

Bangor School Department 2011-2012 Volunteer Handbook



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September 2011



BANGOR SCHOOL DEPARTMENT

Betsy M. Webb, Ed.D. – Superintendent of Schools

73 Harlow Street
Bangor ME 04401

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Welcome Bangor School Department Volunteers!

We are thankful that you have chosen to volunteer your services to our students. The Bangor School Committee encourages parents/guardians and other members of the community to share their time, knowledge, and abilities with our students. Volunteers in our schools enrich the educational program and strengthen our schools' relationships with the greater Bangor community. Your contribution is important to help meet the individual needs of each child and achieve our mission of academic excellence for all.

The education of today's youth takes a whole community. Caring members of our community bring new energy, diverse perspectives, and needed resources into our schools. All over the country schools are drawing support from their communities through the efforts of volunteers who work in our schools, become career mentors, contribute goods and supplies, and more.

This handbook is designed to provide you with practical information that will assist you in your volunteer placement. It is our goal to ensure that the time you spend with our students is worthwhile. If you have any questions that are not addressed in this handbook, please speak with the classroom teacher or the school principal.

Once again, thank you for helping to make a difference in the lives of students in Bangor. The gift of your time is sincerely appreciated.

Sincerely,

Betsy M. Webb
Superintendent of Schools

Bangor School Department

Volunteer Goals

The goal of the Bangor School Department Volunteer Program is to encourage and enable citizens within our communities to participate in fostering academic excellence for all students. Our primary responsibility is to ensure that all volunteers are aware of the confidentiality guidelines enforced in schools and of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), which regulates confidentiality of student records. Our goals will be accomplished by training, supporting and providing encouragement to volunteers to be effective participants within our schools. We recognize the immense value that volunteers bring to our learning environment.

Definition of a Volunteer

A volunteer is a person who provides services, without compensation or benefits of any kind or amount, on an occasional or regular basis in the schools or in school activities.

Opportunities to Volunteer

Volunteer skills, interest, and time commitments vary. We hope that you will be able to find a volunteer opportunity that suits your interests and availability. (A complete list of volunteer opportunities is provided on the back of this packet.)

Classroom - Some teachers may like to have volunteers help in their classrooms or on field trips. Examples would be working with students in the classroom or in small groups, or preparing instructional materials as needed.

School Wide - For those interested in helping on a school-wide level, the school library and the Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) offer various opportunities to contribute. In most schools, the PTO hosts events that require volunteers to help with coordination, set up, supervision, and communication.

Special School Projects - Periodically throughout the year, the school may require volunteer help with such projects as school newsletters, decorating, and specific theme related activities.

**Sound good to you?
Here's all you need to do...**

Getting Started

Before beginning your first volunteer tasks, all volunteers must complete the following process:

1. Complete and return the attached Volunteer Application and Volunteer Agreement Form provided on pages 6-8.
2. Attend an orientation session on the responsibilities and expectations of volunteers. Become familiar with school practices for signing in/out, identification, emergency drills, classroom policies, and rules. Sign the Orientation Attendance Form and the Volunteer Acknowledgement of Student Privacy Rights Form provided at the orientation.

What You Should Know About Our Volunteer Program

The Bangor School Department (BSD) has a strong tradition of parental involvement. Because volunteers are such an integral part of our schools, it is important to maintain high standards of security and professional behavior. All volunteers working with or overseeing children must do so in the presence of a Bangor School Department staff member. Our schools are exciting and busy places, so it is extremely important for all volunteers to remember the following:

- Respect confidentiality. Students and staff have a right to privacy.
- Honor your commitments and be on time. Choose what is manageable and interesting to you.
- Be professional, prepared, responsible, and safe at all times.
- Communicate appropriately. Do not distract teachers while they are teaching. Use an appropriate tone of voice for the age of students. Be positive in discussions with students.
- Strive to give each child the best effort you can.
- Respect each child as an individual.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is a great concern while you are in the school. As a volunteer, you may become privy to information about students' personal or educational information, either formally or informally. The Bangor School Department policy strictly forbids the unauthorized discussion and/or disclosure of any such information.

