1. **INTRODUCTION**
   The purpose of these guidelines is for the operation of the Voluntary Services Leave Program for state employees.

2. **GOAL**
   To put state employees resources to work to improve the quality of the educational experience of children in the public schools of the Commonwealth. Volunteers provide additional resources and expertise for schools and increase home and community awareness of school life and programs.

3. **ELIGIBILITY**
   All employees of the executive branch who have been employed by the state for at least six months and have applied for and received approval from their direct supervisors and agency heads or designees, may participate in the Voluntary Services Leave Program.

   Part-time employees are eligible to participate in the program on a pro-rated basis, i.e., the maximum number of volunteer hours allowed per month are pro-rated in accordance with the number of hours that the employee works per month.

4. **DISPLACEMENT**
   The Voluntary Services Leave Program and the activities of its volunteers are not intended to supplant qualified school personnel.

5. **DEFINITION OF TERMS**
   5.1 **Public School:** Any school or school system in the Commonwealth funded through Chapter 70 of the Massachusetts General Laws (not including Chapter 766 privately-operated schools).

   5.2 **Service:** Any activity of benefit to the students and staff of public schools.

   5.3 **School Volunteer Services:** Voluntary services that are performed in compliance with the general guidelines of the Voluntary Services Leave Program that are performed during an employee’s regular working hours, approved by the employee’s Supervisor and Agency Head or designee and which assist in the improvement of public schools or in the educational achievement of school children. Examples of acceptable school volunteer services include serving on non-elected school boards or committees; assisting teachers in the classroom including the preparation of classroom materials; tutoring or mentoring students; chaperoning of school field trips; providing computer and/or library assistance; using carpentry or other skills to assist with a school program or activity; working on special events such as drug and alcohol prevention programs, grounds clean-up drives, etc.; or other activities that meet the intended goals of the program, as authorized by Executive Order #343 and section 31E of Chapter 29. Examples of activities that are not appropriate are: acting as a substitute teacher; working in the cafeteria preparing or serving food or performing routine maintenance such as sweeping or washing floors.
5.4 Voluntary Services Leave: Leave that permits eligible employees to provide voluntary services in public schools during working hours, for a maximum equivalent of one workday per month, without loss of salary or benefits. The maximum allowable number of leave hours is 7.5 or 8 hours per month, depending on the normal work day for the employee’s position. (NOTE: The total maximum volunteer leave allowance is the equivalent of one workday per month, even in cases where employees choose to participate in more than one volunteer program.)

6. PROCEDURES FOR THE OPERATION OF THIS PROGRAM
Any employee who wishes to participate in the Voluntary Services Leave Program identifies a public elementary, secondary or vocational or technical school where the employee would like to volunteer.

The employee contacts the public school to arrange for a program of voluntary services that could be provided during the hours the employee normally works. Once an appropriate volunteer service has been determined, the employee must complete the approval process described below.

Employees should inform the school that state agency approval must be received before the employee can proceed to volunteer. If state agency approval is received, prospective volunteers must agree to follow all screening procedures (including a background check, if required) that are mandated by the school.

No state employee shall engage in activities prohibited by the State Ethics Commission.

7. ORIENTATION PROGRAM
The prospective volunteer should attend an “orientation to volunteering” program before beginning the volunteer service. The prospective volunteer may either attend an orientation program offered by the public school system or attend an orientation program offered jointly by the Department of Education and the Human Resources Division.

8. APPROVAL PROCESS
The employee discusses his/her request to participate in the Voluntary Services Leave Program with his/her supervisor and completes the Voluntary Services Leave Program Request Form, submitting it to the supervisor. (See attached.)

The supervisor reviews the request and either approves or denies it, taking into consideration the following criteria:
- business needs of the agency
- conformance of the request with program guidelines

The employee is to be notified of approval or denial of his/her request. If the request is denied, the reason must be written on the form and a copy given to the employee. All requests, whether approved or denied by the supervisor, must be reviewed by the agency head or designee. Based upon sound reasons, the agency head or designee has the option to reverse the supervisor’s decision.

9. APPROVED VOLUNTEER
9.1 Payroll: If the request is approved, the payroll coordinator is to be advised so that the appropriate payroll records can be maintained. The special PMIS code (VSL) shall be used to reflect voluntary services leave.

9.2 Orientation Program: The prospective volunteer must first attend the training/orientation session before beginning to serve as a volunteer.

