

BEXLEY CITY SCHOOLS VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

Approved by BCSD BOE 6/8/2022



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Please Note: While operating within the protocols for COVID-19 or post-COVID, portions of the handbooks may not be fully accurate/implemented. Any protocols adopted by the district that supersede the handbooks will be published for students and guardians.

Welcome

We are excited to have you as a volunteer! You have taken an important step towards making a significant impact on the excellent educational programs offered in the Bexley City School District. As a volunteer, you are instrumental in helping our schools create pathways to opportunities and success for our students. Your commitment will help us enhance the educational experiences for students. Whether you volunteer one hour per week, one hour per month, or one hour per year your commitment to education is appreciated.

As stated in Board Policy IICC, The Board believes one of the greatest resources available may be found in the citizens of the community who have special knowledge and talents to contribute to the District. Volunteers work in every aspect of school operation, from classroom and health clinic helpers, one-on-one tutors and mentors, to organizing and staffing special events and extracurricular activities.

Please review this handbook. This handbook is designed to help you make a smooth transition into your volunteer responsibilities. It gives an overview of the volunteers program and provides important guidelines you should be aware of prior to volunteering. It is our hope that you will derive a great deal of personal satisfaction from your time in our schools. All volunteers shall abide by the applicable District policies and procedures, including, but not limited to all sign-in and identification procedures and the confidentiality, safety, reporting, and harassment policies.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact your school's building principal or the district's Director of Employee Relations. Thank you for providing your precious time, individual gifts and talents as a volunteer. On behalf of the students, teachers, and staff, thank you for your service.

Who is a School Volunteer?

A school volunteer is a person willing to take time to share wisdom and experience with those on the threshold of the future. A school volunteer helps to expand and enrich the students' learning experiences by working under the direction of teachers and school staff. A "school volunteer" is any person who offers to perform a service or carry out an activity during the school day or during extended-day, school-related programs, including volunteer chaperones on student field trips or other travel trips, without pay or other material compensation. A "school volunteer" also includes athletic coaches who do not receive compensation or remuneration for their services. In the Bexley City School District, we have identified two levels/types of volunteers.

Two Levels of Volunteers

Level 1 Volunteers

- Individuals who have direct student supervisory responsibilities outside of the direct observation of a staff member and have sustained access to students for an extended amount of time would be Level 1 Volunteers. (Examples: Volunteer who takes a small group of students out of the classroom to conduct a reading session while the primary teacher remains in the classroom with other students or a volunteer who chaperones on a field trip where they are outside of the direct observation of a staff member.)
- Individuals who support a staff member while not having direct supervisory responsibilities of students, but who will have sustained access* to students for an extended amount of time. (example: frequent classroom volunteer that supports the teacher and is not left alone with students)

*Definition of **sustained access** to students: Volunteering at least once a week for a duration longer than 3 weeks.

Level 1 Volunteer Process

1. Principals share the Volunteer Handbook with interested volunteers. Potential volunteers read the handbook, complete the Volunteer Application and the Confidentiality Agreement and submit both documents to the school secretary.
2. The Principal reviews and, if approved, signs the Volunteer Application. The Principal forwards the Volunteer Application, Copy of the State issued ID/Driver's License, and Confidentiality Agreement to the Director of Employee Relations, and notifies the Central Office Secretary. The Principal instructs the potential volunteer to contact the Central Office Secretary at 614-231-7611 to schedule a background check.
3. The potential volunteer goes to the Central Office for background checks or provides copies to the Director of Employee Relations, if the background results have been completed within the past 12 months. The District will cover the cost of the BCI/FBI background check for ten (10) volunteers per building. If a building administrator approves more than ten (10) volunteers in any given school year, the cost of the background check will be charged to the eleventh and subsequent volunteers.
4. When the Director of Employee Relations has the signed Volunteer Application, Copy of the State issued ID/Driver's License, Confidentiality Agreement, and BCI/FBI reports, the volunteer will be recommended to be placed on the Board of Education Agenda for approval. A Level I Volunteer should not be utilized until the BOE/Superintendent has approved the volunteer.
5. The volunteers will get an email after they have been Board approved instructing them to report to the Central Office for an ID badge to be worn when volunteering.
6. This level of volunteer work will be added to a district list by the Central Office in our Google Drive. Forms and approval are annual and will need to be repeated each year to be sure we maintain updated records and to establish yearly continued service. Volunteers with yearly continued service must complete BCI/FBI background checks every 5 years.

