



VOLUNTEER GUIDELINES



SPS Volunteers
167 Holland St., 3rd floor Somerville, MA 02144
www.somerville.k12.ma.us/volunteers jcapuano@k12.somerville.ma.us

Somerville Public Schools

Somerville Public Schools is a vibrant, diverse learning community serving nearly 5,000 students in ten schools. Through interactive core curricula, including arts, music, health and physical education curriculum, and a variety of enrichment and extracurricular programs and activities, SPS aims to actively engage the whole child.

The SFLC/SPS Volunteer Program is a program of the Somerville Public Schools whose mission is to enhance the capacity of educators and school staff to support the learning and well-being of youth and adult learners through volunteer intervention and support. We strive to fulfill this mission by actively recruiting, screening, referring and supporting volunteers to learn, serve and inspire alongside our staff and students.

This guide outlines Somerville Public Schools' policies and practices for all Somerville Public School volunteers and the expectations we have of you as you serve in a school.

On behalf of our students, families, and educators, thank you for your commitment to and care of Somerville's students. We look forward to learning and serving with you!

School Standards and Procedures

1. For the safety and security of all students, every volunteer must complete a **CORI** (Criminal Offender Record Information) or background check through Somerville Public Schools every school year. Regardless of duration of commitment or level of interaction with students, the CORI **must be approved** before volunteering. **Returning volunteers and Parents/Caregivers:** your CORI may be submitted through the main office of any Somerville Public School during school hours or by appointment through the SPS/SFLC Volunteer Program. New and prospective volunteers wishing to serve regularly: CORIs may be submitted at a Volunteer Orientation or by appointment with SPS/SFLC Volunteer Coordinator: jcapuano@k12.somerville.ma.us.
2. **Volunteers Matter!** Your time is valued. We want to know your interests, preferences, skills, experience and availability in order to identify a good match! All regular or weekly volunteers are asked to [self-register with VolunteerMatters here](#). Your account can be updated or deactivated at any time.
3. Volunteers must follow all policies and practices of the Somerville Public Schools. For information about school practices, policies and resources please refer to the [SPS Parent/Guardian Guide](#).
4. Volunteers must sign in and out at the school's main office for each session and **wear a Volunteer or Visitor tag** while in the school. Somerville High School weekly volunteers are provided with a school-issued photo ID.
5. **Parking Passes** Most Somerville streets are Somerville resident permit parking only and school lots are reserved for school staff parking. Temporary parking passes are provided for non-Somerville resident volunteers. One-time volunteers may obtain a temporary parking pass from their assigned school's main office. Parking passes should be displayed on your vehicle's front dashboard.
6. Volunteers working directly with students may become aware of confidential information about specific students. This information may include information such as students' academic performance, student records, behavior, disabilities, medical issues, immigration status or other personal or family matters. Volunteers will not disclose such confidential information except to school employees who have a need to know.
7. Volunteers should not photograph students unless authorized by the building principal or designated staff. Volunteers should not share photographs of students. Volunteers should not use social media, 'friend' or text with students.
8. Volunteers should not provide food or medicine to students.
9. Volunteers should never assume responsibility for the supervision of a class in the absence of a certified teacher.
10. Volunteers should never assume responsibility for the discipline of a student.
11. Volunteers are not authorized to transport students.
12. Volunteers should use adult restrooms only.

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13. Volunteers wishing to serve with your dog or therapy animal should review [Therapy Dog Team Guidelines](#) for next steps. For more information about how to get started contact SPS/SFLC Volunteer Coordinator JCapuano@k12.somerville.ma.us.

14. Somerville Public Schools welcome youth to serve as homework helpers, peer or youth mentors, assist with school events or after school programs and more. Volunteers under the age of 18 years wishing to serve regularly with Somerville Public Schools may reach out to SPS/SFLC Volunteer Coordinator JCapuano@k12.somerville.ma.us. Visit the [Somerville Hub](#) for teen volunteer opportunities, activities and supports.

15. **Conflict of Interest Law** Anyone performing services for a city or town or holding a municipal position, whether paid or unpaid, including full- and part-time municipal employees, elected officials, volunteers, and consultants, is a municipal employee under the Conflict of Interest Law. Please review the following summary of the Conflict of Interest Law, MA General Laws, Chapter 268A:
<http://www.mass.gov/ethics/education-and-training-resources/required-education-and-training/municipal-employee-summary.html>

16. **Liability** The City of Somerville and Somerville Public Schools requires volunteers to accept terms and conditions which release the City and Somerville Public Schools from liability in the event of volunteer injury, illness or property loss, and damages or costs associated with such.

17. **Photo Release** Somerville Public Schools requests that volunteers complete an opt out form if they do not wish Somerville Public Schools to publish, print or post to its website your photograph as part of your volunteer activities. Please see the SPS Volunteer Coordinator if you wish to complete this form.

