**Program Volunteer Guidelines**

**Belknap County Department of Corrections**

Welcome to the Belknap County Department of Corrections. The talent and time that you share is greatly appreciated! Because of you, the quality of life is significantly improved for those incarcerated here. We are appreciative to have you as part of our extended corrections team. Thank you!

Our primary concern to us is the **SAFETY and** **SECURITY of all the volunteers and the inmates.** In an effort to minimize the possibility of any situation getting out of control, strict adherence to the following guidelines is imperative. If you have any questions or concerns about any situation that you are uncomfortable with, ask a Correctional Officer or the Programs Director as soon as possible.

1. All volunteers must complete the BCDOC volunteer application, which includes a background check. Once the background check is complete you will receive a phone call or email from the Programs Director, Tamara McGonagle, to inform you that you are clear to come into the facility. If there is a problem with your application the Programs Director will contact you.
2. Dress Appropriately. T-shirts with drug/alcohol references, tank tops, mini-skirts, low-cut tops and short-shorts are not permitted. Jackets, coats, hats, baseball hats, gloves, purses, wallets, etc., are to be left in your vehicle, the lockers in the lobby or in administrative areas.
3. **No pagers, cell phones or other electronic communication devices are permitted. No weapons of any kind are permitted, including pocket knives, scissors, metal nail files or any sharp metal objects. No medications are permitted.**
4. Volunteers are not to bring in or take out **ANY** item for an inmate. Any materials that a volunteer may wish to use must be cleared with the program director. No program materials with any metal pieces will be permitted. When bringing in approved items be sure to present them to the programs director or correctional officer before using those items in class. Please do not bring in any pens or pencils for the inmates, all inmates have pens or pencils or the jail will provide them.
5. Please be aware that Belknap County is a non-smoking facility. If you smoke please do not bring any cigarettes, matches or lighters into the facility with you.
6. Volunteers will enter through the facility through the main lobby entrance. You will be required to show your photo I.D. at Master Control and sign the “volunteer sign-in log”. All volunteers must exit the jail at the point of entry and sign-out in the log.
7. Vehicles will be parked in the jail parking lot. If the parking lot is full you can park in the lower parking lot. All vehicles must remain locked and secure and it is recommended that you keep your personal items out of sight.
8. If you are part of a group, please wait in the lobby for all members to arrive before requesting admittance. Once the group has arrived you can all proceed directly to the programs classroom. Inmates participating in the activity will depart as a group. Inmates are not permitted to have food, candy, beverages, radio headsets etc. while attending the program and they are aware of this. The inmates must remain in the programs room until they are picked up to be escorted back to their units. Do not allow inmates to leave the programs room until a correctional officer or programs staff has come to escort the inmates back to their units.
9. At the conclusion of the program the room should be set-up again (tables brought back into the classroom if taken out, chairs set up around the tables, white board cleaned and program materials shelved and/or put away). The programs room should be as it was before the start of class.
10. Do not share any personal information with any of the inmates. For example: your address, marital status, children, spouses, family members. Volunteers are not to correspond with inmates through phone calls, cards or letters. Volunteers are not permitted to make monetary deposits into inmate accounts. Do not inquire about an inmate’s charges or personal life.
11. Avoid secrecy with inmates and never make promises to an inmate. Rather, tell them you will speak to someone about their needs or requests.
12. Belknap County is a **“no – touch facility**”. Do not hug the inmates, touch the inmates or allow them to touch you. People in confinement often misinterpret this type of interaction. If the inmate initiates a handshake with you, you may shake their hand but that is the only physical contact that is permitted or allowed in the facility.
13. If correctional officer is needed at any point during your program press the silver button on the intercom system in the classroom and ask for a correctional officer. If an inmate is being disruptive and/or rude you have every right as the facilitator of that class to ask that inmate to leave. If this does occur, press the silver button on the intercom and ask for a correctional officer to escort the inmate back to his or his unit. If an inmate walks out of class press the silver button on the intercom system and inform the correctional officer in master control.
14. In the event of a facility emergency, stay calm and remain in the programs room with your group. A correctional officer will come to your area to provide direction if necessary.
15. Please share with the Program Director and correctional staff any questions, comments, concerns or suggestions you may have as a result of your visit.

Remember correctional officers are your immediate resource for any security assistance. Their response to any call for assistance will be swift and direct, often resulting in multiple officers. Your safety and the safety of everyone in the building is their primary objective.

Again, we wish to extend our most sincere appreciation for your invaluable time and the positive effect that your voluntary participation bring to our inmate population. The programming that the volunteers provide improve the quality of life for the inmates here and we thank you for all your time and efforts!

Sincerely,

Tamara McGonagle, Programs Director

Keith Gray, Superintendent

Jamie Laramie, Deputy Superintendent