



Volunteers in School Settings

Date of Issue: September 2, 2002
Reviewed/Revised: September 2015, September 2017, June 2020, May 2024, August 2026

Memo To: All Staff

From: Director of Education

ACCESSIBILITY:

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PURPOSE:

Volunteers are a welcomed resource in our school and assist in a wide range of activities and services. The purpose of this administrative procedure is to provide guidelines to help principals deploy volunteers in effective ways while ensuring the safety of our students.

REFERENCES:

- [Safe Schools Act](#)
- [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act](#)
- [APC007 Access to Pupils and Schools/Trespassing](#)
- [APC018 Code of Conduct](#)
- [APS040 Criminal Background Checks – Service Providers](#)
- [APO004 Educational Excursions](#)
- [APS010 Travel, Expenses, Perquisites, Meals and Refreshments](#)
- [Education Act s.171 \(1\) \(4\) "Volunteer assistants remuneration"](#)

FORMS:

- N/A

REPORTS:

- N/A.

APPENDICES:

- N/A.



COMMENTS AND GUIDELINES:

The Waterloo Catholic District School Board (WCDSB) has the responsibility under the Education Act, to provide a safe and secure working environment for students and employees. The Board is in a position of trust with regard to students and must strive to protect their intellectual, physical, mental, and emotional well-being.

The Waterloo Catholic District School Board will not permit volunteers who will have direct and regular contact with students who have police records and/or patterns of behaviour which place students or staff at risk.

PROCEDURE

The principal is authorized by the Board “to assign to a person who volunteers to serve without remuneration such duties in respect of the school as are approved by the Board, and to terminate such assignment”. (Education Act, R.S.O. 1990, c.E.2, Section 171(1)(4))

The principal is responsible, subject to existing guidelines for the following tasks:

1. Determining the volunteering needs for the school, in consultation with staff and the school council
2. Overseeing the recruitment, selection and screening of volunteers
3. Reviewing and approving all Volunteer Application Package submissions
4. Approving the task and the assignment of the volunteer
5. The training and orientation of the volunteers
6. The supervision and evaluation of the volunteers
7. The evaluation of the volunteer program
8. The recognition of the volunteers

GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

Determining Volunteering Needs

Principals will consult with the school staff and the Catholic School Advisory Council (CSAC) to determine needs, preferences and tasks/assignments which could be supported with a volunteer and develop an inventory list.

Principals are to address any staff concerns about the volunteer program. Staff may have concerns regarding aspects of confidentiality, health and safety, liability, and supervision related issues.

Recruitment, Selection and Screening

The recruitment, selection, and screening process will fill the needs of the school while also addressing the individual skills of the volunteer.

The Board and its employees have a high “duty of care” under the Education Act. This duty of care cannot be delegated to volunteers.

Volunteer Eligibility

Volunteers must be at least 18 years of age, unless they are an WCDSB student involved in a secondary school program such as a co-op placement, sports leadership training, or performing community service hours.

Volunteer applicants who are 18 years of age or older and not an WCDSB student must submit a Vulnerable Sector Check (VSC) to the Principal prior to being accepted as a volunteer, and again every five (5) years from the date of an individual's most recent check in accordance with O. Reg. 521/01. (Refer to Appendix A)

- A VSC shall be dated within six (6) months of submission.
- The Principal may at any time, and at their sole discretion, request a new VSC.

In addition to the VSC requirements, a volunteer must complete an Annual Volunteer Criminal Offence Declaration Form before being accepted as a returning volunteer.

Volunteers are required to inform the Principal immediately of any charges or convictions incurred since the last VSC and/or Annual Volunteer Criminal Offence Declaration Form.

Volunteer applicants who submit a VSC that lists any offence for which an official pardon has not been received will not be accepted as a volunteer in the school.

The Principal shall maintain a system for tracking VSC's and Offence Declarations. Only the Principal or designate shall have access to these confidential records.

The Principal or designate shall maintain a list of current and occasional volunteers and request updated Vulnerable Sector Check every 5 years to maintain good standing to continue participation in school volunteer activities.

Recruitment

The Principal will request parent/guardians/community partners to volunteer in their schools. Schools will provide the volunteer with WCDSB Volunteer Letter to support their application for a Vulnerable Sector Check. Upon receipt of satisfactory clearance of Vulnerable Sector Check, volunteers will be provided an email to complete the WCDSB Volunteer Package. Upon completion of the Volunteer Package will be sent to the School Principal for final review.

Elementary principals will include a Volunteer Application Flyer with their Welcome to Kindergarten packages for parents and provide this form to parents of all new registrants.

