Regulation IFCD-R(1): School Volunteers Status: ADOPTED

Original Adopted Date: 03/18/2021 | Last Reviewed Date: 03/18/2021

A. Purpose and Application of Regulation

1. Volunteers are an integral part of the instructional program and enrichment activities provided by the Bibb County School District ("District") to its students. To promote volunteers in schools, each school will encourage individuals to volunteer by sharing volunteer opportunities, and the procedures for becoming a volunteer.
2. Registration as a volunteer under this Regulation is not required for activities available to parents and guardians. Such activities include visiting a student's classroom as allowed by school administration, attending teacher or staff conferences concerning their student, attending or participating in school programs (e.g. concerts, performances, or award days) for their student, or having lunch with their student as allowed by school administration. All parents and guardians are expected to sign in at the school's front office before visiting any child's classroom.

B. Definitions

1. Volunteer: Volunteers are parents, guardians or non-District personnel who contribute their time and services to the schools or to the District by assisting in the school or district operation.
2. School Visitor: School visitors are not considered volunteers. School visitors are individuals that attend school events as a spectator or have a scheduled appointment with the school regarding official school business. Visitors also include classroom speakers, performers, or assembly speakers who visit a school for a limited time and purpose. Visitors will have supervised access to students only. Visitors are not subject to the application and screening process associated with volunteers as outlined in this Regulation. Visitors are subject to Policy KM, Visitors to School, and the accompanying regulation, KM-R(1).

C. Volunteer Application Procedures

1. Interested volunteers may reach out to the school or department of interest, visit the District's website, or contact the District's Communications Department or Human Resources Department to begin the process for applying to become a school volunteer. The application and screening process will be coordinated by the District's Human Resources Department. Questions regarding the application and screening should be directed to the District's Human Resources Department.
2. Volunteer applications and procedures will be made available at the individual schools and District departments. A printed copy of the application will be made available upon request.
3. During the application process, the applicant will be required to list all volunteer duties he/she seeks to provide, which will determine the level at which the individual will be screened.
4. In support of student and staff safety, an applicant must furnish a valid state approved photo ID to be considered for volunteer opportunities at the school and satisfy the applicable required screening procedures, as outlined below.
5. Volunteers must sign a Volunteer Orientation form that states the volunteer agrees to follow all expectations and requirements to be a District volunteer. The Executive Director of Personnel and/or Principal (or designee) will review the Volunteer Application. Depending on the volunteer level, as explained below, the individual may be required to go through the background screening process. The Executive Director of Personnel and/or Principal will have the final approval for volunteer needs at their school site.

D. Screening Procedure

1. The screening process is important to protecting the safety of students and staff. A sex offender registry

check, a criminal background check, or both, is required prior to volunteer services being provided at any school or District department. All volunteers will be screened based on the level of volunteer duties provided. An individual who refuses to go through the screening process appropriate for their volunteer level will not be allowed to volunteer in any capacity. Registered sex offenders will not be allowed to volunteer.

E. Volunteer Duty Levels:

1. Level One: Level One volunteers are non-District personnel who have little to no direct interaction with students. Examples include working when students are not present; helping with outside beautification projects; volunteering in departments where students are not present, or assisting in athletic events where interaction with students is limited and District personnel are present (e.g., keeping the scorebook and moving the football chains). Level One volunteers will not be left unsupervised with students at any time.
2. Level Two: Level Two volunteers are non-District personnel who will have direct interaction with students when other qualified adults or District personnel are present to supervise. Examples of Level Two volunteers include individuals that read to students in a classroom, classroom helpers, chaperoning day field trips, in-class tutors, and school fair volunteers. The school principal shall have the discretion to approve specific Level Two volunteer assignments.
3. Level Three: Level Three volunteers are non-District personnel who may have some direct and unsupervised interaction with students. Level Three volunteers must be approved by District-authorized personnel and the school principal prior to the Level Three volunteer having any direct and unsupervised interaction with students. Examples of Level Three volunteers include chaperones on overnight field trips.

F. Background Checks and Training Requirements for Volunteers

1. Level One: Level One volunteers do not require criminal background checks but will be screened through the sex offender database
2. Level Two: Level Two volunteers are required to be screened through the sex offender registry and the criminal background check process. The school principal may require additional screening methods, including, but not limited to, personal interviews and reference checks. Level Two volunteers must participate in any training, including training on Mandatory Reporting requirements, required by the District. The District may provide online or virtual training options. Security clearance for Level Two volunteers must be renewed every year.
3. Level Three: Level Three volunteers will be fingerprinted by District authorized personnel, undergo a criminal background check, screened through the sex offender registry, and participate in any training, including training on Mandatory Reporting requirements, required by the District. Level Three volunteers are required to go through the screening and training process each school year prior to engaging in Level Three volunteer activities. The District may provide online or virtual training options. The school principal shall have the discretion to approve specific volunteer assignments. Level Three volunteers participating in overnight field trips must comply with IFCB-R(1), Field Trips and Excursions.

