

# SBISD VOLUNTEER ETHICS, PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES

Revised 5/18/2007

## Introduction

The following procedures have been developed by the SBISD Volunteer Advisory Board and are designed to protect both students and volunteers. Acceptance of and adherence to these ethics, procedures and guidelines is mandatory to participation as a volunteer in Spring Branch ISD.

These volunteer guidelines are designed to protect students from harm and to prevent even the appearance of impropriety on the part of the individual mentors, volunteers, students and schools participating in Spring Branch ISD volunteer programs. Please know that we appreciate your participation and that we appreciate your adhering to these guidelines. If you have additional questions, ask your school principal, campus volunteer coordinator or the Community Relations Department.

## Volunteer Procedures.

- **Criminal Background Check.** All SBISD volunteers must complete the SBISD volunteer registration process and authorize the SBISD Police Department to complete a criminal background check. The SBISD online volunteer registration is accessible through the district website. If you do not have web access, please complete a written application available through the SBISD campus volunteer coordinator or through the SBISD Community Relations Department.
- **Training.** Depending upon the volunteer role, you may be required to attend a campus or district training.
- **Sign In.** Sign in and out each time you volunteer on campus using the computerized check-in system as per your campus guidelines
- **Name Badge.** Wear the school-provided identification badge as per campus guidelines
- **Volunteer Hours.** Record any volunteer hours served off-campus and report monthly as per campus guidelines.
- **Dress Code.** Use common sense in your dress. Neat, conservative attire is preferred and casual dress is acceptable. Remember, you are a role model for students.
- **Non-School Age Children.** Only bring your non-school age children with you if a school permits and if childcare is available.
- **Dependability.** Maintain consistent and regular attendance. Contact the school if you are unable to attend as scheduled.
- **No Smoking.** All SBISD facilities are tobacco-free zones.
- **Respect.** Volunteers will be respectful of students' and staff's cultural, social, and religious differences. Openness, honesty and respect are expected.
- **Discipline or Other Concerns.** Report discipline, academic or social/emotional concerns to the appropriate administrator or teacher.
- **Calendars.** Stay informed of school holidays, field trips, testing etc.
- **Materials and Supplies.** Return any school supplies utilized in your volunteer role and advise the appropriate school personnel of needed supplies as appropriate.

## **Confidentiality.**

**All student information should be treated confidentially.** Sharing student information with others may be a violation of the law. Do not make a promise to a student that you will keep confidential information secret for the welfare of the student and to protect you from violating the law. Although the student is free to share confidential information with you, there are certain things that you are required by law to tell the campus administrator. Any personal information learned from a student or student's files, should be held in strictest confidence **except:**

1. If a student confides that he or she is the victim of sexual, emotional, chemical or physical abuse;
2. If a student confides that he or she is involved in any illegal activity;
3. If a student confides that he or she is considering homicide or suicide.

Should one of these exceptions arise, you are required by law to immediately notify the student's principal. Note on your calendar when this information was reported and to whom it was given. Remember, this information is extremely personal and capable of damaging lives, so do not share it with anyone except the appropriate authorities. If you have questions, please ask a campus administrator. Any student needs communicated to the volunteer should be referred to an appropriate staff person.

## **Guidelines for Working with Students**

### **Meeting with Students in your role as a volunteer.**

1. All meetings and/or activities with students must take place on the school campus, or as part of a school-sponsored or school related activity such as a field trip.
2. All activities with a student or students must take place in a room with open visibility to the public or on the school grounds in sight of school staff representatives.
3. Off campus contact between volunteers and student is strictly prohibited unless under the direct supervision of a school official.

**Transportation.** Transporting a student in your personal car is prohibited.

- Students must be transported in a school district vehicle (field trips) or in the vehicle of a parent or legal guardian.
- Do not put yourself in the position of being alone with any student in any vehicle.
- Sometimes a parent may provide written consent for you to transport the parent's child. That may not protect you, the volunteer, from liability because you would not be acting within the scope of your duties as a volunteer.

### **Physical Contact.**

- Restrict physical contact.
- Use common sense.

- Physical contact should be limited to holding a hand, giving a soft pat on the back or sharing a hug in full view of other school officials.
- Remember that what you see as simple, friendly affection between you and the student may be viewed as something entirely different by someone else.

### **Positive, Respectful Role Model.**

- Do not criticize parents, teachers, school personnel or guidelines publicly or with your student. If a problem arises, consult with your volunteer coordinator or the campus principal.
- Do not discuss your students and their problems publicly or with others. If you need help with a student, discuss the matter professionally with the teacher, counselor, assistant principal, or principal.
- Address the student directly and with sensitivity, be honest and model an appropriate manner
- Use discretion in giving gifts to students in alignment with your campus volunteer program policy.

### **What you should know about Potential Liability.**

- A volunteer directly serving a school district is immune from civil liability – not personally liable – for conduct that is (1) incident to or (2) within the scope of your duties as a volunteer and involves the exercise of judgment or discretion on your part.
- You are NOT protected from personal liability if you use excessive force in disciplining a student or act with negligence resulting in bodily injury to a student.
- For purposes of liability a “volunteer” is a person providing services (1) on behalf of the school district (2) on the premises of the district (3) or at a school sponsored or school related activity on or off school property.
- The law concerning volunteers does not limit the volunteer’s liability for intentional misconduct or gross negligence. That is, a volunteer can be liable for intentional misconduct or gross negligence.
- A person who does not provide services for or on behalf of the school district on the premises of the district at a school sponsored or school related activity on or off school property is not considered a “volunteer”. If you are not considered a “volunteer”, you may be subject to liability. A volunteer may be subject to liability on federal charges for abuse of children.