

Volunteers in Our Schools

Practices & Screening Procedures

NOVEMBER 2011



*Peterborough Victoria
Northumberland and Clarington
Catholic District School Board*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	2
Purpose.....	2
Objectives	2
Definitions.....	3
 PROCEDURE	 4
 GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS	 5
Determining Volunteering Needs.....	5
Recruitment, Selection and Screening Process.....	5-7
Approving the Task/Assignment.....	7
Orientation for School Volunteers	7-8
Training for Volunteers.....	8
Supervision, Review and Evaluation	8-9
Termination of Volunteers	9
Review of Volunteer Program.....	10
Recognition of Volunteers	10

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE

The PVNCCDSB is committed to working in partnership with volunteers. The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines to help principals effectively deploy volunteers while maintaining the safety of our students.

OBJECTIVES

Volunteer programs will benefit the students, the school system and the volunteers themselves.

The students will benefit through:

- Individual and/or small group support
- Enrichment of learning process
- Innovative programs using a wide variety of community skills and resources
- Increased motivation and self-esteem

The school system will benefit through:

- Access to additional expertise
- Fostering of positive school/community partnerships

The volunteers will benefit through:

- Increased opportunities to use their knowledge and skills
- Personal growth and satisfaction gained through valuable experience

DEFINITIONS

VOLUNTEER

A volunteer is a person that serves without remuneration and shall not be used to perform the duties of any PVNCCDSB employees.

CO-OPERATIVE EDUCATION STUDENTS

Cooperative Education students participate in a planned learning experience, for which credits are earned, that integrates classroom theory and learning experiences at a workplace, e.g. in a school classroom or office environment. Cooperative students must always follow the specific protocol for volunteers in schools as outlined by the PVNCCDSB Volunteer Policy.

TEACHER INTERN

Teacher Interns are students on school placements in years 1, 2, and 3 of a university Teacher Education Program. Teacher Interns must always follow the specific protocol for volunteers in schools as outlined by the PVNCCDSB Volunteer Policy.

PROCEDURE

In order to ensure that all volunteers are used in an appropriate and effective manner and that students are assured of a safe learning environment, compliance with all statutory requirements shall be maintained.

The principal or his/her designate will be responsible for:

- Determining the volunteering needs for the school, in consultation with staff and the school council
- The recruitment, selection and screening of volunteers
- Approving the task and assignment of volunteers to his/her school or program
- The orientation for school volunteers
- The training and orientation of volunteers
- The supervision, review and evaluation of volunteers
- The termination of volunteers
- The review of the volunteer program
- The recognition of the volunteers

GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

DETERMINING VOLUNTEERING NEEDS

- a) The principal must consult with the school staff and the Catholic School Council to determine needs, preferences and tasks/assignments which could be supported with a volunteer and develop a list of specific volunteer activities.
- b) The principal must address any concerns about the volunteer program. Staff may have concerns regarding respect of confidentiality, health and safety, liability, and supervision related issues.

RECRUITMENT, SELECTION AND SCREENING PROCESS

The Board and its employees have a high ‘duty of care’ under the Education Act. Board employees cannot divest themselves of this duty of care when delegating responsibilities to volunteers.

The investment of time in screening, preparing and training volunteers should be in proportion to the degree of impact and risk that the volunteer would reasonably have on Board employees’ ‘duty of care’ - e.g. in proportion to the extent of time that the volunteer will have with students.

Recruitment

- a. The principal may invite parents/guardians to volunteer in their schools
- b. The principal may wish to have all interested teachers complete a Teacher Volunteer Survey

Selection

- a. In selecting a volunteer, the principal will consider at least some of the following
 - skills, knowledge
 - past and background experiences – e.g. work, community, personal
 - interview results and
 - references

- b. In consultation with the staff receiving the volunteer, the principal must determine the best ‘fit’ for the volunteer’s placement.

Screening

- a. The depth of screening volunteers by the principal will be dependent upon the volunteering activities and the extent of the volunteer’s responsibility for and/or interaction with students.
- b. When parents/guardians or grandparents who wish to volunteer in their home school are well known to the school community, the principal in consultation with all employees should be able to screen and approve the volunteer applicant.
- c. The principal must interview volunteer applicants. This can be an informal process for applicants that are well known to the school. A more formal interview for new volunteers is recommended and would be helpful especially for those applicants that will have a great deal of interaction with students.
- d. For other volunteers from the community who are not parents/guardians or grandparents of students attending the school, a higher level of screening is required. These volunteers must provide three references, which will be checked by the principal.
- e. Volunteer applicants will be required to provide a Criminal Reference Check and a Vulnerable Sector Check and present the result of the checks to the Principal.

