

Somerset County Public Schools

VOLUNTEER & VISITOR

MANUAL



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**SOMERSET COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
2018-2019**

Board Members

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Mrs. Margo Green-Gale, Vice Chairman
Mr. Troy Brittingham, Jr.
Mr. Robert Wells

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Mr. Michael Bartemy, Supervisor of Transportation
Mr. Keith O'Neal, Supervisor of CTE/Athletics

Note: For more information, please visit our website at
<http://www.somerset.k12.md.us>



Somerset County Public Schools

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Superintendent of Schools

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Board Members
Penelope Nicholson, Chairman
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Robert T. Wells

Dear Parents, Guardians and Volunteers;

Each day, we serve our students, preparing and guiding them to become the learners and leaders of the 21st-Century. Our goals are designed with the clear intention of providing support for student achievement and are supplemented through the contributions of school volunteers, parents and community supporters who give of their valuable time and resources on behalf of our children.

We clearly recognize the importance and necessity of properly vetting all volunteers who have contact with our students. We want to ensure that all of our expanding learning horizons are, first and foremost, safe and secure for our students and your children. Volunteer service to our schools will continue to support the vast learning experiences we are able to offer.

We believe volunteer service to our schools is an essential component of student success. The supportive parents, grandparents, other significant relatives and community members creates an environment filled with opportunities for students. On behalf of our students and staff, I extend my gratitude and appreciation for your invaluable contributions. Ensuring the success of students is a partnership between school and home.

Thank you in advance for helping to enhance the quality and effectiveness of the education our children and our young adults deserve. I look forward to working closely with you all as we unite to serve our students in our community.

Sincerely,

John B. Gaddis

John B. Gaddis
Superintendent of Schools

THE VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Volunteers donate time to help students, teachers, and staff enhance and extend the instructional programs of the schools. Somerset County Public Schools is fortunate to have registered and temporary volunteers in our schools and offices. These individuals, at the request of the school system and under the direct supervision of a principal/site administrator or designated staff, contribute to student success and reinforce the values of education.

The school volunteer program is incorporated as part of the SCPS Master Plan, ensuring that the goals and objectives are periodically reviewed and carefully monitored. The volunteer program goals are:

- To assist** teachers in providing more individualization and enrichment of instruction to their classes
- To provide** reinforcement for learning that occurs in the classroom
- To increase** students' motivation for learning
- To help** students improve their self-concepts
- To assist** teachers with many of the non-teaching duties and tasks
- To strengthen** school-community relations through positive participation

School Volunteer Coordinators at each elementary, middle, and high school work with the site administrator/principal, teachers and staff to support school and student needs with volunteer help. They recruit, place volunteers, and provide training as needed.

Parent Groups, such as PTA, PTO and Boosters, operate independently from, but within the context of, the school volunteer program. Parent groups work with the principal and supervising staff to organize, support and raise funds for extracurricular and enrichment activities for students and their families.

Principals/site administrators have the final authority over what happens in their school, including volunteer programs and parent group activities. Principals are responsible for setting guidelines for volunteers working in the school, developing a positive working relationship with volunteers, and encouraging staff members to utilize the volunteer help. Somerset County Public Schools upholds the highest standards and safety precautions to provide for the safety and security of students, staff, and visitors. In an effort to maintain safety and security, all volunteers and visitors are screened through the building access management system.

A registered volunteer serves on an occasional or routine basis and may have unsupervised contact with a student on campus or off campus. Examples of registered volunteers include overnight school trips, coaches, tutors, mentors, school office aides, school library aides, student teachers, and classroom aides. A registered volunteer is required to complete an application for a formal background screening and volunteer training. The cost for the screening and training are paid by Somerset County Public Schools. If a registered volunteer begins working in an unsupervised manner, they must be fingerprinted and incur the cost for the process. A registered volunteer applicant may be disqualified from participation as a volunteer for having a history of specific criminal offenses that include felonies, sex offenses, crimes against children,

and specified misdemeanors. An approved registered volunteer can be issued an identification badge if deemed appropriate by the school site administrator.

