

OPERATION BEACON - VOLUNTEERS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS...

- ❖ **Does a Parent have to sign up through Operation Beacon in order to eat lunch with their child?**
 - NO – a parent eating lunch with their child is considered a VISITOR – NOT a VOLUNTEER.
- ❖ **What about anyone who visits a school for one-time events such as Dr. Seuss Day or Career Day? Will they need to go through the application process?**
 - NO - For one day/one-time only events visitors do not have to go through the volunteer application process. If the visitor wants to return on a regular basis to perform a volunteer function, the visitor becomes a volunteer who will need to go through the application process.
- ❖ **Do police officers or firemen visiting a school for a presentation to students need to sign up to do so through Operation Beacon?**
 - NO – they would be considered visitors – NOT VOLUNTEERS. The main thing to keep in mind with this question is: Does this person come into a school on a regular basis to perform a volunteer function and/or interact with students outside of a general presentation to a class in the presence/under the supervision of a staff member? If the answer is yes – they must register through the application process.
- ❖ **Do Volunteers need to be supervised by school staff?**
 - YES – All volunteers MUST be supervised by school staff. At no time will an SCCPSS employee leave a volunteer unsupervised while interacting with students at the school. Protected student information will not be accessible to school volunteers without the required parental consent approvals.
- ❖ **If a parent wants to visit his/her child at a field trip event, do they need to be screened?**
 - NO – Parents may visit their children at school sponsored events as directed and supervised by school staff.
- ❖ **If someone wants to help out and perform volunteer duties on a class field trip do they need to be screened?**
 - YES - This would be considered a direct engagement volunteer duty where an individual will be working with and interacting with many students under the supervision of school staff. He/she must register through the applications process and will be screened.

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❖ **What differentiates Limited Engagement from Direct Engagement Volunteer Activities?**

- Limited Engagement = Those who perform volunteer duties on a brief occasion that will have limited interaction with students.
 - Requires a Sex Offender Registry Check
- Direct Engagement = Those who perform volunteer duties that shall involve direct student interaction.
 - Requires Sex Offender Registry and Criminal Background Check

❖ **Where is the application for volunteers located?**

- The link to an application and Operation Beacon information can be found on the front page of the District's website – www.SCCPSS.com. Simply look to the left sidebar to find the Operation Beacon button under "Dates to Know" – click the link to go to the Operation Beacon landing page where you can find the application and the virtual training module.

❖ **Do volunteers working in my school as part of a community group need to sign up as a volunteer through Operation Beacon?**

- YES – we want to know who is working in our schools. This includes Community Organizations. Because of the wide variety of organizations and the various roles they play, please call Communications with questions and we will determine the correct designation and procedure.

❖ **Do volunteers working in my school as part of a group need to go through the background screening if their organization already conducts one?**

- They must sign up through Operation Beacon and the appropriate level of screening will be determined during the application process based on their planned volunteer activities.

❖ **Does every volunteer go through a complete background screening?**

- NO – The level of screening required will be determined during the application process based on whether the volunteer plans to serve in a way that requires Direct engagement or Indirect engagement with students. Examples of Direct engagement can include mentors, tutors, field trip chaperones, etc. who work closely with students. Indirect engagement can include PTA members, Boosters, Concession

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Stand workers, classroom helpers, frequent event volunteers, frequent career day presenters or speakers, etc.

- ❖ **After a background check has been completed, how does the district determine if someone should be disqualified from volunteering?**
 - Decisions on volunteer applicants are based on the findings of the confidential background check. Only employees of the school district's Human Resources (HR) Department review background check information. If HR is unable to clear an applicant, a denial letter is generated and delivered to the individual. A simple misdemeanor would not immediately eliminate an applicant; however, the severity and reoccurrence of incidents are factors that will impact the final decision.
- ❖ **Is the information contained on my background check safe from public disclosure?**
 - Yes! The district maintains all confidentiality requirements as prescribed by law.
- ❖ **How does a denial impact my activity as a parent?**
 - The denial for serving in the capacity of a Beacon volunteer does not preclude the applicant from attending and/or observing a public event or activity at school. Nor does it prevent normal interactions of a parent with a child's school.
 - *Examples include, attending Back-to-School nights, actions as a parent of a student such as PTA meetings, parent/teacher conferences or scheduled meetings, school assemblies, school concerts, or participation in other school related events open to the public.*
- ❖ **Do High School Students volunteering at a school need to go through a background check?**
 - NO – we do not need to do a background check on our high school students.
- ❖ **Do Community Partners going into a school to perform health screenings on students need to apply through Operation Beacon and go through a Background Screening?**
 - If they fall under an existing Memorandum of Understanding or are working as part of an organization that comes into the school once or twice a year to provide a specific service – it is not necessary that they apply individually as an Operation Beacon volunteer. Those providing a service MUST be supervised by SCCPSS staff.
- ❖ **Do College students or groups who volunteer in a school need to apply through Operation Beacon?**

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- It depends...are they working in a school through a Memorandum of Understanding or regular educational partnership between SCCPSS and the college or the college group? If so, no, they do not. (For example: Nursing students getting college credit for clinicals or student teachers)
- If however, the college students are volunteering on their own and returning to the school on a regular basis – then yes, they do.
- ❖ **The school PTA is hosting a PTA event that is approved to take place at the school. Do the PTA event helpers/volunteers associated with the event need to go through the Operation Beacon Volunteer application process?**
 - NO – a PTA sponsored event taking place at the school is not considered an Operation Beacon Volunteer activity. PTA events taking place at the school site are reviewed for approval at the site level.
- ❖ **The school PTA has recruited volunteers to help at the school to perform volunteer duties, do they need to be approved through the Operation Beacon Volunteer application process?**
 - YES – if the PTA is bringing in volunteers to help the school and perform a volunteer function for the school, they will need to go through the application process.
- ❖ **How will volunteers be notified if they are cleared to work in a school?**
 - Volunteers who are cleared to begin working in our schools should be notified by email through our App-Garden Volunteer Tracker service.
- ❖ **Do potential volunteers need to go through a background check with SCCPSS if they just completed one a few months ago?**
 - NO – Background screenings are good for three years.
- ❖ **Do permanent SCCPSS employees need to go through the background screening process in order to volunteer?**
 - NO – Permanent SCCPSS employees will automatically be cleared to the level of a Direct Engagement volunteer.
- ❖ **What about training?**
 - SCCPSS Professional Development has created a simple online “virtual training”. It is available on the Operation Beacon page at SCCPSS.com. All volunteers will be required to complete training by watching the video. If the volunteer does not have

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a computer/internet access at home – the volunteer coordinator may opt to have the potential volunteer complete the training on a computer at the school site. Any school-based training beyond that will be any site specific policies and procedures.

❖ **Are Volunteer Hours tracked?**

- Yes, volunteer hours are a part of our District Accountability System report for Community Engagement and are tracked through the App-Garden Volunteer Tracker computer sign-in process. There may be incentives and awards given to volunteers in appreciation for the hours they spend working to make our schools successful. Schools must maintain a record of volunteer hours.

❖ **How will volunteers sign-in and be identified at the school site when they show up to work?**

- Volunteers should sign in at the school site as required by Board Policy using the school's established visitor or volunteer sign-in protocol and then sign into the App-Garden Volunteer Tracker so that their hours can be recorded.