

## Importance of Volunteers/Chaperones

We greatly appreciate all of our volunteers/chaperones who provide much needed assistance to students and teachers in so many ways, from attending school field trips and musical competitions to Agri-Science activities and athletics. Volunteers/Chaperones provide countless hours of support to our District, dedicated to being a part of the scholastic world of our students.

We value our relationships with parents and the larger community, and welcome the opportunity for community members to offer their valuable time to supporting the mission of our District – to provide all students a secure learning environment and exemplary academic programs that inspire all students to reach their full potential.

This manual serves as a resource for all current and prospective volunteers/chaperones for the Ephrata Area School District. It contains District policies and procedures for volunteers/chaperones, including the processes to apply for clearances. Please contact the respective principal in the building where you seek to volunteer or chaperone if you have additional questions about the contents of this manual. You may also contact the Human Resources Department at (717) 721-1513 for answers to your questions.

Contact information for each school is as follows:

Akron Elementary School: (717) 859-0400

Clay Elementary School: (717) 721-1100

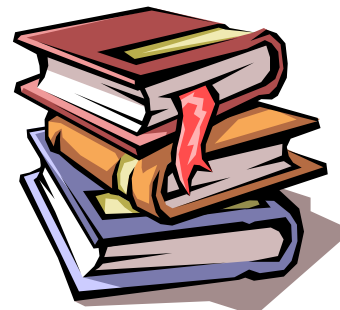
Fulton Elementary School: (717) 721-1130

Highland Elementary School – (717) 721-1160

Ephrata Intermediate School – (717) 721-1405

Ephrata Middle School – (717) 721-1468

Ephrata High School: (717) 721-1478



The Ephrata Area School District is an equal opportunity educational institution and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, or disability in any of its activities, programs, or employment practices as required by Title VI, Title IX, Section 504, and the American Disabilities Act. For information regarding civil rights or grievance procedures, contact the District Office, 803 Oak Boulevard, Ephrata, PA 17522 at (717) 721-1513.

## School Board Policies Addressing School Volunteers/Chaperones

The Ephrata Area School District has three Board policies that address important rules and procedures for volunteers/chaperones. Board Policy No. 916 – *School Volunteers/Chaperones* provides volunteers/chaperones with specific information about the types of volunteering opportunities and the guidelines and requirements. Board Policy No. 907 – *School Visitors* establishes procedures governing school visits and Policy No. 917 – *Parent/Family Involvement* outlines guidelines for effective involvement in the schools.

The Board recognizes the vital role parents/families play in the education, welfare, and values of their children. The district is committed to the belief that all students can learn and acknowledges that schools, families, and the community share a commitment to the educational success of students. As noted in Board Policy No. 916,

*The Board recognizes that quality educational programs require the active support and involvement of everyone associated with our schools. School volunteers can make valuable contributions to the educational program. The use of school volunteers is endorsed by the Board, subject to legal requirements and administrative procedures.*

The District categorizes volunteers/chaperones using the titles provided below:

- Occasional Volunteer
- Supervised Special Events Volunteer
- Unsupervised Special Events Volunteer
- Regular Volunteer

## Steps for Becoming a Volunteer/Chaperone

In order to become a volunteer/chaperone, you must comply with the following requirements:

- ✓ Complete the ***Volunteer/Chaperone Application Form*** and ***Volunteer/Chaperone Disclosure Form*** located in the Appendix portion of this manual. The completed forms must be sent to the Human Resources Office, Ephrata Area School District, 803 Oak Boulevard, Ephrata, PA 17522.
- ✓ Complete the applications for the **required clearances** as noted by the volunteer/chaperone position you are seeking. The required clearances are issued through the Department of Public Welfare, Pennsylvania State Police, and the FBI. All regular volunteers must also undergo a tuberculosis (TB) examination in accordance with the regulations of the Pennsylvania Department of Health. Please see *Volunteers/Chaperones Policy Summary* (page 3) for the specific clearances required for each classification of volunteer. The clearances and TB test are at the expense of the volunteer/chaperone, unless otherwise approved by an administrator.

