

## BCS SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS-PROCEDURES

The Board of Education recognizes that volunteers are an important asset and make many valuable contributions to schools in the Beaufort County School System, and it encourages schools to develop programs for the effective use of volunteers. Volunteers should be used to supplement the school program and not as substitutes for paid staff members.

Every volunteer is expected to behave in a professional manner in accordance with Board policies, administrative procedures, and school rules. Principals may limit or terminate the services of volunteers as they deem appropriate. Current employees do not have to complete a Volunteer Request form as long as the principal approves their participation in school activities.

\* This policy does not refer to volunteers who serve in coaching or co-curricular sponsor roles at middle schools and high schools. Please contact BCS Human Resources for more information about that process.

**\*\*The volunteer approval process can take up to a week to finalize so last minute plans, changes and/or additions may not receive approval and would not allow those particular individuals to participate in an activity.**

**\*\*Principals must sign the Volunteer Request for Criminal Background Check form to indicate they have approved of the participation of a volunteer prior to submission to HR for final approval. (This will add to the overall approval time for volunteers so I cannot stress enough the need for careful planning.)**

If a volunteer activity takes place with direct supervision under school staff and involves little or no direct student contact or a volunteer activity takes place in a classroom or other group setting and is supervised by school staff, no Volunteer Request for Criminal Background Check Form is necessary for the HR Department.

Examples include:

Volunteer visits classroom to read to students, assist teacher, be a guest speaker, etc. while teacher supervises.  
Volunteer visits a school setting and their interaction is only with their own children in a supervised manner.  
Volunteers assisting with outdoor projects, beautification efforts, field day, school fairs, athletic concessions, and/or PTA fundraisers and activities.  
Volunteers who serve as test proctors and are not left alone with students at any time.  
Volunteers attending field trips but are explicitly instructed not to chaperone/supervise students other than their own and not left alone with groups of students.

When a volunteer activity involves direct contact with students under limited supervision by school staff or a volunteer activity involves unsupervised contact with student(s) on or off campus, those volunteers will need to complete a Volunteer Request for Criminal Background Check Form. This form must be completed and approved before participation in the activity can occur. A new volunteer request form must be completed each school year by each volunteer.

Examples Include:

Volunteer supervises children other than their own on a field trip (day trip or overnight).  
Volunteer tutors a child in an unsupervised area (empty room, hallway, etc).  
Volunteer assists in the front office and interacts with children on a regular basis.  
Volunteer assists with activity/club outside of regular school hours in an unsupervised area (empty room, hallway, etc).  
Volunteers that are college students from various universities that wish to serve in different volunteer capacities (tutors, observing classrooms, student-teaching, etc.) must have prior approval before beginning in this role as well. If teachers are contacted directly by professors, university officials or the college students themselves, they should be instructed to contact HR immediately before proceeding with any activity in the school setting.

Approved volunteers shall notify Human Resources if they are charged with or convicted of a criminal offense (including entering a plea of guilty or nolo contendere) except minor traffic violations.

Information obtained through the implementation of this policy shall be kept confidential as provided in the North Carolina General Statutes and regulations. The school system shall maintain in paper format only data from a criminal history check conducted through the North Carolina Department of Justice. These records shall be kept in a locked, secure place, separate from the individual's personnel file.

Volunteers, whose prior history, including criminal history, demonstrates a risk to the safety or well-being of students, will be denied participation in activities with limited or no supervision by school employees. Conditions for rejecting a volunteer's participation in these activities may include but not be limited to the following:

- Conviction of or a Plea of No Contest to any felony
- Conviction of or a Plea of No Contest to any misdemeanor that indicates the volunteer may pose a threat to the safety or integrity of the school environment.
- A pattern of criminal charges, even if the charges were dismissed, which cause concern that the volunteer may pose a threat to the integrity or safety of the school environment.
- If the Beaufort County Board of Education learns that an individual is a registered sex offender, this individual will be barred from volunteering.

All volunteers shall sign-in when arriving on campus, shall wear a school developed identification tag while participating in volunteer activities, and shall state where they will be during their visit. Volunteers shall sign-out when departing the campus.

Volunteer should understand the expectations of the school program, issues of confidentiality, professionalism and professional dress and appearance.