

Volunteers in Schools

The Board of Education (“Board”) believes volunteers can make a valuable contribution to the education of students in schools.

The Board also believes that the education of students is an undertaking that should be shared among its employees, parents and members of the community. The active involvement of parents in a volunteer role has the potential to provide considerable benefit to the intellectual, social, emotional and physical development of students. In addition, the participation of volunteers increases communication and builds positive relationships among the school, parents and the community.

The Board further believes that the use of volunteers supports parental involvement, complements the skills and expertise of employees, assists schools in providing enriching, additional, learning experiences and extracurricular programs, and strengthens lines of communication among the school, home and community.

Intent

It is the intent of the Board to comply with the provisions of collective agreements including provisions which restrict the use of volunteers.

It is the intent of the Board that school volunteers be selected, oriented and supervised in order to:

- a) Minimize risk to students;
- b) Maximize contribution to realizing the School District objectives; and
- c) Ensure the protection of the privacy of students, their families and all student records.

It is the intent of the Board that involvement of volunteers is encouraged in activities for which:

- a) The volunteer is qualified;
- b) Benefit the school; and
- c) Do not interfere with employees performing their regular duties or result in the displacement of an employee.

The delivery of an effective volunteer program requires harmonious relationships between school staff and volunteers. Volunteers should function in a supportive role which is compatible with the philosophy of the School District and should not undertake tasks that require making educational decisions.

Authority

Principals and/or Vice-Principals are authorized to utilize school volunteers within the context of Board’s policies.

The Board assigns district administration the responsibility and authority to establish School District standards and practices for the utilization of school volunteers.

Expectations

The Board expects its schools to be safe, secure and caring environments for students while supporting the community involvement in schools. Therefore, appropriate safeguards respecting the selection, role and supervision must be in place to support the use of volunteers. The School District, through its employees, must maintain control of school programs and school-sponsored activities.

Definition

A volunteer is a parent or other community member who has made a commitment to assist the school without expectation of compensation. This policy does not apply to students and to school staff who volunteer.

Responsibilities of Schools and Volunteer

Principals or Vice-Principals will review the school's volunteer program and list of volunteers annually to ensure it meets School District expectations.

Schools will maintain a list of volunteers, specifics of their volunteer work and advise parents of any volunteer who works exclusively on a regular basis with their child.

Complaints about volunteers will be handled by the school Principal and/or Vice-Principal in a confidential manner.

Volunteers will conduct themselves in a manner that meets all the criteria of conduct and deportment required by the School District staff; maintain the confidentiality of students and school matters; and all relevant and applicable legislation including School District policies.

Selection

The Principal and/or Vice-Principal will consider the need to interview potential volunteers based on:

- a) The nature of the sport/activity;
- b) The extent of supervision by the staff sponsor; and
- c) The knowledge, skills, abilities, and suitability required for the sport/activity.

The purpose of the interview is to:

- a) Understand the person's character, motivation and interests;
- b) Identify the person's talent, skills, and relevant certification;
- c) Request the name of references;
- d) Assess suitability to work under differing levels of supervision;
- e) Specify an appropriate placement of accepted volunteers; and
- f) Assess the ability to deal with students in a respectful and positive manner.

All Information collected in the screening and interviewing process will be officially documented and treated as confidential, excepting the disclosure of information when necessary to determine suitability.

The Principal and/or Vice-Principal will request a Criminal Records Check, and possibly references, as an aid to decision-making in relation to the selection and placement of prospective volunteers. A Criminal Records Check is mandatory in the following circumstances:

- a) Overnight supervision;
- b) Transportation of students;
- c) Any unsupervised access to students;
- d) Minimal direct supervision of by teachers;
- e) Student contact which will be extensive or individual in nature; and
- f) Discomfort with interview responses.

It must be recognized some applicants will not be suitable for volunteer work in a school setting.

The *School Volunteer Information* form should be utilized to document contact data, specialized skills and training, and approval to utilize specific school volunteers.

A volunteer's services may be terminated at the discretion of the Principal and/or Vice-Principal. In the event the Volunteer Checklist and/or Criminal Records Check reveals information which indicates employees may be exposed to a risk of violence, these employees will be informed according to WCB Regulations.

The Principal and/or Vice-Principal will ensure that volunteers are oriented as to:

- a) Obligations and responsibilities of staff, volunteers and students;
- b) School procedures related to safety, emergencies, and the reporting of incidents;
- c) School calendar;
- d) Confidentiality requirements;
- e) Review of relevant and applicable policies and procedures; and
- f) Provide any direction or specific instruction related to the volunteer's role.

Insurance

The School District's comprehensive general liability insurance basically covers volunteers in their roles while participating in any School District or school authorized sport/activity. Any incident or accident that may give rise to a claim against a volunteer or School District, the volunteer must promptly provide all information available to the Principal and/or Vice-Principal.

Volunteer Drivers

The selection, orientation and supervision of volunteer drivers is addressed in Administrative Procedure #105 covering *Volunteer Drivers* which deals with concerns related to driving capabilities, vehicle safety, roadworthiness, and vehicle insurance.

Requirement for Staff Sponsor

The Principal and/or Vice-Principal may require a staff sponsor for activities organized and run by community volunteers. The Principal and/or Vice-Principal will be responsible to receive the confirmation that the volunteer has completed the appropriate screening and interview process.

The Principal and/or Vice-Principal will consider the level of risk involved determining whether or not a staff sponsor is required and in determining the extent of their involvement and supervision needs.

A staff sponsor is required for events involving overnight travel unless waived by the Superintendent of Schools.

Volunteer Community Coaches

A “community coach” is defined as any individual who is not a School District employee and coaches a school team.

Community coaches are interviewed by the Principal and/or Vice-Principal in consultation with school staff, where applicable, to:

- a) Determine ability to work with students of the school;
- b) Identify specific training/competence in the selected sport/activity (which may need to be verified by external resource personnel);
- c) Communicate requirements for a Criminal Records Check; and
- d) Obtain details of qualification and certification on the School District’s *School Volunteer Information Form*. (Would be desirable for volunteers to have undertaken or hold coaching and first-aid training)

The community coach or staff sponsor, if required, is responsible to:

- a) Report to the Principal and/or Vice-Principal on a regular basis, about the program and schedules of the team;
- b) Report to the Principal and/or Vice-Principal regarding all travel and supervision arrangements and advise parents;
- c) Directly supervising students at all times; and
- d) Be present at all games, tournaments and travel events.

Community coaches under 19 years of age and student teachers must be under the direct supervision of a staff sponsor at all items. Staff sponsors must make their presence known to opposing coaches/staff sponsors and/or tournament/event organizers.

Date Adopted: December 2001

Date Amended: May 20, 2014

Appendix: School Volunteer Information Form

*Cross Reference: School Volunteer Information Form
Criminal Record Checks Administrative Procedure #105
Employee Conflict of Interest Administrative Procedure #400*