Level I Volunteers who have a break in their yearly continued service and wish to once again serve as a Level I Volunteer, must begin the approval process again.

Level 2 Volunteers

- Individuals who will support a staff member and will not have direct supervisory responsibilities of students and will be in close proximity to a staff member at all times are Level 2 Volunteers. This individual will not have sustained access to students for an extended amount of time. (Examples: A chaperone for a field trip who will be under the direct supervision of a staff member and, except for very brief periods of time during a school day or a school activity, within the sight of the supervising staff member, or a guardian speaker/presenter.)
- Individuals who will not be in close proximity to students and whose primary purpose is to support the building. (Example: An individual who reports weekly to make copies for a teacher/staff member.)

Level 2 Volunteer Process

1. Read the handbook, complete the Volunteer Application, Confidentiality Agreement, and submit the completed application to your school secretary.
2. The Principal signs the Volunteer Application and keeps it on file in their school office for the current school year, along with the Confidentiality Agreement. This level of volunteer work will be added to a district list by principals and/or building secretaries in our Google Drive. Forms and approvals are annual and will need to be repeated each year to maintain updated records.

Your Role as a Volunteer

Volunteers support our mission of education. If you volunteer in a classroom, you should make prior arrangements with the teacher with whom you will work. When working with students, individually or in small groups, be sure to follow instructions from the teacher very carefully. While guardians' involvement in their children's education is very beneficial, students and teachers need to focus on their work.

We ask that volunteers report directly to assigned areas and remain in areas of the building that are appropriate for your assignment. When entering a classroom, please come and go quietly in order to avoid interrupting instruction. Student safety is a high priority at our school. Therefore, you must always report to the office before you begin your volunteer activity. Volunteer badges will be provided to individuals who have completed their paperwork and submitted it to be kept on file in the office. Volunteers must wear their name badges while in the building and during the duration of the activity. This will ensure that students and staff can easily identify you. Any adult without a badge will be sent to the office to sign in. We appreciate your cooperation!

Suggestions for Starting Your Volunteer Experience

The following are suggestions that should prove helpful in developing a successful partnership with our students and teachers.

- Meet with the teacher/staff member before you start.
- Ask questions of your teacher (or other staff members) if you are unclear about something.
- Keep communication open.
- Know our safety and security protocols.
- Get to know the school grounds.
- Know the location and phone number of the school office.
- Know the location of important rooms such as the multipurpose room, office, staff restrooms, theater.
- Determine where to park.
- Become familiar with classroom routines.
- Identify the location of supplies within the classroom.
- Establish positive relationships with the students.
- Be encouraging to students.

General Guidelines

Level 1 Volunteers must be approved by the Bexley Board of Education or the Superintendent. Volunteers who donate their time in the schools are covered by the Volunteer Liability Act (1997), which covers volunteers who are acting within their scope of responsibilities. The Act does not cover willful or criminal acts of negligence or omission, or harm caused while operating a motor vehicle.

The following are guidelines that are meant for the protection of students, staff, and volunteers. Please note the Bexley City School District administration has the discretion to dismiss a volunteer whose actions do not support the school's mission.

A volunteer is someone who cares. Thank you for caring! Bexley City School District is an equal opportunity educational institution and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability or age.

Appropriateness of Volunteer Work

If you are asked to do something that makes you feel uncomfortable or for which you feel unprepared, please see the principal or appropriate staff member for guidance. A volunteer is never considered a substitute for a member of the school staff.

Reporting Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect

There may also be a time when a student shares something with you that causes you some concern about their personal safety. If this should be the case or if you have reason to believe that a child has been subjected to abuse or maltreatment, you must immediately inform the classroom teacher or principal. School personnel will proceed by contacting the appropriate authorities.

Student Discipline

Students may occasionally have a behavior problem while working with a volunteer. As with all employees, volunteers may not touch a student in an aggressive, disciplinary, or sexual manner. It is the teacher's responsibility to discipline children. Any concerns that you have about a student and how to manage their behaviors should be brought to the teacher. Speaking to the children in a calm, focused way will go far in getting their attention and cooperation. Telling them directly what you expect of them and what the standards are for the activities will give them a framework on which to focus their efforts. However, a volunteer may not impose punitive consequences directly.

Obligations of Confidentiality

We ask that you respect the confidentiality of information that students or staff share with you. The Federal Education Right to Privacy Act, (FERPA) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records (including medical records) and information. Volunteers must protect the teachers' and students' right to privacy. It is extremely important that you do not talk with other guardians or community members about any of the children in the school. Violations of confidentiality may cause school authorities to suspend your opportunity to volunteer for our school district.

