

Penn Manor School District Volunteer FAQs

Do ALL volunteers have to have clearances?

Yes, all volunteers will be required to have background clearances. The new state law requires that the following volunteers need clearances:

1. Volunteers who are responsible for the welfare of the child.
2. Volunteers who have direct contact with a child, i.e., providing care, supervision, guidance or control of a child (using the common meaning of those terms, with child safety serving as the paramount consideration).
3. Volunteers who have routine interaction with children (volunteers who have regular, ongoing contact that is integral to their volunteer responsibilities).
4. Any individuals who serves without pay as a sports coach.
5. Any individuals who regularly assists and has contact with children in connection with a play, concert, or other curricular, co-curricular, or extracurricular activity.
6. Student Volunteer-A student age 18 or older enrolled in one the District's schools who volunteers for an event on school grounds and sponsored by the school in which the student is enrolled and which is not an event for children who are in the care of a child care service. The definition applies only if the student is not responsible for the welfare of any child at the event.
7. The following individuals are not required to obtain clearances:
 - Visitor-An individual whose actions do not rise to the level of a volunteer. As examples and without limiting the category of individuals who may be considered visitors, Visitor includes:
 - ✓ A parent, close relative, or guardian who visits a classroom, auditorium, other school common area, or private meeting area to make a delivery to, meet with, or share a celebration time with, a student who is the individual's child or other close relative or for whom the individual is the guardian
 - ✓ An individual who attends a sports event or other co-curricular activity
 - ✓ An individual who is a career day or other similar speaker or participant visiting to share information with students under supervision of a school employee. Visitors are governed by Board Policy No. 907/School Visitors.
 - ✓ An individual who allows a student to visit the individual's place of business for a job shadowing for a very limited time period in not considered involved in an internship, externship, work study, co-op or similar program

Unless a Principal can categorize your activity as that of a visitor, you will need to have clearances to volunteer with our students.

What clearances are required?

Three different clearances are required – (1) PA State Criminal Record Check, (2) PA Child Abuse History Clearance and (3) Federal Criminal History Record Check ("fingerprint" – done through IdentoGo) The new state law permits the District to waive a volunteer's need to obtain the Federal Criminal History Record Check (FBI Fingerprint) if the volunteer can attest that they have been a resident of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania during the entirety of the previous ten-year period.

Why are 3 different clearances required?

Each clearance request searches a unique database of records. The PA clearances for child abuse and criminal records are held in 2 different state databases, while the Federal clearance checks criminal history through a national database.

What should I do once I get my clearances?

Once you receive all your clearances, take the originals to the Main office of the school in which your child attends and where you plan on volunteering, during normal office hours, when school is in session; otherwise, please take your original clearances to the District Office, Monday-Thursday, (7:00am-4:00pm), over the summer months, when school is not in session or you may scan your clearances to the Human Resources Mailbox, HumanResources@pennmanor.net

Additional times can be made by appointment. Administrative Staff will review your clearances and will make a copy to keep for our files. The originals will be returned to you. Thereafter, your name will be added to a central database of volunteers who have submitted clearances and will be maintained by the Human Resources Department.

What if I have older clearances that I got for volunteering with other organizations?

The District will accept the clearances provided they are not more than five years old from the date of submission. The clearances will expire when the oldest of the submitted clearances is more than 5 years old.

How often will I have to update my clearances?

Every 5 years from the date you submit them to the District.

What if I am not truthful about disclosing prior arrests or notifying the District of a subsequent arrest?

The statute makes the failure to disclose information a misdemeanor of the third degree.

How much do the clearances cost?

Effective January 1, 2018, the cost of each of the clearances is:

- Pennsylvania State Police Clearance for volunteers (free)
- Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance for volunteers (free)
- Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) report through IdentoGo– PDE (approximate cost \$20 - \$23) -If you have not lived in PA for a period of 10 years

How long does it take to obtain my clearances?

The length of time it takes to receive your clearances is contingent upon the method you use to apply for the clearances. Applying online will typically result in a faster turnaround time. It is also important to note that all potential volunteers across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania will be applying for clearances as well. We encourage prospective volunteers to begin applying for their clearances as soon as possible.

How will volunteers submit their clearances?

Potential volunteers must present clearance documents to your child's school, while school is in session; otherwise, you will have to drop them off at the District Office. Upon verifying the original clearances, the school or District representative will return the originals back to the individual and retain a copy of each clearance/exception statement.

Clearances can also be submitted to Theresa K. Chiodi, Director of Human Resources (2950 Charlestown Road, Lancaster, Pa 17603), Monday-Thursday, from 7:00 AM-4:00 PM.

What will the school/district do with my clearances once I submit them?

The school or district representative will document the clearance information in a shared database that can be accessed by all schools in the District and maintained by the Human Resources Department. The database will include the names of approved volunteers as well as the expiration dates for each individual clearance. A copy of the clearances/exception forms will be maintained in the District for a period of sixty months (5 years), at which point, the clearances will be destroyed.

I have students in multiple school buildings; will I need to submit my clearances to each school?

No. Since there is only one PMSD volunteer database that is shared among the buildings, you will only need to submit your clearances to one location.

I already have my clearances. Will I need to get new ones?

Act 153 stipulates that clearances are good for 60 months from the effective date. You can submit your current clearances as long as they are less than Five years old.

Who is responsible for accessing the database at the building level and how are the names of approved volunteers shared with the organizers of various activities?

Each building secretary will be responsible and will have access to the approved volunteer's database. If an event is planned that will require the use of volunteers, the organizer of the event will work with the secretary and/or principal to ensure that these volunteers have provided the appropriate clearances.

Is the person responsible for acceptance of volunteers required to keep a copy of my clearances?

Yes, pursuant to § 6344 (b.1), the employer, administrator, supervisor or other person responsible for employment decisions or acceptance of the individual to serve in any capacity requiring clearances, shall maintain copies of the required information and require the individual to produce the original documents prior to employment or acceptance to serve in any such capacity, except provisional employees for limited periods as described in § 6344.2 (f) and outlined above. An employer, administrator, supervisor or other person responsible for selection of volunteers that intentionally fails to require an applicant to submit the required clearance before the applicant's hiring commits a misdemeanor of the third degree. Agencies are reminded that the child abuse history clearance information is confidential and may not be release to other individuals.

GET IN TOUCH

Please contact if you have any questions:

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