

## **Ohio School for the Deaf Volunteer Guidelines**

The Ohio School for the Deaf recognizes community members and parent volunteers' significant contribution to the enhancement of education and social development of its students. OSD will support programs and activities through the use of volunteers. Volunteers' particular knowledge or skill will help students learn more and promote academic excellence for all students in or outside the classroom.

### **Background Checks**

For the safety of our students, school volunteers will be required to submit to a criminal background check prior to any volunteer activity. Due to the turnaround time to obtain a background check, volunteers will be asked to submit to a criminal background check well in advance of volunteering at or for the school. All background check results (hard copy) should be sent to the Superintendent's office.

Please Note – 109.575 of the Ohio Revised Code states *“At the time of a person's initial application to an organization or entity to be a volunteer in a position in which the person on a regular basis will have unsupervised access to a child, the organization or entity shall inform the person that, at any time, the person might be required to provide a set of impressions of the person's fingerprints and a criminal records check might be conducted with respect to the person.”*

### **Confidentiality**

When you have a concern... If you hear or observe something that troubles you, tell the classroom teacher or employee. The teacher or employee is usually in the best position to deal with the issue appropriately. If you feel your concern cannot be addressed appropriately by the classroom teacher or employee, discuss it with the school principal or student life administrators.

**The Ohio Revised Code Abuse Reporting Law (ORC 2151.421)** requires mandated reporters, who are generally attorneys, health providers, and school employees acting in their professional capacities, to personally report known or suspected abuse/neglect of a child to the applicable county children service agency or law enforcement agency. School volunteers are not required by law to make reports of abuse or neglect to those agencies but may do so in good faith if they wish.

### **If You Need Help**

If you have questions, concerns or just want to talk about your volunteer assignment, please speak with the classroom teacher, youth leader, or OSD administrators.

### **Maintaining a Safe School Environment**

These guidelines are designed to provide our students with a safe environment, as well as protect our volunteers. If volunteers are uncomfortable with or uncertain about circumstances under which they are asked to work, they are encouraged to discuss any concerns or questions with OSD administrators or employee.

### **Restrooms**

Volunteers are asked to use the staff-designated restroom(s) and should not enter the student restroom(s). If a student is in need of assistance in a restroom, volunteers should notify OSD staff.

## **Personal Space**

Volunteers should be sensitive to a student's personal space and comfort level. All hugs including shoulder-to-shoulder hugs and hugs from the side should be given only when initiated by the student. Face-to-face hugs are not appropriate.

## **Medications**

Absolutely NO volunteer may administer any medications to students.

## **Snacks and Treats**

Volunteers should not give students snacks without staff permission. As a volunteer, you may not be aware of students' food allergies.

## **Visibility**

Volunteers should be visible in a location where others can see them at all times, while working with students. If in a room, a staff member should be present or the door left open.

Volunteers should avoid taking a student out on the playground, unless other students are present with a teacher or any other employee.

## **Discipline**

Our school have detailed discipline plans, and the responsibility for discipline rests with the staff. Please make the staff member aware of any behavior or actions you believe to be inappropriate while you are volunteering. All discipline is always under the staff's direction and follows the school's Student Code of Conduct. You can obtain a copy of the Student Code of Conduct from the school office, Student Life Department or the Superintendent's office.

## **Dismissal of Students**

Volunteers may never dismiss a student from school. Under no circumstances may a volunteer take a student off campus. Volunteers may not walk or drive a student to his or her home unless the child's parent has notified the school office in advance and given written permission for the volunteer to do so.

## **What You Should Know**

1. Respect confidentiality. Students and staff have a right to privacy.
2. Honor your commitments and be on time. Dress appropriately.
3. Choose what is manageable and interesting to you.
4. Be professional, prepared, responsible, and safe at all times.
5. Communicate appropriately. Don't distract teachers while they are teaching. When talking to students, be positive and use an appropriate language.

6. Strive to give each child your best effort.
7. Respect each child as an individual.
8. Never share personal information about a student or student's family with others.
9. Never share specific information with a parent about his or her child based on the volunteer's classroom experience, whether positive or negative.
10. Never make comments that would be harmful to the reputation of any pupil, professional or other volunteer.
11. Never share opinions about the behavior and/or academic progress of students.