

**Regulation**

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SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS

Purpose

As a school district, we value the safety of children in our care, the people whom we serve and our employees and volunteers. We want to take prudent measures to attempt to safeguard people from potential harm. Therefore, the district has implemented a policy on background checks for volunteers who have regular contact with children. The following is the procedure according to which the policy shall be implemented.

Parts of a background check include:

- A. A review of the NJ State Police criminal history database (county repositories may be checked as well to verify convictions or provide more information above convictions);
- B. A review of state and county criminal history databases in other states for employees or volunteers who live out-of-state or who have recently moved to New Jersey;
- C. A review of the NJ Sex Offender Registry;
- D. A check of child welfare agency records for substantiated reports of child abuse or domestic abuse;
- E. A check of driving records through the NJ Department of Motor Vehicles (only for employees who drive as part of their job responsibilities and is indicated on the job description);
- F. A credit check (only for employees who have access to over \$1,000 in funds and whose job description requires access to funds); and/or,
- G. Professional assistance in verifying convictions obtained through criminal history reports and researching details of convictions to allow for informed decisions on suitability for employment or volunteer service.

Background checks are conducted by a local firm, Morpho Trust, which specializes in obtaining criminal histories, driving records, and credit reports.

Scope

It is the policy of the district to conduct background checks on the following individuals:

- A. All new volunteers who have regular contact with children (as described below) and who are not supervised by a certified staff member;
- B. All current volunteers who have regular contact with children (as described below) and who are not supervised by a certified staff member.

Background checks do not need to be conducted on employees or volunteers who are under 18 years of age since criminal records are not available for juveniles.

The superintendent shall determine what constitutes "regular" student contact.

SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS (continued)

Contact with Children

It is our policy to conduct background checks on volunteers who have regular contact with children. Volunteers may include any person who functions in the name of the school or district in a capacity of chaperoning, mentoring, supervising, teaching or training minors (those who are 17 years of age or younger). Positions may include: athletics, chaperones, clerical/office help, custodian, day care/extended care worker, instructional assistant, library assistant, maintenance (school or office), playground monitor, tutor/private instructor, youth music instructor or director, volunteer athletic coach or trainer. Last-minute replacements shall require a substitute certificate.

Some of our schools have policies that encourage the parents of all students to volunteer for a specified number of hours during each school year. Checks are not required in those situations if contact with children is minimal, or fully supervised by a certified staff member.

Process for Volunteers Who Have Regular Contact With Children

- A. A district application form with criminal history questions is completed;
- B. Prior to beginning volunteer service, the individual completes the release form and returns it to the school or agency, which will fax it to the company that provides the background check;
- C. The individual cannot start volunteer service until the check has been completed (except for licensed teachers and school administrators);
- D. If there is no criminal history, a report will be sent to the school or agency within 2-3 business days verifying that a check has been completed. (Out-of-state checks may take longer.); and
- E. If there is a criminal history, a report will be sent to the Human Resources Office within 2-3 business days, and Human Resources will contact the pastor, principal or business manager. A conviction for a crime may not automatically preclude volunteer service. The board of education shall have the final decision.

Process for Current Employees And Current Volunteers Who Have Regular Contact With Children

- A. This process will be implemented in September 2013;
- B. The Human Resources Office will send a release form that should be distributed to all Volunteers who have regular contact with children as described above;
- C. The principal should ensure that all forms are completed and returned to Human Resources;
- D. A list of persons with no criminal history will be sent to Human Resources within thirty (30) days. (out-of-state checks may take longer.);
- E. If one or more persons have a criminal history, a report will be sent to the Human Resources Office within thirty (30) days, and Human Resources will contact the pastor, principal, or business manager. A conviction for a crime may not automatically preclude employment or volunteer service. The board of education shall have the final decision.

Due Process

If a record of criminal convictions is found, the volunteer will be given a copy of the criminal history report. If the volunteer disagrees with the accuracy of the report, the volunteer may (at the discretion of the superintendent) be placed on administrative leave until the information on the criminal history report can be

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verified. The volunteer may choose to provide other information about his/her criminal history that may be helpful in understanding the circumstances of what occurred. The final decision about new or continued volunteer service will be made by the superintendent in consultation with the director of human resources and, when necessary, the board president and legal counsel. A similar process occurs when issues of concern are raised by credit reports or driving record checks.

Privacy

The privacy of the information obtained by the district through the background check will be respected. Information will not be shared with persons who do not have a need to know.

Adopted: March 2012