You may also encounter personal and school information while volunteering; you are not to disclose this information outside of the school setting. You will be serving in a unique capacity with our students. Sometimes students share things with a volunteer that they have not shared with anyone else. This information may be about private family matters or information about themselves that they are entrusting to you. It is very important to the integrity of your work with students that you do not share this information with others. If you feel it is important that another person has this information, please talk to the teacher or the principal.

When working as a school volunteer, there may be times when confidential information is seen or heard. Our staff will make every effort to prevent this from happening; however, as a volunteer you must agree that you will not repeat confidential information outside of the school. You will be serving in a unique capacity with our students. Sometimes students share things with a volunteer that they have not shared with anyone else. This information may be about private family matters or information about themselves that they are entrusting to you. It is very important to the integrity of your work with students that you do not share this information with

others. If you feel it is important that another person have this information, please talk to the teacher or the principal.

Additionally, three laws govern special education confidentiality, FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act), IDEIA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act), and the Ohio Policies Governing Services for Children with Disabilities. All three bodies of regulations indicate that confidentiality must be maintained relative to special education students. Therefore, any written or verbal communication with anyone who does not have a right to know is in violation of the laws. A volunteer should not discuss a child's disability or medical condition with any individual other than the classroom instructor, building principals, or building staff member. The volunteer should not use any written or verbal statements outside of the school that would divulge the child's disability or medical condition; this includes notes, email, text messages, and/or social media sites. In essence, only those who work directly with the student are considered as those with a "need to know." If at any time these terms of confidentiality are violated by a volunteer, termination of volunteer services may occur.

As a school volunteer, you are subject to a code of ethics similar to that which binds educational professionals. You must keep confidential matters private. Volunteering at Bexley City Schools is a privilege and not a right. The school's principal reserves the right to deny or remove any volunteer violating confidentiality or any other Bexley City School District policy. By signing the volunteer application, you are agreeing not to divulge information about any student or family to any person outside the school setting.

Supervision

Level 2 Volunteers who are working with students should always work under the direct supervision of the appropriate staff member and only with those teachers and/or staff members to whom the volunteer is assigned. "Direct Supervision" means under the direction of and, except for brief periods of time during a school day or a school activity, within sight of an employee. School volunteers who are not working with students should always work under the general supervision of the appropriate staff member and only with those teachers and/or staff members to whom the volunteer is assigned.

Student Instruction

Volunteers are an important part of the educational process. The suggestions and opinions of volunteers are welcome. However, the staff is responsible, by law, for the decisions that are made regarding the instruction of students and the management of the school. Consequently, volunteers should not provide the curriculum or teaching plan, take charge of the classroom, diagnose student needs, evaluate achievement, or counsel students.

Restrooms

Volunteers must use restrooms designated for staff. Volunteers are not permitted to use student restrooms.

Dismissal and Transport of Students

Students leaving school must have permission from the school and must follow established school procedures. Students must be dismissed from school by appropriate staff. Volunteers must work with students only during regular school hours at the location designated by the supervising staff member. Volunteers cannot escort a student off-campus and cannot drive students in their vehicles except, of course, if the student is the volunteer's child unless they have prior arrangements with that student's guardians(s) and the guardian(s) of the child has/have notified (in writing) the school.

Student Contact

Volunteers should not telephone students or visit them off-campus. If you are interested in working with students off-campus and outside of school hours, we encourage you to contact local organizations that arrange these types of situations. Volunteers are not to ask for telephone numbers of students nor to give their numbers to students for the purpose of phoning or texting.

Social Media

Because, in a form, school volunteers represent the school, it is reasonable for the school to ask volunteers to represent themselves and the school within their social media in a professional manner. As well, due to privacy concerns, volunteers should not post on social media any information obtained while volunteering. Also, volunteers are not permitted to post online pictures of students (other than their own children) taken while serving in the capacity of a volunteer. Please remember that volunteering to work in the classroom is a privilege – not a right. Violations of social media may cause school authorities to suspend that privilege.

Cell Phones

Cell phones should be off while you are working with children, except in case of emergencies. If you must take or make a call, please do so outside of the classroom. Talking on the phone is very distracting to the students. It can also give the impression that what they are doing is not as important as the conversation.

