

# Volunteer Guidelines

When children enter BOCES programs, teachers and parents must become partners in facilitating children's learning. One of the most important things we can do for children is to allow them to see parents and teachers working together. This helps children realize that there is a bond between home, community, and school. Parents and other caregivers who work in the school come to understand their child's education better.

School Volunteers serve under the direction of school staff to meet the needs of students. There are many opportunities for you to become involved at BOCES. Contact your child's teacher or administrator.

Some children are not ready to have their parents in the classroom with them. In the classroom, parents have a different role; they are assisting the teacher. However, some children are unable to accept their parents in any role other than parent. In these cases, it is better for the parent to volunteer in another area.

In order to promote a quality education, BOCES has developed this Volunteer Policy. These are the expectations we have for all adults who work with our students. Please read this packet and complete the application.

**Before you volunteer you must meet with an administrator and submit the application to the office for review.**

### **Confidentiality**

**Confidentiality is of the utmost importance in your association with teachers and students.**

What you see and hear at the school is private. You are in a unique position when you volunteer in the classroom to gain information that is not to be shared. Students you observe in the classroom or the school **cannot** be discussed with other parents, faculty or staff. You may not discuss a child even with that child's parents. You must always refer any question regarding students at BOCES to the child's teacher or the administrator.

### **Volunteers During School Hours**

When you are volunteering at BOCES you are demonstrating your support for education. Please understand that in academic settings it is important to be able to give your full attention to the task at hand. For this reason, do not bring any children with you when you are volunteering during school hours.

Chaperones on fieldtrips agree to abide by Board Policy as it pertains to safety.

**Exceptions:** At times, teachers invite other family members for special functions. Some of these functions might be the Heritage Feast, Thanksgiving Feasts, or other family oriented celebrations. At this time, siblings or other family members may be invited.

## Dress

Appropriate attire will be worn.

## Language/Behavior

Remember we are all teachers. Staff and volunteers are role models for the children around us. "Little eyes" are watching, listening and learning appropriate behavior from our actions.

Cussing, inappropriate language or discussions are not allowed on campus or on fieldtrips.

## Classroom Disruptions

Please conduct all private conversations outside of the classroom. Teachers need the attention of the students to direct the instruction. Extraneous conversations distract from the task at hand. Remember that conversations in the hallways are distracting as well.

## Cell Phones

Cell phones are to be turned off in the classrooms.

## No Smoking

Schools are tobacco free zones. This means you may not even bring tobacco products on campus in your purse or pockets. You may not smoke on fieldtrips even in your own car.

## Discipline

**Volunteers are not to discipline students.** Discipline is solely the responsibility of the teacher. Only the teacher is responsible to plan the course of study and see that it is implemented. The volunteer always works under the direction of the teacher to HELP, not replace, the teacher.

On fieldtrips if you are the adult supervising a group of children and the teacher is unavailable, volunteers may appropriately address safety or behavior issues. It is the responsibility of the volunteer to inform the teacher as soon as possible about these issues. However, any consequences for behavior are the responsibility of the teacher, not the volunteer.

### **Students treat volunteers with respect**

Adults are respectful to children and children are always expected to be respectful in return. If on any occasion you are treated disrespectfully, tell the teacher as soon as possible. Elementary age children are still learning appropriate behavior and this is an opportunity to reteach respect. Children should call you Mr., Ms. or Mrs., but should not address you by your first name.

### **BOCES Volunteer Agreement**

To provide the safest learning environment possible and to facilitate the use of volunteers suitable for substantial contact with children, it is the practice of BOCES to obtain the information on the Volunteer Agreement form. An applicant's failure to honestly answer any question will result in the applicant being unable to volunteer in any capacity.