



**S M A R T**  
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**Volunteer Policy  
&  
Procedure Guide**

# About this Guide

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This Volunteer Policy & Procedure Guide is meant to be a positive resource to ensure all volunteers a rewarding experience. Separate from volunteer training handbooks, this guide outlines the general policies and procedures that support the volunteer experience and defines the volunteer's relationship with SMART. Read it carefully as outlines essential information regarding the policies and procedures that keep SMART running smoothly.

SMART reserves the right to change the policies in this guide without notice. The organization recognizes its responsibility to keep volunteers informed of changes that may affect them and intends to provide updates to keep information current. This guide replaces all other policies and procedures previously in effect for SMART volunteers.

## SMART and the Volunteer Experience

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Volunteers come to SMART with varied backgrounds, experience, skills, goals, perceptions, and values. Such diversity makes for a rich environment giving SMART access to the wonderful skills represented within Oregon communities.

SMART's continued success in local educational communities is due in large part to the dedication and enthusiasm of its volunteers. SMART makes every effort to match volunteers to a suitable and worthwhile volunteer assignment that best fits individual interests and skills.

Volunteers can expect:

- To be treated as a respected member of the team
- Their time to be valued
- An assignment that is meaningful and satisfying
- Professional and courteous communication, and diligent supervision
- Accurate information about SMART, and quality training, assistance and support
- Prompt and thoughtful feedback on volunteer work
- A friendly, welcoming atmosphere
- Exposure to opportunities to learn and grow
- Regular expressions of appreciation
- Opportunities to voice ideas and concerns

In return, SMART asks that volunteers:

- Support, understand and adhere to SMART's mission, goals, policies and procedures, including all record keeping and confidentiality requirements
- Represent SMART in a responsible and professional manner
- Perform duties conscientiously, to the best of ability and within the bounds of specific position descriptions and requirements
- Respect the individual differences encountered
- Honor duty commitments or provide adequate notice of changes

- Actively participate as requested in opportunities to improve the SMART program
- Maintain timely and regular communication with direct supervisors
- Feel proud of the valuable contributions to improving children's literacy

Volunteering at SMART offers:

- The chance to volunteer at a respected and unique nonprofit organization
- An opportunity to learn more about literacy issues and be part of a statewide effort to eradicate illiteracy
- The satisfaction of having a significant, long-term impact on children's futures
- The opportunity to work within the community at a deeper level
- Training that allows volunteers to gain new skills and knowledge or enhance existing ones
- The opportunity to interact with many different people
- A chance to make new friends
- Insight into the unique abilities and interests of volunteers
- The opportunity to work with educational professionals
- The opportunity to work with committed volunteers making a significant contribution to the communities in which they live

### **SMART'S Commitment To an Equal Volunteer Experience**

Equally important as the above commitments are the following statements that briefly describe laws that govern and protect the volunteer environment.

#### *Americans with Disabilities Act*

In accordance with the law, SMART makes reasonable accommodations for physical or mental disabilities of a qualified volunteer, unless an undue hardship for either would result. Volunteers requiring accommodations should contact their supervisor to advise as to what is needed. Information about disabilities are kept confidential, to the extent possible and consistent with SMART's obligations under the law.

#### *Discrimination*

Volunteers are recruited without regard to gender, disability, age, race, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, marital status or any other protected status. The sole qualification for volunteer recruitment is the ability and suitability to perform a task on behalf of SMART as described in the position description.

#### *Harassment*

SMART prohibits conduct by any employee or volunteer that harasses, disrupts, or interferes with another's performance or which creates an intimidating, offensive, or hostile environment or which adversely affects an individual's opportunities. Prohibited harassment includes harassment against an individual due to that individual's race, color, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, age, marital status, source of income, disability, veteran or any other protected status.

While all forms of harassment and discrimination are prohibited, it is SMART's policy to emphasize that sexual harassment is specifically prohibited. Conduct is considered to be sexual harassment if:

- Submission to the conduct is in any way deemed to be a term or condition of volunteerism;

- Submission to or rejection of the conduct is used as a basis for volunteer-related decisions; and/or;
- The conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.

