

Warrior Run School District Volunteer Handbook

Guidelines and expectations for serving as a volunteer

Revised 9/16/15



Purpose of School Volunteers

The Board 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 requirement and administrative procedures.

Definition of a School Volunteer

Volunteer – any individual who voluntarily provides services to the school district in connection with school district activities, including but not limited to an individual who does any of the following: (1) works under the general direction and supervision of a coach, teacher or administrator employed by the district; (2) chaperones an overnight field trip; (3) directly supervises or instructs students engaged in an activity or may, from time to time, be reasonably expected to have direct contact with students; (4) serves on the coaching staff of an athletic team; or (5) is responsible for a student’s welfare.

Authority of School Volunteers

Direct contact with students-the care, supervision, guidance or control of students, or routine interaction with students.

You Are Part of an Education Team

Volunteers who are committed to helping students be successful are important members of the school team. These individuals are essential to bringing the outside world to the school. Students need contact with individuals who can share experiences and bring other perspectives into the classroom. They need adults who can guide them through the learning process.

Goals:

- Enrich the curriculum
- Enrich students learning opportunities
- Provide help for individual students
- Provide opportunities for meaningful service
- Establish a school and community partnership for quality education
- Enhance all aspects of the educational process

Working closely with the classroom teacher and school staff includes:

- Following the direction of a school staff member
- Accepting direction and suggestions from teachers
- Respecting the privacy of teachers and students by not discussing school matters away from the classroom
- Understanding that evaluation of a student’s learning can only be done by the teacher
- Committing to working in a classroom to support and improve education for all students
- Seeking help from the teacher when you need additional information or instruction

- Referring to the classroom teacher or regular school staff member for final solution of any student problem which arises, whether of an instructional, medical or operational nature

Enjoy working with students by:

- Finding ways to establish a good rapport with students
- Providing help and assistance without doing the work for students
- Showing a genuine interest in each student
- Accepting each student and encouraging the best from him or her
- Using patience and kindness

Volunteer Expectations

Volunteers are expected to:

- Sign in and wear a visitor badge on school grounds at all time
- Wear professional attire
- Show respect for all staff and students
- Share concerns regarding students with the school staff only

Please do not bring younger children to the school during your volunteer hours. You will also be asked to turn off your cell phone while you are volunteering in the classroom and are discouraged from making personal calls while on the school campus.

Ground Rules for School District Facilities

- No smoking or tobacco allowed, including on athletic fields and in district vehicles
- No weapons allowed
- No drugs or alcohol allowed
- Do not use school equipment for personal purposes

Maintain Student Confidentiality

Volunteers are expected and required to keep all student information that they obtain while working as a volunteer for the district confidential. In fact, federal law strictly prohibits school districts and district volunteers from releasing any student information without parent/guardian permission.

Student information includes all academic, medical and personal information. Volunteers cannot take photos of students during their volunteer activities and post them publicly without authorization from the school. Student work, like artwork or papers, is also protected by law and cannot be shared publicly without written permission. Disclosure of student information by a volunteer is a violation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) and

may subject the volunteer and the district to civil liability. It is very important that you keep information about students confidential. It is important that you do not discuss students or their progress with others –even their parents. Do not make references to students’ abilities in front of other students. The only person who should be told about a students work is their teacher. If parents ask about their students’ progress, suggest in a friendly way that they contact the teacher.

Harassment

The Board strives to provide a safe, positive learning climate for students in the schools. Therefore, it shall be the policy of the district to maintain an educational environment in which harassment in any form is not tolerated.

The Warrior Run School District Harassment Policy calls for a commitment to an educational environment that is free from all types of discrimination and harassment, including sexual harassment, bullying and intimidation. Volunteers are expected and required to respect and uphold the Warrior Run School District Harassment Policy. The district asks you to review this policy in detail prior to volunteering. Policies can be located under “District” on the district website. Please refer to Policy #248 – Unlawful Harassment.

What Are the Differences between a Volunteer and a Visitor?

A volunteer is any individual that has direct contact with children and has the possibility of care, supervision, guidance AND routine interaction with children. Routine interaction is defined as regular, repeated and continual contact that is integral to a person’s employment or volunteer responsibilities. A visitor is any individual that has limited contact with children and does not have routine interaction with children.

Examples of Volunteers:

- Chaperoning repeated school activities
- Helping with plays or musicals
- Assisting students at the school on a regular basis (assisting in classrooms, etc.)
- Chaperoning a field trip

Examples of Visitors:

- Joining a student for lunch or special holiday meal
- Reading to a class during Read Across America Day
- Serving as a guest speaker to a class or presenting at a school assembly
- Attending activities at the school during the school day to watch students
- Chaperoning a dance

Important Guidelines

Safe Interaction with Students

The school board expects that all staff and volunteers will strive to set the kind of example for students that will serve them well in their own conduct and behavior and contribute toward a school atmosphere that is friendly but has a degree of formality.