Health and Safety

If you are sick, please let the appropriate staff member know that you will not be coming in, and they will make alternative arrangements. Volunteers must not lift heavy tables or equipment, due to liability issues. Please make arrangements with the site's custodial staff to put up tables, arrange equipment, or complete necessary lifting tasks.

Sign In and Out

Please sign in and out of the school office as you come and go from school. This allows the school to manage the number of individuals on the campus at any one time. You will receive a

visitor badge to wear while you are on campus. You must wear your badge at all times while you are in the building.

*Cassingham Complex volunteers only have access to the building in which they are serving. If a volunteer needs to conduct business in another school within the complex they must report to the Main Entrance and sign back in.

School Rules

A parent/guardian/Student Handbook is available online for your review. Please refer to it if you have any questions.

Professionalism

Although the job is voluntary, the commitment is professional. Besides being responsible for maintaining an attitude of mutual respect and confidence, you should also become familiar with school and classroom policies and practices.

Attire

Your appearance should be neat and professional. This would apply to field trips as well as indoor and/or outdoor activities. In the event that attire is deemed to be inappropriate; t-shirt slogans, advertisements for tobacco or alcohol products, attire displaying weapons, etc., the building principal may ask a volunteer to leave the school.

Timeliness

Please remember to be on time. When you are late or do not come in for your volunteer session, it can upset the routine of the classroom and students. Students, teachers, and staff members count on you and rely on the services performed by you as a volunteer. It is essential that you contact the school if you are unable to volunteer on your scheduled day so that other arrangements can be made. All volunteering should be pre-arranged with the teacher. Lesson plans are commonly written around a volunteer's availability. Teachers will not have time to put together work for you to do while attending to the children in the classroom.

Drugs (prescription and over-the-counter)

Our school is a drug-free workplace. Drugs of any kind are not permitted to be in the presence of children. Please be aware of what you have in your possessions. Volunteers are not permitted to give over-the-counter medication or medical treatment to students. Please send students with this need to the school nurse, classroom teacher, or building principal.

Tobacco

Tobacco use of any kind is never permitted in the school or on school grounds (including the parking lot); this includes evenings and weekends.

Emergency Procedures

To be prepared for emergencies, learn the correct procedures for responding to emergencies and for following the rules for fire, tornado, and lock-down drills. Please see the classroom teacher or front office for instructions. In a life-threatening situation, you should be aware of the “Run, Hide, Fight” options. Please view the video at <https://tinyurl.com/yan7molm>

Volunteer Placement

It is not always in the best interest of a child to have guardians, relatives, etc., volunteer in their children’s classrooms. Therefore, volunteers may be utilized in classrooms other than those in which their children are enrolled. Younger and/or older siblings are not permitted to accompany volunteers in the school.

Promotion of Products, Religions, or Politics

Volunteers may not promote any commercial product, any religious doctrines or beliefs, or any political candidates or parties while volunteering at school.

When Working with an Individual Student

- Let the student know that you care about their thoughts and ideas.
- Accept the student for whom they are...don't try and make them into something they are not. You are here to help, not change them.
- Be encouraging.
- Recognize effort as well as products.
- If you don't know an answer to something, admit it and work it out together...nobody knows everything!
- Let the child know that you enjoy your time with them...and enjoy yourself!!

When Working with Groups of Students

- Find out what the teacher wants you to work on...get specifics.
- Indicate to the children how you would like to be addressed – the teacher may have preferences in this area.
- You may want to have the children wear name tags so that you can address them personally.
- Discuss with the teacher ahead of time what classroom management techniques you should be using.
- Encourage all the students, not just the ones with the correct answer.
- Give each student time to answer...don't allow other students to jump in and answer for them.
- Ask students their names and make notes in order to remember them.
- Let the children know that you enjoy your time with them...and enjoy yourself!!

Volunteer Code of Ethics

You are about to join a very important part of this school's educational team of school volunteers. It takes an exceptional person to give their time and energy to help make our school stronger. Your caring enables us to work better and more productively, and your involvement gives our students extra time and personal contact that are vital to academic success. You are sending students the powerful message that people care about them. As a role model, it is important to follow the Bexley Volunteer Code of Ethics and honor Volunteer General Agreements.

RESPECT FOR AUTHORITY: A volunteer should respect the authority of the school and the school administration.

CONFIDENTIALITY: A volunteer shall not discuss school matters or information concerning students outside the classroom with anyone, but the designated school staff.

IMPARTIALITY: A volunteer shall favor no one side or party more than another in all school situations.

