



Anne Arundel County Public Schools

#BePresent

Mentor/Volunteer Guide



Safer Schools, Stronger Communities

#BePresent

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Welcome!

Thank you for your interest and commitment to forming positive relationships with AACPS staff and students.

Your time and your dedication will mean so much to the students! You are modeling generosity and involved citizenship for our students—qualities we know are important as they become citizen leaders in their communities.

Each person who helps a child learn is someone who makes a difference in that child's life. Schools are safe, nurturing places for students to grow and learn, and the work you do makes that environment even more rich and meaningful.

This handbook is designed as a partnership tool. It includes basic information and tips for working with students. It also includes some very important legal information that all volunteers must understand and abide by to ensure that students and adults in our schools are safe.

Our Mission

...to help create the best possible volunteer experience.

Our Vision

...to create engaged communities through volunteer action.

Our Values

- Volunteering contributes to the vitality and capacity building of the community
- Diversity of community stakeholders are respected through the model of Cultural Competence and is reflected in policies and service delivery

What is #BePresent?

#BePresent is a community/school partnership designed to increase and improve community relationships within schools. Mentors and volunteers will assist school-based staff and administration with ensuring a safe and orderly school environment by being present during the school's daily function. Mentors and volunteers are invited to have a greater presence in schools as a way to enhance relationships and make school operations safer and more efficient.

#BePresent is a community-wide effort that includes:

- Individuals
- Family Members
- Civic and Faith Groups
- Business Leaders
- School Alumni

What will you do in a school?

Although each school has unique needs, some possible activities might include:

- helping with arrival and dismissal.
- assisting staff during lunch and recess.
- being present in hallways during class changes.
- supporting specific programs/activities.
- mentoring a student or small group of students.
- reading with a student.

Please know that you will not be expected to teach students or discipline students in any way.

Being a volunteer...

- Allows you to give back!
- Helps improve self-worth!
- Increases personal satisfaction!
- Improves listening and leadership skills!

Expectations & Guidelines



Anne Arundel County Public Schools depends on mentors/volunteers and value their contributions. Your willingness to serve the students and staff of the district is greatly appreciated. All mentoring/volunteering relationships established through AACPS must take place with students on the school campus during school hours or at other authorized school activities only.

Before you can mentor/volunteer in a school

All mentors/volunteers must complete the mentor/volunteer application, training, fingerprinting, and AACPS criminal background check before service can begin.

Expectations while mentoring/volunteering

- Sign in and wear a name tag on school grounds at all times.
- Be sure your attire is neat, clean, comfortable and appropriate for the school setting.
- Share concerns regarding students with the school staff only.
- Turn your cell phone to vibrate while you are in the building and make personal calls or texts while performing your duties only in emergency situations.

continued...

- Be prompt and reliable.
- No smoking or tobacco is allowed on any AACPS property.
- No weapons allowed.
- No drugs or alcohol allowed.

Tips on Being a Good Mentor/Volunteer

- Receive the required training and or information about sexual harassment and child abuse reporting policies.
- Abide by the school policy that states that mentors/volunteers will exercise reasonable care in protecting students from harm.
- Exhibit professional and appropriate relationships with students. Do not date nor have sexual relations with students.
- Follow the direction and suggestions of school staff members.
- Do not photograph children during school hours.
- Respect the privacy of teachers and students by not discussing school matters away from the school.
- Commit to working in a school to support and improve education for all students.
- Refer to the classroom teacher or an appropriate school staff member for final solution of any student problem which arises, whether of an instructional, medical or operational nature.
- Find ways to establish a good rapport with students.
- Accept each student and encourage them to be their best.
- Learn the names of the students and use them often.
- Respect the roles of the teachers and administrators
- Cooperate with others. A spirit of teamwork is essential to getting things done.
- Follow policies, rules, and regulations.
- Be patient.
- Be kind.
- Be positive.
- Have fun!