Selection

In reviewing a volunteer application, principals will consider at least some of the following:

- Skills, knowledge
- Past and background experiences, i.e. work, community, personal
- Interview results
- Encourage volunteer participation that is representative of the diversity of the school community

The principal will, in consultation with staff invite volunteers, and determine the best "fit" for the volunteers' placements. Generally, a parent/guardian volunteer is not placed as a volunteer in a classroom with his/her own children.

Screening

The depth and degree of screening by the principal will be dependent upon the volunteering activity, the extent of interaction with and responsibility for students, and the degree of direct supervision of the volunteer.

A Volunteer Package will be reviewed at the principal's discretion.

The principal and/or staff retain the authority to accept or decline any volunteer's offer of service. The principal may review any exception to the requirement for a Police Vulnerable Sector Screening with the Superintendent and may contact the superintendent of education regarding the involvement or use of a volunteer if information gathered during the screening process indicates a concern/ question.

A volunteer who wishes to be involved in athletics/coaching, may require specific coaching and/or first aid qualifications as identified by the Ontario Physical Activity Safety Standards in Education which can be found on the Ontario Physical Health and Education Association (OPHEA) website.

Approving the Task/Assignment

The principal/ teacher must clearly define and describe the tasks and expectations for the volunteer.

Every volunteer must demonstrate a clear understanding of their activities, duties, responsibilities, rights and the parameters of their involvement.

Volunteers must demonstrate a clear understanding of the procedures to be followed if they encounter any difficulties with students. Volunteers must be made aware of health and safety issues, legal liability, reporting abuse procedures, and emergency procedures, e.g. fire drill.

Training and Orientation

All volunteers need to be properly welcomed and provided with essential basic information. A tour of the school, introduction to staff and an orientation package will be given to new volunteers. Under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, all school volunteers must complete an [online training module](#) before commencing their volunteer duties. A link to the training module is available on the home page of all WCDSB school websites. Schools must maintain a record of all trained volunteers.

Principals will provide an information orientation package for volunteers which will include:

- Expectations and role description of the task assignment
- A copy of relevant and related school rules and routines, i.e. student code of behavior, emergency procedures, etc.
- A review of procedures related to discipline issues
- A review of procedures and protocol for use of school equipment, i.e. photocopier, gym storage

Supervision and Review

The principal is ultimately responsible for the actions and activities of any volunteer within the school or working with students in co-curricular/extra-curricular activities, and the supervision of the volunteers.

It is essential that the work of volunteers is carefully monitored and supervised as a protection for our students and in the best interest of our volunteers.

It is essential to monitor the activities of individual volunteers and to regularly provide them with feedback. As well, adjustment to activities, training and further follow-up may be necessary.

The performance of volunteers will be reviewed as determined by the principal. The length and detail of the review must be flexible and at the discretion of the principal. It may be beneficial to have the volunteer do a reflection as well to provide feedback about the volunteering experience and the volunteer program itself.

Review of the Volunteer Program

Periodic monitoring and review of the overall volunteer program is necessary to measure its impact and provide input to make adjustments necessary to its ongoing success.

Recognition of the Volunteers

The efforts and assistance of the volunteers are to be recognized. Volunteers are giving of their time, energy, skills and resources.

The type of recognition may vary from school to school. Some suggestions for acknowledgment by the school staff are as follows:

- Encouragement, praise and thanks on a regular basis
- Acknowledging contributions through the school newsletter
- Annual school recognition assembly, event, luncheon, etc.
- Invitation to special school events

Presenters who do not charge for their services are treated as volunteers and will be duly recognized (using the strategies above).

Appropriate token gifts of appreciation (e.g., Tim Horton's gift card or flowers), valued up to \$50, may be offered in exchange for - complimentary offerings of service or expertise. These gifts can only be offered to people who are not engaged in work for the Board. Justification may be requested to support a token gift of appreciation.

Honoraria (i.e. cash gifts) or alcohol (including gift certificates for the LCBO and the Beer Store) may not be given as gifts or tokens of appreciation.

As students are frequently called upon by staff to attend or participate in activities beyond the normal course of the school day, these students are considered volunteers and not entitled to receive compensation (e.g. honoraria) for their time. Students will be credited with community service hours. Providing snacks or pizza for volunteer students is an acceptable use of student generated funds where it facilitates the flow of business (i.e. parent interviews). Pre-approval by the Chief Financial Officer will be required for any student honoraria (using APS010-03F Pre-approval of and Exception to Travel, Expenses, Perquisites, Meals and Refreshments).

CSAC will not set aside funds to recognize volunteers or acts in recognition of bereavements according to the Education Act s. 171 (1) (4).