

Use of Volunteers

1. **Volunteer Authorization:** The Carthage Central School District values the presence of volunteers who support its educational programs and activities. Therefore, the Superintendent authorizes the use of volunteers when they perform duties on behalf of the Carthage Central School District as authorized by the Building Administrator, or by the Superintendent at the district level.
2. **Application of the Policy:** The requirements of this policy shall apply to individuals who wish to volunteer in the District. For the purposes of this authorization, the term Volunteer will refer to any and all individuals that request or are invited to provide services or assistance in relation to school activities, which will have regular and repeated access to school grounds (not to exclude buildings and other facilities), **and the reasonable expectation of working with students within that capacity.**

A. Defined Exclusions:

This policy shall not apply to local or state officials on campus performing official functions, incidental school visitors, and other individuals who fit the following descriptions:

- Visitors to a school for the purpose of assisting in a short duration, non-repetitive event, characterized by direct supervision of the event by regular District and School staff members.
- Volunteers working on projects involving no contact or only incidental contact with children, such as fund-raisers and boosters. [Event characterized by direct District and School staff supervision].
- Volunteers that have already been the subject of background checks deemed by the Superintendent or the Building Administrator to be comparable to those done by the District with other volunteers.
- A parent, stepparent, legal guardian, or grandparent of a District student who is accompanying his or her child's class on a one-day field trip or on another type of occasional extra-curricular activity that does not involved an overnight stay or unsupervised contact with children. [Event characterized by direct District and School staff supervision].

- Volunteers in Athletics. Individuals who wish to volunteer as coaches must meet such additional requirements as set forth in New York State Education Department guidelines. Contact the Carthage Central School District Athletic Director regarding this subject.
 - Student Volunteers. Students requesting to volunteer at a school other than the one they attend shall be screened by the Building Administration or Superintendent prior to providing volunteer services [Event characterized by direct District and School staff supervision]. These students will read and sign the Volunteer Agreement.
3. **Volunteer Application:** Prior to service, all prospective non-exempted volunteers will complete a Volunteer Application, sign the Volunteer Agreement, and be subject to review, which may include personal interviews with the Superintendent, Building Administrator, or their designee. Volunteers shall annually update application forms and all other required information each school year prior to continuance of volunteering.
 4. **Volunteer Activities:** All volunteer activities shall be conducted under supervision of District or School staff members. The Superintendent, Building Administrator or their designee will determine the extent of volunteer duties, work schedule, and location.
 5. **Background Checks:** The District reserves the right to require background checks of any prospective or current volunteer, including parents, legal guardians, stepparents, and grandparents. The requirement of a background check is at the discretion of the Superintendent or Building Administrator.

Activities that may require criminal record clearance of volunteers are those characterized by the reasonable expectation of unsupervised contact with children. Such activities may include but are not limited to:

- One-on-one tutoring or mentoring outside the classroom or another unsupervised setting.
- Attending or chaperoning overnight school-sponsored trips.
- Any other volunteer activity where the funding agency requires criminal record clearance.

Unless subject to the authority of other statutes, regulations, or laws, this article requires that no background information is an automatic disqualification to perform volunteer work

for the District. Instead, the information obtained will be considered in view of all relevant circumstances and a determination made whether volunteering would be consistent with the safe and efficient operation of the District, recognizing the need to protect children. Background information may provide information to cause the District to decide that volunteering within the context of specific circumstances will be denied to the applicant. Additionally, volunteer service authorization may be denied where a potential volunteer fails to completely provide required information, or provides false information, in connection with the District's screening requirement.

The District considers the relevant information, and disqualifies the volunteer after consideration of circumstances which may include, but not be limited to:

- Time, nature, and matters disclosed
 - Facts surrounding such matters
 - The relationship of the matter to the service to be provided by the applicant
 - Length of time between matters disclosed and application
 - Volunteering/employment history before and after the matter
 - Efforts and success at rehabilitation as well as the probability that such matter may occur again.
 - The probability that the matter would prevent the applicant from performing the position in an acceptable, appropriate manner, consistent with the safety and welfare of children.
6. **Access to Student Information/Confidentiality:** The District may provide volunteers student information, necessary to accomplish their duties to the extent authorized by law. The District shall use all available methods to ensure that volunteers have access only to such student information and records in which they have a legitimate educational interest when that information is necessary to effectively perform their duties as a volunteer.

As a condition of such provision of information, the District shall ensure that prior parental permission has been secured for the release, or the volunteer is considered a "school official" because:

POLICY

2014

3150

Community Relations

- S/he performs an institutional service or function for which the District would otherwise use employees,
- S/he is under the direct control of the District, and,
- The volunteer has signed the District's/School's form acknowledging and agreeing to the conditions under which s/he will receive information.

7. **Denial/Exclusion/Revocation of Status:** At their discretion, the Superintendent, the Building Administrator, or staff member in charge may ask any volunteer who violates school rules to leave campus.

The Superintendent or Building Administrator has the right to deny or revoke any person's volunteer status at any time. The Superintendent or Building Administrator shall be responsible for investigating and resolving complaints regarding volunteers. A volunteer who has been the subject of a denial, exclusion, or revocation of status may appeal to the Superintendent, whose decision shall be final.

8. **Procedures:** Each school shall develop and implement procedures for registering the presence of volunteers in the building, and utilizing the services of volunteers. Such guidelines shall include but may not be limited to:

- Volunteers shall comply with all requirements imposed by the school regarding check in and check out at the office and identification as a Volunteer while on grounds.
- Each school that utilizes the services of volunteers shall keep Volunteer attendance records on file.
- School administration shall designate and execute supervisory responsibilities.
- Volunteers shall notify and seek the aid of appropriate school personnel in the case of information or incidents which may impact student safety, serious discipline problems, or suspected mental health or drug/alcohol problems.
- Volunteers shall not engage in any behavior that may constitute discrimination against students, staff members, or any other volunteers.
- Volunteers shall comply with confidentiality requirements with respect to any student record information with which they may come in contact.

POLICY

2014

3150

Community Relations

9. **Training**: Each District Building or School shall communicate applicable District policies and provide appropriate training to authorized volunteers who work in the District on a regular basis. Such procedures and rules shall include but are not limited to the building's fire evacuation, building evacuation, lockdown procedures, student safety, student discipline, confidentiality of student information, and policies and rules pertinent to non-discrimination and the prohibition against the use of physical contact.

Volunteer Protection Act of 1997, 42 USC Section 14501 et seq.
Education Law Sections 3023 and 3028
Public Officers Law section 18

NOTE: Refer to Policy #6540 – Defense and Indemnification of Board Members and Employees