



Tamaqua Area
School District

**'Parent
Volunteer
Manual'**

TAMAQUA AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

Phone: (570) 668-3306
Tamaqua Area Elementary Schools
Tamaqua, PA 18252

Laura Shook
Elementary Principal

Dear Volunteer,

We are very pleased that you have decided to participate in the Tamaqua Area School District Volunteer Program. As parents, grandparents, neighbors and community members, you have ideas, talents and time to share with our students and our schools. It is our belief that volunteer programs are beneficial to everyone involved. These programs also help to foster stronger school/community relationships by creating a common ownership in the success of our schools. They also demonstrate the importance of community service to all involved in the program, especially students.

Please read through this handbook carefully. It is designed to give volunteers much of the information necessary to make your experience rewarding. If you have any questions, please direct them to the principal of your school.

Thank you for devoting your time to this worthy endeavor.

Sincerely,

Laura Shook
Elementary Principal

Role of the Volunteer

Volunteer in the classroom can assist teachers in a variety of ways, thereby freeing the teacher to focus more time on the teaching/learning process. An organized program of volunteer assistance can provide a unique contribution to the educational program by helping assume some of the many roles of the teacher.

Before You Begin

Volunteers should arrange to meet with the teacher before beginning as a classroom volunteer. The first visit or two should be spent observing the classroom, getting to know the students and the style and routines of the teacher. This will help the children to become familiar with you before you begin.

The teacher is in charge of all phases of classroom activity and the volunteers will take directions from the teacher. Your activities should support the efforts of staff members but not replace them or exceed their authority.

It is not in the best interest of the child to have a parent, grandparent, guardian, etc. volunteer in their child's classroom, therefore volunteers will be utilized in classrooms other than those in which their children are enrolled.

Try to match your interest, abilities and time availability with the school needs. Contact the building principal for specific details regarding school needs, requirements and scheduling options.

Maintain good communication especially in the event of an absence or schedule change. If you cannot fulfill your commitment for any period of time, please contact the school or classroom teacher as soon as possible so other arrangements can be made.

Follow school and district procedures regarding signing in and out, wearing badges, using school materials and maintaining health/security standards. Know emergency procedures for fire, illness, etc.

Seek advice from those directly in charge, including teachers, secretaries, aides, or other school personnel who are trained and responsible for the tasks. Maintain a spirit of partnership and cooperation with school staff.

Hints For Working With Students

- Be yourself. Warmth and friendliness foster volunteer-student relationships. Maintaining a sense of humor and comfort will help ensure your success with young people.
- Always be consistent with specific rules and practices maintained by your staff partner. Also, be familiar with school and classroom rules. Read parent or teacher handbook, if necessary.
- Maintain your position of responsibility and authority at all times. Do not let friendships or neighborly relations interfere with your role as school volunteer.
- Learn student and teacher names quickly.
- Be aware of and sensitive to the unique gifts and needs of individual students. This is critical at all age levels.
- Encourage and praise students when appropriate.

Important Information

Background Checks

All volunteers serving in volunteer positions shall be required to submit a child abuse history clearance and a Pennsylvania State record check EVERY 60 MONTHS. An **FBI criminal history check is only required if the volunteer has not been a resident of the Commonwealth for the previous ten years**.

Fees:

For volunteers required to obtain certifications under the CPSL, the fee has been waived for the state criminal history check and the child abuse clearance so long as the certifications are not used for other purposes. Such certifications are provided at no charge only once every 57 months.

Timeline – With respect to volunteers required to get certifications pursuant to the law, the phase in works as follows:

- Beginning August 25, 2015, all new volunteers must submit certifications prior to the commencement of service.
- Volunteers who obtained certifications prior to August 25, 2015, must obtain new certifications 60 months from the date of the person's oldest certification. If current certification is older than 60 months as of August 25, 2015, new certifications must be obtained by July 1, 2016.
- Volunteers approved before August 25, 2015, without certifications must obtain the required certifications by July 1, 2016.

Below you will find information about how to obtain each clearance:

Pennsylvania Child Abuse Reports:

As of December 31, 2014, requests for clearance statements (now called "certifications") may be made online at <https://www.compass.state.pa.us>.