Each supervisor has a responsibility to maintain an environment free of any form of harassment. This policy covers conduct in the workplace, at social functions sponsored by SMART (dinners, picnics, sporting events, etc), and at business functions (conferences, meetings, etc).

Volunteers of SMART have the responsibility to immediately report to the supervisor any actions or words by a supervisor, employee, volunteer, vendor, or other individual that are believed to be unwelcome harassment or discriminatory. If the complaint involves the direct supervisor, the volunteer reports the incident to the next level of supervision or the Controller as applicable.

SMART does not retaliate against volunteers for filing a complaint in good faith or cooperating in an investigation. All complaints are investigated promptly, impartially, and as confidentially as possible. To ensure impartiality to the extent possible, SMART, at its sole discretion, may choose to use an outside party to conduct necessary proceedings.

### **Dispute Resolution**

As stated throughout this guide, communication is the key to resolution. The first step in any dispute is to communicate with those involved. Volunteers are encouraged to deal directly with the person/s involved.

If that level of directness is uncomfortable, the complaint or grievance remains unresolved, or the situation requires greater scrutiny, volunteers inform the supervisor or the Controller if it involves the direct supervisor, verbally or in writing as soon as possible and not later than within five days of the concern so that the supervisor can determine the best course of action. Each subsequent level of review must be submitted in writing within five days after the lower-level decision.

Every effort is made to solve problems cooperatively and informally at the lowest levels of supervision, before presenting them in writing as a formal grievance. There are, however, situations where a formal appeal process is started immediately.

### *Appeal Process*

Honest differences of opinion occur, and some situations may need review or a decision at a higher management level. However, a higher management review is intended to occur only after a volunteer has discussed the situation with the immediate supervisor and a satisfactory solution has not been reached. SMART realizes there may be valid reasons to forego this initial step. For those unusual circumstances, volunteers go directly to the next level of management and/or to the Controller for assistance.

If volunteers feel a policy has been inappropriately applied, or they have been treated unfairly or been unjustly disciplined by the supervisor, they present the matter to the next level of supervision and/or the Controller who reviews the issue and makes a decision. If the volunteer is not satisfied with this decision, s/he presents the matter to the CEO in

writing for review and settlement. The decision of the CEO is final. All cases are reviewed on an individual basis.

#### *Regulatory Concerns Policy*

SMART conducts its affairs in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations, including rules regarding nonprofit organizations. Any volunteer who becomes aware of a violation of law or regulation applicable to SMART is encouraged to raise his or her concerns with the Controller.

Any report under this policy is promptly investigated and appropriate action is taken to address a violation if one has occurred. SMART does not retaliate against any volunteer who in good faith raises a concern regarding regulatory or legal compliance under this policy.

## **SMART Volunteering—Beginning to End**

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### **Volunteer Placement**

In determining suitable placements for volunteers, equal attention is given to the interests and goals of the volunteer, and to the requirements and needs of SMART. Volunteers are considered an integral part of the team and careful consideration is made on any decisions that would substantially affect the performance and scope of duties. A volunteer is only placed in a position for which s/he is fully qualified and for which the organization can provide adequate training and supervision.

Throughout this guide, the term “supervisor” is used to indicate the individual who oversees and supports the volunteer during his/her particular assignment. Supervisor may refer to any and all of the following: Program/Area Manager, Site Coordinator, SMART staff, Chapter or Board member, or any other individual acting in a supervisory capacity.

### **Application**

Volunteers complete an application and interview process specific to the position for which they are applying. There are some volunteer positions that require both background and reference checks. Volunteers are informed if the position is subject to these additional requirements.

SMART volunteers must be of high school age or older. Volunteers below the age of 18 submit only the front page of the application and two letters of recommendation from non-related references.

### **Acceptance**

Service as a SMART volunteer begins with an official welcome letter and/or notice of acceptance given by an authorized representative of SMART after completing all necessary screening and enrollment paperwork. At this time, volunteers also receive a copy of the position description and, if applicable, agreement of service with the agency.

