



# Power Booster

DuPage Association of Volunteer Administration  
[www.dava-il.org](http://www.dava-il.org)

## Handling Volunteer Performance Problems

Handling performance problems is easier if your organization has documented procedures and policies. Problems often arise when volunteers don't understand what is expected of them. As Betty Stallings says, "You should make certain that policies for handling volunteer performance problems are aligned with those for staff." At DCM our procedures are outlined in a Volunteer Handbook. We go over the Handbook during the interview and each volunteer takes home a copy. The Handbook is also posted on the Volunteer Web Page and copies are available in the Volunteer Center. Included in the Handbook are our progressive disciplinary steps which are identical to the ones for staff. Most problems are cleared up quickly but sometimes it does result in dismissal. Listed below is an excerpt from our Volunteer Handbook.

### ***Dismissal from the Volunteer Program at DuPage Children's Museum (DCM)***

*Grounds for immediate dismissal include but are not limited to:*

- *the use, manufacture, possession or being under the influence of alcohol or any illegal drugs while working directly with minors while on DCM premises or conducting DCM business*
- *furnishing alcohol or illegal drugs to minors or permitting minors to use such in their presence while on DCM premises or conducting DCM business*
- *theft or misuse of DCM property*
- *inappropriate physical contact with a visitor, staff or volunteer as outlined in the Standards for Behavior*

*The dismissal of a volunteer, other than immediate dismissal, is considered only after remedial steps have been tried. Steps will be taken to retrain or reassign the volunteer if another position is available. It is the policy of DCM to seek correction through progressive discipline.*

*Situations requiring discipline are seldom identical so each incident is given careful consideration. Typically, the progressive disciplinary steps are:*

- *discussion of the infraction with the volunteer by a staff member. In most cases it is because the volunteer did not clearly understand a procedure*
- *discussion of the infraction with the Volunteer Coordinator*
- *letter of notice is sent to the volunteer outlining the infraction, the expected future behavior and the length of the period of probation*
- *if the volunteer does not correct the problem within the probationary period, the volunteer will be dismissed and a letter sent to the volunteer*

We rarely dismiss a volunteer because our progressive discipline steps usually result in the appropriate behavior changes.

