

RULES OF THE SCHOOL BOARD OF PALM BEACH COUNTY, FLORIDA

Chapter 2. General Administration
Section 2.53

Policy 2.53 **Volunteers in Public Schools**

1. **Purpose.** The purpose of this policy is to promote and encourage school volunteers in order to expand and enhance parental, community and civic involvement within schools while maintaining an adequate level of safety and security in the schools of the School District. This policy establishes the framework of volunteers serving in schools through the Palm Beach County Schools Volunteer Program known as VOLUNTEERS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS, hereafter referred to as VIPS.
2. **Applicability and Scope.**
 - a. This policy applies to all volunteers and prospective volunteers in Palm Beach County District Schools.
 - b. This policy shall not apply to: a person who visits a school for a one-time special event, such as guest speakers, celebrity readers, attending student performances, parents or family members who have lunch with their own child, career day special guests, and attendance at parent conferences. These people are considered school visitors. They must sign in as visitors in the main office and school staff should provide them with appropriate direction. Under no circumstances may visitors or volunteers be left alone with students.
3. **Policy.** The School Board believes that the use of volunteers in schools of the District enhances the educational process for students and promotes community involvement in education. The School Board of Palm Beach County encourages volunteer participation by individuals and groups in School Board sponsored programs in local schools, in district and area offices, and for School Board sponsored and supervised off-school campus activities before, during, and after regular school hours.
 - a. A volunteer is a non-paid person functioning under the sponsorship of the Palm Beach County School District.
 - b. The School Board of Palm Beach County authorizes the Superintendent or his/her designee to approve volunteers to assist in organized school programs following the submission of an application, completion of a background check as provided herein, and upon successful completion of a volunteer orientation and training program. in accordance with State Board of Education Rules and Laws of the State of Florida.
4. **Enrollment Procedures for Volunteers.** Prospective volunteers must complete all VIPS registration forms and volunteer release as provided by the Department of Public Affairs/Office of Community Involvement.
5. **Status of Volunteers.** Volunteers may be used to assist district personnel in local schools and district programs. However, the instructional personnel retains responsibility for supervising, diagnosing, prescribing, instructing and evaluating students.
 - a. The acceptance and utilization of the services of any person on a voluntary basis shall be at the discretion of the School District, and the utilization of such services may be discontinued by the School District at any time.
 - b. Volunteers shall not engage in political or religious activities while on district premises and while performing district duties.
6. **Criminal Background Investigation.** In order to protect the safety and security of students and staff, volunteers must submit to a background screening as required by § 943.04351, Florida Statutes, as now or hereafter amended.
7. **Responsibility.**
 - a. Principals and administrators are responsible for coordination and supervision of volunteers.
 - b. Principals and administrators are responsible for identifying appropriate tasks for volunteers.
 - c. The Department of Public Affairs/Office of Community Involvement is responsible for coordinating the background checks on volunteers.
 - d. The Superintendent shall issue directives concerning school volunteers included but not limited to more stringent guidelines for screening as deemed necessary.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: Fla. Stat. §§ 1001.41, 1001.42

LAWS IMPLEMENTED: Fla. Stat. §§ 110.504, 768.28, 1001.43, 1012.01, 440.02, 943.04351

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION RULE: Rule 6A-1.070 and 6A-1.0502

HISTORY: 4/23/86; 5/06/2009