

REGULATION MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Related Entries: ABA, ABA-RB, ABC, ABC-RA, CNA, CNA-RA, COA-RB, EIB-RA, GDA-RB, IPD-RA, JHC, JHC-RA

Responsible Offices: Chief Academic Officer
Deputy Superintendent of School Support and Improvement

Volunteers in Schools

I. PURPOSE

To establish procedures to encourage and effectively utilize the services of parent/guardian and community volunteers in Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS)

II. BACKGROUND

The academic achievement and educational experiences of all students are enhanced by a community invested in their learning. Volunteers who become active in the student learning process assist school personnel to meet the needs of students more effectively, provide students with additional role models, and enrich the educational experience of students as well as their own understanding of MCPS.

Volunteers may include parents/guardians and other family members, as well as other members of the community interested in the education of children, who are willing to donate their time and energies to support the students of Montgomery County.

III. PROCEDURES

A. The Office of Student and Family Support and Engagement (OSFSE) supports MCPS schools and offices in their efforts to encourage and effectively utilize the services of parent/guardians and community volunteers.

1. OSFSE publicizes best practices guidelines for schools regarding the use of volunteers and other information of interest to parent/guardian and community volunteers.
2. OSFSE provides technical assistance in volunteer program development.

- B. Decisions regarding the selection, placement, and replacement of volunteers are at the discretion of the principal. Examples of permissible activities for volunteers include, but are not limited to, assisting students as directed by teachers, chaperoning field trips, and supporting school activities and community engagement events.
- C. Local school staff members are responsible for the following:
1. Ensuring there is a positive environment in their buildings where parents/guardians and community members feel welcomed and are treated with respect.
 2. Familiarizing staff with the requirements of this regulation.
 3. Informing parents/guardians of volunteer opportunities and responsibilities at least annually and providing orientation and training as needed.
 4. Provide appropriate supervision.
- D. Volunteers are expected to do the following:
1. Volunteers are to sign in and out of the building using the Visitor Management System (VMS), or as otherwise directed, at the beginning and end of each volunteer activity and wear a volunteer identification name tag at all times. The VMS enables staff to scan a visitor's driver's license or identification card to produce a visitor badge and cross-reference the visitor's information with state and local sex offender registries.
 2. Volunteers may not access confidential student or personnel records, and should otherwise respect the confidentiality of students.
 3. Volunteers working with students must be within view of others (e.g., either through a window in a door, a door left open, or in a public space). In some programs, such as mentoring, volunteers may be required to spend a brief amount of time one-on-one with a student. Volunteers can manage these situations by avoiding physical contact, only going to authorized destinations, and reporting activities or whereabouts to the principal or supervisor.
 4. Volunteers may not discipline students, but should report behavioral problems to the supervising staff member. Volunteers should address any concerns about student or school safety to the principal or other appropriate staff member.

5. Volunteers must comply with all Montgomery County Board of Education policies and MCPS regulations and rules.
6. OSFSE will provide screening language for partnership agreements with organizations or businesses providing volunteers to MCPS. The language will include the requirements that:
 - a) volunteers' identification information is cross-referenced with state and local sex offender registries; and
 - b) volunteers are required to complete background checks and training consistent with this regulation.
7. Any accident or injury involving a volunteer must be reported consistent with MCPS Regulation EIB-RA, *General Liability Insurance*.

E. Training and Background Checks

1. All volunteers who regularly support schools, and school sponsored activities, such as: student teachers and interns; volunteers who regularly help with school dismissal or recess; as well as those who attend field trips, and chaperone outdoor education, must complete the MCPS online Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect volunteer training. All other volunteers are encouraged, but not required, to engage in this important, informative training.
2. Online child abuse and neglect training for volunteers is provided on the MCPS website, in English and the languages most requested by MCPS students and parents/guardians.
 - a) Schools have the option of using the online module as a resource to provide individual or small group training sessions for their volunteers, especially if accommodations for disabilities or language interpretation are needed.
 - b) Parents/guardians will not be barred from participation in their schools due to the need for accommodations.
 - c) If schools provide trainings, the school is responsible for collecting a list of participant names and contact information and providing the list to OSFSE for input into the volunteer training database.

