

DCSD Volunteer Guidelines Common Questions

Are all individuals visiting the school considered volunteers and required to go through this process?

No. A parent or guardian visiting the school to meet with their child's teacher, eat lunch with their child or attending a singular school sponsored events such as career day, beautification day, etc., are visitors, not volunteers. However, if an individual is coming into contact with students such as acting in the capacity as a "helper" or "assistant" for a class, that individual is considered a volunteer and required to complete the Volunteer Registration Application and Mandated Reporter training.

Why am I required to view the Mandated Reporter presentation?

House Bill 1176 was signed into law in May 2012. This Bill revised OCGA 19-7-5 that requires all school affiliated volunteers to become "mandated reporters" in instances of suspected child abuse. The law was amended as an extra layer of protection for school aged children. Failure to report a case of suspected child abuse will result in a misdemeanor.

What are the limitations regarding the work of a volunteer with students?

Volunteers may work with small groups of students or an individual student in a tutoring or mentoring capacity or assist in other ways at the principal's discretion. A volunteer may work with an individual student in an open area, where they may be easily observed by other volunteers or staff members, e.g. media center, cafeteria, hallway, etc. Volunteers may not be left alone or provide support to an individual student in secluded areas of the school where they may not be observed, e.g. closed office, isolated classroom, etc.

Why do volunteers need to be fingerprinted? Is there a cost involved in having a criminal background check?

DCSD is committed to the safety and security of all students. As a result, volunteers who will be working in close proximity to students, such as providing individual tutoring, mentoring or coaching, as well as other one to one student interaction, must submit to a background check. The cost of completing a background check is \$41 and must be paid for by the volunteer or sponsoring organization.

Excerpt from policy GAK(1): Volunteers are non-paid persons who provide services at approved school or district-sponsored activities. Persons who, in the course of their service, will come into contact with students who are not their own student and/or who will serve as a tutor, mentor, coach, etc. must successfully complete a district Volunteer Registration process prior to coming into contact with students. This process will include the mandated reporter training per O.C.G.A. §19-7-5 and the associated district fingerprint and background check. The prospective volunteer is responsible for the cost of the fingerprint and background check.

Are Registered Volunteers permitted to assist with after school programs/activities?

Yes. Registered Volunteers are permitted to assist students beyond the school day. The same limitations apply during non-traditional hours, whereby Registered Volunteers are required to interact with students in open areas where they may be easily observed by others.

Are Registered Volunteers permitted to utilize student restrooms?

No. All adults, including Registered Volunteers, must utilize adult restroom facilities located in teacher workrooms, lounges, media centers and other designated areas of the building.

Am I required to complete the volunteer process at every school my child attends?

No. Once you complete the application process and become a Registered Volunteer, you may volunteer at any DCSD school for the entire year (July through June). The names of Registered Volunteers are maintained by the District for reference by school staff.

How will the Sexual Offender Registry affect my ability to volunteer?

Persons listed on the Sexual Offender Registry will not be permitted to serve as volunteers in the DCSD. You may check the status of individuals via:

http://state.sor.gbi.ga.gov/sort_public/SearchOffender.aspx

What if I have a concern regarding someone who may be listed on the Sexual Offender Registry?

You should contact your local law enforcement agency. DCSD is not charged with investigating concerns regarding the registry that is governed by the Georgia Bureau of Investigations.

Do I have to complete this process if I am a volunteer for a project, however, I do not interact with children?

No. If you have been invited by the principal or designee to participate in a supervised one-time school activity which takes place on school property when no children are present such school beautification project, you are not required to become a Registered Volunteer.

Are one-time guest speakers at an assembly, graduation or other school/district sponsored activity required to complete this process?

No. Speakers who will be presenting to a group of students are visitors to the school. As such, they are not required to complete the Volunteer Application Process. However, all visitors should be supervised by a school employee at all times. Speakers should be escorted to the auditorium, arena or other presentation area and, upon completion; they should be escorted out of the building. At no time should district staff leave a visitor alone.

To learn more, please contact Pamela Mathis, Family Engagement Liaison