

# **JPSO Band of Excellence**

## **Volunteer Support Group Guide**



**Sheriff Joseph Lopinto, III**

In 2009, Sheriff Newell Normand launched a youth band to offer a safe, healthy, and prosperous after school environment for at-risk children. In doing so, Sheriff Normand believed that even if one child is allowed to follow his or her dream and become an educated, skilled and productive citizen, then his effort is not in vain. The traditional definition of the term “at-risk” was expanded to include children who are not engaged in an organized activity after normal school hours.

The band continues on today, and is always in need of support from involved parents, volunteers, and the community. Please allow this guide to introduce you to the requirements involved with being a band volunteer.

## **Band Volunteers**

The Jefferson Parish Sheriff's Office (JPSO) and Band of Excellence (BOE) staff believes that the use of volunteers within the BOE program enhances the band experience not only for its students, but also for parents and the supporting community. Volunteers provide additional support personnel during practice sessions, field trips, and special events. Engaging volunteers also promotes parent and student intimacy as well as expands community cooperation with facilitating the band's overall agenda of achieving excellence and responsibility in its members. This form of inclusiveness fosters support, and provides us (staff) with individuals who have experts in various areas to be used as resource persons, chaperones, and those to work with specific goals of the band.

Volunteers are defined as any individual that assist the BOE staff and/or students during band practice and during event settings without pay or compensation. Examples include assisting with tasks associated with practice sessions, set-up for an event, special activity, helping to plan and deliver special needs for the band, assist the band director or assistant directors, and those who act as chaperones during field trips or off site performances.

There are three general groups considered to be volunteers by the JPSO BOE. They are

- Parental support volunteers
- Band assistant volunteers
- Mentors, counselors and educators

The parental support volunteers work very closely with the administrator and staff to assist band members with logistical and needed support during activities. They act as chaperones, fundraisers, and volunteer leadership officers and parental group advisors.

Band assistant volunteers work with the band director and his assistants to improve the musical skills of band members. This group is selected by and given direction by the music staff. These volunteers would typically be band directors, band assistants, or prior JPSO BOE members past the age of acceptance into the band.

Mentors, counselors, and educators are volunteers who work with BOE students to improve or enhance their social, emotional, and educational skills.

## **Who can be a volunteer with the band?**

- Parent, guardian, sibling ,or family member of our students
- JPSO personnel
- Previous band members who have exceeded the acceptance age of the band
- A member of a community group or organization
- Other band directors or assistants

Interested individuals should contact the band administrator to obtain a volunteer background check form. Once the selection process has been concluded, the interested person will be notified of approval to participate in the band program. As a volunteer you will be notified of the date, time and activity for which your assistance is needed by the administrator.

## **Volunteer Minimum Qualifications:**

- Be at least 20 years old
- Have a child who regularly participates with the Band of Excellence or be an adult working with children in another school or program deemed acceptable to JPSO staff
- Be able to pass a criminal background check
- Put the objectives of the band staff and its students first
- Acceptance that the JPSO BOE is a structured program that does not lend itself to interference with the director's curriculum or style of teaching
- Have an interest in young musicians and work to assist and be a positive example to them
- Anyone listed on the sex offender registry or with a criminal history involving drugs or violence are excluded from participation as a volunteer. Additionally, these individuals may not be present during any practice session, or in any JPSO or contracted vehicle utilized to transport students, or be invited to be present at JPSO Band of Excellence sponsored activities at any time. Other criminal history is considered at the discretion of the JPSO BOE staff. Selections of volunteers are completed by JPSO BOE staff after a careful review of each record that exists.

## **Volunteer Guidelines:**

Volunteers are bound by the same code of ethics and all applicable laws as the professional staff. The following are additional restrictions on conduct. Any conduct in violation of these standards could lead to the volunteer's dismissal from the program.

Never smoke or drink alcohol while working with the students or arrive in an intoxicated state.

Never engage in inappropriate (sexual, discriminatory, profane, etc.) conversation with band members.

Never remove a band member from the premises without their registered parent or guardian's permission.

Never strike or touch a band member in an inappropriate manner.

You must be neat and clean in appearance at all times including being appropriately dressed (no low cut, too short or revealing clothing).

You must be willing to attend meetings and planning sessions.

You must keep the administrator apprised of accurate contact information.

You must refer all matters regarding conflict, injury, or misbehavior to the band director or JPSO staff member. You may be required to do make a written explanation of an incident and be willing to do so.

Never argue with or demean a student (**even if it is your child**) while they are at practice or an event sponsored by JPSO BOE.

We will treat every child with respect and dignity and encourage him/her to treat each other in the same manner. Having adult example helps to reinforce this in youth. That is why we embrace positive attitudes and discourage horseplay, verbal insults, and demeaning actions among our students and especially with regard to our staff and volunteers.

## **Organizing Your Leadership**

The Parental Support group is free to establish its leadership and maintain the organizational, records, funds and volunteer contact list independent of the Band of Excellence. Because of this position, the sheriff's office will not take part in collecting, establishing bank accounts or any fund accounting associated with this part of the parental support group. All matters regarding funds are to be directed to the leadership.

If you have been appointed or elected to a leadership position or become an officer with the parental support group, you must resign this position in writing if you no longer want to serve in the position.

Failure to attend three consecutive meetings as an officer without just cause will result in termination.

It is presumed that parents who are a part of the parental support group will exchange their telephone and email contact information. Anyone not wanting to do so, should express this to the group, otherwise, your contact information will become a part of the groups master list.

## **Visitors**

Because of the size of our facility, the admission of visitors during practice sessions must be limited. However, prearranged visitors are allowed at the discretion of Sheriff Lopinto, the band director, his assistants, and BOE staff.

A visitor is defined as any individual who enters the band room or the JPSO complex to observe practice sessions. Visitors must check in with the administrator when they arrive and sign the visitors log upon entry.

Visitors are welcome and invited to be present in the band room for other scheduled events such as Open House, a party, or band performance.

## **Special Notes**

Copies of the completed background check forms will be on file in the JPSO BOE offices. They are good for one school year, which includes the summer following the year. Background checks must be renewed annually. All volunteers are required to submit to a background check that includes child abuse and neglect screenings as well as a check of the national sex offender registry. These services are offered free of charge, but do take some time, so please allow at least one week to ten working days for personnel to process the request.

Our best mode of communication is email. Please provide an email address when completing your paperwork. You are notified by email that you have been added to the team.

Any volunteer/mentor/chaperone that will be travelling with a student group for an overnight trip must be cleared prior to the trip.

All dismissals are handled in writing to the address we have on file.

***We want to sincerely thank you for your interest in the  
JPSO BOE!***