3. Examples of volunteer activities that do not require completion of the MCPS online Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect volunteer training, include:
 - a) Volunteer support at large events:
 - (1) High school/college recruiters and volunteers at job and college fairs
 - (2) Parents/guardians staffing concessions and ticket booths at large events
 - b) Volunteer assistance at one-time events under supervision of school staff members:
 - (1) Guest readers and speakers in classrooms
 - (2) MCPS student volunteers who are helping in schools and who must be supervised at all times by MCPS staff
 - (3) Parents/guardians or other relatives who are observing or supporting a celebration (e.g., a parade) or helping with a class party
 - (a) Parents/guardians who are visiting the school to eat lunch in the cafeteria with their own children are not considered volunteers.
 - c) Other volunteers as designated by MCPS.
4. Beginning with the 2017-2018 school year, volunteers will need to complete the child abuse and neglect training at least once every three years to continue volunteering. If volunteer training was taken in:

2016-2017 renew in 2020-2021
2017-2018 renew in 2020-2021
2018-2019 renew in 2021-2022
5. The following categories of volunteers are required to complete criminal background checks, including fingerprinting -
 - a) Volunteer coaches;

- b) Grade 6 Outdoor Environmental Education Programs (Outdoor Education) overnight chaperones;
 - c) Volunteers on overnight field trips;
 - d) Volunteers on other field trips that extend beyond 7:00 p.m. in the evening (e.g. out of area, out of state), and/or trips that require Office of School Support and Improvement (OSSI) approval, as determined by OSSI;
 - e) Other volunteers as designated by MCPS.
6. Criminal background checks, including fingerprinting, may be obtained at locations identified on the MCPS Child Abuse and Neglect Information website.
- a) Individuals seeking to volunteer are responsible for the cost of the background check.
 - b) On a case-by-case basis, schools may work with volunteers to make alternative arrangements to cover the cost.
 - c) Outdoor Education overnight chaperones will not be required to pay for background checks if completed through MCPS. Outdoor Education chaperones who use other service providers will need to pay a fee.
7. The Office of Human Resources and Development will notify schools if volunteers successfully completed the background check.
8. The Office of Employee Engagement and Labor Relations will conduct a case-by-case analysis and follow-up with the potential volunteer, when the results of a criminal background check contains information regarding any offenses involving distribution of drugs or other controlled substances, as well as the following crimes listed in Section 6-113 of the Education Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland:
- a) A sexual offense in the third or fourth degree under § 3-307 or § 3-308 of the Criminal Law Article of the Maryland Code or an offense under the laws of another state that would constitute an offense under § 3-307 or § 3-308 of the Criminal Law Article if committed in Maryland;

- b) Child sexual abuse under § 3-602 of the Criminal Law Article, or an offense under the laws of another state that would constitute child sexual abuse under § 3-602 of the Criminal Law Article if committed in Maryland; or
 - c) A crime of violence as defined in § 14-101 of the Criminal Law Article, or an offense under the laws of another state that would be a violation of § 14-101 of the Criminal Law Article if committed in Maryland, including: (1) abduction; (2) arson in the first degree; (3) kidnapping; (4) manslaughter, except involuntary manslaughter; (5) mayhem; (6) maiming; (7) murder; (8) rape; (9) robbery; (10) carjacking; (11) armed carjacking; (12) sexual offense in the first degree; (13) sexual offense in the second degree; (14) use of a handgun in the commission of a felony or other crime of violence; (15) child abuse in the first degree; (16) sexual abuse of a minor; (17) an attempt to commit any of the crimes described in items (1) through (16) of this list; (18) continuing course of conduct with a child under § 3-315 of the Criminal Law Article; (19) assault in the first degree; (20) assault with intent to murder; (21) assault with intent to rape; (22) assault with intent to rob; (23) assault with intent to commit a sexual offense in the first degree; and (24) assault with intent to commit a sexual offense in the second degree.
 - d) Any other criminal information that may significantly affect the safety and security of MCPS students.
- 9. MCPS will maintain confidentiality and not share details regarding a potential volunteer's criminal background check with school-based staff members.
 - 10. Potential volunteers will receive notification from the reporting agency by mail of the background check results.

F. Exemptions from Criminal Background Checks

The following individuals do not need to complete the criminal background checks, but do need to complete the MCPS online Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect volunteer training:

- 1. Active federal, state, and local law enforcement personnel who have completed a criminal background check as a requirement of employment are exempt from the criminal background check. However, they are

required to provide a copy of their official law enforcement agency issued identification to verify exemption.

2. Montgomery County Government (MCG) employees, (such as nurses and health room technicians), who undergo a criminal background check, including fingerprinting, at the time of hire, are exempt from the criminal background check. They must have their MCG-issued identification badge visible or on their person while in the schools.

Related Source: *Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article, §§6-106, 6-113*

Regulation History: Formerly Regulation No. 301-7, February 16, 1979, revised December 1986; revised April 5, 1994; revised May 5, 1999; revised July 14, 2014; revised August 16, 2017.