## Volunteers/Chaperones Policy Summary

- **Occasional Volunteer** – any individual who serves as a volunteer without compensation for a limited number of times during a single school year and has contact with students only under the direct supervision of district staff. A homeroom parent is an example of this type of volunteer.
  - Yearly review and approval by building principal; copy of Volunteer/Chaperone Application Form kept in the respective building administrative office
  
- **Supervised Special Events Volunteer** – any individual who serves as a volunteer without compensation for special school events and has contact with students only under the direct supervision of district staff. Parents serving as a student chaperone at a dance or a volunteer at a holiday party are examples of this type of volunteer.
  - *Child Abuse History Clearance* (\$10 money order payable to Department of Public Welfare)
  - *Pennsylvania State Criminal Record Check* (\$10 money order or certified check payable to Commonwealth of Pennsylvania)
  - *FBI Federal Criminal History Record Check* (\$36 registration fee online at [www.pa.cogentid.com](http://www.pa.cogentid.com))
    - (All clearances must be given to Human Resources Department in the District Office)
  - Tuberculosis (TB) Examination (obtain at your cost from a family physician; proof of TB screening must be given to Human Resources Department in the District Office)
  - Yearly review and approval by building principal; copy of Volunteer/Chaperone Application Form kept in the respective building administrative office
  - If a **break in service** occurs that covers a time period of one (1) school year during which an individual does not serve as a supervised special events volunteer, he/she will be required to renew the clearance checks
  
- **Unsupervised Special Events Volunteer** – any individual who serves as a volunteer without compensation for special school events such as field trips and has contact with students outside of direct supervision by district staff. A parent serving as a student group chaperone for a school day or overnight trip is an example of this type of volunteer.
  - *Child Abuse History Clearance* (\$10 money order payable to Department of Public Welfare) – reimbursable by District if purchased only for an overnight trip
  - *Pennsylvania State Criminal Record Check* (\$10 money order or certified check payable to Commonwealth of Pennsylvania) – reimbursable by District if purchased only for an overnight trip
  - *FBI Federal Criminal History Record Check* (\$36 registration fee online at [www.pa.cogentid.com](http://www.pa.cogentid.com))
    - (All clearances must be given to Human Resources Department in the District Office)
  - Tuberculosis (TB) Examination (obtain at your cost from a family physician; proof of TB screening must be given to Human Resources Department in the District Office)
  - Yearly review and approval by building principal; copy of Volunteer/Chaperone Application Form kept in the respective building administrative office

- If a **break in service** occurs that covers a time period of one (1) school year during which an individual does not serve as an unsupervised special events volunteer, he/she will be required to renew the clearance checks
- **Regular Volunteer** – any individual who frequently and regularly serves as a volunteer without compensation and who has both supervised and unsupervised contact with students. A parent who comes to a classroom or the school on a regular basis to work with small groups of students is an example of this type of volunteer. Athletic and band volunteers are also examples.
  - *Child Abuse History Clearance* (\$10 money order payable to Department of Public Welfare)
  - *Pennsylvania State Criminal Record Check* (\$10 money order or certified check payable to Commonwealth of Pennsylvania)
  - *FBI Federal Criminal History Record Check* (\$36 registration fee online at [www.pa.cogentid.com](http://www.pa.cogentid.com))
    - (All clearances must be given to Human Resources Department in the District Office)
  - Tuberculosis (TB) Examination (obtain at your cost from a family physician; proof of TB screening must be given to Human Resources Department in the District Office)
  - Yearly review and approval by building principal; copy of Volunteer/Chaperone Application Form kept in the respective building administrative office
  - If a **break in service** occurs that covers a time period of one (1) school year during which an individual does not serve as a regular volunteer, he/she will be required to renew the clearance checks.

