



OFFICE OF SCHOOL & FAMILY PARTNERSHIPS

Anne Arundel County Public Schools

Volunteer Guide

ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Office of School & Family Partnerships



For questions, concerns and comments about the volunteer program in the Anne Arundel County Public Schools, please contact the Office of School & Family Partnerships.

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This document is available on the employee intranet on the School & Family Partnerships page and on the public website at aacps.org/volunteer.



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Section 1: Volunteer Program Overview

- Introduction
- Philosophy
- The School Volunteer Program
- Characteristics of an Effective Volunteer Program



Thank you!

Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much. Helen Keller

Thank you for taking the time to volunteer in our school system. We appreciate your dedication to the students and staff.

The volunteer program is meant to be developed to meet the needs of each individual school, so your volunteer role will differ depending on the school and their needs.

Later in this manual, you will read about the roles of all those involved in the management of the volunteer program at each school, as well as general guidelines. Each school may have different guidelines and procedures, so please check with your school for specifics.



Philosophy for Volunteer Programs

The Board of Education of Anne Arundel County Public Schools is committed to ensuring a strong home-school-community partnership, and to promote and increase effective and comprehensive involvement practices. We recognize that engaging parents and the community in the program is essential to improved academic success for students. We also recognize that parent, student, and community volunteer involvement in the schools increases the support of the schools by the community and adds to the total school program.

It is imperative that volunteer programs be thoughtfully and carefully implemented if the full potential and benefits of the skills, talents, and expertise available are to be used effectively and efficiently.

The School Volunteer Program

The School Volunteer Program is the organization of individuals who contribute service to the schools to strengthen and/or enrich the education experience offered to our students. A volunteer is a person who, working under staff supervision, contributes service without financial remuneration from the school system. The volunteer can work at the school or outside the school site to support educational activities. As with other school personnel, the volunteer must meet certain qualifications and accept certain responsibilities.

The program is managed cooperatively by a member of the staff (Staff Liaison for Volunteers) and one or more Volunteer Coordinators. The Staff Liaison and the Volunteer Coordinator(s) plan and manage the program at each school. This handbook gives guidelines for putting into place an effective program.

Characteristics of an Effective Volunteer Program

- Understands, supports, and incorporates the AACPS Strategic Plan values and indicators into the planning and implementation of the volunteer program
- Provides the school with educational and support services
- Has the support of and works collaboratively with administrators, teachers, and other school staff members, parents, and parent organizations within the school
- Has a designated staff liaison for volunteers and volunteer coordinator, as well as an established organizational format
- Reflects the diversity of the school population and the community that it serves
- Positively affects school-community relations

Adapted from Fairfax County, VA, Public Schools Volunteer Program Guide



Section 2: Roles and Responsibilities

The volunteer program is organized individually in each school. Each school's needs determine how and where volunteers are utilized. The management of the school volunteer program is clearly delineated.

Principal

The principal is responsible for the overall guidance of the program in the school, and

- Acts as manager/administrator for the program
- Always makes the final decision for school-wide rules, policies, and program implementation
- Facilitates a climate for shared, professional leadership
- Provides an open and friendly atmosphere for volunteers
- Encourages a positive organizational climate
- Provides support and motivation for the volunteer program
- Encourages staff participation in the program.

Staff Liaison for Volunteers

The Staff Liaison for Volunteers is a member of the school staff assigned by the principal to handle the program details and provide support to staff members and volunteers. The Staff Liaison

- Facilitates the school-based program
- Directs the planning, implementation, maintenance, and evaluation of the program under the guidance of the principal
- Plans and conducts an orientation with the assistance of the Volunteer Coordinator
- Plans and directs any training needed for volunteers in special programs within the school
- Promotes an open and friendly atmosphere for volunteers
- Shares leadership responsibilities with other participants, including volunteers.



Volunteer Coordinator

The Volunteer Coordinator is a volunteer who helps recruit, schedule, orient, and provide support to the volunteer group. The Volunteer Coordinator

- Assists the Staff Liaison with the implementation, maintenance, and evaluation of the school-based program
- Assists in the planning and execution of the orientation
- Assists with any training needed for volunteers in special programs within the school when requested to do so
- Assists with the recruitment of volunteers.

