



# Volunteer Guidelines

Green Bay Area Public School District

Our Mission:

***We educate all students to be college, career and community ready, inspired to succeed in our diverse world.***

**Volunteer Guidelines**

Thank you for your interest in choosing to volunteer with the Green Bay Area Public School District. In addition to Green Bay Area School District Board of Education Policy 353 and Rule 1 of Policy 353 which can be found here: [www.gpaps.org](http://www.gpaps.org) , under Our District, Board of Education, Board Policies, we have developed guiding principles that will assist you as you work with our students and staff. Please feel free to talk to staff you are working with or contact the school's office if you have any question or concerns.

The District recognizes that education requires partnerships and involvement with the community and as such, encourages the participation of volunteers within the educational program of the District's schools. Volunteers play an important part in the total education setting at the Green Bay Public Schools. These guidelines are written for volunteers wishing to devote time to our schools and students, typically in our school settings. Where you have concerns about the applicability of these Guidelines to certain volunteer situations outside of the school setting, please consult with the building principal.

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### **Code of Ethics for Volunteers**

As a volunteer for the Green Bay Area Public School District, I realize that I am subject to a code of ethics similar to that which governs school professionals. Like them, I assume certain responsibilities and expect to account for what I do in terms of what I am asked to do. I will keep confidential student records and information about students, their personal or family life.

I understand that it is my duty to deal justly and considerately with each student, school employee or other volunteer. As a volunteer, I share the responsibility for improving educational opportunities for all.

I accept the fact that all children learn differently and at different rates. It is my duty to not discriminate or permit discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, religion or serious medical condition against any person while I am volunteering for the District.

### **Volunteer Principles**

1. Confidentiality: All information concerning students is strictly confidential and should not be shared with others. All volunteers must adhere to the requirements of federal and state law regarding student and pupil records confidentiality as noted below.
  - Take a student's comments with a "grain of salt." It is not appropriate or permissible to repeat stories and personal information that students share with you.
  - Refrain from discussing children you work with or observe outside of school or with staff members who do not work with the student.
  - If a student shares information with you that may affect his or her safety, you must share the information with the teacher and administration.
2. Volunteers will function under the direction and guidance of certified professional staff and in most cases need to be in the vicinity of a teacher when working with a child.
  - The staff member that you are working with will provide the assignment to you.
  - Only the teacher or administrator should handle student discipline issues. Please bring any discipline problems to the attention of the teacher. It is inappropriate for volunteers to discipline children verbally or any other way.
  - Please avoid interrupting teachers while they are teaching. Questions and concerns can be addressed following instructional time.
  - Ask other volunteers or teachers for help when you need it.

3. Facilities:
  - Please park in the designated lot(s) or spaces for visitors.
  - Please sign in and out in the school's office when you are volunteering. Please wear identification badges provided by the school while participating in volunteer activities.
  - Feel free to use the staff bathrooms while you are volunteering.
  - Where lounge facilities exist, they are there for you to use including microwave, coffee, refrigerator, tables and chairs.
4. The District appreciates your focus on our students when you are volunteering.
  - Please leave non-school aged children at home when volunteering.
  - Remember to turn cell phones off or switch them to vibrate when in the classroom. If you must answer, step outside the classroom for your conversation.
5. Please call the school if you are coming late or will be absent.
6. Attire should be neat, clean and comfortable – appropriate for a public school or volunteer setting.
7. Prohibited conduct:
  - No political or religious preferences may be advocated.
  - A volunteer shall not report to any school building or school event under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs. The use of drugs, alcohol, tobacco and alternative tobacco products is strictly prohibited.
  - The District does not permit the possession or use of destructive devices (including explosives), firearms or other dangerous weapons (as defined by Wis. Stat. §948.61(1)(a) of any kind at any time. "District premises" shall include:
    - Any school or other building/facility that is owned, occupied or controlled by the District;
    - On the grounds of a school or on other school premises; or
    - At any District-sponsored program or activity not held on school grounds or on school premises, where such program or activity qualifies as a special event having restricted access that is controlled by the District.
  - Transporting of students without the permission of parents or guardians or without the expressed permission of the school or district is prohibited.
8. Don't worry about making mistakes. We all make them.
9. Enjoy your experience! The students you are working with look forward to your time with them. You are providing a valuable service to the students and the District.

Concerns regarding a school volunteer's suitability to begin or continue service shall be addressed by the building principal, and as appropriate, in conjunction with the Human Resources Department.

### **Confidentiality of Student and Pupil Records**

Federal and state law requires the District to protect the privacy of student and pupil records. The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA") is the federal law that is designed to protect the privacy of parents and students in educational institutions that receive federal funds. Wisconsin Statute § 118.125 is the state law that requires that all pupil records maintained by a public school be confidential except as provided in the statute.