OBJECTIVITY: A volunteer shall not let their personal feelings enter their work as a volunteer.

APPEARANCE: A volunteer shall dress appropriately, always remembering that they are setting an example for the students.

Additional Requirements

1. I agree to perform the duties assigned to me in accordance with the district policies and procedures as outlined in the Bexley City School District Volunteer Manual.
2. I agree to conduct myself in a professional manner, to promote the education and interests of the students and the reputation of the Bexley City School District.
3. I agree not to disclose any confidential information or materials that I may have access to as a result of my volunteer assignment.
4. I agree not to post student information or pictures on social media sites.
5. I understand that as a volunteer I must work under the direction of a professional employee at all times.
6. I understand that I may be dismissed if I have been named as a perpetrator of a founded report of child abuse or as the individual responsible for injury or abuse in a founded report.
7. I agree that any contact with students beyond my approved method of contact associated with my volunteer work, must be pre-approved by the student's guardians and the school principal.

8. I have read, understand, and agree to comply with the provisions of this volunteer handbook and Policy IICC--School Volunteers.

9. I understand any volunteers who have or will have unsupervised access to students on a regular basis may be required to submit to a criminal records check at any time.

10. I confirm that I have never been arrested or convicted of a criminal offense. I have never been named as a perpetrator in a founded or indicated report of child abuse, and in the future if arrested or convicted for any such offence or named as a perpetrator, I will provide written notice to the District within 72 hours of such event.

11. I understand a violation of any of the terms of this volunteer handbook could result in termination of my volunteer assignment. My signature on the volunteer application indicates the following: all information provided by me is both current and accurate, I have received and read this volunteer handbook, and I agree with all volunteer terms, conditions and policies.

12. I understand that although I am covered under Bexley City School District's liability insurance policy, I am not covered by its health insurance policy nor am I eligible for Workers' Compensation.

13. I understand if I become ill or suffer an injury as a result of volunteer services for the Bexley City School District, I release the Bexley City School District of any obligation; agreeing that I shall be responsible for any and all hospital and medical charges that may accrue.

14. I release the Bexley City School District from any and all liability for any damages, whatever their nature, which may result as a consequence of my volunteer services.

15. I agree that it is my responsibility to notify the District by way of contacting the Director of Employee Relations if the status of my criminal history information changes in any way after the date on this form.

16. I understand that serving as a volunteer requires yearly principal recommendation and board approval.

Volunteer Confidentiality Agreement

Level 1 and Level 2 Volunteers Must Agree and Sign In Order to Be Considered

There are federal and state laws that protect the privacy rights of students and families. In a school situation, there are many instances in which confidential information is discussed in order to better understand students and how we can help them. When working in the schools as a volunteer, there may be times when this information is heard. Our staff will make every effort to prevent this from happening; however, as a volunteer you must agree that if you do hear information about a student or family you will not repeat this outside of the school. This will ensure the protection of our students' interest and their families, thus creating a better environment for all.

Additionally, three laws govern special education confidentiality, FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act), IDEIA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act), and the Ohio Policies Governing Services for Children with Disabilities. All three bodies of regulations indicate that confidentiality must be maintained relative to special education students. Therefore, any written or verbal communication with anyone who does not have a right to know is in violation of the laws. A volunteer should not discuss a child's disability or medical condition with any individual other than the classroom instructor, building principals, or building staff member. The volunteer should not use any written or verbal statements outside of the school that would divulge the child's disability or medical condition; this includes notes, email, text messages, and/or social media sites. In essence, only those who work directly with the student are considered as those with a "need to know." If at any time these terms of confidentiality are violated by a volunteer, termination of volunteer services may occur.

As a volunteer, I realize that I am subject to a code of ethics similar to that which binds the professionals in the field in which I work. I will keep confidential matters private. I also understand that volunteering at Bexley City Schools is a privilege and not a right. The school's principal reserves the right to deny or remove any volunteer violating confidentiality or any Bexley City School District policy. By signing this agreement, I am stating that I will not divulge information about any student or family to any person outside the school setting.

Volunteer Name (please print): _____

Student Name(s) _____

Student's Teacher(s) _____

Volunteer Signature: _____ Date: _____

My signature on the Volunteer Confidentiality Agreement form attests that I have read and understand the expectations and confidentiality of being a school volunteer. I understand that if any of the Code of Ethics or General Agreements are violated, I may not be able to continue to offer my time as a volunteer.

Volunteer Application:  **volunteer application**