

SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS POLICY

The Jackson Public School District (JPSD) seeks volunteers who positively contribute to the intellectual, physical, and/or emotional development of scholars and the general welfare of the schools. The Jackson Public School District does not discriminate based on race, color, sex, religion, national origin, gender identity, sexual orientation or, disability status, or genetic information in its recruitment, screening, selection, or placement of volunteers

To ensure the safety of the District’s scholars and staff, individuals desiring to serve as school volunteers must adhere to the provisions contained in this policy. This shall include volunteer services occurring during/after school hours including school-sponsored- activities.

For purposes of this policy, a “volunteer” is a person who renders aid, performs a service, or assumes an obligation of his/her own free will and is not paid for services by the District. A volunteer has either direct and/or extended contact with scholars or has one-to-one direct and/or extended contact with scholars.

A “community visitor” is a person who has limited to no direct contact with scholars and must be directly monitored and supervised by school personnel at all times. Community visitors may include but are not limited to guest speakers, annual reading events, Science fair judges, or other scholar competitions, etc. Community visitors are not subject to the volunteer applications or background check provisions of this policy.

A. VOLUNTEER APPLICATION

Prospective volunteers are required to complete a Volunteer Application Form, inclusive of a confidentiality statement. Additionally, prospective volunteers are required to complete a liability waiver and watch a volunteer orientation video. The video will be produced by JPS ITV and the Partners in Education department.

School-Based Volunteers

All school-based prospective volunteers must be screened and approved by the school principal or their designee. Upon the recommendation of the school principal or their designee, the volunteer candidate’s application will be submitted to the Office of Campus Enforcement for processing of the criminal background check. Once the prospective volunteer’s background check is favorable, and the volunteer is approved by the principal or their designee, the office of Partners in Education is to receive a copy of their application, indicating that the individual may serve as a volunteer.

Athletics Volunteers

Athletic-related volunteers must be screened and approved by the Executive Director of Athletics, or his/her designee. Upon the recommendation of the Executive Director of Athletics or their designee, the volunteer candidate’s application will be submitted to the Office of Campus Enforcement for processing of the criminal background check. If the prospective volunteer’s background check is favorable, and o is approved by the principal or their designee, the office of Partners in Education is to receive a copy of their application indicating that the individual may proceed.

B. CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECKS

Individuals refusing to submit to a required background check shall be ineligible to serve as volunteers. Willful falsification or omission of required volunteer information will result in ineligibility to serve as a volunteer. Omission of relevant information on required volunteer applicant documents may result in

ineligibility to serve as a volunteer.

The District reserves the right to conduct additional background checks at any point in the volunteer's period of approved services as warranted.

The process of verifying information provided by an individual that the District is considering as a prospective volunteer shall include but may not be limited to a check of child abuse and neglect registries and federal and state criminal records. Individuals refusing to submit to any criminal background check and/or to supply a fingerprint sample required under this policy shall be ineligible to serve as volunteers. Prospective volunteers shall be required to make full disclosure of any prior charges and/or convictions, including, but not limited to sex offenses, following Miss. Code Ann. § 45-33-32.

Upon completion and submission of the Volunteer Application Form, to the principal or designee, criminal background checks/fingerprinting shall be conducted on prospective volunteers.

Background check information received by the District under following this policy shall be confidential and used solely for assessing the suitability of the prospective individual for volunteer services.

All fees associated with the criminal background check shall be paid by the volunteer before processing.

The Office of Campus Enforcement will forward the results of the background check to notify both the presenting school and the Athletic Department. The presenting school will notify the volunteers of the results of the background checks.

Volunteers are never to be left alone with a scholar and are always to be in view of and in close proximity to school personnel/administration.

C. APPROVAL

Individuals approved to serve as volunteers shall be under the direction of the Principal or program administrator and shall be bound by the standards of conduct applicable to District employees. Approved volunteers who violate this policy or guidelines established by the Superintendent or designee may be removed from their volunteer services and/or prohibited from volunteering within the District.

1. Permission must be obtained from the principal (or designee) to tutor and mentor scholars and/or to host volunteer-sponsored events/activities that take place at school during school hours.
2. Permission must be obtained from the principal, appropriate supervisor, or the Office of Partners in Education and from the parent/guardian for volunteers to work with scholars in District-sponsored tutoring and mentoring programs and/or to host District-sanctioned events/activities that take place either away from school grounds or during non-school hours.

District-sanctioned events/activities, group tutoring, and group mentoring that takes place at a school location or an off-site location must be under the supervision of at least two (2) adults (school personnel or volunteers) approved by the principal, or the appropriate supervisor.

D. GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. All volunteers must be a minimum of 18 years of age.
2. All volunteers must sign in and out at their school/site location, present appropriate identification

when requested, and wear identification badges when providing their volunteer service.

3. The school principal or administrator must maintain a daily roster of all individuals who enter and leave the school or administrative offices to perform volunteer activity.
4. JPSD (e.g., principals, supervisors, or appropriate district administration) reserves the right to terminate volunteers whose service does not support the goals of volunteerism and reserves the right to refuse the service of volunteers whose service does not support the goals of volunteerism.
5. Volunteers shall maintain professional wholesome relationships with scholars at all times. Volunteers may not use their authority to take advantage of a scholar in any way. All scholar discipline is the responsibility of the principal and designated staff and shall be implemented following the following applicable District policy, regulations, and/or guidelines.
6. Volunteers will only communicate with a scholar outside of school with the explicit permission of the school and the scholar's parent/guardian. Volunteers shall not communicate with a scholar by any means (e.g. letter, telephone, text, email, Internet) for reasons that are not directly related to the scholar's education and that would be deemed unethical, illegal, or immoral. The principal, supervisor, or appropriate District staff has the right to restrict the types of communication between volunteers and scholars.
7. All volunteers are responsible for their actions and are not agents of JPSD. In the event of legal action taken against a volunteer for actions associated with his/her activities as a volunteer, the Board may, in its sole discretion, furnish legal assistance or representation. JPSD has no legal duty whatsoever to defend or indemnify any volunteer for their actions, nor shall these rules and regulations create any expectation of defense or indemnification on the part of any volunteer.

E. RESPONSIBILITY

1. Principals and administrators are responsible for coordinating and supervision of volunteers.
2. Principals and administrators are responsible for identifying appropriate tasks for volunteers.
3. Volunteers are responsible for complying with the requirements of this policy and its administrative rules and regulations and for performing their designated school-related tasks.

LEGAL REF.: 42 U.S.C §5119a (1998)

Miss. Code Ann. § 45-33-32

DATE: June 21, 2004

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May 19, 2021

December 6, 2022

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