

1212 VOLUNTEER POLICY

The Board of Education recognizes the importance of school volunteers at all levels of schooling. Volunteers can enhance collaboration between the school and community, broaden the school's educational environment and ultimately enrich students' school experience. The Board encourages a volunteer program in the District and in its schools with suitable regulations and safeguards.

Volunteers must work under the supervision of Simsbury Public Schools staff. Volunteers may assist with tasks, including: chaperoning field trips, coaching, clerical support, mentoring and other appropriate assignments.

Volunteers are held to the same standards of conduct as school staff and must observe all Board of Education policies. This includes, but is not limited to: use of appropriate language, maintaining confidentiality, wearing appropriate attire, and exercising good judgment.

Volunteers may be required to submit to state and federal criminal record checks and a record check of the Department of Children and Families (DCF) Child Abuse and Neglect Registry. No person who is a "sex offender" as defined by Public Act 98-111, An Act Concerning the Registration of Sexual Offenders, may volunteer in the Simsbury Public Schools.

Given the legal requirements, no employee of the Simsbury Public Schools shall serve as a volunteer in any capacity, except as may be approved by the Superintendent or his/her delegate based on the specific situation.

Persons interested in volunteering their services should contact the school principal.

Legal Reference:

Connecticut General Statutes § 10-4g

Connecticut General Statutes § 10-235

Connecticut General Statutes § 54-254

Public Act 97-920

Adopted: March 26, 2013
Effective: August 28, 2013

REGULATION OF SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS

I. Sign In Procedure

All school volunteers must report to the school office upon arrival to sign in. All volunteers must report to the office prior to departure to sign out. A sign-in/sign-out log will be maintained in each school office. Volunteers should indicate the purpose of their visit. Additionally, volunteers will be provided with identification badges, which should be displayed during each visit.

II. Screening Procedure

The following procedure has been established for screening volunteers beginning August 28, 2013. For the purpose of this procedure, volunteers are defined as those individuals who volunteer their time to assist in schools for the benefit of the study body with the expressed knowledge, consent and direction of a Simsbury Schools employee.

This procedure will identify those situations in which an individual may be required to submit to state and federal criminal record checks and a record check of the Department of Children and Families (DCF) Child Abuse and Neglect Registry within 10 days of application to volunteer. All results must be received by the Human Resources Office before the volunteer may commence his or her services. No person who is a "sex offender" as defined by Public Act 98-111, An Act Concerning the Registration of Sexual Offenders may volunteer in the Simsbury Public Schools.

Definitions

I. The District has identified two classifications of volunteers: Group I and Group II.

Group I

Volunteers will be classified in Group I when they engage in activities in the presence of a Simsbury Public Schools employee. Background checks will not be required of Group I volunteers. Group I volunteers are those who engage in the activities listed below:

- assisting in a classroom, cafeteria, or library when a staff member is present;
- accompanying a class on a field trip during the school day with a teacher;
- helping in the school office during regular school hours
- assisting in the cafeteria or library during regular school hours
- extra curricular events, i.e., dances, fairs, open house, etc.

Group II

Volunteers will be classified in Group II when they provide services to students when not in the direct presence of a Simsbury Public Schools employee. Group II volunteers will be required to complete a consent form regarding the release of information concerning any prior or pending criminal offenses, and such volunteers will be required to submit to a record check of the Department of Children and Families (DCF) Abuse and Neglect Registry. Group II volunteers are those who engage in the activities listed below:

- accompanying a class on a field trip in which the plans include that students be divided into small groups supervised solely by the volunteer chaperone for any length of time;
- chaperoning an overnight field trip;
- working in direct contact with students without the direct presence of a Simsbury Public Schools employee
- coaching

A list of all approved Group II volunteers will be maintained by the Superintendent or Designee. Only volunteers on the approved list may be utilized by the district.

Upon receipt of DCF Abuse and Neglect Registry results indicating that the volunteer is involved in an abuse or neglect investigation or that the volunteer is listed as a perpetrator of abuse or neglect on the Registry, the Superintendent or his designee will notify the volunteer in writing of the results of the Registry check and will provide an opportunity for the volunteer to respond to the results of the Registry check. If warranted by the results of the Registry check and any additional information provided by the volunteer, the Superintendent or designee shall not allow the individual to volunteer in the Simsbury Public Schools.

When a criminal record check of a volunteer reveals a criminal conviction, whether disclosed or undisclosed on the volunteer's consent form, the Superintendent will make a case-by-case determination as to whether to allow the individual to volunteer in the Simsbury Public Schools. Prior to any such decision by the Superintendent or designee, the Superintendent or designee shall inform the volunteer in writing and shall provide an opportunity for the volunteer to respond. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the falsification or omission of any information on a volunteer consent form, including but not limited to information concerning criminal convictions or pending criminal charges, may be grounds for the Superintendent or designee to prohibit the individual from becoming a volunteer.

II. The District will indemnify and hold harmless volunteers from civil liability in most situations as long as the volunteer is acting within the scope of his or her responsibilities in an activity approved by the Board of Education and is under the direction of a certified staff member. Willful and/or malicious conduct on the part of the volunteer is not covered under Connecticut General Statutes § 10-235.

Legal Reference:

Connecticut General Statutes § 10-4g
Connecticut General Statutes § 10-235
Connecticut General Statutes § 54-254
P.A. 97-290