A temporary volunteer participates in a single event and will not have any unsupervised contact with students. Examples of temporary volunteers may include chaperones for field trips, school dances, and guest speakers. A temporary volunteer is required to complete a volunteer application for the principal's approval. The application will be screened with the National Sex Offender Registry and Maryland Judiciary Case Search.

GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEERING AND VISITING OUR SCHOOLS

Volunteers should be familiar with and adhere to all policies and regulations pertaining to visiting our schools.

The Board of Education of Somerset County (Board) constantly strives and continues to make opportunities available to our students that encourage them to learn and fully enhance their academic and social development. The Board recognizes the value and importance of visitors who support students and schools. Parents, guardians, community members, and school volunteers are resources serving to support our goals and the learning experience of children.

The Board also recognizes the expectation of our community to protect our students and schools and ensure their safety and security each day. The importance of identifying everyone and understanding who visits a school and has access to our students is paramount in efforts to maintain a safe and orderly school environment.

The superintendent or designee is authorized by the Board to establish regulations and security procedures necessary to ensure the identification, vetting, and management of all school visitors and volunteers, as required, and in accordance with all local, state, and federal laws.

Volunteers and Visitors will be under the supervision of the professional staff **Volunteers and Visitors shall not** have inappropriate contact with SCPS students **Volunteers and Visitors must** regard all information concerning students, teachers, and schools as **confidential** to help maintain good public relations in the school and community.

Volunteers and Visitors must not access **confidential** student records electronically or in print.

Volunteers and Visitors must discuss plans, problems, and discipline procedures at appropriate times and with the appropriate professional staff.

Volunteers and Visitors should review the school site handbook for procedures and routines that are unique to the site.

Volunteers and Visitors must follow all rules and regulations set forth by the school system and/or school. Site administrators are encouraged to follow best practice guidelines that address the specific needs of their students and staff that serve to create an efficient, safe, and secure learning environment. The following guidelines are provided to further assist site administrators:

WHILE AT SCHOOL AND ON CAMPUS BEST PRACTICE:

Volunteers and Visitors must follow sign-in procedures for the safety of all children.

Volunteers and Visitors must receive administrative approval to visit a classroom to minimize disruption.

Volunteers and Visitors must schedule parent-teacher conferences in advance. **Volunteers and Visitors** are encouraged to make alternative arrangements for their non-enrolled students when visiting during the school day; as this may create a disruption to instructional delivery.

CAFETERIA BEST PRACTICE:

Volunteers and Visitors while at schools are encouraged to limit celebrations that involve food during the school day. Although we are not banning homemade treats, we are encouraging that food celebrations should include store bought baked goods with ingredient lists to protect students with allergies and other health issues.

For supervisory and capacity concerns, non-enrolled students in the company of volunteers and visitors must remain under the supervision of the volunteer or visitor and, with approval of the principal/site administrator, will be welcome in the cafeteria.

COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES BEST PRACTICE:

Volunteers and visitors wishing to forward communication between families for personal arrangements or events may be coordinated through the local PTA/PTO's directories and contact information.

VOLUNTEER REGISTRATION UPON ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

The school visitor registration systems and procedures are located and processed in the main office of all Somerset County Public Schools' facilities. Please complete the entire entry for the day and times that you are volunteering. If you are unable to come during a previously agreed upon and scheduled date, please contact the school so that the teacher or staff member can make other arrangements.

VOLUNTEER BADGES

Printed volunteer or visitor access passes are issued during each school visit. Volunteers must log in at the main office using the computerized building access management (BAM) system/network or other established procedures.

DRESS AND BEHAVIOR

Take your lead from the professional staff and dress appropriately for the job you are doing. Casual clothing is fine, but attire is to be neat and conservative. Your appearance should reflect your environment. Keep in mind volunteers are in a position to set an example for students. Your speech and behavior should serve as good models for them to follow.

TRANSPORTATION

Volunteers must provide their own transportation. Volunteers are not permitted to ride school buses to and from school. Volunteers shall not transport students at any time for any school-sponsored activities.

CHILDREN OF VOLUNTEERS

Children of volunteers are not allowed to accompany volunteers during the regular school day. Volunteer activities during the regular school day are geared toward the volunteer devoting undivided attention to their task and responsibilities.