- f. If (under any circumstance) the volunteer has a criminal record, the principal will bring it to the attention of the School Superintendent to decide on the volunteer's offer of service.
- g. The principal on behalf of the Board will retain the right to accept or decline any volunteer's offer of service
- h. If the decision is not to proceed, the principal will send a letter of rejection to the volunteer
- i. The principal will maintain a checklist of all Criminal Record and Vulnerable Sector Checks pertaining to volunteers. The original Criminal Record Check will remain with the volunteer
- j. The principal will collect on an annual basis an Offence Declaration from all volunteers. An information sheet on each volunteer will be kept at the school
- k. For any volunteer task/assignment, the volunteer and the principal will sign a volunteer contract.

APPROVING THE TASK/ASSIGNMENT

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

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

Every volunteer 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, etc.

ORIENTATION FOR SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers perform at their best when given encouragement and permitted to operate in an environment of mutual respect and clear communication. A well-prepared orientation is a key in achieving this objective.

- a. All volunteers must be properly welcomed and provided with essential information. A tour of the school, introduction to staff and orientation workshop is essential for new volunteers.
- b. The principal must provide an orientation for the volunteer which includes:
 - expectations and role description of the task/assignment
 - a copy of relevant and related school rules and routines
 - e.g. student code of behaviour, emergency procedures, etc.
 - school administration procedures relevant to volunteer
 - e.g. sign-out and sign-in procedures, bell times, notification of absence, coffee breaks, lunch breaks, key telephone numbers, school calendar, etc.
 - a review of procedures related to discipline issues
 - a review of procedures and protocol for use of school equipment
 - e.g. photocopier, gym storage, etc
 - a review of legal liability issues; confidentiality issues; disclosure of abuse of a student; health and safety procedures

TRAINING FOR VOLUNTEERS

Offering on-going training for volunteers is a sound investment, it can help volunteers perform their assignments effectively and supports them in the important work they do.

- a) Where necessary school staff must provide “on-the-job” training to volunteers that involves learning through job experience supported by good communication links to staff.

SUPERVISION, REVIEW AND EVALUATION

The principal is ultimately responsible for the supervision of the volunteer, however many volunteers will be more directly supervised by another staff member. For example, a volunteer who helps a school secretary would be directly supervised by the school secretary and a grade 3 classroom volunteer would be directly supervised by the classroom teacher.

Informal and ongoing monitoring of volunteers takes place in day-to-day discussions between staff and the volunteer. Discussions might cover the volunteer's strengths as well as areas where there is need for more direction.

Some categories of volunteers, such as students on field placements, will need written documentation and evaluation to provide a record of their in-school experience to support applications to specific programs of study or for job applications.

- a. The principal is responsible for the actions and activities of any volunteer within his/her school or working with students in co-curricular/extracurricular activities, and the supervision of the volunteers
- b. The Principal will ensure that the work of volunteers is carefully and regularly monitored and supervised as a protection for our students and in the best interests of the volunteers.
- c. The Principal will ensure that 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.
- d. The Principal will ensure that the performance of volunteers should 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 self-evaluation as well as to provide feedback about the volunteering experience and the volunteer program.

TERMINATION OF VOLUNTEERS

Unfortunately, there are a few occasions when a volunteer placement is not success. Volunteers who do not adhere to the policies and procedures of the Peterborough Victoria Northumberland and Clarington Catholic District School Board, or undertake an authorized role, or fail to satisfactorily perform their volunteer assignment, may have their assignment terminated at the sole discretion of the principal or the appropriate supervisor.

REVIEW OF VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

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

- a) The principal will undertake an annual audit/evaluation of the volunteer program. Input for participating volunteers, staff, and the school council will be helpful to review parameters, scope and needs for the school.

RECOGNITION OF VOLUNTEERS

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

- a) Recognition of volunteers may vary from school to school. Suggestions for acknowledgement by the school staff are:
 - encouragement, praise and thanks on a regular basis
 - acknowledge contribution through the school newsletter
 - annual school recognition assembly, event, luncheon, etc.
 - invitation to special school events