Teacher

The teacher is the educational expert in each classroom. He/she makes all the decisions regarding the instruction and evaluation of students in the classroom. The teacher

- Plans and provides meaningful, appropriate tasks for volunteers
- Promotes a friendly and welcoming atmosphere for volunteers
- Promotes good relations between each volunteer and the students in the class
- Provides the necessary training to work with projects and students in the class
- Works closely with the Staff Liaison.

Volunteer

The volunteer agrees to serve as an appointed, non-paid staff member acting under the direct supervision of a staff member. The volunteer

- Works as a team member with faculty and staff
- Follows policies, rules, and regulations
- Works closely with administrators, Staff Liaison, and Volunteer Coordinator(s).
- Follows directions
- Is responsible, dependable, and protects student confidentiality
- Has respect for students and others working with the program
- Is willing to share ideas, talents, and skills.



Section 3: Volunteer Guidelines

- Volunteer Responsibilities
- Code of Ethics for Volunteers
- Benefits of Volunteering
- Volunteers and Preschool Age Children
- Volunteers and Computer Data Security
- Volunteers and Use of Social Media
- Volunteer Dress Code
- Sexual Harassment and Volunteers
- Child Abuse Information for Volunteers
- Training and Security Requirements for Volunteers
- Student Volunteers and Background Checks



Volunteer Responsibilities

All volunteers should:

- Sign in and out when entering or exiting the school.
- Respect the confidentiality of school matters.
- Receive the required training and or information about sexual harassment and child abuse reporting policies.
- Complete applications for the level of security clearance required for their level of access to students.(Commercial Background Check or Fingerprint-Supported Background Check)
- Notify the school or the Volunteer Coordinator when an illness or other circumstances prevent reporting to school for volunteer activities.
- Abide by the established Code of Ethics for Volunteers.
- Carry out only those duties assigned to them.
- Abide by the school policy that states that volunteers will exercise reasonable care in protecting students from harm. Adult volunteers shall exhibit professional and appropriate relationships with students. Adult volunteers will not date nor have sexual relations with students.
- Follow the school guidelines for the use of Universal Precautions.
- Report any incident that could lead to legal action against the volunteer and/or the Board of Education.
- Be dependable – arrive promptly as scheduled.
- Respect teachers' responsibilities and schedules.
- Abide by the policy that prohibits volunteers from administering or supervising the taking of any medications.
- Refrain from using cellphones while volunteering, except in case of emergencies.
- Do not photograph children during school hours.

Note: All worksites within the jurisdiction of the Board of Education are designated as drug and alcohol-free workplaces. All worksites are also designated as smoke-free workplaces. The sale or use of tobacco in any form is prohibited at all times in all system-owned or leased buildings and vehicles, and on all system-owned or leased grounds.



Code of Ethics for Volunteers

As a volunteer, I am a member of an educational team. As a volunteer 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 maintain the dignity necessary to gain the respect of students and set a good example at all times.*
- ❖ I will show high regard for each child by being courteous, impartial, and fair.*
- ❖ I will respect those with whom I work.*
- ❖ I will not impose my own religious or political views upon students.*
- ❖ I understand that I will work under the supervision of one or more staff members.*



Benefits of Volunteering

Insurance Coverage

A volunteer who is registered appropriately with the school in which they are volunteering by completing the appropriate training and background checks is covered by this insurance policy.

The Anne Arundel County Board of Education's general liability policy will pay all sums which the volunteer may become legally obligated to pay as damages because of bodily injury or property arising out of his activities while on school property. Volunteers are also protected against the cost of medical bills in accordance with Maryland's Worker's Compensation Law.

A volunteer involved in a situation which could lead to legal action against him and/or the Board of Education should report the incident immediately to the principal of the school. This is particularly important if a parent or other citizen contacts the volunteer to question him or to register a complaint about the incident. If he receives communication from the Board's insurance company requesting further information, he should respond immediately.

Transportation

Volunteers and employees of Anne Arundel County Board of Education may ride buses to and from school with written permission of the Supervisor of Transportation.

Work Experience

Volunteer experience can be listed on a resume, job application, or work record. Most companies and agencies consider volunteer service when considering an applicant for a job.

Tax Deduction for Volunteers

Volunteers may deduct some expenses not reimbursed as part of giving to a school. For more information, contact the local branch of the Internal Revenue Service.



