
VOLUNTEERS

Background

Volunteers provide a valuable service to the students. Through volunteerism, greater opportunities for students are provided thereby increasing the opportunities for students to meet the standards of education. The Division therefore supports the use of volunteers to assist in creating safe and caring learning environments.

Definitions

Duty of Care: means a legal principle which identifies the obligations of individuals to take reasonable measures of care for and to protect all students to an appropriate level or standard. Students are vulnerable by default, however, if they cannot protect, defend, or assert themselves, permanently or temporarily, because of age, disability, or circumstances, then that duty becomes more intense and the standard higher.

In loco parentis: refers to individuals acting in “the place of parents,” who are held to a standard of care requiring that they exercise wise and judicious decision making in the best interests of all students.

Prudent Person Standard: means the standard of care expected in individual circumstances is that of a reasonable or prudent person.

Standard of Care: refers to the degree or level of service, attention, care, and protection that one owes another according to the law; usually this is considered with the laws relating to negligence. The required standard varies according to the circumstances of each situation.

To determine what the **standard of care** should be in a particular situation, the following questions would be asked:

1. What would a reasonable person of average judgement, skill, and experience, be expected to do – or not do – under these circumstances?
2. What are the risks involved in a situation, given the nature of the activity, the participants, the setting, the availability of support or assistance, and the other relevant factors?
3. What consequences of an action – or lack of action – would a reasonable person of average judgement skills, memory, and experience be expected to foresee?

Volunteer: means an individual who assists the school and/or students in curricular and/or extra-curricular activities, not including Division employees, guest speakers, presenters, special visitors to the school, or School Council members while in their role as School Council members.

Vulnerable Sector Check: refers to an enhanced criminal record check. This type of record check was created in 2000 to protect children and vulnerable persons and is governed by section 6.3(3) of the *Criminal Records Act*.

Current Criminal Record: shall refer to a criminal record check with a vulnerable sector within twelve (12) months.

Child Welfare Intervention Record Check: shall refer to a record of information provided under the *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act*.

Procedures

1. The Principal, in consultation with the staff, will determine the benefits and purposes of having volunteers in the school.
 - 1.1 Giving prudent consideration of whether or not volunteer activities will **add value** to the activity;
 - 1.2 Giving prudent consideration of the **safety and wellbeing** of students and staff, including each individual's **duty of care** to upon the **standard of care**; and
 - 1.3 Giving prudent consideration of the staff members' desire and ability to **benefit from volunteers**.
2. The Principal, in consultation with the staff, will develop a **plan for the use** of volunteers in the school. Such a plan will identify the following:
 - 2.1.1 Recruitment and screening procedures;
 - 2.1.2 Registration procedures;
 - 2.1.3 Orientation and training procedures;
 - 2.1.4 The limits to the assignable tasks;
 - 2.1.5 Job assignment;
 - 2.1.6 Communication procedures;
 - 2.1.7 Confidentiality procedures;
 - 2.1.8 Evaluation and feedback procedures; and
 - 2.1.9 Volunteer recognition and appreciation.
 - 2.2 The Principal may delegate the coordination of the volunteer program to an administrative team member.
 - 2.3 The Principal is responsible for compliance with this Administrative Procedure, any related Board Policies, other related Administrative Procedures, and government directives.
3. Recruitment and screening processes will be developed to secure volunteers and to protect the safety and interests of the students, the school, and the Division.
 - 3.1 The Principal shall ensure a current **Criminal Record Check with a Vulnerable Sector Check and Child Welfare Intervention Check** must be on file at the school for those volunteers who meet one of the following criteria:
 - 3.1.1 Whose participation in school related activities is anticipated to exceed ten (10) hours over the course of the current a school year;
 - 3.1.2 Who will be working individually with one (1) student; or
 - 3.1.3 Who will attend an overnight off-site activity.
 - 3.2 Volunteers who meet the criteria in either of 3.1, 3.2 or 3.2 will complete a Criminal Record Check with a Vulnerable Sector Check every twenty-four (24) months, from the date of the Record Check.