DRUG-FREE SCHOOLS

The use of tobacco in any form is prohibited in all Somerset County Public Schools' buildings at all times. The possession, use, distribution, or being under the influence of alcoholic beverages or a controlled or dangerous substance on school grounds is not allowed.

USE OF TECHNOLOGY

The use of cell phones, iPads, personal laptop computers, and/or other electronic devices can cause a breach in school safety and security. Volunteers are encouraged to leave personal items in their vehicle while visiting schools. Volunteers may not use school computers for personal use. Volunteers may not take photographs, videos, or audio recordings of any Somerset County Public Schools' students or staff without the direct written permission of the school principal/site administrator.

RESTROOMS

Please do not use student restrooms. Staff restrooms are available to volunteers and visitors.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers must participate in an orientation and training scheduled by the school volunteer coordinator as needed.

Volunteers must sign in and out at the school's main office. Somerset County Public Schools will maintain a record showing the date and time of volunteer service. For security reasons, and in case of an emergency, it is important for administrators to know who is in their school and why.

Volunteers always work under the direct supervision of the professional staff at each site and only with those teachers who have requested the service.

Volunteers should attend when expected. All unexpected absences should be reported to the main office as soon as possible.

Volunteers shall not have inappropriate contact with SCPS students and they are not permitted to date SCPS students.

Volunteers must regard all information concerning students, teachers, and schools as confidential to help maintain good public relations in the school and community.

Volunteers must not access confidential student records electronically or in print.

Volunteers must discuss plans, problems, and discipline procedures at appropriate times and with the appropriate professional staff.

Volunteers should review the school site handbook for procedures and routines that are unique to the site.

Volunteers must follow all rules and regulations set forth by the school system and/or schools.

ACTIVITIES APPROVED FOR VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers may work directly with individual students or with groups of students within the instructional program. Motivating students and enhancing their self-concepts are of primary importance. Volunteers may:

- Assist individuals or small groups of students under the direction of a teacher;
- Help students with special projects/programs;
- Assist students making book selections in the media center;
- Assist students in the computer lab;
- Assist students using graphing calculators;
- Assist the teacher with supervision of students in the cafeteria or on the playground;
- Chaperone school field trips;
- Read to students or listen to students read; tutor students;
- Assist with school clubs and student council activities;
- Work with Student Service Learning Projects;
- Work with peer tutors;
- Assist students who have been absent;
- Be a guest speaker on a specific career or other area of expertise.

Some volunteers may prefer to help students indirectly. Volunteers may:

- Prepare games, packets, and instructional resources;
- Assist with displays of student work to include laminating, matting, and hanging;
- Assist with office filing, copying, and laminating;
- Type forms, letters, and notices, etc.;
- Sort, stamp, and distribute mail
- Run errands within the building;
- Help to check in, distribute, and inventory materials;
- Assist with making telephone calls;
- Assist in the media center by filing, shelving, and minor book repairs;
- Assist with bulletin boards and other displays;
- Assist with social events, such as parties, dances, county fair, and athletic events.

Some volunteers may decide to join and participate in the work of the:

- Athletic, band, and/or choral boosters;
- Citizens' Advisory Committee for Special Education;
- Somerset County Council of PTAs;
- School Improvement Team;

- School PTA, PTO, and other committees as appropriate.

Often people wish to volunteer but are unable to work in the school. In these cases, the volunteers may work at home to:

- Catalog materials;
- Color and cut materials for bulletin boards;
- Make phone calls;
- Prepare resources for class rewards.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE/EVACUATION PROCEDURES

SCPS is committed to maintaining proactive and progressive measures that address prevention efforts and mitigating factors for all crisis and emergency events.

Emergency Response Charts are available at all school and office sites. If you are working in a classroom with students, please follow all established emergency procedures. Make yourself aware of these procedures as you enter the classroom each day you volunteer.

WORK EXPERIENCE AND DOCUMENTATION

Many employment applications now have space to record volunteer experience as part of an applicant's work record. You may wish to keep a record of your hours of service as documentation for a future employment application. School staff, with whom you have worked, may be willing to provide letters of reference, if requested by you.