Volunteers may be allowed to work in the district up to thirty (30) calendar days while awaiting the return of their clearances, provided that they are working under the direct and immediate supervision of a district employee and not working directly with children. Prior to the start of the volunteering or chaperoning, volunteers/chaperones will need to sign the *Volunteer/Chaperone Disclosure Form* stating that their status as a working volunteer/chaperone is pending the results of the clearances. **No individual may be an *Unsupervised Special Events Volunteer* or *Regular Volunteer* until all required clearances and TB test results are in the District's Human Resources Office.**

No individual will be approved to serve as a volunteer or chaperone if the criminal history, child abuse, or FBI reports evidence of an offense which would preclude him/her from being employed in a Pennsylvania public school under Act 34, Act 114, or Act 151.

An individual who desires to visit a school for a specific purpose, such as a scheduled parent-teacher conference, or provide a one-time service that may involve a presentation to a class or the school, is not considered a volunteer or chaperone. A visitor will not interact unsupervised with children, and does not provide ongoing service to the District.

If an individual already has clearances that were obtained less than a year from the current date (for a previous community/church activity, etc.), these reports may be provided to the Human Resources Office.

If a **break in service** occurs that covers a time period of one (1) school year during which an individual does not serve as a volunteer or chaperone in any classification, he/she will be required to renew the clearance checks.



## **Guidelines for Volunteers/Chaperones**

The following guidelines must be followed when providing services to the District:

- Volunteers/chaperones must honor all applicable privacy laws and regulations. It is expected that confidential information about students, staff, other volunteers, or school district business be maintained as confidential. Anything that is overheard concerning students or staff should never be shared outside the building.
- Volunteers must sign in and out of the school office during all working hours unless they are working as an athletic coach.
- Volunteers must wear the name tag/identification provided at the sign-in. Athletic coaches do not need name tags.
- Volunteers/chaperones do not assume the professional responsibilities of school staff. Volunteers offer support and operate under the primary direction of staff.
- Volunteers/chaperones are not permitted to directly administer student discipline outside of the guidelines established by the building administrator. Similarly, volunteers should not administer first aid unless in the case of an emergency.
- Volunteers/chaperones should honor that safety is a top priority. They should become familiar with the surrounding area and make note of exits and safety equipment. Volunteers/chaperones must remain calm and protect themselves and others from accidents and injuries. School staff or the building administrator should be contacted in the case of an incident, and any relevant information must be relayed. Any accident involving a student, school staff, or volunteer that occurs on school property must be reported to the school office using the designated district accident report form.
- Volunteers/chaperones do not receive compensation for their services to the District. They are not Board-approved paid employees of the District.
- Volunteers/chaperones are provided the same liability insurance coverage as provided for employees of the district.
- Volunteers/chaperones providing transportation to events with students must be given prior approval by the building administrator. Volunteers who transport students in personal vehicles must abide by all policies and procedures established by the District.

## Compliance with Drug/Substance Abuse and Tobacco Use Policies

The Ephrata Area School District works to maintain a safe and drug-free school campus. The District prohibits the use of controlled substances and tobacco on school property. The Board prohibits the use, possession, distribution, and being under the influence of any controlled substances during school hours, at any time while on school property, at any school-sponsored activity, and during the time spent traveling to and from school and school-sponsored activities.

Act 191 of the Pennsylvania Legislature of 1988 24 P.S. 5-527 requires that any employee of the Ephrata Area School District who is convicted of the delivery of a controlled substance or convicted of the possession of a controlled substance with the intent to deliver shall be terminated from his or her employment with the district – regardless of where the violation occurred. The same policy applies to volunteers/chaperones.

The Ephrata Area School District is dedicated to providing a healthy, comfortable, and productive environment for staff, students, and visitors. Because the Board is concerned about the health of its employees and because it recognizes the importance of adult role-modeling for students during the formative years, a tobacco free environment is enforced. The Board prohibits tobacco use by employees in a school building and on any property, buses, vans, and vehicles that are owned, leased, or controlled by the school district. The Board prohibits tobacco use by employees at school sponsored activities that are held off school property.



The volunteer/chaperone position is a privilege and not a right. Any volunteer/chaperone position may be eliminated at any time for any reason. Furthermore, any volunteer/chaperone may be removed from a volunteer/chaperone position for any reason.

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*Achieving Success One Student at a Time*