

# Frequently Asked Questions

**Q: I've never needed to fill out these volunteer application materials before. Why now?**

**A:** Missoula County Public Schools has instituted a district-wide volunteer management program to help safely increase the number of parent and community volunteers used in the schools and support the current volunteers we have. These forms will help us set realistic goals for increasing volunteerism and also help keep our students and staff safe.

**Q: I have children at multiple schools. Do I need to fill out multiple application forms?**

**A:** No. These forms certify you as a volunteer across the District. If you plan to volunteer at multiple schools, tell the secretaries and they can access your records from the District database.

**Q: Will I be contacted to volunteer by other schools?**

**A:** No. District volunteer records help us track involvement numbers and keep students and staff safe. We understand a volunteer commitment comes from the volunteer. You will only be contacted to volunteer at schools where you have expressed an interest in helping.

**Q: I want to serve on my school's PTA/PTO. Do I need to fill out these volunteer forms?**

**A:** Maybe. If you only want to serve on the PTA/PTO/booster club and will not be working with MCPS students directly or during school hours, you will not need to fill out the District Volunteer Application forms. However, if you are working with students at a school-sponsored event (ice cream social, Sock Hop) you will need to fill out the forms and ask your group's leadership and the school principal if your work will be supervised or unsupervised. Unsupervised positions require an approved Criminal Background Check.

**Q: My child's extended family wants to volunteer while visiting. Is that allowed?**

**A:** Family involvement is absolutely encouraged and welcomed by MCPS. Family volunteers will need to fill out the basic District Volunteer Application and Confidentiality Agreement to participate in one-stop volunteer activities. We understand the desire to be involved, but we must ensure the safety of all students and staff.

If you know family will be visiting, feel free to mail them a copy of this handbook with the proper forms and/or refer them to the MCPS Volunteer webpage at

**[www.mcpsmt.org](http://www.mcpsmt.org).**

**Q: What will show up in my Criminal Background Check, and who will see the results?**

**A:** The MCPS Criminal Background Checks will be run by the MCPS district-wide Human Resources Department through a company called Victig. The results include criminal convictions only. No financial or education history is included in the background check. Teachers, aides and secretaries at the schools will only know if your background check is approved or not approved, and principals will have access to the results of your report if you are not approved for unsupervised contact with students. Please refer to Page 6-7 for more information and a list of restricted convictions.

**Q: What if I can't afford to pay the \$6.00 Criminal Background Check processing fee?**

**A:** MCPS understands that while some families may be able to pay for their background check, others may not. To encourage involvement from all parents and community members, MCPS has arranged to cover the fee in cases of financial hardship. We welcome the opportunity to help everyone volunteer in our schools, so please ask your school staff how you can get your fee covered.

**Q: My teacher knows when I come and everyone at the school knows me. Do I still have to sign in and out at the front desk every time I volunteer?**

**A:** Yes. The sign-in/sign-out sheets help us track volunteer involvement, keep students safe and provide proof you were in the school at certain times if you are injured while volunteering and file a Worker's Compensation claim through the District.

**Q: What happens if I decline a Criminal Background Check?**

**A:** Any volunteer who declines a Criminal Background Check is still welcome to be involved in the school, but will be restricted to supervised volunteer positions. In these positions, you may never be in contact with students without the presence of a MCPS employee or approved program supervisor.

**Q: How soon can I start volunteering after turning in my application materials?**

**A:** You may begin volunteering in a supervised position immediately after turning your application materials into the school. For unsupervised positions, you must wait until your Criminal Background Check results are returned. Checks are submitted once a week and take 24 to 48 hours to process, so it could take up to two weeks to get the results to your school. You may use that time to volunteer in a supervised capacity. If you know you will be volunteering at some time during the year, turning in your application and forms at the beginning of the year can cut out the lag time between application and approval.

**Q: Do I have to fill out these forms every year?**

**A:** Not necessarily. Your Criminal Background Check results are valid for two school years. Your volunteer records will reflect when you need to renew your background check. You may fill out a new application and give it to school staff to update your information, and we recommend you fill out a new application every two years when you renew your background check.

**Q: How do I know if my volunteer position is supervised or unsupervised?**

**A:** The teacher or administrator you volunteer with can tell you the contact level of your position. Positions are classified at the district level by the Human Resources Department, and to avoid discrimination, contact is not determined on a case-by-case basis.

**Q: Who can I contact with more questions about these policies and procedures?**

**A:** You can visit the General Information section of the MCPS Volunteer Webpage. You will have access to F.A.Q.'s, volunteer forms and other resources. For further questions, please contact Brittany Gross at 728-2400, ext. 1030, or by e-mail at [blgross@mcps.k12.mt.us](mailto:blgross@mcps.k12.mt.us).

We'd love to hear from you!

If you have any questions or concerns regarding these policies, procedures or your volunteer service, please contact Brittany Gross.



**Phone:** 728-2400, X. 1030 **E-mail:** [blgross@mcps.k12.mt.us](mailto:blgross@mcps.k12.mt.us)