- 3.3 One Criminal Record Check with a Vulnerable Sector Check and Child Welfare Intervention Check is sufficient for cross-school volunteering; a copy must be on file at each school.
 - 3.4 There will be no Alberta Education funds used for the purpose of compensating volunteers for the cost of any of a Criminal Records Check, the Vulnerable Sector Check or the Child Welfare Intervention Check.
 - 3.5 If a volunteer who has been required to provide a Criminal Record Check with a Vulnerable Sector Check is found to have an entry on the document, the record will be reviewed by the Principal in consultation with the Human Resources Department to determine volunteer eligibility prior to continuing in any capacity as a volunteer. Principals must ensure that during this evaluation period, volunteers are not carrying out work with students and/or in the school.
 - 3.6 Any information about a school volunteer gained through Forms 490-01 and 490-02, a security clearance or through any other means, will be kept in strict confidence, used only for the purpose for which the information was provided and disclosed only in accordance with this Administrative Procedure and the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.
 - 3.7 A volunteer will not normally be assigned by the Principal to assist a teacher or be placed in a classroom without discussion with the teacher.
 - 3.8 All prospective school volunteers will complete the Annual School Volunteer Registration Form (Form 490-01).
 - 3.9 School volunteers will, prior to being allowed to act as a school volunteer, read and sign the School Information Confidentiality Form (Form 490-02).
 - 3.10 All prospective volunteer drivers will complete the Driver Information Form (Form 565-01) and the Driver's Abstract Release Form (Form 565-02).
4. The duties assigned to volunteers will be limited to those areas that are generally accepted to be appropriate for volunteer involvement and that are consistent with the professional ethics of the teaching profession.
 - 4.1 Volunteers are responsible to the Principal and to the assigned classroom teacher(s) for all actions relating to students and the school. The role of the volunteer is to supplement and support the teaching staff.
 - 4.2 Volunteers will not:
 - 4.2.1 Diagnose the learning needs of students;
 - 4.2.2 Prescribe educational programs for students;
 - 4.2.3 Implement educational programs;
 - 4.2.4 Evaluate the results of the educational process;
 - 4.2.5 Evaluate, question, or criticize the professional competencies of the staff in the school;
 - 4.2.6 Discipline students;
 - 4.2.7 Counsel students;
 - 4.2.8 Have access to Student Records files or to a student's ISP;
 - 4.2.9 Discuss student progress/behaviour.

- 4.3 The teacher and the Principal are professionally responsible to ensure that the standard of care provided by a volunteer is equivalent to the standard of care provided by the professional staff. In the event that this standard of care is not provided, the teacher or the Principal will take any necessary action required to correct the situation.
 - 4.4 When a volunteer is involved in an activity that takes place off the school grounds the teacher-leader and the Principal are professionally responsible to ensure that the provisions of Administrative Procedure 260 – Field Trips and where applicable Administrative Procedure 565 – Transportation of Students in Private Vehicles are implemented.
 - 4.4.1 A volunteer may only conduct an activity that takes place off the school grounds under the direction of a teacher.
 - 4.4.2 Volunteers must always work under the direct supervision of a teacher.
 - 4.5 Volunteers, while they are engaged in assigned tasks in the school, are considered agents of the Board and therefore subject to all Board Policies, Administrative Procedures and school procedures.
5. The confidentiality of information about students, staff, families, and the school will be protected.
 - 5.1 Volunteers will maintain strict confidentiality in all school matters concerning students and staff.
 - 5.1.1 The disclosure of information gained, while acting as a volunteer in the school, about a student or a staff member except through appropriate channels is prohibited.
 - 5.1.2 Information about a student will be disclosed only to the child's teacher or to the Principal.
 - 5.1.3 Information about a staff member will be disclosed only to the Principal.
 - 5.2 Volunteers who, during the course of their duties as a volunteer, gain information that leads them to believe that a child is in need of protective services will comply with the requirements of the Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act and Administrative Procedure 325 – Child Neglect and Abuse. The volunteer will report the situation to the Principal and a child welfare worker employed by Alberta Children's Services.
6. Processes of orientation and training must be part of an effective volunteer program in the school.
 - 6.1 All school volunteers will participate in an individual or group orientation program developed by the Principal.
 - 6.2 A school volunteer orientation program will include at least the following:
 - 6.2.1 Familiarising volunteers with Division Board Policy, Administrative Procedures and school rules;
 - 6.2.2 Acquainting the volunteers with the geography of the school;
 - 6.2.3 Introducing the volunteers to the staff;
 - 6.2.4 Confidentiality requirements;
 - 6.2.5 Introduction to the class or to the work area and tasks;
 - 6.2.6 Expectations regarding attendance and notification of absence.

- 6.3 A school volunteer handbook will be developed by the Principal to provide volunteers with a ready reference to essential information.
- 6.4 The Principal may arrange for the on-going training of school volunteers.
 - 6.4.1 The training will provide the volunteer with the necessary skills to operate any school equipment they may be asked to use.
 - 6.4.2 The training may also be designed to help the volunteers increase their skills in their assigned program tasks.
7. All school volunteers must report to the school office and wear a Division Volunteer Name Tag when volunteering at the school.
8. Volunteering in schools is considered a privilege and not a right, and therefore the Principal or designate may deny or revoke permission for a volunteer to work in the school(s) - based on school needs and/or school climate.

Reference: Section 11,33,52,53,196,197,222,256 Education Act
Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act
Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

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