General Guidelines for Safe Interaction with Students:

All interactions with students should be professional and focused on teaching and learning. These guidelines protect both the student and the volunteer.

Do Not:

- Take a student or students on private outings
- Initiate social activities with students
- Have a prolonged verbal exchange with students if you have an impromptu encounter at a public place
- Engage in Social Networking with students via Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Vine or Twitter or any other social networking website to initiate or maintain relationship(s) with any student that is not consistent with appropriate professional behavior and/or boundaries

Communication

Do not say or write things to a student that you would be uncomfortable sharing with the student's parents, district/school administrators or the teacher you are working with.

Do Not:

- Make any comments that are based on gender or could be construed as sexist
- Make any comments and/or innuendos that are sexual in nature or could be construed as sexual
- Make jokes that belittle or diminish another person
- Give students compliments that focus on physical attributes
- Initiate conversations or correspondence of a private and/or personal nature with students

Working Alone with Students at School

- Always keep the door open and lights on
- Do not post anything on class windows that would obstruct a clear view into the room

Physical Contact with Students

It is the District's expectation that all physical contact between volunteers and students must be professional and appropriate.

Field Trips and Off-Campus Activities

There will be times when classes will be taking field trips to support academic topics. All chaperones must be board approved volunteers. Selection will be solely the responsibility of the classroom teacher and in consultation with the building principal. Please refer to the Field Trip Policy in the Warrior Run Elementary Handbook for more information.

Extracurricular and Enrichment Activities

Schools often provide before and after-school programs. All extracurricular and enrichment activities must be organized under the authority of Warrior Run School District or its parent teacher support organizations and comply with all applicable rules and regulations.

Report Suspected Abuse or Neglect

As a volunteer and mandated reporter, you are in a unique position to observe students. If you suspect that a student may be the victim of abuse or neglect, report it immediately to the principal, school counselor or another school district employee.

Nondiscrimination Notification

The Board declares it to be the policy of this district to provide an equal opportunity for all students to achieve their maximum potential through the programs offered in the schools regardless of race, color, age, creed, religion, gender, sexual orientation, ancestry, marital status, national origin or handicap/disability.

The district shall provide to all students, without discrimination, course offerings, counseling, assistance, employment, athletics and extracurricular activities. The district shall make reasonable accommodations for identified physical and mental impairments that constitute disabilities, consistent with the requirements of federal and state laws and regulations.



How Do I Become a Warrior Run Volunteer?

Volunteers are parents or community members who voluntarily offer a service to the District without compensation. The following steps must be completed prior to starting actual volunteer services:

- 1) You will need to obtain your clearances which include the Pennsylvania State Police Criminal Records Check, the Child Abuse History Clearance and completing an affidavit or the Federal Criminal History Background Check.
- 2) You will need to complete the Act 126 Mandated Reporter Training and submit proof of completion prior to volunteering. The training may be accessed thru a free website: <https://www.reportabusepa.pitt.edu>. Once the website is accessed, please register, print your certificate upon completion, and present certificate to the principal.
- 3) Original copies of clearances must be presented to the principal. Copies will be signed and dated, then forwarded to the District Business Office.
- 4) Your name will then be placed on the School Board agenda for approval.

Clearances

As a volunteer state law requires clearances every three years. You will need to pay for the clearances, but at this point in time, the PA Child Abuse History Clearance and the PA State Police Criminal Record Check are provided at no charge to volunteers.

PENNSYLVANIA CHILD ABUSE HISTORY CLEARANCE INSTRUCTIONS

<https://www.compass.state.pa.us/CWIS>

Directions:

- a. After Clicking on the link above, Click "Create New Account" (Unless you already created an account for recent clearances).
- b. Read the Welcome and then Click "Next".
- c. Create your own "Keystone ID" and answer the questions on the page including the security question (use an email account you can access because they will send you a temporary password that you will need to complete the process).
- d. Check your email for the temporary password they will send to you.
- e. Go back to the main page using the link above (compass.state) and this time click "Log in".
- f. Then Click on "Access My Clearances".
- g. Read the information and then click on "Continue".
- h. Type in your username and the temporary password that was emailed to you.
- i. Then it will ask you to create a new password and click "Continue".
- j. Select "Volunteer" as the reason from the drop down list of choices and then fill in the remaining information requested on the screen. It is a secure site so you can enter your social security number.
- k. You can select to have a paper copy mailed to you but you will get an electronic version that you can print off so it is your choice.
- l. You will need to list every permanent address you have lived at since 1975. If you do not remember all the specifics such as zip, or street address just fill in as much as you can. If parents/grandparents are deceased you do not need to put an age in for them.
- m. You will need to list everyone you have ever lived with this includes your parent(s), spouse, ex-spouses, etc. You will need to select how they are/were related to you.
- n. You then need to click to verify that what you are submitting is correct.
- o. After submitting, usually within a few minutes, your results should appear right under the account number in a green box that will say "To view the result, click here".
- p. The pdf of the certificate should show up, print out a copy then at the top of the page click "Log Out".

