



Southern Humboldt Unified School District Requirement of School Volunteers Questions & Answers

Q: Why are school volunteers required to be fingerprinted and undergo a criminal background check this school year? This is a change!

A: The SHUSD Board of Education and administration have been reviewing school safety measures and Board Policies with legal counsel this past year. Given the District’s duty and desire to protect students, and the prevalence of crimes against children in society, District leadership decided to require California Department of Justice (DOJ) criminal background checks of potential school volunteers who may be in contact with students outside the direct supervision of teachers or site administrators.

Q: What are some examples of volunteer activities at school requiring (or not requiring) fingerprinting?

A:

Fingerprinting/DOJ Criminal Background Check and TB Clearance are REQUIRED for These Volunteers*	Fingerprinting/DOJ Criminal Background Check & TB Clearance NOT REQUIRED
Volunteer assignment involving contact with students at school or on field trips where there is a possibility a volunteer could be outside the presence of a certificated staff member (teacher or administrator) even briefly	Attending a musical, drama production, athletic, academic or art event as a member of the audience
	Presenting at a “Career Exploration Day” once during the school year
Driving and/or chaperoning field trips, including after-school sports. (Note: a valid CA Driver License and insurance coverage also required.)	Attending school events at which parents are expected to supervise their own children (e.g., Family Math Night or Ice Cream Social)
Coaching or assisting with special events, including dances, sports competitions, drama and musical productions	Visiting the office for the purpose of conducting business there or observing in the classroom after signing in at the office
Providing lunch-time volunteer assistance or eating lunch on campus with children when not volunteering	Attending a parent-staff conference

*Note: The above chart is a guide and is not necessarily an exhaustive list. The school principal will answer questions concerning other types of volunteer assignments.

Q: Do other school districts complete background checks of volunteers?

A: Yes, many do. Several community organizations that work with children also require volunteers to be fingerprinted, including the YMCA, Girl Scouts, Little League, other youth sports and performing arts groups, as well as some churches and synagogues.

Q: If a volunteer has been fingerprinted and “cleared” by another community organization, would s/he need to be fingerprinted again for Southern Humboldt Unified School District?

A: Yes. The DOJ prohibits organizations from sharing background information and individuals’ records.

Q: How does the District process criminal background checks of potential volunteers, and what does the District’s Custodian of Records (COR) look for?

A: Potential volunteers’ fingerprints are sent via a dedicated secure electronic transmission line to the CA Department of Justice (DOJ). The DOJ sends a report to the District’s authorized COR. The report either verifies no criminal record or contains a record of convictions.

The COR reviews the DOJ report and looks for convictions involving crimes against children and/or the community, such as assault, molestation, child abuse, reckless driving and DUIs (which would disqualify a volunteer from driving students on field trips or to sports competitions) while still in the probationary or restrictive period.

Given a criminal record of a potential volunteer, the COR would contact the school principal and simply report: “[volunteer’s name] is not ready to volunteer, or s/he is ready to volunteer, but not ready to drive students.” No other information is shared.

Q: What if a potential volunteer’s criminal record shows a conviction for a “youthful indiscretion” in the distant past?

A: If the criminal activity was an isolated incident, petty, non-violent and in the distant past, then the individual will probably be considered “ready for volunteer service.”

Q: Why do I have to provide extensive personal information on my DOJ Live Scan Service Request Form? It feels like an intrusion on my privacy.

A: Confirmation of a potential volunteer’s identity is important. Potential volunteers are asked to produce an official identification document (e.g., a CA Driver License, a Department of Motor Vehicles identification card, a Social Security Administration card, a passport or visa). If the passport has been issued by a country other than the U.S., the DOJ requires a secondary piece of identification (e.g., a pay stub or a mortgage, rent, or utility payment document with the volunteer’s name and address on it).

Q: Must I provide my Social Security number?

A: It is recommended; however, it is not a requirement, if another personal identification document is presented. Transmitting fingerprints with a live scan application form that does not contain the Social Security number may result in delayed processing by the DOJ.

Q: Why am I being asked to pay fingerprinting/background check charges?

A: The District is fortunate to have numerous volunteers assisting students and staff at our schools. The minimum cost of fingerprint processing is \$67 for one volunteer. The District does not have adequate funding resources to pay for every volunteer.

Most Live Scan locations charge \$30-\$35 to roll fingerprints and transmit them to the DOJ. The CA Department of Justice charges \$32 for processing each set of fingerprints for a criminal background check, which is paid to the DOJ by the District. If potential volunteers choose to be fingerprinted, they would pay only \$35 (rolling and transmittal fee)

Q: How long does a fingerprint rolling appointment take?

A: Typically, the rolling of all ten fingers requires about three-to-five minutes, if an individual arrives at the live scan location with his/her “Request for Live Scan Service” form completed, and ID and payment ready. (The application form is available through the District Office or School Site; it can also be requested by email by emailing personnel@sohumusd.com)

Q: How long will it take my fingerprint submission to be processed?

A: The DOJ's processing of fingerprints and reporting can take a few hours up to 30+ days. Many factors are involved. The District has no control over when the DOJ reports are delivered to the COR. The COR will inform the school principal, or his/her designee, when a volunteer is ready to begin service at the school. The school will, in turn, notify the volunteer.

Q: How often does a SHUSD school volunteer need to be fingerprinted?

A: Only once. If you have been fingerprinted as an employee, substitute or volunteer in Southern Humboldt Unified School District in the past, you need not be fingerprinted again for SHUSD unless it was prior to December 15, 2013. Please inform the school office staff at the time you submit your volunteer application form.

Q: What identification do I need for fingerprinting?

A: DOJ requires a California Driver License, DMV Identification Card, or Out-of-State Driver License for fingerprinting purposes. In the absence, any of the above-mentioned forms of identification, you will need to provide a photo-identification PLUS one of the following:

- Utility bill with name and address
- Voter registration card
- Vehicle registration
- Paycheck stub with name and address
- Public assistance card
- Spouse/parent affidavit
- Cancelled check or bank statement
- Mortgage/lease document

Thank you for the generosity of your time and effort to ensure a safe learning environment for our students!