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STATEMENT ABOUT CONFIDENTIALITY & PRIVACY

Perhaps one of the greatest obstacles in the path of the effective use of volunteers, especially parent volunteers, is the concern on the part of the teachers and principals regarding the possible use of privileged and confidential information.

Pursuant to the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, volunteers with the Waterloo Catholic District School Board will at all times uphold complete confidentiality.

Volunteers are not allowed to have free access to a student's records for any reason. Under no circumstances will a volunteer be given such personal information as home phone numbers, addresses, birth dates without the consent of the parent/guardian or student who is sixteen or older. Volunteers who are assisting administration and/or office staff will often need to access this information. This is permissible only if there is a staff member directly supervising the volunteer.

The volunteer will be privy to only that personal information which they need for a consistent purpose to perform the function they have been assigned. In some circumstances, the volunteer may require background information on a student to best understand the particular needs of the student for the purpose of providing proper assistance. The teacher would share only the appropriate information. As well, volunteers by being in the school setting and by working with students and staff will form personal opinions and arrive at personal conclusions.

In addition, volunteers are in a position to learn and observe more about staff members than would be learned or observed in a regular parent to teacher relationship.

There is nothing wrong with the volunteer possessing such knowledge or personal opinions. However, in no case should such knowledge or opinions be shared in the community. Likewise, care must be taken to refrain from expressing comments harmful to the reputation of each pupil or professional.

If a problem develops, the line of communication regarding a situation in the school is always first with the staff member concerned and then, if necessary, with the principal.

A volunteer has every right to expect that his or her participation will be treated with the same confidentiality and respect.