

VOLUNTEER POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Purpose: This document provides guidelines for the management of volunteer programs within the Windham School Department. The intent of this policy and procedures is to increase the capacity of volunteer programs to improve our school community, while respecting the unique needs of each school and safeguarding the children and families which we serve.

Volunteer Definitions

- Category A: Classroom volunteers or volunteers who are or may be in regular close contact with students and who may at times be unsupervised, such as mentors, tutors, athletic or extra curricular activities, or those who work with individual or small groups of students.
- Category B: Volunteers who have more limited or no contact with students, such as those in administrative or clerical roles, library aides, general classroom volunteers, or those who are supervised by teachers or staff.
- Category C: Volunteers who work on single events or for one day, such as chaperones, classroom presenters, or those who volunteer for special projects.

Application and Registration of Volunteers

Categories A & B

All such volunteers shall complete and sign a Windham School Department volunteer application form. The application process shall require a meeting with a school staff member.

Category C

Volunteers may register the same day as the service is performed, but prior to their participation, they provide valid identification which will include: providing their full name, date of birth, complete address, telephone number, and driver's license. The school may also keep a file of Category C volunteers so such volunteers are not required to provide a complete registration for each separate volunteer assignment.

Selection of Volunteers

All volunteers shall be selected on the basis of their ability to bring something of value to the school community. Every volunteer can offer some skill or ability. Access to the program should be assured to individuals from diverse backgrounds, as represented in the larger community outside the school.

Once all application information as outlined above is complete, decisions made regarding selection and placement of a volunteer shall be made at the sole discretion of an administrator. Information gathered regarding the volunteer applicant shall be shared **only** with those individuals responsible for decision making regarding the volunteer's approval and placement and shall be treated as highly confidential.

Appointment of Volunteers

An Administrator or his/her designee will work with the teachers and staff to orient the volunteer to the school’s practices and the appropriate personnel, and to provide a general orientation to the school. An Administrator will provide a written outline of the general requirements of the role of volunteers, as well as information pertinent to the specific school or program needs.

Training

Each school may provide such training as is deemed appropriate for the volunteer to perform the tasks assigned to him/her. In addition, the school will provide volunteer orientations which will be in written format, and training in related issues as deemed appropriate. Information such as:

- School Mission
- Orientation and training opportunities
- Programs unique to the school
- Profile of student population
- Volunteer application & selection process
- Review of volunteer opportunities

Included in the training will be an opportunity for the volunteer to become familiar with the schools’ Crisis Plan. Training and/or information provided to the volunteer shall include an outline of the “chain of command” within the school. The volunteer shall be provided with clear information about where to go with questions and concerns about their involvement in the school.

Confidentiality

Each school shall be responsible for assuring that all volunteers are provided appropriate information and training about confidentiality.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) was designed to afford parents and students privacy and other rights with respect to educational records. All information about a student, and/or the student’s family, shall be considered confidential and shall not be disclosed to anyone other than the authorized school department employees.

It is vital that volunteers understand that nothing that happens to or about a student should be repeated to anyone other than the authorized school department employees. Any questions that volunteers are asked about a student should be directed to the teacher or school administrator. Volunteers should be made familiar with the school department employee they should speak to if they have questions or concerns they wish to talk about.

Placement of Volunteers

Every effort will be made for volunteers to be placed in their chosen area/classroom of interest. Each school shall reserve the right at its sole discretion to remove a volunteer from service or to reassign any volunteer if it is determined that such action would be in the best interest of the school. This final decision will be made by an administrator.

First Reading _____ August 11, 2004 _____

Adopted _____ August 18, 2004 _____