18. SMILE and have FUN!

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Best Practices

Volunteers are most effective when they can serve consistently and with the same classroom, educator, counselor, staff or student(s) for consecutive weeks, ideally for at least three consecutive months. If you are matched with a classroom, program or for individual tutoring, mentoring or other regular support, we ask that you:

1. Make a Firm Commitment. Volunteer tutors, academic support volunteers and mentors should commit to a consistent schedule, serving one hour a week for a minimum of three months. As a weekly volunteer, students and teachers who come to rely on you will miss you when you are not there. Except in an emergency, last minute absences are disruptive. If you are casual about your absences, students will receive the wrong message, and it may cause teachers to be hesitant to work with volunteers in the future. Please contact your direct supervisor at least 24 hours prior to an absence, and if for any reason you are unable to complete your service, please make sure to notify your supervisor and the district Volunteer Coordinator immediately.

2. Define Your Role. The educator or lead staff you are connected with is your supervisor. Work with them to clearly define your role. Your volunteer work will vary depending on the subject and program, but communicate with your supervisor your expectations. Always ask the educator or your direct supervisor if you have questions about materials, school protocols, or expectations.

3. Understand Learning Goals. If working one-on-one or with a consistent small group of students, work with your supervisor to understand the learning goals for the student (s). Request progress information from your supervisor if you feel it will help inform your tutoring or mentoring.

4. Get Feedback. Through your supervisor, get feedback on whether student performance is improving, and how performance will be measured, such as level of student engagement, behaviors, test scores if relevant, or other areas of student assessment.

5. Be on Time. Teachers and students have tight timelines. Please be on time so that teachers can adhere to their and students' schedules. If you must miss a session, please let your supervisor know well ahead of time. If you cannot reach the supervisor, leave a message at the school's main office.

6. Reassignment or Dismissal from Service. Somerville Public Schools strives to match volunteers with placements that best serve students and staff. SPS understands that not every match is ideal and that there may be times when the educator-staff-volunteer relationship is not productive or beneficial to student learning. In these circumstances, the volunteer will need to be reassigned or in some cases, dismissed from service.

7. College or Community Service Credit; Letters of Recommendation Let your supervisor know ahead of time if you will need a letter of recommendation or other information from them, or from the SPS Volunteer Coordinator. Keep a log of dates and hours worked, activities, and any skills, cultural lessons or other knowledge or understanding you gained through tutoring or serving in a classroom.

8. Exit Survey In order to support volunteers and ensure that their time and service are most effective, we need to hear about your experience. Volunteers are asked to complete a Volunteer Survey upon completion of the school year or at the end their service.

9. VolunteersMatter!

Help demonstrate that volunteer service matters and that individualized volunteer intervention can boost student confidence, interest in subject, and performance. In order to evaluate impact for one-to-one or small group intervention, the following information is required for weekly academic volunteers:

Volunteer Name	Start Date	End Date	Schedule (Day/Time)	Subject (Literacy/Math/ESL...)	School / Program	Grade/ Teacher

Resources

Somerville Public Schools remain steadfast in their commitment to serving all students and families, regardless of citizenship. Somerville Public Schools has a moral and legal obligation to enroll and serve every child living in our district without regard to immigration status, and without fear of discrimination. As a volunteer serving in our schools, thank you for helping to provide a welcoming, safe, inclusive and nurturing educational experience for all students. These resources may be helpful in your volunteer journey:

[Resources for SPS and community families](#)

[One Somerville Resources](#)

[Teaching Tolerance - Diversity, Equity and Justice](#)

[Immigrant and Refugee Children: A Guide for Educators and School Support Staff](#)

http://www.tolerance.org/sites/default/files/general/TT55_Teaching_Tolerance_Magazine.pdf pg 24.

Growth Mindset

<https://ww2.kqed.org/mindshift/tag/growth-mindset/>
<https://www.mindsetworks.com/science/>

Somerville Public Schools Grade Level Curriculum Guides, K-5

<http://www.somerville.k12.ma.us/district-leadership/central-administration/curriculum-instruction-and-assessment>

Literacy

www.readingrockets.org

Interactive reading games and activities: <http://pbskids.org/games/reading/>
25 Books that diversify students' reading lists

<https://ww2.kqed.org/mindshift/2014/06/07/25-ideas-to-diversify-reading-lists-this-summer/>

[Multilingual Learners, Resources , Activities](#)

Mentoring Resources

<https://nationalmentoringresourcecenter.org/resources-for-mentoring-programs/>

<https://www.evidencebasedmentoring.org/>

Somerville Public Schools
Somerville Family Learning Collaborative

Volunteers
Serving & Inspiring

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