



# School District of Pickens County

*Building success beyond the classroom*

## **VOLUNTEER PROGRAM GUIDELINES & PROCEDURES**

The School District of Pickens County supports and encourages volunteerism in our schools. Volunteers work in cooperation with schools to help in meeting the needs of children and the school staff. Volunteers also represent the community in fulfilling its responsibility to the schools beyond merely providing tax support.

We encourage volunteerism in our schools for the following reasons:

1. As volunteers, parents or other adults in the community provide students with enriched or additional learning experiences through their special skills and interests.
2. Volunteers, in many instances, relieve teachers of certain routine duties, freeing them to devote more time to their professional duties.
3. Volunteers serve the district's need for community input in planning efforts by serving on committees, councils, and study groups. These efforts also build a support base for the needs of schools in the community.
4. Use of volunteers can increase the educational program's flexibility as well as provide opportunities for personal attention and assistance to individual students.

### ■ **Definitions**

1. A "volunteer" is a person or group who has been approved by completing the district's volunteer process and then provides goods and services of his/her own free will to the School District of Pickens County. A volunteer receives no financial payment for such goods and services.
2. A "volunteer hour" is one for which the school or school district pays no monetary remuneration. A volunteer may serve in any manner approved by the school.
3. A "volunteer coordinator" recruits, trains, and organizes volunteers for the school. To provide the best training and consistency in duties and responsibilities, each school should have two volunteer coordinators, each serving alternating two-year terms. These coordinators should be volunteers, not paid staff. Volunteer coordinators are often officers or committee members of the school's PTO/PTA.
4. A "volunteer liaison" is a paid staff member who serves as supervisor for the volunteer coordinator in an individual school and is the school contact for SDPC Communication Services staff. The liaison works closely with the volunteer coordinator to develop an understanding of district and school volunteer policies, procedures and guidelines.

**Communication Services**

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## ■ **Goals**

1. Strengthen the involvement of parents in the education of their children.
2. Increase participation of business and industry in our schools.
3. Broaden community involvement in our schools.
4. Establish awards and recognition for individuals, businesses and organizations that contribute to effective partnerships.
5. Establish mutually beneficial partnerships with business and industry, institutions of higher learning, and community organizations.

## ■ **Considerations**

1. All volunteers should be under the direct supervision of certified personnel, except in the case of office help; administrative assistants may supervise those volunteers.
2. Volunteers who chaperone students on field trips as well as those who escort or supervise students at any time without a district employee present must undergo a background check performed by SDPC through the RAPTOR system. The chaperone will be required to pay for his/her background check.
3. Volunteers should never have access to student records. Volunteers may request to view their own children's records under the **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974** through the school's counselor.
4. Volunteers who tutor a specific child must always respect the child's privacy.
5. Volunteers are helpers only. The direction or discipline of students, particularly in the classroom or teaching area, is the teacher's responsibility and cannot be turned over to the volunteer. A volunteer supports the teacher's instructional objectives.
6. In addition to volunteering at school during school hours, volunteers also may serve the school and students away from the school building at other times. Examples would include callers for phone lists, construction of school materials at home, emailing pen pals as tutor or mentor for a class or student, chaperones for after-school activities.

## ■ **Recruitment**

Principals, volunteer liaisons, school staff and parents will recruit and sponsor volunteers to serve the School District of Pickens County students. Volunteers will be recruited from all cultural and socioeconomic areas of the community.

## ■ *Areas of Use*

The capacities in which volunteers may be used are far too numerous to list here. However, the following illustrate some uses made of volunteers in schools:

- Reading stories to students
- Providing exhibits
- Assisting in supervising the loading and unloading of buses
- Arranging and assisting with field trips
- Helping in learning centers, computer labs, libraries, cafeterias, offices, etc.
- Assisting in supervising playgrounds
- Tutoring
- Lecturing on special topics
- Assisting with technology
- Helping set up science experiments
- Contacting groups of parents by telephone
- Organizing parents for special projects
- Mentoring
- Participating in a business and community partnerships
- Acting as hostess for school functions
- Serving on School Improvement Councils, PTO/PTA, booster clubs

Volunteers will supplement and enrich programs and services in the School District of Pickens County but will not substitute for employee activities and functions.

## ■ *Role of the Volunteer Coordinator*

With the assistance and guidance of the School District of Pickens County's Communication Services staff, the volunteer coordinator(s) will organize the volunteer program at his/her school **under the direction of the school principal**.

