

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

Descriptor Term: SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS	Descriptor Code: 5015-P	Date Issued: March 1, 2004
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Volunteer Screening

No single screening process is suitable for all volunteer positions. The screening used will be based upon the specific task(s) assigned, the relationship of the volunteer to the school system (i.e., employee, parent, non-parent) and the risks associated with the performance of those tasks. The principal/building level supervisor shall be advised of all volunteer selections. Any person not selected as a volunteer may appeal that decision to the Superintendent.

Levels of Screening

Risk is determined by the setting in which the volunteer activity takes place and the intensity of the relationship between the volunteer and the student(s). Intensity is defined as the solitary time with the student, exclusivity of relationship, amount of time (frequency) and length of time (duration) in contact and level of vulnerability. The thoroughness of the screening increases as the risk of the contact increases.

Recommended Screening Procedures According to Volunteer Role

Teachers, principals and other professionals are expected to use their professional judgment in reviewing the position descriptions and in determining the appropriate level of screening needed for volunteer roles. Volunteers who are referred through other agencies (Asheville City Schools Foundation, Education Coalition, etc.) are subject to screening requirements consistent with those listed below. However, these requirements may have been satisfied through prior screening by the referral agency or the volunteers place of business. In such cases, it is not necessary to re-screen the volunteer. When accepting another agencies' screening care should be taken to determine that the tools used were appropriate screens for the role the volunteer will fill in the school.

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Screening Tools

Screening tools which may be used (as applicable) include:

- Applications/registrations
- Orientation
- Interviews
- Reference checks
- Attendance at training sessions
- Criminal record checks

Nametags

Schools will require volunteers to register in the school office at the beginning of each school visit and wear a nametag while in the building. Nametags may be color-coded to indicate the level at which the volunteer has been screened.

Mentoring Programs

Mentoring activities and volunteer coaches represent two of the highest risks to students and will incorporate the most intensive level of screening. The nature of the mentoring concept is to develop a sense of trust and support that extends over a school year or longer on a one-to-one basis.

School staff members will employ screening procedures that are sufficient to reduce the risk to students to a minimal level. Specifically, schools should strive to 1) protect children from individuals who may wish to become mentors for immoral or illegal purposes; 2) provide training so that mentors understand and adhere to guidelines for appropriate interactions with children that show respect for the child's culture, religious upbringing, and family values; and 3) provide support to mentors including verbal communication between teacher and mentor to increase the likelihood that the relationship will be sustained over time.

District Wide Support

The general administration, curriculum and instruction department, and human resource office will provide whatever assistance is needed to ensure the complete implementation of these administrative procedures and to guarantee the safety and well being of our students.

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Volunteer Files

Asheville City Schools will maintain certain records on volunteers in accordance with Section 115C-209.1 of North Carolina General Statutes. Volunteer records are not public records, but will be disclosed upon request, to the volunteer, the superintendent and other supervisory personnel, the parent or guardian of any student with whom the volunteer has had contact, members of the local board of education and the board's attorney, and a party to a lawsuit, by authority of subpoena or proper court order. Asheville City Schools may also permit inspection of volunteer records when the Board of Education determines that it is necessary to maintain the Board's integrity or the level or quality of services provided. Notice of these confidentiality and disclosure provisions shall be given to each volunteer candidate.

Confidentiality

Volunteers are held to professional standards for maintaining confidentiality of student information. Likewise, schools should take the necessary action to keep volunteer records confidential.

Criminal Background Checks

Criminal convictions against, or pleas of guilty or nolo contendere by a volunteer, may have an impact upon the goals of the school district and will be considered in selecting volunteers. When considering volunteers who possess criminal records the following guidelines shall be followed:

- 1) The type of criminal conviction shall be thoroughly reviewed. Any felony conviction will automatically render the potential volunteer ineligible to serve.
- 2) The period of time since the last conviction will be considered. A minimum of three years since the last conviction for drug offenses and other types of non felony offenses will serve as a minimum cessation period.
- 3) Volunteer candidates convicted of any type of crime against a child, involving the use of violence, or registered as a sex offender **are ineligible to serve as a volunteer in the Asheville City Schools System. Additionally, all former employees of ACS who are coded as ineligible for rehire are ineligible to volunteer.** The registered sex offender list may be found at: <http://sbi.jus.state.nc.us/DOJHAHT/SOR/>

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