All volunteer placements begin on a trial basis as determined by the direct supervisor and depending on the volunteer position assigned. At the end of the trial period, both the organization and the volunteer mutually evaluate the extent to which their objectives are being satisfied. The position may be renegotiated to bring about a more satisfactory placement for both parties. In rare cases, other options such as reassignment, referral to another organization or to the local volunteer center, or separation of service may be considered.

SMART accepts the service of volunteers who satisfy SMART requirements with the understanding that any and all services performed are at the sole discretion of SMART. After discussing it with the volunteer, SMART reserves the right to change the nature of a volunteer's responsibilities as the needs of the organization change and evolve.

### **Orientation/Training**

All volunteers receive an orientation to SMART, and training is an integral part of volunteering with SMART focused on building the capabilities of all volunteers. In order to provide adequate support for volunteers to feel productive and competent, all volunteers are required to complete the applicable portions of the volunteer training program as determined by the supervisor prior to volunteer placement.

Volunteer training ensures program consistency and integrity, a key factor in children's success. Volunteer training is provided through a variety of both formal and informal formats.

### **Program Review/Performance Feedback**

Volunteers have the right to receive periodic review and feedback on the impact of their contributions to the organization as established in each volunteer position description. While discussions between volunteers and supervisors are encouraged on an ongoing basis, there are also opportunities for more formalized conversations during the course of service. These are designed to:

- Acknowledge and congratulate successes
- Share supportive, non-threatening and constructive details regarding performance effectiveness
- Offer suggestions for improvement
- Discuss alternative ways of accomplishing goals

In addition to the above, for those volunteer positions where more formal performance feedback and program reviews are included, these are designed to:

- Ensure consistency and understanding of SMART program standards
- Identify areas for improvement
- Discuss suggestions or position adjustments
- Provide a way for both the volunteer and the organization to discuss ways to mutually enhance the relationship

All volunteers have the right to receive a copy of the written record of any formal performance feedback they receive.

### **Corrective Coaching**

There may be times when SMART personnel feel that a volunteer needs clearer direction to satisfactorily perform duties. To that end, SMART has coaching opportunities

with direct supervisors so that issues can be discussed in a clear and respectful manner. SMART coaches volunteers on performance concerns or addresses policy violations whenever needed.

Coaching is utilized for any variety of situations depending on the circumstances and severity of the particular situation. Coaching outcomes may include, not necessarily in the same order:

- Verbal cautions
- Written cautions
- Suspension of duties
- Separation of service

The intent of corrective coaching is to assist and support volunteers in performing duties in the most effective and meaningful way possible.

### **Leaving SMART**

SMART appreciates any and all time that volunteers donate. SMART recognizes that there are times when volunteers, for whatever reason, find that they must end the volunteer commitment. In order to achieve an orderly transition, SMART appreciates receiving notification of intent to leave at least 10 days prior to departure whenever possible.

SMART is always looking for ways to improve the volunteer experience. Exit interviews and/or feedback surveys are arranged to give volunteers an opportunity to share suggestions for improvement. Volunteers are encouraged to participate in providing this feedback.

Volunteers must return all SMART or site property in their possession by the last day.

### **Separation of Service**

SMART understands, and volunteers agree, that either the volunteer or the organization may at any time, for whatever reason, discontinue the volunteer service relationship. Some acts, particularly those that are intentional or serious, may immediately warrant separation of service. Asking volunteers to leave is only done as a last resort.

## **Procedural Policies**

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### **Absences**

Volunteers are asked to meet the time and duty commitments mutually agreed to in discussions with the supervisor prior to engagement. Volunteers inform the direct supervisor of any lateness or impending absences as far in advance as possible so that alternate arrangements can be made for the completion of work. Whenever possible, volunteers find their own, approved substitute.

If a volunteer is unable to provide consistency due to excessive absences, the volunteer and the direct supervisor determine the best way to remedy the situation.