Paper submissions of the clearance statement request form CY113 Form may be accessed via the Department of Human Services (DHS) website and mailed to the ChildLine and Abuse Registry, Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, P.O. Box 8170, Harrisburg, PA 17105-8170.

Download and print the form: [version](#)/[Spanish version](#).

Pennsylvania State Police Reports:

Pennsylvania State Police reports may be secured online using the state police website at <https://epatch.state.pa.us>

Paper submissions of the clearance statement made be obtained by accessing Form SP4-164 on the state police website and mailing the request form to Pennsylvania State Police Central Repository-164, 1800 Elmerton Avenue, Harrisburg, PA 17110-9758.

The quickest method is to apply online and receive immediate results if there is no record.

Questions about State Police checks may be directed to 1-888-QUERYPA (1-888-783-7972).

FBI Reports:

To request FBI reports, costing \$27.00-\$28.75, application forms and instructions can be found at <https://www.pa.cogentid.com> or by calling 1-888-439-2486.

Confidentiality

All school volunteers are expected to maintain confidentiality while working in the school. All things that are seen and heard at school about children and their families should be considered privileged information. Trust must be established and maintained in order for this volunteer program to be successful. Volunteers can strengthen the bond between themselves and the school by following these guidelines:

- Treat all student information as personal and confidential regardless of source.
- Communicate relevant information about students to the respective classroom teacher or building principal.
- Seek clarification of unusual situations that occur in the school from the person(s) involved and avoid discussing such matters with non-school personnel.
- Retain a sense of perspective regarding comments heard and actions observed.
- Understand that not all information can and will be shared with volunteers, due to legal considerations.
- Deal impartially with students regardless of background, intelligence, physical or emotional maturity.
- Do not discuss student progress or behavior with the parent. All relevant information should be referred to the teacher or principal. Direct inquiries about students to the professional staff.
- Speak constructively of all school staff; however, report difficulties involving the welfare of students or school to the principal.
- Do not discuss confidential information with anyone. This information includes, but is not limited to:
 - scholastic and health records
 - test scores and grades
 - discipline and classroom behavior
 - character traits of children
- **All volunteers are required to sign a statement of confidentiality.**

Discipline

Discipline of students is solely the responsibility of the teacher in charge. Volunteers should in no way discipline students. Should students misbehave in your presence, you should report this immediately to the teacher in charge. The teacher will then determine the necessary course of action. Also note that we expect students to treat volunteers with the same level of respect given to other school personnel. If you feel that students are not being respectful towards you, do not hesitate to discuss the matter with the teacher or principal.

The DOs and DON'Ts of Volunteering

To capably assist the school with additional services, all volunteers are requested to keep in mind the following:

- **DO** take a personal interest in helping and working with teachers, staff and students.
- **DO** be willing to learn more about fostering the process of growth and development in children.
- **DO** be willing and able to follow directions from teachers and staff.
- **DO** be adaptable and flexible when working with children.
- **DO** have a cooperative attitude in working with school personnel.
- **DO** be imaginative, creative, consistent, dependable and optimistic.
- **DO** keep all student information strictly confidential.
- **DO** have a sense of humor as well a patience and understanding.
- **DO** accept each child for who they are.
- **DO** let the teacher be responsible for discipline.

- **DON'T** forget to sign in and out of the office every time you're in the building.
- **DON'T** lose your temper or become annoyed when students don't understand something the first time.
- **DON'T** do a student's work for them.
- **DON'T** discuss student's work with anyone but the teacher.
- **DON'T** ask teachers or others for personal information about students.
- **DON'T** threaten or punish students.
- **DON'T** intervene or contradict a teacher once a problem has been handled.
- **DON'T** forget to contact the teacher or school if you can't fulfill your commitment.

PENNSYLVANIA CHILD ABUSE HISTORY CLEARANCE

COMPLETE SECTION I ONLY. PRINT CLEARLY IN INK. ENCLOSE \$10.00 MONEY ORDER ONLY. PAYABLE TO DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE. DO NOT SEND CASH OR PERSONAL CHECK.