Volunteers and Preschool Age Children

Volunteers should not bring their preschool age children with them when they volunteer during the instructional day. The distraction is detrimental to the student trying to concentrate, the teacher trying to instruct, and the volunteer trying to help. Also, much of the equipment used in schools (such as paper cutters, copiers, and laminators) can be very hazardous to young children.

Volunteers and Computer Data Security

Computer information is a significant school system resource that must be kept secure and used only by authorized persons for approved and legitimate purposes. School system data consists of confidential as well as public documents and other information considered to be critical. Access to information is on a ‘need to know’ basis only. The intent of the data security procedure is to ensure that confidentiality, availability, and integrity of data; to reduce the risk of data loss; and to preserve the school system’s rights and remedies in the event of such a loss.

Accessing information without proper identification and authorization is inappropriate and will be considered a violation of the policies related to the disclosure of such information.

Volunteers and Use of Social Media

Social media can be a convenient, fun and rewarding way to share your life and opinions with family and friends. However, using social media involves certain risks and responsibilities. These guidelines apply to all forms of social media:

- Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), parents have the right to prevent photographs of their children from being taken in instructional settings. Given that volunteers have no knowledge of which parents have allowed their children to be photographed and which have not, volunteers should not take or post online any photographs or movies of students in any instructional setting during the instructional day. This includes recess, lunch, and events such as Halloween parades.

- Volunteers should not make or receive phone calls or text messages while they are volunteering.

Volunteer Dress Code

At the present time, there is no specific dress policy approved for employees or volunteers in our schools. However, volunteers are asked to abide by the same dress code in place for students.



Sexual Harassment & Volunteers

Anne Arundel County Public Schools is committed to maintaining an environment for student, employees, and volunteers that is free from all forms of harassment. As you work within our schools, you will be responsible for recognizing and reporting any incidents of sexual harassment which may come to your attention.

In 1993, the Board of Education of Anne Arundel County Public Schools enacted *BOE Policy 902.16 — Sexual Harassment—Students* and *BOE Policy 800.31—Sexual Harassment—Employees* in order to maintain an environment free from sexual harassment. In addition, sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination, and is illegal as defined by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, the 14th Amendment of the Constitution, and numerous state criminal and civil statutes. Sexual harassment is not just a problem for adults. It occurs in our schools and may affect students as early as elementary school. We are all responsible for recognizing and addressing allegations of sexual harassment.

Filing a Complaint

Volunteers who learn of allegations of sexual harassment should immediately report that information to a school staff member or administrator. Investigations of all complaints will be conducted quickly to prevent additional allegations. All investigations are handled in a confidential manner involving only those people who need to know.

Child Abuse Information for Volunteers

Child abuse and neglect is a serious problem which requires the involvement of everyone in the community for the purposes of prevention, identification, and treatment. In Maryland, the law requires that anyone who SUSPECTS a child has been or is being mistreated must report the matter to the Department of Social Services. Any person who, in good faith, makes a report of abuse or neglect is IMMUNE from any civil liability or criminal penalty. School administrators, pupil personnel workers, and guidance counselors may be able to offer assistance in making the report. You can also obtain consultative assistance from the Office of Investigations and Records Management (410-222-5286).

For more information on training, see the next section of this guide.



Training and Security Requirements for Volunteers

All volunteers **must** receive training on sexual harassment and child abuse.

- All volunteers **must** view the video on sexual harassment and child abuse. This is available at www.aacps.org/family under Volunteering for AACPS>>How to Become a Volunteer. It is also available in Spanish. The volunteer can either sign a form, or you can keep a running log indicating who has watched the video. Sample forms (English and Spanish) are included in the Appendix, pp. 37-38
- Volunteers must watch the video every time they go through the volunteer renewal process, or every two years, whichever comes first.

Background investigations are divided into two categories: fingerprint-supported background checks (review of local, state, and federal records) and commercial background checks (review of local records). Once a fingerprint-supported background check is performed, applicants no longer need to submit the electronic commercial background check.

Fingerprint-Supported Background Check: The following groups of individuals must complete a fingerprint-supported background check:

- All overnight volunteers or chaperones
- All drownproofing volunteers or chaperones
- Any volunteer or chaperone with one-on-one unsupervised/unrestricted access to children*

*One-on-one unsupervised or unrestricted access – a person having responsibility for a student while not in the direct and continuous view of an AACPS employee. This does not include chaperones or volunteers who supervise groups of students (e.g., field trip to the zoo, museum, BSO performance.)