10. RECORD KEEPING

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An employee must submit a Verification of School Volunteer Services Form (see attached) to his/her supervisor each time the employee serves as a school volunteer. Specific information regarding the dates and times of volunteering is to be included on the form. This form must be signed by an authorized representative of the school where services are provided.

The verification forms are to be maintained by Agency Human Resources Departments and a copy of each form submitted must be sent to HRD. It is the responsibility of Agency Human Resources Departments to ensure that services performed match the program descriptions submitted by employees in their Voluntary Services Leave Program Request Forms.

11. OTHER AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES
Agency Human Resources Departments are responsible for monitoring any agency-wide policies that may affect the program. Agency Human Resources Departments are also responsible for compiling employee participation data and for responding to survey requests from HRD or other entities.

12. EMPLOYEE STATUS
An employee who is granted paid leave time pursuant to this program shall not be considered to be acting within the scope of employment for the purposes of Chapter 152 of the Massachusetts General Laws (Worker’s Compensation) nor shall the Commonwealth be liable for any acts or omissions of said employee while released for volunteer purposes. Volunteers are expected to follow the rules and regulations of the school in which services are provided.
Commonwealth of Massachusetts Human Resources Division
VOLUNTARY SERVICES LEAVE PROGRAM REQUEST FORM

Employee: ___________________________________  Telephone: ______________________

Official Job Title: ___________________________________________________________________

Agency: _____________________________________________________________________________

Work Address: _______________________________________________________________________

School/School District: _________________________________________________________________

Address: ___________________________________________________________________________

School Liaison: ___________________________  Telephone: ______________________

Description of specific volunteer service to be provided: _____________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________

Goal of volunteer service: ______________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________

PROPOSED VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE:
Day(s) of Week: (Hours) From: To:

I verify that if approved to participate in the Voluntary Services Leave Program, I will follow all
guidelines and regulations of HRD, my agency and the school in which I volunteer.

Employee Signature: ___________________________  Date: ___________________________

See reverse side
SUPERVISOR REVIEW

Request approved: ________________  Request denied: ________________

If request is denied, state reason: __________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

Supervisor Signature  Date

HUMAN RESOURCES

Request Approved: ________________  Request Denied: ________________

Comments: ___________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

Designee Signature  Date
Commonwealth of Massachusetts Human Resources Division
VERIFICATION OF SCHOOL VOLUNTEER SERVICES

Name of Volunteer: ____________________________________________________________
(Print or type)

State Agency: ______________________________________________________________________

Location: ____________________________________________________________________________

Phone#: _______________________________________

NOTE: The intent of this program is that volunteer assignments “assist in the improvement of a
student’s or school’s educational achievement or programs”. Volunteers may not be used to
replace qualified school personnel or to perform work not directly related to educational programs.
(See reverse side for description of appropriate volunteer assignments.)

This is to certify that the above-named employee of the Commonwealth provided the following volunteer
service (please give a specific description of the service):
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

Service provided at:
_____________________________________________________________________________________
(School and School District)
on ______________________ (Date)

Time arrived: ___________ Time departed: ___________ Total hours worked: ___________

Statement on quality/usefulness of service provided:
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________
Signature

_____________________________
Title

_____________________________
Print or Type

_____________________________
Date

_____________________________
Address

_____________________________
Phone Number

(The Agency Human Resources Department must send a copy of this form within 1 week of volunteer time to: School
Volunteer Program, Human Resources Division, 1 Ashburton Place, 3rd Floor, Boston, MA 02108)

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Description of Appropriate Voluntary Services

Under the Voluntary Services Leave Program, volunteer services are to be performed during an employee’s regular working hours, after approval has been received from the employee’s supervisor or agency head or designee. The purpose of the volunteer service must be to assist in the improvement of public schools or the educational achievement of school children. Examples of acceptable school volunteer services include: serving on non-elected school boards or committees; assisting teachers in the classroom including the preparation of classroom materials; tutoring or mentoring students; chaperoning of school field trips; providing computer and/or library assistance; using carpentry or other skills to assist with a school program or activity; working on special events such as drug and alcohol prevention programs, grounds clean-up drives, etc.; or other activities that meet the intended goals of the program, as authorized by Executive Order #343 and section 31E of Chapter 29. Examples of activities that are not appropriate are: acting as a substitute teacher; working in the cafeteria preparing or serving food; or performing routine maintenance such as sweeping or washing floors.