1. PENNSYLVANIA STATE POLICE CRIMINAL RECORD CHECK INSTRUCTIONS

<https://epatch.state.pa.us/Home.jsp>

Directions:

- a. Click on the link above.
- b. Click in the middle right of the page on "Submit a New Record Check".
- c. Read the information and click "accept".
- d. Fill in the information requested. For Reason, Scroll down to "School District".
- e. Verify your information and click "Proceed".
- f. After submitting, usually within a few minutes, your results should appear, click on view results and print out a copy.

2. FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION (FBI) CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK

Please note - If you have lived in the state of PA for the past 10 years, you do not need to complete this step. A volunteer affidavit is available in the school office in lieu of this step.

www.pa.cogentid.com

Directions:

- a. Click on the link above.
- b. On the next screen click on the "PA Department of Education" Logo
- c. In the right hand column, click on "Register Online".
- d. Read and check the box then click "Continue".
- e. Fill in the requested information. For Reason select "School District", fill in remaining information then click "Next".
- f. Verify your information and click "Next".
- g. Fill in your credit card information to pay the \$27.00 Fee and click "Pay".
- h. Click "Print" to print the confirmation page. You will need to take this page with you when you have your fingerprinting done.
- i. You have 90 days to have your fingerprinting done. Please call the fingerprinting center to verify their hours (ask for the fingerprinting hours, they don't do fingerprints the entire time they are open).
- j. Once fingerprinted, you will receive your clearance in the mail.

Volunteer Affidavit

(Submitted in lieu of fingerprint-based FBI Clearance pursuant to 23 Pa.C.S.A. §6344.2(b.1))

Please note - you will be asked to sign this Affidavit in the presence of an office employee

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Volunteer Position(s) Applied for: _____

I, _____ (Name) hereby attest that all information provided below is correct and current. I understand that if this any false statements can and will be punishable by law.

1. I hereby attest and understand that the volunteer position for which I am applying is an unpaid position.
2. I hereby attest that I have been a resident of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania during the entirety of the previous ten-year period, i.e. from _____ [date ten years prior to current date], to the current date of this application.
3. I hereby swear and affirm that I have not been convicted of any of the following offenses under Title 18 (relating to crimes and offenses), or any offense similar in nature to the crimes listed below, under the laws or former laws of the United States or one of its territories or possessions, another state, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico or a foreign nation, or under a former law of this Commonwealth.
 - Chapter 25 (relating to criminal homicide).
 - Section 2702 (relating to aggravated assault).
 - Section 2709.1 (relating to stalking).
 - Section 2901 (relating to kidnapping).
 - Section 2902 (relating to unlawful restraint).
 - Section 3121 (relating to rape).
 - Section 3122.1 (relating to statutory sexual assault).
 - Section 3123 (relating to involuntary deviate sexual intercourse).
 - Section 3124.1 (relating to sexual assault).
 - Section 3125 (relating to aggravated indecent assault).
 - Section 3126 (relating to indecent assault).
 - Section 3127 (relating to indecent exposure).
 - Section 4302 (relating to incest).
 - Section 4303 (relating to concealing death of child).
 - Section 4304 (relating to endangering welfare of children).
 - Section 4305 (relating to dealing in infant children).
 - A felony offense under section 5902(b) (relating to prostitution and related offenses).
 - Section 5903(c) or (d) (relating to obscene and other sexual materials and performances).
 - Section 6301 (relating to corruption of minors).
 - Section 6312 (relating to sexual abuse of children).The attempt, solicitation or conspiracy to commit any of the offenses set forth in this list.
A felony offense under the act of April 14, 1972 (P.L. 233, No. 64) known as The Controlled Substance, Drug, Device and Cosmetic Act, committed within the five-year period immediately preceding verification under this section.

I hereby verify and affirm that I understand that a conviction for any of the offenses outlined above or any similar offense under federal or other state law or former law disqualifies me from approval for service as an unpaid volunteer. I further understand and agree that I have an obligation to submit written notice to the Superintendent or other designated administrator disclosing any future arrest or conviction for any such offenses, and/or any notification that I have been listed as a perpetrator in a founded or indicated report, within 72 hours, of the occurrence of such arrest, conviction, or notification of listing as a perpetrator.

I hereby verify that all statements in the within Affidavit are true and correct to the best of my knowledge, information and belief. I understand that my statements are made subject to the penalties of 18 Pa. C.S. § 4904 relating to unsworn falsification to authorities, which provides that if I knowingly make false averments, can and will subject me to criminal penalties.

Signed By: _____ Date: _____

Attest/Witness: _____ Date: _____