the registration information regarding sexual predators and sexual offenders maintained by the Department of Law Enforcement under F.S. 943.043, as amended from time to time, as well as a local criminal history background check. No volunteer shall be allowed unsupervised contact with students unless approved in advance by the site administrator. Volunteers who are allowed unsupervised contact with students shall first successfully complete level 2 background screening pursuant to the procedures described for Jessica Lunsford Act level 2 screening set forth at http://www.pcsb.org/jlahome.html. "Unsupervised contact" shall not include unanticipated unsupervised contact that is infrequent and incidental.

**Qualifications**

To be eligible to serve as a school volunteer, an individual must be of good moral character. A person who is found through background screening to have been convicted of any crime involving moral turpitude as defined by rule of the State Board of Education shall not be appointed to the position of school volunteer. The term conviction means a conviction by a jury or by a court and shall also include the forfeiture of any bail, bond, or other security deposited to secure appearance by a person charged with having committed a felony or misdemeanor, the payment of a fine, a plea of nolo contendere (no contest), the imposition of a deferred or suspended sentence by the court, adjudication withheld, finding of guilt, or the date of entry into a pre-trial intervention, pre-trial diversion, or similar program, so long as such PTI/PTD program is completed by the end of the relevant waiting period.

Additionally, the following guidelines shall apply:

A. Category One  
  
Felony sexual related crimes, felony lewd and lascivious crimes, felony child abuse crimes, and any other crime involving moral turpitude.

May not volunteer if convicted of Category One offenses.

B. Category Two  
  
Other felony crimes (except those designated under Category One and excluding worthless checks), any misdemeanor crimes of a sexual nature, and misdemeanor crimes related to children.

May not volunteer if the conviction for a Category Two offense was within the last ten (10) years. The District will consider and carefully review if the conviction for a Category Two offense was beyond ten (10) years.

C. Category Three  
  
Misdemeanor drugs, misdemeanor crimes of violence, and misdemeanor crimes involving weapons.

May not volunteer if the conviction for a Category Three offense was within the last five (5) years. The District will consider and carefully review if the conviction for a Category Three offense was committed beyond five (5) years.

D. Category Four  
  
Other misdemeanors (crimes involving worthless checks, whether felony or misdemeanor, will not be considered as a disqualifying offense.)

The District will consider the convictions in Category Four offenses on a case‑by-case basis.

E. Other Restrictions

May not drive students if DUI conviction within the past five (5) years, or ten (10) years if volunteer has two (2) DUI convictions. Cannot drive students with three (3) or more DUI convictions. Crimes involving worthless checks committed within the last five (5) years will disqualify a volunteer from handling money.

All volunteers must self-report any arrest, conviction, finding of guilt, withholding of adjudication, commitment to a pre-trial diversion program, or entering of a plea of guilty or Nolo Contendere for any criminal offense other than a minor traffic violation within forty-eight (48) hours to the Office of Professional Standards and the Director of the Office of Strategic Partnerships.

An applicant whose application has been rejected due to conviction of a disqualifying criminal offense may appeal to the Criminal History Appeal Committee. The Committee shall be made up of the Staff Attorney, or designee, an administrator from the Office of Professional Standards, and the Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources. Applicants appealing to the Committee shall have the burden of setting forth the circumstances surrounding the criminal incident for which an exemption is sought, and sufficient evidence of rehabilitation including, but not necessarily limited to, the time period that has elapsed since the incident, the nature of the harm caused to the victim, the history of the applicant since the incident, and any other evidence or circumstances indicating that the applicant will not present a danger if the appeal is granted. In the case of rejection due to an adjudication of guilt for an offense listed in F.S. 1012.315, the only basis for appeal to the Committee shall be mistaken identity. The decision of the Committee is final.

**Responsibility**

Principals and administrators are responsible for coordination and supervision of volunteers.

Principals and administrators are responsible for identifying appropriate tasks for volunteers.

The Office of Strategic Partnerships is responsible for coordinating the background checks on volunteers.

The Superintendent shall issue directives concerning school volunteers included but not limited to more stringent guidelines for background screening as deemed necessary.

F.S. 110.504, 440.02, 768.28, 943.04351, 1001.41, 1001.42, 1001.43, 1012.01  
F.A.C. 6A-1.070 and 6A-1.0502

Adopted 12/9/09; Revised 6/29/10, 12/7/10, 05/19/15