

Oak Ridge Schools

Office of the Superintendent



Administrative Procedure 4.501

School Volunteers

Oak Ridge Schools is committed to providing a safe school environment for all students and staff and to continue to maintain high levels of volunteerism in the district. As part of this commitment, the district has differing requirements for all volunteers. Requirements for volunteers shall be based upon specific volunteer service levels.

Volunteers approved for volunteer service for the district must receive permission from principals or other administrative personnel prior to providing service to the district.

A. VOLUNTEER SERVICE LEVELS

Level 1 General Volunteers – have no direct or extended contact with students. Examples of general volunteers include, but are not limited to, speakers, program guests, daytime field trip chaperones who accompany school personnel on local field trips, judges of student competitions, occasional classroom visitors, or fundraising event participants.

Level 2 Monitored Volunteers – have direct and/or extended contact with students, during and after school hours, in the presence and under supervision of district personnel. Examples of monitored volunteers include, but are not limited to, room parents, class readers, front door reception workers and office volunteers.

Level 3 Unmonitored Volunteers (Only to be used in limited situations where district personnel have to be away for short periods of time.) – have direct and/or extended contact with students, both during and after school hours, without the presence and direct supervision of district personnel. Examples of unmonitored volunteers include, but are not limited to, chaperones assisting school staff on out of state or overnight travel, athletic coaches, one-on-one tutors or mentors, group mentors, and individuals who assist teachers sponsoring student extra-curricular activities.

The Superintendent shall periodically review the specific standards for approving prospective volunteers.

B. APPLICATION AND CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK REQUIREMENTS FOR VOLUNTEERS

Level 1 General Volunteers – Volunteers serving occasionally in a highly public setting with little or no direct contact with students and who are under constant supervision by Oak Ridge personnel will not be required to complete a volunteer application or a criminal background check.

Level 2 Monitored Volunteers – Regular volunteers with student contact under constant supervision of Oak Ridge personnel must complete a volunteer application and a confidentiality agreement acknowledging FERPA (student confidentiality) requirements prior to serving as a volunteer.

Level 3 Unmonitored Volunteers – Unmonitored volunteers will be required to (1) complete a volunteer application and confidentiality agreement which must be submitted to the school department prior to serving as a volunteer and (2) complete the same criminal background check required of employees and be cleared by Human Resources prior to serving as a volunteer. Prospective volunteers who refuse to submit to the required application and confidentiality and criminal background check shall not provide volunteer services.

The costs for criminal background checks required for unmonitored Level 3 volunteers will be borne by the district.

The ORS Human Resources department will maintain the records of volunteer criminal background checks just as they do for employees.

Social Security numbers will be safeguarded and will not be included on information that is shared with the schools or departments. However, the information obtained from these searches include public records from across the nation. Because of this, ORS cannot guarantee that the information is confidential. If an individual is concerned that a criminal background check will reveal something that they do not want disclosed, they should not volunteer for Level 3 work. ORS will not disclose results to any member of the public unless required by law to do so, but Tennessee law does require disclosure of most government records to members of the public upon written request.

Criminal background check results

Prospective volunteers who have pending charges or who have been convicted of child abuse/neglect against a child, of selling drugs to or of committing any criminal offense involving a minor will not be eligible to serve as a volunteer. Additionally, prospective volunteers who have pending charges or who have been convicted of committing any of the following offenses will not be eligible to serve as a volunteer: aggravated child abuse and neglect, aggravated rape, aggravated sexual battery, aggravated spousal rape, spousal rape and spousal sexual battery, incest, rape, rape of a child, sexual battery by an authority figure, sexual battery, and statutory rape.

Individual circumstances may be considered prior to preventing an individual from providing volunteer services based on committing offenses other than those listed above. Criminal background checks indicating criminal convictions shall be reviewed by the Superintendent of Schools to determine if a cause for concern exists for the safety of the students, employees, and/or property of the ORS. The applicant shall be provided an opportunity to view the report and, if applicable, dispute the accuracy of the information. Upon verification of the results, the Superintendent of Schools shall make a final decision. Oak Ridge Schools reserves the right to declare a volunteer ineligible at any time and for any reason allowed by law.

There will be no appeal procedure since there is no legal right to volunteer; the schools can always refuse volunteer work absent discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex and disability. However, the prospective volunteer can certainly talk with the Superintendent if the prospective volunteer has any questions.

Volunteers who are arrested and/or convicted of any crime during the time in which they have been approved to provide volunteer services must immediately report the arrest and/or conviction to the Principal/Administrator. Failure to report promptly may result in being disqualified as a volunteer. Volunteers may be removed from volunteer activities or reassigned based on initial and updated criminal background checks.

C. DOCUMENTATION OF VOLUNTEER SERVICES

December 12, 2022

All volunteers, including general volunteers, must sign in and out at their school/department location, present appropriate identification when requested, and wear some form of identification when providing their volunteer service.

The school principal or administrator must maintain a daily roster of all individuals who enter and leave the school or departments to perform volunteer activity.

A school may, at its discretion, require volunteers to complete a general school volunteer application or roster that does not require a criminal background check (e.g., general application or roster for volunteers serving as chaperones on field trips). This general application or roster shall be maintained only at the school.

DISCLOSURE

In the event of legal action taken against a volunteer for actions associated with his/her activities as a volunteer, the Board may, in its sole discretion, furnish legal assistance or representation, or choose to indemnify the volunteer from liability. ORS has no duty whatsoever to defend or indemnify any volunteer for their actions, nor shall this policy create any expectation of defense or indemnification on the part of any volunteer. All volunteers are responsible for their own actions and are not agents of ORS.

D. REMOVAL OF VOLUNTEERS

Oak Ridge Schools reserves the right to declare a volunteer ineligible at any time and for any reason allowed by law.