

The Manchester Board of Education recognizes the importance of school volunteers at all levels of schooling. The Board of Education encourages the use of school volunteers to: (1) increase students' educational attainment, (2) provide enrichment experiences for students, (3) increase the effective utilization of staff time and skills, (4) give more individual attention to students, and (5) promote greater community involvement. The Board encourages a volunteer program in the District and in its schools with suitable regulations and safeguards.

Through the publication of administrative regulations pursuant to this policy, the Superintendent of Schools may set such criteria for the qualifications of volunteers, as well as their responsibilities and supervision, as the Superintendent may deem appropriate in his/her discretion.

Volunteers may be required to submit to state and federal criminal record checks and a record check of the Department of Children and Families (DCF) Child Abuse and Neglect Registry. No person who is a "sex offender," as defined by Public - Act 98-111, An Act Concerning the Registration of Sexual Offenders, may volunteer in Manchester Public Schools.

(cf. 1240 – Citizens' Assistance to School Personnel) (cf. 6162.4 - Community Resources)

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes Connecticut
 General Statutes § 10-4g Connecticut General
 Statutes § 10-235
 Connecticut General Statutes § 54-254

 Public Act 97-290

 Public Act 98-111 an Act Concerning the Registration of Sexual Offenders

School Volunteers

Securing and Screening Volunteers

The Building Principal or his/her designee directs the use of volunteers within the school. Specifically, the Principal or designee directs volunteer recruitment, screening, placement, and training within the following parameters:

1. **Qualifications.** Volunteers may come from all backgrounds and all age groups. The main qualification for a volunteer is that he or she has a desire to give his or her time and talent in order to enrich student learning opportunities and the school community generally.

No person who is a “sex offender” as defined by Public Act 98-111, An Act Concerning the Registration of Sexual Offenders, may volunteer in Manchester Public Schools.

2. **Recruitment.** School personnel may recruit volunteers through the following resources: parent(s)/guardians, parent organizations, retired teachers and other senior citizen groups, community businesses, local volunteer centers, and universities. If a staff member, other than the Principal, recruits a volunteer, the staff member must provide the volunteer's name and address to the Principal.
3. **Role.** Volunteers serve only in an auxiliary capacity under the direction and supervision of a staff member; a volunteer is not a substitute for a member of the school staff. Volunteers do not have access to confidential student school records.
4. **Volunteer Application.** Persons interested in volunteering their services should contact the Principal, and must submit a new volunteer information form. A volunteer information form must be completed for every school year for which the volunteer seeks to volunteer.
5. **Screening Procedure.** The following procedure has been established for screening volunteers. For the purpose of this procedure, volunteers are defined as those individuals who volunteer their time to assist in schools for the benefit of the student body with the expressed knowledge, consent and direction of the Principal or designee.

In all cases, whenever an individual submits a new volunteer information form, the Principal or designee shall review the sex offender list most recently published to confirm that the volunteer is not a sex offender. The Principal shall also review sex offender lists whenever volunteer chaperones will be used.

Depending on the nature of the volunteer activity, an individual may be required to submit to state and federal criminal record checks and a record check of the Department of Children and Families (DCF) Child Abuse and Neglect Registry within 10 days of application to volunteer. All results must be received by the Human Resources Office before the volunteer may commence his or her volunteer activities.

For purposes of screening, the District has identified two classifications of volunteers: Group I and Group II.

Group I

Volunteers will be classified in Group I when they engage in activities in the presence of a Manchester Public Schools employee. Background checks may be required of Group I volunteers. Group I volunteers are those who engage in activities such as, but not limited to, those listed below when a staff member is always present:

- assisting in a classroom, cafeteria, or library when a staff member is present;
- accompanying a class on a field trip during the school day with a teacher;
- helping in the school office during regular school hours;
- assisting in the cafeteria or library during regular school hours; and
- extracurricular events, i.e., dances, fairs, open house, etc.

Group II

Volunteers will be classified in Group II when they engage in activities involving students when not in the direct and continuing presence of a Manchester Public Schools employee. Group II volunteers will be required to complete a consent form regarding the release of information concerning any prior or pending criminal offenses, and such volunteers will be required to submit to a record check of the Department of Children and Families (DCF) Abuse and Neglect Registry. Group II volunteers are those who engage in activities such as, but not limited to, those listed below:

- working in direct contact with students without the direct and continuous presence of a Manchester Public Schools employee;
- accompanying a class on a field trip in which the plans include that students be divided into small groups supervised solely by the volunteer chaperone for any length of time;
- chaperoning an overnight field trip; and
- coaching.

Upon receipt of DCF Abuse and Neglect Registry results indicating that the volunteer is involved in an abuse or neglect investigation or that the volunteer is listed as a perpetrator of abuse or neglect on the Registry, the Superintendent or his/her designee will notify the volunteer in writing of the results of the Registry check and will provide an opportunity for the volunteer to respond to the results of the Registry check. If warranted by the results of the Registry check and any additional information provided by the volunteer, the Superintendent or designee shall not allow the individual to volunteer in the Manchester Public Schools.

When a criminal record check of a volunteer reveals a criminal conviction, whether disclosed or undisclosed on the volunteer's information form, the Superintendent or his/her designee will make a case-by-case determination as to whether to allow the individual to volunteer in Manchester Public Schools. Prior to any such decision by the Superintendent or designee, the Superintendent or designee shall inform the volunteer in writing and shall provide an opportunity for the volunteer to respond. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the falsification or omission of any information on a volunteer information form, including but not limited to information concerning criminal convictions or pending criminal charges, shall be grounds for the Superintendent or designee to prohibit the individual from becoming a volunteer.

6. **Selection, Placement, and Supervision.** Volunteer selection and placement shall be on the basis of the volunteer's qualifications and availability, and the school's needs. A volunteer will be assigned to a staff member only with the staff member's consent. The relationship between a volunteer and staff member should be one of mutual respect and confidence.
7. **Training.** Each academic year, when a person first completes the volunteer information form, the Principal or designee should give the person a copy of this administrative procedure along with other pertinent information. The staff member to whom the volunteer is assigned is responsible for explaining his or her expectations of the volunteer. If needed, the Principal or designee should arrange appropriate training opportunities for those volunteer activities requiring a particular skill or knowledge base (e.g., working in the computer lab).
8. **Sign In Procedure.** All school volunteers must report to the school office upon arrival to sign in. All volunteers must report to the office prior to departure to sign out. A sign-in/sign-out log will be maintained in each school office. Volunteers should indicate the purpose of their visit. Additionally, volunteers will be provided with identification badges, which should be displayed during each visit.
9. **Conduct.** Volunteers are held to the same standards of conduct as school staff, and must observe all Board of Education policies and school rules. Permission to volunteer or to continue volunteering will be denied if the volunteer behaves in any manner that demonstrates he or she is not a good role model, is disruptive or otherwise detrimental to the school environment.
10. **Waiver of Liability.** Manchester Public Schools does not provide liability insurance coverage to non-district personnel serving as volunteers for the district. Pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes § 10-235, the District will indemnify and hold harmless volunteers from civil liability in most situations as long as the volunteer is acting within the scope of his or her responsibilities in an activity approved by the Board of Education and is under the direction of a certified staff member. Willful and/or malicious conduct on the part of the volunteer is not covered under Connecticut General Statutes § 10-235.