

## **VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK**

### **Definition**

A volunteer is defined as an individual performing services for the School District who does not receive compensation for his/her services. Individuals who volunteer to perform services for the school district are not employees for purposes of compliance with minimum wage and overtime provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). The administration of the school and the instructional program are the responsibility of the school employees and cannot be delegated. All volunteers are expected to familiarize themselves and comply with district policies, regulations and rules.

Volunteers are an important part of our educational team. The Oneonta City School District values and appreciates the time, energy and commitment given to help make our school district stronger.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of the volunteer program will be as follows:

- Supplement the work of the classroom teachers working directly with students in a curricular, co-curricular or extra-curricular capacity, under their supervision, and with the approval of school administration.
- Provide individual attention for students through tutoring, coaching, and/or small group projects under the direction of school staff.
- Provide enrichment experiences to supplement the educational program.
- Provide assistance for the school staff in non-academic areas where student contact may or may not exist.
- Meet special school needs.
- Promote better school-community relations by enhancing community involvement and understanding and positive participation.
- Develop improved public relations for local, state, and national educational endeavors.

### **Approval Process for School Volunteers**

- An application shall be completed by each prospective volunteer. The building principal or administrator will forward his/her decision concerning selection and placement of volunteer to the superintendent for evaluation. If approved, the volunteer request will be forwarded to the Board of Education for final approval. The superintendent and/or Board of Education retain the right to approve or reject any volunteer applications submitted for consideration.
- All regularly scheduled volunteers will, at minimum, complete an application, provide authorization for a reference check, and shall be screened and interviewed by the building principal. Occasional volunteers shall be screened by the building principal in a manner of his/her choosing.
- The District reserves the right to request fingerprinting check of volunteer as deemed appropriate.
- The need for volunteers will be determined by the building principal in cooperation with the faculty and other personnel as may be appropriate. The district's decision on whether to approve the volunteer candidate shall be based on the best interests of the school.
- The district may request a written plan regarding the proposed volunteer program.

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- Volunteers work under the direction of the administration and school staff. School personnel who are responsible for tasks or projects that involve the use of volunteers shall identify appropriate tasks and time schedules for such volunteer activities, as well as make provisions for adequate supervision and evaluation.
- It is the staff member's responsibility to give the volunteer a clear understanding of the duties, procedures and expectations and any other knowledge needed for performance in a school setting.
- Each building administrator shall be responsible for maintaining a current and complete list of all active volunteers and their assignments, completing building use permits as needed.
- If the volunteer activity takes place outside of the regular school day, the volunteer must obtain an approved building use permit and have someone present with AED/First Aid certification at all times, per district policy.
- Volunteers will be requested to sign and comply with the District's Acceptable Computer Use Policy as appropriate.

#### **Code of Ethics & Confidentiality**

There are certain rules all of us must follow when working in the school, in addition to Policy B.9-Code of Ethics:

- Do not discuss individual children outside the school.
- Do not compare children within the school.
- Never publicly discuss parents, children, teachers or other volunteers.
- Volunteers will be restricted from access to confidential information in student and employee files. Regular volunteers will be responsible for maintaining confidentiality regarding information seen or heard while working as a volunteer.
- Be responsible for your scheduled times, if applicable, and notify the school staff if you are unable to meet the commitment.
- Respect the authority of the school and school administration.
- Be impartial in all school situations.
- Do not let your personal feelings enter into your service as a volunteer.
- Dress appropriately, always remembering that you are setting an example for the students. Volunteers should plan to dress comfortably and appropriately when spending time with the students in a school or during school-related activities. Clothing that advertises alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs, violence or sexual acts should never be worn when working with children, while volunteering in the district.
- Child abuse/neglect – Volunteers should report to school staff if they know or suspect a child has been abused or neglected. The school administration, child's teacher, guidance staff, or school nurse should be sought out under these circumstances.

#### **Sign In**

All visitors to the schools, including volunteers, are required to report to the office each time they visit during the normal school hours. Volunteers must wear appropriate identification to insure immediate recognition as persons whose specific purpose is helping students and staff. If a volunteer is seen in the building without appropriate identification, that volunteer will be asked to go immediately to the building office and check in.

**What Volunteers CANNOT Do**

Administer discipline	Volunteers may not be assigned the responsibility of disciplining students but may assist the staff member in maintaining proper behavior of students and report behavioral problems to the teacher or administrator for appropriate action.
Interrogate students or investigate problems	Please report any problems to a staff member or building administrator.
Administer medications, including over the counter drugs	Please refer any matter to the school nurse or building principal's office.
Transport children	Volunteers may not transport students.
Be the only responsible, approved adult present with children.	For safety and security purposes, all volunteers will be required to have another responsible, approved adult present at all times while working with students.

**Insurance**

School volunteers are covered by the school's liability insurance policy while they are serving as an approved volunteer. Personal items that are lost, stolen or damaged are not covered under any school insurance. Volunteers are advised to leave valuables at home.

**Nondiscrimination**

It is the policy of the Oneonta City School District that no person may be denied the benefits of, or be discriminated against in any curricular, extra-curricular, pupil services, recreational, or other program or activity because of the persons age, sex, race, religion, national origin, ancestry, creed, pregnancy, marital or parental status, sexual orientation, or physical, emotional, or learning disability or handicap.

**Injuries and Accidents**

- Injuries to the volunteer or others must be reported immediately to the school office. If an injured child cannot be taken to the office, send someone for help immediately. Injured children should be watched closely.
- Volunteers should not be involved in the clean up of bodily fluids. In the case of a life-threatening situation, volunteers should first attempt to alert school personnel. If it is necessary to take immediate action, they should exercise all reasonable precautionary measures. School personnel should be notified as soon as possible.

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