G. Volunteer Program Expectations

1. Volunteers are representatives of the school community and role models for students. As such, volunteers are expected to adhere to the District's core values: integrity, high ideals and expectations, and sensitivity to the school environment. Volunteers must take personal responsibility for understanding the system's ethical standards and applying them in volunteer activities. At all times, volunteers are expected to:
    i. Act in the best interest of all students;
    ii. Maintain professional relationships with students, parents, staff members, community members and other volunteers;
    iii. Observe local, state and federal laws, policies, rules, and regulations;
    iv. Support and advance cooperation between the school and the community;
    v. Refrain from using the school and volunteer privileges to promote partisan politics, sectarian religious views, commercial goods or services, or propaganda of any kind;

vi. Safeguard and respect all school property and equipment;
vii. Uphold and support board policies;
viii. Exhibit a positive standard of professional conduct at all times including, but not limited to, displaying appropriate behavior, language, and attire;
ix. Review District volunteer training and Mandatory Reporting materials;
x. Notify school administration or the Executive Director of Personnel if the volunteer is arrested, indicted, or charged with a crime prior to any subsequent volunteer activity;
xi. Notify school administration or the Executive Director of Personnel if the volunteer is subject to a Temporary Restraining Order ("TRO") limiting the volunteer's access to an employee or student in a school or department where the individual volunteers; and
xii. Comply with the Mandatory Reporting requirements for suspected child abuse under O.C.G.A. § 19-7-5.

2. The District will:
   i. Maintain the privacy of all volunteer information obtained through the background screening process that is not subject to disclosure in accordance with all state and federal laws;
   ii. Maintain a professional relationship with all volunteers;
   iii. Seek to efficiently screen (where applicable) volunteers; and
   iv. Provide an easily accessible application process and understanding of the volunteer program and opportunities for involvement with the District and its schools and departments.

H. Findings of an Offense: Review of Eligibility

1. The District maintains the rights to limit, modify, suspend, or terminate volunteer privileges for any individual at any time if such action is in the best interest of students, staff and District operations or if the volunteer acts outside of the scope of their volunteer assignment or interferes with school operations. Individuals who have had their volunteer privilege denied,modified, or revoked will be informed in a manner that maintains confidentiality and is consistent with Georgia law. All criminal background check records will be kept confidential.
2. Criminal history information that would trigger a review of eligibility includes individuals who have been indicted and are awaiting trial or have been convicted, arrested, fined, imprisoned, placed on probation, or placed on parole for a felony offense. Any misdemeanor that has occurred within the last five (5) years from the date of the volunteer application involving assault, burglary, theft, child abuse, child endangerment, child neglect, crimes against children, or possession of drugs will be cause for a review of eligibility. A volunteer that is subject to a TRO limiting the volunteer's access to an employee or student in a school or department where the individual volunteers will result in a review of eligibility. Findings of an offense may not immediately disqualify volunteer status; however, the nature of the offense, date of conviction, and frequency of offense(s) will be factors that will impact the decision.
3. Volunteer and volunteer applicants that have been convicted of child abuse, child endangerment, child neglect, crimes against children, or have been involved in a domestic violence incident that occurs in the presence of a child, will not be eligible to volunteer in the District.
4. Any individual who has been disqualified from volunteering will be notified in writing and will have the opportunity to request a review as outlined below.

I. Administrative Review Process: Second Review of Eligibility

1. When volunteer privileges are denied, modified, or revoked, an individual may file a written request for administrative review of the decision to the District's Chief of Staff.
2. The volunteer applicant or volunteer must file their written request for administrative review within fourteen (14) days of the date his or her volunteer privileges were denied, modified, or revoked.
3. Reviews are conducted on an individualized basis and will consider criminal history findings, severity of offenses, the frequency of incidents or concerns, the position of school administration, and other factors pertinent to the reviewer.

4. The volunteer applicant or volunteer may include in their written statement an explanation regarding why their volunteer duties should be reinstated or why they should be reconsidered as a volunteer.
5. Any background check information reviewed or shared during the review process will remain confidential in a manner that is consistent with Georgia law.
6. Additional documents, including those that show adjudication or corrective action/remediation, and reference letters, may be provided.
7. The Chief of Staff will review and consider all supporting documentation. Upon the completion of the eligibility review, disqualification status may be upheld or volunteer services may be modified or limited.
8. The Chief of Staff will provide a written response within thirty (30) business days of receiving the request to review.
9. The Chief of Staff's decision regarding volunteer status under review will be final.

J. Volunteering in Schools

1. All volunteers in the schools must sign-in and out of the school office in accordance with Board Policy KM, Visitors to School, and the accompanying regulation, KM-R(1). All volunteers in school must abide by any school procedures or other volunteer protocol established by school administration.
2. School volunteers will not have access to information deemed confidential by local, state and federal laws, policies, rules and regulations without express written consent from the parents/legal guardians.