To make sure that students, staff, and families feel comfortable in our schools, it is essential that we respect each other's privacy. Volunteers must be especially careful to maintain confidentiality. Breaching confidentiality can be hurtful to children, their families, and our staff. It can also harm the good reputation that our BSD volunteer parents have earned over the years.

All volunteers must sign the BSD Volunteer Acknowledgement of Student Privacy Rights form during your orientation session.

(Confidentiality – continued...)

Here are some sample issues that may arise:

When you see or hear something...

As a volunteer, you might see or hear things from staff or students that they would not want repeated outside the school. No matter how innocent, cute, funny, or charming a classroom event may be, it is not appropriate to repeat stories about students under any circumstances.

When parents ask you questions...

Many parents are tempted to ask you about how their children behave in school. You are not at liberty to tell. Politely let them know that they should speak with the classroom teacher.

When students tell you about their personal lives...

As students become comfortable working with you, they might decide to share something personal. You need to keep this information private, even if you know the child and their family outside of school.

When you have a concern...

If you hear or observe something that troubles you, tell the classroom teacher. The teacher 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, discuss it with the school principal.

A Volunteer is expected to:

- Never share personal information about a student or student's family with other people.
- Never share specific information with a parent about their child based on the volunteer's classroom experience, whether positive or negative.
- Never make comments harmful to the reputation of any pupil, professional or other volunteer.
- Never share opinions about the behavior and/or academic program of students.

Discipline

Allow teachers to discipline children. If there are incidents of misbehavior, it is the teacher's job to deal with them. As a volunteer, it is helpful to be specific about rules and expectations with students. Keep limits and boundaries in place. Consistently and calmly work with the students, taking a neutral stance, restating rules and expectations, and offering reasonable choices.

If You Need Help...

If you have questions, concerns, or just want to talk about your volunteer assignment, please talk with the classroom teacher or staff member with whom you are working, or the principal



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VOLUNTEER APPLICATION

You can make a difference: Be a school volunteer!

(Please PRINT clearly.)

First Name: _____ Middle: _____ Last Name: _____

Maiden Name: _____ Previous Name(s): _____

Date of Birth: ____ / ____ / ____ Driver's License # _____ State I.D.# _____

Home Address: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____ Email: _____

Area(s) of interest for volunteering: _____

<u>Name(s) of Child/Children</u>	<u>School</u>	<u>Grade</u>
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

List any education/training/experiences you have had that would help us in meeting the needs of our students:

In which area(s) would you prefer to serve? (Please see the complete list of volunteer opportunities provided on the back of this packet.)

School: _____ Volunteer Opportunities: _____

School: _____ Volunteer Opportunities: _____

School: _____ Volunteer Opportunities: _____

Days Available: _____ Times Available: _____

Person to be notified in case of emergency: _____ Phone: _____

REFERENCES:

Please list three persons who can comment on your character and abilities that we may contact.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>Relationship</u>

BACKGROUND:

The Bangor School Department asks the following information of all individuals who volunteer to work with our children to help ensure the safety of our students.

1. Have you ever been charged with or investigated for sexual abuse or harassment of another person? Yes___ No___
2. Have you ever been convicted of a crime (other than a minor traffic offense)? Yes___ No___
3. Have you ever entered a plea of guilty or "no contest" (nolo contendere) to any crime (other than a minor traffic offense)? Yes___ No___
4. Has any court ever deferred, filed or dismissed proceedings without a finding of guilty and required that you pay a fine, penalty or court costs and/or imposed a requirement as to your behavior or conduct for a period of time in connection with any crime (other than a minor traffic offense)? Yes___ No___

If you answered YES to any of the previous questions, provide full details below, including information with respect to court actions, the date, offense in question, and the address of the court involved (attach additional page(s) if necessary).