Fingerprint-supported background checks must be scheduled through the Fingerprinting office at 410-222-5045. The Fingerprinting Office is located at the Central Office and is open from Monday to Thursday from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. during summer hours. The office resumes their normal hours, Monday to Friday from 8am to 4pm during the school year.

The cost of fingerprinting is \$58.25 and includes the commercial background check. Fingerprint-supported background checks for overnight chaperones should be completed at least three weeks prior to the scheduled trip. All positions are contingent upon completion of a successful background check. 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 blue Fingerprint Verification Card. The card should be kept with the applicant while on school grounds and should be displayed to an administrator upon request. Each school should keep a running list of chaperones and volunteers that have been fingerprinted. Fingerprinting is good for the tenure of their children in AACPS.



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.

Commercial Background Check: All chaperones and volunteers without one-on-one unsupervised or unrestricted access to students must complete the online request for a commercial background check. This group is inclusive of PTA and PTO officers, CAC officers, Booster club officers, and chaperones or volunteers who work with children in the presence of an approved AACPS representative. (e.g., daytime field trip to the zoo) These background checks are at no cost to the applicant and are valid for two years. All applications should be submitted electronically at least three weeks prior to the intended volunteer event. The link to the application can be found [on the School Security website](#).

All questions regarding this process should be directed to the Office of School Security at 410-222-5083. Schools will continue to have access to the [online database](#) to check the results of a commercial background check that was submitted electronically.

Finally, please remember that the safety and security of our students is the key determiner for all of these issues.

Student Volunteers and Background Checks

AACPS students who are 16 years old through graduation age and are volunteering outside their home school must complete a background check.

Student volunteers who are 16 or 17 years old:

- Contact the AACPS Fingerprint Office to schedule an appointment for a Commercial Background Check.
- Student will need to travel to the AACPS Central Office on Riva Road to complete the check; it cannot be done online.
- Student **must** be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian.

Student volunteers who are 18 years old through graduation age:

- Contact the AACPS Fingerprint Office to schedule an appointment for a Commercial Background Check.
- Student will need to travel to the AACPS Central Office on Riva Road to complete the check; it cannot be done online.
- Student **does not need** to be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian.



Section 4: Recordkeeping

Raptor

Raptor is the school security software in use in all AACPS buildings to monitor those who enter and leave the buildings during school hours. Schools also use this software to sign volunteers in and out, as well as to monitor their hours.

Be sure the Front Office staff know you are in the school to volunteer so that hours are logged into Raptor as volunteers and not visitors.

Virtual Volunteer Portal

Many volunteers contribute hours and hours of service outside of the school building and the school day. It may include taking home materials to color or cut, PTA/PTO officers, booster groups, before- or after-school club organizers, and Weekend Food program partners, among many others. Providing accurate data about the volunteer hours is not only important for school and volunteer recognition. These hours, reported at the end of each year, are compiled at the county level and are used to indicate in-kind support when the county applies for state, federal and private grants.

Virtual Volunteer Portal is a feature of Raptor that allows volunteers to log offsite hours remotely. To sign up for the portal, give the school secretary an email address to add to your volunteer Raptor profile. An automatic email is sent, inviting you to log on to [the portal](#) and set up an account. Hours that you record are automatically added to those that are recorded at school.

If you do not have access to a computer or feel comfortable using them, please speak to your school about an alternative system to record hours outside the school day or school building, through Delayed Entry in Raptor.



Anne Arundel County Public Schools
Volunteer Program
Sexual Harassment and Child Abuse Video Viewing

Once you have viewed the Sexual Harassment and Child Abuse video online, complete this form and return it to the Staff Liaison for Volunteers at your school.

I certify that I have viewed the Sexual Harassment and Child Abuse video in its entirety and I understand the information contained in it.

Name

Email address/phone number

Date

School



Escuelas Publicas del Condado de Anne Arundel
Programa de Voluntarios
Video sobre Acoso Sexual y Abuso Infantil

Una vez que haya visto el video en línea sobre el Acoso Sexual y el Abuso Infantil, complete esta forma y devuélvala a la persona de Enlace para Voluntarios de su escuela.

Certifico que he visto en su totalidad el video sobre Acoso Sexual y Abuso Infantil y entiendo la información contenida en el mismo.

Nombre

Correo Electrónico/Numero de teléfono

Fecha

Escuela