### **National Background Check**

SMART performs required reference and background checks during the application process. All prospective volunteers working directly with children or at a SMART site are required to satisfactorily undergo this process prior to placement as a volunteer. Reference and background checks are performed in accordance with applicable federal and/or state law. Background checks are refreshed every three years. Individuals who refuse to comply with this request are not allowed to volunteer.

Other volunteer positions may require a background check as determined by the direct supervisor depending on the sensitivity of duties. A signed consent for release of information is obtained from the prospective volunteer prior to the initiation of the background and/or reference checks.

### **Communication**

All volunteers are encouraged to maintain open and ongoing communication with the supervisor, asking clarifying questions whenever they are unsure of policy or procedure.

SMART values the opportunity for volunteers to learn from each other and encourages them to share knowledge, skills and information.

### **Conflict of Interest**

Volunteers may not use their position with SMART or the organization's assets or influence for personal advantage or the advantage of others.

SMART volunteers are often active participants in their communities offering support to a vast array of personal activities, organizations and causes. Volunteers may not, however, use their SMART affiliation to further any causes, partisan politics, religious matters, or community issues contrary to positions taken by SMART. Contact a direct supervisor or the Controller with questions about specific organizations or issues.

Volunteers must disclose any business, commercial or financial interest where such interest might be construed as being in real, potential or apparent conflict with the duties of SMART.

### **Confidentiality**

Volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all proprietary or privileged information to which they are exposed while serving as a volunteer.

Volunteers are subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including separation of service for revealing any and all confidential information. Confidential information includes the contents of all SMART records or information, financial records, personnel records, and all records concerning volunteers, employees, participating children and/or donors.

Except in the ordinary course of performing assigned duties on behalf of SMART, advance permission must be received prior to removing any organizational records or information from SMART premises, including, without limitation: documents, files, records, computer files, and all similar materials. In those rare occasions when materials are utilized away from SMART, reasonable steps must be taken to protect confidentiality of those documents.

### **Emergency Closing**

There may be occasions when SMART offices are closed due to inclement weather, natural disaster, etc. Decisions are made by the direct supervisor and generally are congruent with decisions made by local school districts.

### **Health and Safety**

SMART is committed to a safe and secure place to volunteer and values the fact that volunteers and employees both strive to do their part in maintaining that environment.

All accidents, injuries, thefts, or anything else that threatens the safety and security of volunteers, employees, or children must be reported as quickly as possible to the direct supervisor and/or the site at which this occurs. If an accident occurs that requires immediate medical attention, appropriate emergency procedures should be taken.

SMART maintains a healthy workplace for employees, volunteers, and children, therefore; no one may smoke in any SMART facility, instructional area/office, or on any school grounds, indoor or outside.

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) has established a set of universal precautions to minimize the risk of spread of communicable diseases. SMART makes this information available to all volunteers.

SMART has a “zero tolerance” policy for any actions, verbal or physical, that threatens SMART’s employees, children, volunteers, and donors. Volunteers are encouraged to raise any concerns about violence with the supervisor.

For the safety and the safety of the children, volunteers must be aware of all emergency procedures at the site and be prepared to follow them in the case of an emergency.

Volunteers are encouraged to leave valuables at home. SMART is not responsible for any loss incurred.

### **Recognition**

SMART recognizes that the work of the organization could not be done without volunteers. SMART strives to provide appropriate and related recognition to all volunteers at all levels of the organization in appreciation for the valuable contributions they have made to children, schools, communities, and SMART.

Each year, SMART formally recognizes all volunteers. Additionally, SMART publicly acknowledges volunteer service regularly at events, in its newsletter and, with volunteer permission, in the media as appropriate and available.

### **Representing SMART**

Volunteers are the heart of our statewide literacy efforts. SMART asks all its representatives while volunteering to present a positive, responsible, professional image to clients and the community.

While on assignment for SMART, volunteers may represent themselves only within the extent of the position description and only as a volunteer with the organization.

Volunteers act in accordance with all appropriate codes, laws, regulations, and policies, regardless of whether they are set by SMART or outside regulatory bodies.