INSURANCE COVERAGE

Under Section 6-106 of the Education Article, volunteers are considered agents of the local board of education for the purpose of comprehensive liability insurance and workers compensation coverage while on school property and acting within the scope of duties assigned.

REMEMBER . . .

It is essential that volunteers remember that as the teacher plans activities and tasks, there are guidelines that must be followed. Volunteer assistance is valued; however, only the teacher may:

- Grade students' assignments and/or tests
- Contact parents regarding student progress
- Evaluate student progress
- Give food or beverage to a student
- Initiate instruction
- Diagnose student needs
- Counsel students
- Write comments on student papers
- Discipline students
- Give advertisements or fund solicitations

CHILD ABUSE

Child Abuse may present itself as physical abuse, sexual abuse, mental injury, and neglect

Physical Abuse

Indicators of Physical Abuse may include bruises, burns, welts, cuts, abrasions, and fractures. Certain behaviors like overly compliant/aggressive, avoidance of care takers/physical contact, distrustful, easily frustrated, and crying may also be indicators of physical abuse.

Sexual Child Abuse

Involves children under the age of 18 and can include sexual molestation or exploitation of the child. Behavioral Indicators of Sexual Abuse may include unusual sexual behavior or knowledge, poor peer relationships/isolation, few social skills, depression, repeated runaways and nightmares. Physical Indicators of Sexual Abuse may include difficulty walking or sitting, repeated medical problems with stomach or digestive system, diagnosed with a sexually transmitted disease or pregnancy

Mental Abuse/Injury

Mental abuse is the impairment of a child's mental or psychological ability to function. The impairment must be observable, identifiable, and substantial

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

If you suspect abuse you do not need to investigate but **must report it**. This is the **LAW** and includes **ALL** school employees, volunteers, and bus drivers. Students are under our care and supervision.

As the reporter of suspected child abuse or neglect, you have legal protections.

Protections of a reporter include immunity from civil or criminal penalty, and confidentiality. If you do not report, you are subject to professional and legal sanctions/actions that may include criminal (prosecuted as common law conspiracy and obstruction of justice).

Possible offenders of child abuse or neglect may be any person with temporary or permanent care, custody, or supervision of a child.

When an employee is suspected of child abuse the reporter must:

- Notify your Site Administrator immediately.
- Notify the Department of Social Services or Sheriff's Office (by phone) as soon as possible.
- Prepare a written report within 48 hours to Department of Social Services with appropriate copies.

The principal/site administrator will notify the Director of Safety and Security, who will notify the police.

RELATIONSHIPS

Relationships between volunteers/visitors and students should be professional at all times, and one of cooperation, understanding, and mutual respect.

FRATERNIZATION

Volunteers and visitors should NOT engage in interactions with students that rise to the level of fraternization, engage in non-school related communications with students, including electronic communications unless under the supervision of the parents/legal guardians.

Communicating with students on social networking sites such as Facebook, and Twitter is prohibited under SCPS' policy.

REMEMBER:

No dating or fraternization with students under any circumstance!
Students are under our care and protection.

WARNING:

You can lose your approval status as a volunteer for failing to comply with established regulations.

All inappropriate interactions with students will be reported to authorities for investigation.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Governed by the Federal Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

All student records are sensitive in nature.

Some records are more sensitive than others such as discipline records, treatment for alcohol/drugs and child abuse and neglect. Reporting forms are not kept in the student's record.

All student records are protected by FERPA.

SCPS Emergency Response System

Prompts for School Announcement Script of Precautionary & Emergency Situations:

1. Provide an appropriate and brief description of what is happening that warrants Precautionary or Emergency actions.
2. Describe the priority steps staff should immediately take to secure the building in their immediate area.
3. Describe the priority parameters regarding student movement appropriate to the current situation.