SEND TO CHILDLINE AND ABUSE REGISTRY, DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE, P.O. BOX 8170 HARRISBURG, PA 17105-8170

APPLICATIONS THAT ARE INCOMPLETE ILLEGIBLE OR RECEIVED WITHOUT FEE WILL BE RETURNED UNPROCESSED. IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS CALL 717-783-6211

CHILDLINE USE ONLY

DATE RECEIVED BY CHILDLINE

SECTION I APPLICANT IDENTIFICATION

IN THIS SPACE PRINT APPLICANTS FULL NAME AND ADDRESS (DO NOT USE INITIALS)

NAME

STREET

CITY, STATE
ZIP CODE

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER

AGE DATE OF BIRTH DAYTIME PHONE NO.

SEX COUNTY YOU LIVE IN
 M F

PREVIOUS NAMES USED SINCE 1975 (Include Maiden Name, Nicknames, Aliases)

(FIRST, MIDDLE, LAST)

(FIRST, MIDDLE, LAST)

PURPOSE OF CLEARANCE (Check ONE block ONLY)

- CHILD CARE
 VOLUNTEERS-A copy of your PROCESSED "Request for Criminal Record" (Form SP4-164) must be attached. Out-of-state residents must also attach a copy of their PROCESSED FBI clearance (Form FID-258).
 CWEP (Community Work Experience Program Participant)
- FOSTER CARE
 _____ SIGNATURE OF CAO REP CAO PHONE NO
- ADOPTION
- SCHOOL

PREVIOUS ADDRESSES SINCE 1975 (Attach additional pages if necessary)

1.
2.
3.
4.

HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS (List everyone who lived with you at anytime since 1975 to the present).

NAME (First, Middle, Last) Do not use initials.	RELATIONSHIP	PRESENT AGE	SEX
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			

I certify that the above information is accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief and submitted as true and correct under penalty of law (Section 4904 of the Pennsylvania Crimes Code).

Applicants are required to show the Administrator the original document. Administrators are required to keep a copy of this child abuse history record on file. Any person altering the contents of this document may be subject to civil, criminal or administrative action.

APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE

DATE

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS SECTION - CHILDLINE USE ONLY

SECTION II RESULTS OF HISTORY CHECK

- APPLICANT IS NOT LISTED IN A REPORT OF CHILD ABUSE OR A REPORT FOR SCHOOL EMPLOYEE.
 APPLICANT IS LISTED IN A REPORT OF CHILD ABUSE OR A REPORT FOR SCHOOL EMPLOYEE (SEE BELOW).

STATUS OF REPORT	DATE OF INCIDENT	STATUS OF REPORT	DATE OF INCIDENT
1.		3.	
2.		4.	

VERIFIER

DATE

VERIFIER'S SUPERVISOR

DATE

Application Form School Volunteer

Name: _____

School: _____

Telephone Number: _____

I am the parent/guardian/grandparent of:

Child's name: _____ Grade: _____

Child's name: _____ Grade: _____

Child's name: _____ Grade: _____

I would like to work with these grades:

(You may choose as many as you wish)

K 1 2 3 4 5 No preference

Please circle to indicate when you are available:

<u>Monday</u>	<u>Tuesday</u>	<u>Wednesday</u>	<u>Thursday</u>	<u>Friday</u>
AM	AM	AM	AM	AM
PM	PM	PM	PM	PM

Check for completed forms:

_____ Act 151 Clearance

_____ Act 34 Clearance

Statement of Confidentiality for School Volunteers

I understand that in the course of my association with the Tamaqua Area School District I share the responsibility of maintaining the confidentiality of any employee or student information that I may have available to me. I understand that it is my responsibility to assure rights and confidentiality of information both written and verbal.

As a volunteer, I will work with the highest standards, committed to the idea that my work will benefit students. I promise to take to my work and attitude an open-mindedness, willingness to be trained, as well as interest and commitment.

I understand that in the performance of my duties, I am not to discuss academic or other confidential information regarding student or employees with anyone. Any breach of confidentiality will be carefully reviewed and if substantiated could result in termination of volunteer involvement with the School District, and my result in legal action.

I acknowledge that I have read and understand this statement of confidentiality.

Volunteer Signature

Date

Witness Signature

Date