Responsibilities and/or suggested strategies are as follows:

1. Attend volunteer coordinator training
2. Be familiar with all sections of the training manual
3. Be familiar with and advocate adherence to the School District of Pickens County volunteer procedures
4. Identify program needs
5. Recruit and screen volunteers
6. Provide volunteers with an orientation to the school, training for specific work areas, and school volunteer guidelines
7. Continue recruiting throughout the year
8. Act as a liaison between school staff/volunteers/community partners
9. Monitor volunteer and staff satisfaction continuously
10. Encourage appropriate formal and informal recognition of volunteers
11. Promote good relations between the school and the community

## ■ *Role of the Volunteer Liaison*

The volunteer liaison will serve as supervisor for the volunteer coordinator in an individual school as well as the school contact for SDPC Communication Services staff. The liaison works closely with the volunteer coordinator to develop an understanding of district and school volunteer policies, procedures and guidelines.

Responsibilities and/or suggested strategies are as follows:

1. Be familiar with and advocate adherence to SDPC volunteer procedures
2. Attend volunteer liaison training
3. Be thoroughly familiar with RAPTOR
4. Enter new volunteer information and update volunteer records in RAPTOR
5. Coordinate chaperone approval with teachers no later than two weeks prior to field trip dates
6. Act as a liaison between volunteer coordinator and SDPC Student Services staff

## ■ *Rules & Regulations*

1. Volunteers, including those who serve the school on boards, committees and other planning groups, should record volunteer hours through the school's **RAPTOR** database. Examples include PTO/PTA, booster clubs, SIC and strategic planning committees or other committees.
2. Any volunteer who works in direct contact with a student or students must attend a volunteer orientation.
3. Any volunteer applicant who does not disclose his or her criminal background will not be eligible for service.
4. Any volunteer who falsifies information on his or her application will not be eligible for service.
5. At all times while performing service, a volunteer will be required to wear and clearly display the school-issued volunteer nametag on his/her person.
6. Volunteers will provide an appropriate adult role model, offering support, encouragement and friendship while displaying a positive attitude.
7. If a volunteer applicant is unwilling to agree to the requirements in the **SDPC Volunteer Application** through RAPTOR, the volunteer coordinator or principal will inform the applicant that he/she may not perform volunteer services in the School District of Pickens County.
8. All volunteers who coach for an athletic team are subject to the rules and guidelines for volunteer coaches as presented in the **South Carolina High School League's Constitution** and in the **School District of Pickens County's Athletic Handbook**. In addition, a volunteer coach must meet the conditions for general school volunteers as expressed in numbers one (1) through seven (7) of this section.

## ■ *Application and Approval Process*

1. Any volunteer who will have direct contact with students must do the following:
  - a. Complete a **School District of Pickens County Volunteer Application** through RAPTOR and go through a screening process which will include a check through the National Sex Offenders' Registry.
  - b. Receive **initial volunteer training** from a district school. **Initial volunteer training** will address blood borne pathogens, sexual harassment, and procedures volunteers are to follow at a local school.
2. Volunteers who have had **initial volunteer training** in past years will be required to renew their eligibility by yearly updating their **SDPC Volunteer Application** through RAPTOR. Volunteers will receive information informing them of blood borne pathogens and sexual harassment.
3. Volunteers who **chaperone students on field trips and those who escort or supervise students without a district employee present** must also undergo a background check performed by SDPC Communication Services personnel through the RAPTOR system.
  - All background checks must be processed through the School District of Pickens County. We do not accept background checks run by another agency, school district or individual.
  - Background checks are effective for three school years.
  - The cost of the background check is \$25 and must be paid by the volunteer.
  - Volunteers who need background checks should complete the Level II application online and pay for the background check at the conclusion of the application. Background checks must be requested and paid for two weeks before the date of any field trip.
4. Individuals who volunteer as test monitors only are required to complete a SDPC Volunteer Application through RAPTOR but are not required to attend a volunteer training session.
5. SDPC maintains a letter of agreement with the Good News Club. The agreement covers those volunteers for working only with the Good News Clubs. To chaperone a field trip, the volunteer must complete the online application and attend volunteer training and have a current background check through SDPC.
6. SDPC employees – both certified and hourly employees – who wish to volunteer should be given a copy of the school's volunteer guidelines. Current SDPC employees do not need a background check to qualify as a chaperone.
7. Substitute teachers undergo background checks when they are hired. Immediately after they have renewed their eligibility through annual training, current subs are entered into RAPTOR. Current substitutes do not need a background check to qualify as a chaperone.
8. Individuals who volunteer as field trip bus drivers are not required to have background checks. They are not considered chaperones since they will not be left with children while unsupervised by SDPC staff.

