

Administrative Procedure 490

VOLUNTEERS IN SCHOOLS

Belief

School volunteers, through their donation of time and talent, contribute significantly to the successful operation of a school. As a consequence, the Division strives to promote an environment which welcomes volunteers, provides them with meaningful involvement, and demonstrates appreciation for their efforts.

Guidelines

1. The Division encourages volunteerism while maintaining a safe and secure learning and working environment.
2. The Division recognizes the important contribution of volunteers in its schools and related programs.
3. The Division supports the accommodation of employees who choose to volunteer at other sites.
4. For the purposes of this administrative procedure, a criminal record means a statement of all convictions registered under any Federal Act or Regulation and for which an official pardon granted under section 3 of the Criminal Record Act, has not been granted.
5. For the purposes of this administrative procedure, security clearance means a certified disclosure of a criminal record background search (includes a Criminal Record & Vulnerable Sector Check).
6. For the purposes of this administrative procedure, volunteer means a person who assists schools and/or students either in curricular or extracurricular activities and includes volunteer drivers and students volunteering outside of their normal student role. It does not include guest speakers, presenters, visitors to the school, or School Council members in their position as School Council members.
7. Volunteers who act as “resource persons” are individuals:
 - 7.1 That have a relevant area of experience and expertise;
 - 7.2 That are involved in an activity on a short term basis to enhance the education program; and
 - 7.3 Whose visits are planned, supervised, and evaluated by a certified teacher.
8. Volunteers who provide “support services” are individuals:
 - 8.1 That assists teachers or groups of teachers directly or indirectly in achieving educational objectives by providing non-instructional services.

9. Volunteers provide support to schools and students either as resource persons or in supportive services and shall be recognized for the valuable service they provide.

Procedures

10. All volunteers are required to complete a Volunteer Registration form.
11. Volunteers who are not current employees with the Division are required to provide a security clearance if their duties involve:
 - 11.1 Working in unsupervised conditions with individual students;
 - 11.2 Volunteering to supervise overnight or longer field trips;
 - 11.3 Activities that involve working on an ongoing basis with two or more students in an unsupervised situation, i.e., coaching teams; and
 - 11.4 Situations that in the judgment of the Principal warrant closer scrutiny.
12. All volunteer positions that require a security clearance must have a specified purpose and position description to evaluate the responsibilities of and supervision for the position.
13. A volunteer may not be assigned to assist a teacher without the teacher's consent.
14. The Principal has the right to approve all volunteer positions in a school.
15. To screen volunteers, Principals shall use the following steps from the [Safe Steps Screening Program](#) developed by Volunteer Canada:
 - 15.1 Determine the risk

Organizations can control the risk in their programs. Examining the potential for danger in programs and services may lead to preventing or eliminating the risk altogether.
 - 15.2 Write a clear position description
 - 15.3 Careful position descriptions send the message that an organization is serious about screening.

Responsibilities and expectations can be clearly set out, right down to the position's dos and don'ts. A clear position description indicates the screening requirements. When a volunteer changes positions, the screening procedures may change.
 - 15.4 Establish a formal recruitment process

Whether an agency posts notices for volunteer positions or sends home flyers, they must indicate that screening is part of the application process.
 - 15.5 Use an application form

The application form provides needed contact information. If the volunteer position requires other screening measures (medical exam, driver's record, police records check), the application form will ask for permission to do so.

15.6 Conduct interviews

The interview provides not only an opportunity to talk to the potential volunteer about their background, skills, interests, and availability, but also to explore any doubts about the suitability of the candidate. In other words, the interview will help determine the "right fit".

15.7 Request a Police Records Check

A Police Records Check (PRC) is just one step in a 10-step screening process. PRCs signal, in a very public way, that the organization is concerned about the safety of its participants.

15.8 Conduct orientation and training sessions

Principals shall have discretion on what the orientation and training process entails. Screening does not end once the volunteer is in place. Orientation and training sessions offer an opportunity to observe volunteers in a different setting. These sessions also allow organizations to inform volunteers about policies and procedures. Probation periods give both the organization and the volunteer time to learn more about each other.

15.9 Supervise and evaluate

The identified level of risk associated with a volunteer position will determine the necessary degree of supervision and evaluation. If the risk is great, it follows that the volunteer will be under close supervision. Frequent feedback in the first year is particularly important. Evaluations must be based on position descriptions.

15.10 Follow up with program participants

Regular contact with participants and family members can act as an effective deterrent to someone who might otherwise do harm. Volunteers should be made aware of any follow-up activities that may occur. These could include spot checks for volunteers in high-risk positions.

16. Approval of a volunteer position is conditional on satisfactory receipt and evaluation of their Volunteer Registration Form and security clearance.

17. If an applicant has a criminal record, the Principal will review the applicant's suitability for the volunteer position based on the following factors:

17.1 The type of charge or offence;

17.2 The age of the charge or offence;

17.3 The type of volunteer work the applicant is being considered for;

17.4 Whether the criminal record impacts on the applicant's ability to perform those volunteer duties;

17.5 Whether the behavior associated with the offence(s), if repeated, will pose a threat of physical or sexual abuse to children or others; and

17.6 Any other factor(s) which the Principal determines to be relevant.

18. If the Principal determines that the applicant is deemed unsuitable for that volunteer position, the applicant will not be offered that particular volunteer position.

19. Volunteers must notify the Principal of all criminal charges at the time the charge is issued, except for minor traffic violations.
20. Volunteers charged with an offence under the Criminal Code of Canada may be suspended from their volunteer positions depending on the nature of the offence and its relationship to their duties.
21. Conviction of any criminal offence may result in termination of a volunteer position with the Division.
22. Applicants for a volunteer driver position must also complete the Volunteer Automobile Driver Authorization Form ([Form 557-1](#)).
23. Volunteers must comply with Board policy, administrative procedures and school rules.
24. Volunteers are insured under the Division's liability insurance policy only while they are acting within the scope of their duties as assigned by the Principal, teacher, or the Division.
25. All information regarding security clearances is strictly confidential and may only be disclosed in accordance with this administrative procedure and the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

References: Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
[WRPS Volunteer Package](#)