If you have lived outside of Maine, please identify the states and dates: _____

Refusal to provide authorization for reference and/or criminal records checks and/or providing false or misleading information on this application shall constitute sufficient reason to deny approval to serve as a volunteer or termination as a volunteer in the Bangor School Department.

I understand that the Bangor School Department performs reference and criminal records checks on all volunteers and I authorize persons and entities contacted by the Bangor School Department in connection with this application to provide information about me. I expressly waive in connection with any request for or provision of such information, any claims, including without limitation, defamation, emotional distress, invasion of privacy, or interference with contractual relations that I might otherwise have against the school department, its agents and officials or against any provider of such information. I further understand that if I am approved as a volunteer, that I will be required to sign a Volunteer Agreement and attend a Volunteer Orientation.

Applicant Signature Date: _____

Printed Name

OFFICE USE ONLY:

- _____ Application reviewed for completeness
- _____ References checked (attach documentation)
- _____ Criminal record checked (attach documentation)

Application approved: _____

Application denied: _____

Administrator or Authorized Official _____

Date: _____



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VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT FORM

I have read the Bangor School Department Volunteer Handbook, have attended volunteer training, and understand my responsibilities as a school volunteer.

I understand that as a volunteer in the Bangor School Department I must keep ALL student and staff information confidential. I agree not to access, review, disclose, or use confidential student or staff information without specific authorization from a school administrator. I also understand that even when I am no longer a volunteer in the schools, any confidential information I have learned must continue to be kept confidential. I understand that any breach of confidentiality requirements will result in my immediate termination as a volunteer and may result in legal action against me.

I understand that I must comply with all Bangor School Department policies and school rules applicable to school staff as well as all directions from school administrators and staff while serving as a volunteer. I further understand that my authorization to serve as a volunteer may be terminated at the discretion of the superintendent and/or school principal at any time if they determine that such action is in the best interest of the Bangor School Department.

Date

Signature of Volunteer

Printed Name

Volunteer Orientation Outline for Guidance/Administration

1. Confidentiality

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To make sure that students, staff, and families feel comfortable, it is essential that we respect each other's privacy. Volunteers must be especially careful to honor confidentiality. Breaching confidentiality can be hurtful to children, their families, and our staff. It can also harm the good reputation our BSD volunteer parents have earned over the years.

2. Professional and Ethical Responsibilities

Maintain confidentiality. It is our expectation, and a program requirement, that volunteers never share confidential information about a student or staff member with others, including that student's or staff member's family and the volunteer's own family. The teacher is generally the most appropriate person with whom to discuss a child's progress and concerns. You should direct any questions to the teacher. If you feel your concern cannot be appropriately addressed by the teacher, discuss it with the school principal.

Be reliable. Remember that students and staff members depend on your presence.

Be a role model. Remember that you are acting as a role model for the students. Conduct yourself with dignity, courtesy, and consideration at all times. Wearing appropriate, practical, comfortable clothing when you volunteer is one more way you can be a role model. Just as we expect students to refrain from using inappropriate language while at school, we expect the same from teachers, staff, and volunteers. Most adults realize how easily children pick up on what we say, and often a harmless slang term to one individual may be offensive to another.

Be flexible. Remember that you are at school to help all students. You will be making a contribution whether you are working with your child's class or in another setting.

Be focused. This is a time to be with the students enrolled in school, so please do not bring younger children to school while you volunteer.

Be a positive, public representative of the school. Address any concerns or issues promptly and productively with the staff member with whom you are working, as you are under the supervision of a Bangor School Department employee at all times.

3. Routine Procedures

- Sign in/Sign out
- Volunteer badges with names
- Parking
- Staff Lounge (school policy)
- Fire drills/Emergency procedures
- Cell phones/School phone usage
- Lunch procedures
- Restrooms
- What to do if the classroom teacher is absent
- Smoking policy

4. Questions/Answers Time

5. Thank You

Always remember that you are appreciated! Sometimes the staff members get caught up in the tasks of the day and may forget to say, "THANKS!" Please know that we value the time you give to our schools.