Volunteers must dress appropriately for the conditions and performance of their duties and in accordance with the codes established by the site at which they volunteer.

Volunteers wear the volunteer identification provided by the direct supervisor at all times while engaged in the business of SMART.

### **Risk Management**

All volunteers are trained on and follow all safety and emergency guidelines of SMART and SMART sites.

Volunteers may not give gifts to SMART children. Volunteers who have concerns about children's needs are encouraged to alert the supervisor who will work closely with school personnel who know the best way to offer assistance while respecting the family's dignity and privacy.

The engaging relationship between SMART volunteers and SMART children exists solely within the confines of the school or during SMART events. SMART volunteers are prohibited from outside contact with SMART children. The only exception is when volunteers have a previously established relationship or are supervised through another agency. Please contact the supervisor if there are any questions regarding this.

In all circumstances, physical contact with students must adhere to the following guidelines:

- Physical contact is never to be encouraged or initiated by a volunteer.
- Should a child wish to offer a hug, the volunteer responds in a quick-release fashion.
- Children may never sit in an adult's lap.
- Volunteers are never to be involved in a child's personal hygiene routines.
- Volunteers and children should be within view of other SMART volunteers and/or site staff at all times.
- Should a child exhibit a level of affection outside of these limits, gently tell the children the appropriate alternative. If the child persists in the behavior, immediately notify the supervisor.

Photographs of SMART children and activities are taken only when arranged through the direct supervisor and only of those children with a signed parent/guardian permission slip on file. All media requests must be cleared through site supervisors or principals.

### **Substance Abuse**

As a part of SMART's commitment to a safe and secure environment, volunteers are prohibited from being under the influence of, possessing, abusing, selling or being involved with illegal drugs, abusing alcohol, or abusive use of controlled substances while performing SMART business.

Volunteers are further prohibited from use involvement, or abuse at any time of illegal drugs and/or alcohol to the extent that it violates laws or negatively affects SMART activities or undermines public confidence in the organization.

In agreement with the commitment to represent SMART in a professional and responsible manner, volunteers who consume alcohol at a SMART-sponsored social event are expected to do so in moderation, exercise good judgment, and comply with all laws related to alcohol use.

If a volunteer's doctor prescribes over-the-counter or pharmaceutical drugs, the volunteer is responsible for ensuring that the ability to work safely is not be affected by taking the medication. Volunteers are encouraged to confidentially discuss any concerns with the supervisor before beginning work.

### **Tracking Volunteer Hours**

Volunteers are asked to track hours donated to SMART as accurately as possible using forms provided by the direct supervisor that is applicable for their volunteer position. Information provided by volunteers is used to create statistical data for SMART's use when applying for funding, accurately reflect the volunteer commitment, and in some cases, as the basis to determine volunteer recognition by SMART and/or other organizations.

It may not be possible for SMART to recognize contributions when a volunteer has not submitted the necessary information.

### **Use of SMART Logo and Materials**

Volunteers must regard all SMART records, equipment, and property carefully and with appropriate respect. Volunteers are responsible for all items in their possession.

Any public use of the SMART logo, SMART documents and promotional materials must follow SMART Brand Guidelines to maintain brand integrity. Please ask the direct supervisor or contact the Communications Manager for a copy of the guidelines.

### **Volunteer File**

A volunteer has the right to access any and all documents within his/her file which may include:

- Application form – only if paper application is submitted
- Record of interview
- Volunteer agreement
- Engagement paperwork checklist
- Reference worksheet
- Letters of reference
- Performance reviews
- Exit interviews
- Letter of commendation
- Written warnings of progressive disciplinary action

Volunteers are encouraged to keep all personal information up to date, informing the supervisor of any changes as soon as possible. This is especially true of emergency contact information.

**Volunteer/Staff Relations**

SMART volunteers strengthen staff's capability, competency, and control and are seen as complementing not challenging or subordinate to paid positions. Volunteers and staff are all held to the same high program standards in order to provide consistent support to SMART's mission and vision.

***Thanks for helping Oregon kids get SMART!***