9. SDPC teacher cadets and civic responsibility students should not be in settings without supervision by SDPC employees. Therefore, background checks are not required. If the students are volunteering outside their normal class requirements, they should be supervised at all times and must also undergo volunteer training. They should also record their volunteer activities through RAPTOR.
10. The volunteer coordinator from each school will notify the volunteer liaison when the volunteer has met the training requirements.

## ■ *Orientation and Training*

Each school will thoroughly orient volunteers to the duties they will perform. Volunteers also should be acquainted with the overall operation of the school, including what is expected of all employees. They should be cautioned to discuss school matters outside of school in a responsible manner.

1. At the beginning of each school year, schools are encouraged to have multiple training sessions at various times of the day.
2. Training at local schools should not be held simultaneously with school-sponsored functions. Volunteers should not have to choose between attending a school function or a volunteer training. However, it is appropriate to hold trainings prior to or immediately following a school-sponsored event.
3. The volunteer coordinator or liaison will notify SDPC Student Services staff of training dates. These will be posted on the district website.
4. Each volunteer coordinator will provide all volunteers with a handout of expectations, guidelines, and procedures specific to the school.
5. All volunteers will be orientated on the following:
  - a. Volunteer guidelines, policies, and procedures
  - b. Expectations for creating positive school climate
  - c. Safety and security issues
  - d. Confidentiality: All communications are to be kept strictly confidential. Information about the student may be shared only with the teacher, principal or guidance counselor of the school.
  - e. Transportation
  - f. Dress code
  - g. Sexual harassment
  - h. Bloodborne pathogens
  - i. Sign in/sign out procedures through RAPTOR
6. Volunteers may receive initial training from any Pickens County school. When a volunteer is trained away from the local school, the volunteer coordinator who conducts the training must provide the volunteer's name to the local school volunteer liaison.
7. Middle school and high school volunteer coordinators are encouraged to "take the training" to the first meeting of booster, athletic, and academic support groups in August.

## ■ *Supervision*

1. When volunteering during regular school hours, volunteers must use **RAPTOR** for signing in and signing out.
2. Volunteers who jeopardize the security or safety of a facility or office or those who are inappropriately dressed may be denied access to the school.
3. All volunteers working in schools will be under the direct supervision of an accountable member of the school's staff. Periodic assessments should be made to ensure volunteers are working productively with students. Volunteers are helpers; the planning of student programs, particularly in the instructional area, is the responsibility of the teacher.
4. If a volunteer is injured while on school premises or providing volunteer services, he or she will report this injury to the principal or to the volunteer coordinator or school nurse.
5. The decision to accept or reject a volunteer applicant rests with the principal and the volunteer coordinator.
6. District personnel will determine criteria which will accept or reject an application based on background check. District personnel will notify the volunteer and the principal of the rejection and will provide a process for the volunteer to discuss or dispute the rejection.

## ■ *Relationship between Schools and Volunteers*

1. School staff will be courteous to volunteers and show respect for their contributions. Likewise, volunteers will be expected to extend courtesy and respect to school staff.
2. Any issues that may arise will be referred to the volunteer coordinator or school principal as appropriate.

## ■ *Departure and Dismissal*

Although the School District of Pickens County is not limited to the reasons below, a volunteer can be terminated for the following:

- Breach of confidentiality concerning student or other privileged information
- Unlawful conduct or breach of School District of Pickens County or school site rules and regulations
- Physical or emotional stress which incapacitates the volunteer
- Inability to cooperate and work effectively with site staff and students
- Activities that threaten the order or security of the site or the safety of the volunteer
- Erratic or unreliable attendance or behavior
- Unsatisfactory service
- Sexual misconduct
- Providing falsified information on the application
- Establishing inappropriate relationships with youth served.
- Criminal charges or conviction of a crime

## ■ *Recognition*

Local district schools that have a long-term commitment to volunteer efforts will be given recognition at the end of the school year. Schools must meet certain criteria such as conducting fall volunteer training, providing on-going volunteer training, aligning volunteer activities to the school's strategic plan, providing end-of-year recognition for volunteers and logging at least two volunteer hours for each student enrolled.

## ■ *District's Commitment*

The School District of Pickens County will provide:

- training for volunteer coordinators and liaisons
- broad-based recruitment and publicity for recruiting volunteers
- a method for evaluating the program
- volunteer recognition at the end of each school year
- **RAPTOR** software, initial hardware and supplies, and applicable training
- volunteer website with dates of upcoming orientations and links to helpful volunteer resources
- liability coverage for all approved volunteers
- verification of **National Sex Offenders Registry** checks on volunteers through RAPTOR
- **Background checks for volunteers who chaperone students on field trips and those who escort or supervise students without a district employee present;** the chaperone/volunteer must pay the local school \$25 for this service.