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is a legal requirement. Federal law prohibits school districts from releasing non-directory student information without parent/guardian permission. Disclosing this information is a violation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA). All information concerning students and staff is strictly confidential and should not be shared with others. Keep ALL student information confidential, including scholastic and health records, test scores and grades, discipline and classroom behavior, and children's character traits. Share concerns with school staff only—not with the child's family or others. Staff members are responsible for family communications.

Confidentiality is an ethical concept that implies an explicit promise to reveal nothing about a student except under conditions agreed to by the student. Confidentiality can be waived when:

- the student consents to the disclosure of information,
- the student has disclosed a significant part of the information to a third party, and
- under certain circumstances:
 1. **Threats of Violence:** You are obligated to notify the school principal and/or guidance counselor when a student threatens violence to another person (**Duty to Warn**).
 2. **Threats of Suicide:** You are obligated to notify the school principal and/or guidance counselor when a student threatens violence to themselves.

Suspected/Reported Child Abuse/Neglect:

As a volunteer with Anne Arundel County Public Schools, you must make a report to the Anne Arundel County Child Protection Unit of Department of Social Services (DSS) when you have a reason to suspect that a child has been physically or sexually abused, or that a child has been neglected, or has been the subject of mental injury. To make a report, please call 410-421-8400, 24 hours a day. If the suspected abuse involves a school system employee, you must also notify an administrator.



Code of Ethics

As a mentor/volunteer, I am a member of an educational team.
As a member of that team...

- I understand that all information concerning children, teachers, and the school is confidential and should remain in the school setting.
- I shall always maintain the dignity necessary to gain the respect of students and set a good example.
- I will show high regard for each child by being courteous, impartial, and fair.
- I understand that I will work under the supervision of one or more staff members.
- I will respect those with whom I work.
- I will not impose my own religious, political, or other bias views upon students.
- I understand that I will work under the supervision of one or more staff members.

Training & Security Requirements

Before you can mentor/volunteer in a school, you must complete the AACPS training and security requirements.

All mentors/volunteers must:

- participate in a 2-hour training on AACPS school practices and other related topics. Training will occur twice a month at a date, time, and place advertised on www.aacps.org.
- view the Sexual Harassment and Child Abuse training video for mentors/volunteers and complete the acknowledgment form (required every two years). The video is available at www.aacps.org/family under **Volunteering for AACPS** (left column) >>**How to Become a Volunteer**.
- undergo a background investigation, include a fingerprint-supported background check (review of local, state, and federal records).



www.aacps.org/family >>Volunteering for AACPS >>How to Become a Volunteer



Background Check

Finally, please remember that the safety and security of our students is the primary concern of AACPS. All **#BePresent** mentors/volunteers are required to complete a successful **Fingerprint-supported Background Check**.

- Fingerprint-supported background checks must be scheduled through the Fingerprinting Office at 410-222-5045. The Fingerprinting Office is located at the AACPS Central Office on Riva Road and is open weekdays from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. and until 6:30 p.m. on Wednesdays, during the school year. The \$58.25 cost will be waived for **#BePresent** mentors/volunteers.
- School personnel do not have access to an online database to check applicant results for fingerprinting. Each applicant requiring a fingerprint-supported background check is provided with a pink Fingerprint Verification Card. The card should be kept with the applicant while on school grounds and should be displayed to an administrator upon request.
- All questions regarding this process, or to confirm the results of a fingerprint-supported background check should be directed to the Office of Investigations at 410-222-5287.

Questions & Concerns

If you have any questions or concerns,
please contact us at:

BePresent@aacps.org

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**Every child you pass in the hall
has a story that needs to be heard.
Maybe you are the one to hear it.**

Bethany Hill



ANNE ARUNDEL
COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Mark T. Bedell, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Anne Arundel County Public Schools prohibits discrimination in matters affecting employment or in providing access to programs on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, sexual orientation, genetic information, gender identity, or disability. For more information, contact: Anne Arundel County Public Schools, Division of Human Resources, 2644 Riva Road, Annapolis, MD 21401. 410-222-5286 TDD 410-222-5000

www.aacps.org

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