Categories	Precautionary	Emergency
Securing the Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish a designated entrance for parents to pick up their child(ren) - Windows and exterior doors locked - Close window shades - Lock playground gates (if possible) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish a designated entrance for parents to pick up their child(ren) - Windows and exterior doors locked - Close window shades - Lock playground gates (if possible) - Administration will confirm security of hallway/entrance and exit doors.
Student Movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Instruction continues as normal - Students are able to change classes - Students will remain in portables and will be escorted if moving btw portable and main building. - Related Service Staff (speech, OT, PT, etc.) will follow their normal schedule - Recess & PE classes will remain inside - JM Tawes program will continue as scheduled and be escorted from school to bus or bus to school. - School administration will determine whether sports and field trips will continue as scheduled. Students will be escorted from school to bus or bus to school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Instruction continues as normal - All students will remain in their current classroom until further instruction is given - J. M. Tawes students will remain at their current location until further instruction is given - Related Service Staff (speech, OT, PT, etc.) Will remain at their current location. - Recess & PE classes will remain inside - No student movement (Bathroom, Nurse, etc.) without an authorized escort. - School administration will determine whether sports and field trips will continue as scheduled. Students will be escorted from school to bus or bus to school.

<p>Parent & Community Access to School & Students</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Proper identification needed for anyone picking up their child - Emergency forms will be referenced by school staff for all student pick-ups - School administration will determine whether pre-planned activities (inside or outside) may continue. - People who are part of the regular school program (student teachers, mental health providers, etc.) will have access to school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Proper identification needed for anyone picking up their child - Emergency forms will be referenced by school staff for all student pick-ups - Pre-planned activities (inside or outside) will be discontinued during emergency and/or until further instructions are given. - Parents/Guardians will not enter the building. Children will be escorted to the parent/guardian after proper identification is provided and reviewed.
<p>Communication</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Administration will notify Superintendent or designee - Administration will send an e-mail to the Emergency Contact group as a second notification of the facts. - Connect Ed call will be made by the School Principal, Superintendent or designee following the event. - Public Relations Officer will address phone calls to central office - Social Media Communication will be handled appropriately by designated central office staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Principal or designee will call 911 - Administration will notify Superintendent or designee - Connect Ed call will be made by Superintendent or designee at the appropriate time. - Public Relations Officer will address phone calls to central office - Principals of surrounding schools and BOE Supervisors will be notified by Public Relations Officer or other central office staff.
<p>Transportation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Administration will supervise and monitor the loading of students. - Administration will have a compilation of all Field Trips and Athletic Events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Superintendent or designee will communicate with law enforcement to determine the appropriate time and method of dismissal. - Supervisor of Transportation will notify bus contractors that J. M. Tawes students will remain at their current location. - Once dismissal is determined, administration will supervise and monitor the loading of students. - Administration will have a compilation of all Field Trips and Athletic Events.

Emergency Response System

Prompts for School Announcement Script of Imminent Threat Situations:

1. Provide an appropriately detailed and brief description of what is happening that warrants Imminent Threat actions.
2. Provide an appropriately detailed description of the location of the Immanent Threat within or outside of the building.
3. Provide the priority steps of what staff and students should do. (Student Movement, Teacher Directed Movement, Barricade/Shelter in Place, Evacuation, etc....)

Category	Imminent Threat
Securing the Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Windows and exterior doors locked - Close window shades - Lock playground gates (if possible) - Administration will confirm security of hallway/entrance and exit doors. - If directed, secure and barricade classroom doors and windows
Student Movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As directed, relocate students and staff away from immanent threat - Sports and field trips will be cancelled - All pre-planned activities (inside or outside) will be cancelled.
Parent & Community Access to Students and Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There will be no parent or community access to the building. - Reunification procedures will be communicated with law enforcement, central office staff and parents.
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Principal or designee will call 911 - Administration will notify Superintendent or designee - Connect Ed call will be made by Superintendent or designee at the appropriate time. - Public Relations Officer will address phone calls to central office - Social Media Communication will be handled appropriately by designated central office staff. - Principals of surrounding schools and BOE Supervisors will be notified by Public Relations Officer or other central office staff. - Supervisor of Transportation will communicate appropriate steps with bus contractors to include provision that busses do not approach school. - Reunification procedures will be communicated with law enforcement, central office staff and parents. - Public Relations Officer will handle all communication with media outlets at the appropriate time.
Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supervisor of Transportation will communicate appropriate steps with bus contractors to include provision that busses do not approach school. - Supervisor of Transportation will communicate bus transportation procedures associated with reunification process with bus contractors. - Administration will have a compilation of all Field Trips and Athletic Events.