As a volunteer with the District, you may interact with students and have incidental access to information about a child's school performance and behavior. This information could constitute an educational or pupil record that must be treated confidentially.

Only those individuals who have a “legitimate educational interest” in the educational or pupil record may be provided such information. You may not share information about a student even with others who may be genuinely interested in the student’s welfare, such as a child’s neighbor, scout leader or clergy member. You must refer all such inquiries to the student’s teacher or principal.

Unauthorized disclosure of confidential information by a volunteer who has access to student information by any means may result in the revocation of an individual’s ability to volunteer with the District. It is imperative that any disclosure or use of student information be limited to approved, authorized use. If you believe you have impermissibly disclosed an educational record, notify the principal immediately.

### **FAQ’s Regarding Background Checks**

**1. Must I have a background check prior to volunteering in my child’s school?**

Yes. Criminal background checks will be conducted under the direction of the District’s Human Resources Department prior to the first time a volunteer works with students

A “volunteer” is any person who offers to perform a service or carry out an activity during the school day or during extended-day, school-related programs, including volunteer chaperones on student field trips or other travel trips, without pay or other material compensation that permits the individual to have access to students. A “volunteer” also includes athletic coaches and volunteers for District programs who do not receive compensation or remuneration for their services.

**2. How often is a background check required?**

A background check is good for two school years from the date of processing. You may contact the school office to verify the date of expiration as needed. The District reserves the right to conduct additional checks prior to the two year expiration.

All approved volunteers shall notify Human Resources as soon as possible, but no more than three calendar days after any arrest, indictment, conviction, no contest or guilty plea, or other adjudication of the volunteer for any felony, any offense involving moral turpitude, and any of the other offenses as indicated below:

- A. Crimes involving school property or funds;
- B. Crimes that occur wholly or in part on school property or at a school-sponsored activity;
- C. A misdemeanor which involves moral turpitude [e.g. an act or behavior that gravely violates moral sentiments or accepted moral standards of the community]; or
- D. A misdemeanor which violates the public trust.

The requirement to report a conviction or deferred adjudication shall not apply to minor traffic offenses. However, an offense of operating under the influence, revocation or suspension of license, and driving after revocation or suspension must be reported if the volunteer drives or operates a District vehicle or piece of mobile equipment or transports students in any vehicle. Failure to report under this section may result in revocation of volunteer privileges.

**3. Am I required to pay a fee for the District to run my background check?**

No. The District does not require volunteers to pay costs associated with the background check.

**4. What information must I provide for a background check to be run?**

In order to run a background check, an individual must provide:

- 1. Full legal name and all prior names;
- 2. Date of birth;
- 3. Current and prior addresses; and

4. Social security number.

The databases accessed during the background check process require an individual to be identified by a social security number. Currently, there are no alternative methods for adequately and completely checking a person's background without a social security number.

**5. What information is checked under a background check?**

The following databases are typically checked during a background check process. The District reserves the right to access additional databases under such process.

- Social Security and Address Verification through a national query;
- Wisconsin Criminal History (where applicable, other state databases where the applicant has lived);
- Local law enforcement requests;
- National Sex Offender Registry Program.

**6. How long does the process take?**

Typically, the background check process takes three to four weeks to complete. During peak times such as the start of the school year, additional time may be required. In addition, where an out of state search is required, additional time may be required.

**7. Does the District check my credit information as part of a background check?**

No. The background check does not check your credit history. A separate and distinct authorization would be required to authorize a credit information check. We are only conducting a criminal history background search and in limited circumstances, a traffic record history.

**8. Who sees the background check results?**

All information gathered during the District's background check will be kept confidential. The District's Human Resources Department may need to consult with District Legal Counsel and/or Superintendent of Schools and Learning regarding the results of the background check.

**9. What offenses will prohibit my ability to volunteer for the District?**

Where an offense has been disclosed on the background check application, such revelation will not automatically impact an individual's ability to volunteer for the District. Decisions regarding whether the revelation of a specific offense will negatively impact an individual's ability to serve as a school volunteer are made on a case-by-case basis and in compliance with all applicable state and federal laws and District policies.

However, a failure to disclose pending arrests or prior felony or misdemeanor convictions will be grounds for exclusion as a school volunteer, regardless of the nature of the arrest or conviction. In addition, the making of any false or misleading statement or omission shall be grounds for immediate disqualification as a school volunteer.

**10. What happens if I do not pass the background check?**

If you fail to clear the background check, you will not be able to volunteer for the District. It may be the case that you could be permitted to apply to volunteer at a later date. You will be notified if you fail to clear the background check.

**11. Can I receive a copy of the completed background check?**

Individuals are allowed a free copy of their background report in the event the individual does not clear the background check and is not permitted to volunteer for the District. For individuals who clear the background check, a request for a copy of the check must include a check for \$50.00. Requests can be sent in writing to the Human Resources Department: 200 S Broadway, Green Bay WI 54303

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