

AVON MAITLAND DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

NO. 495

SUBJECT: VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS IN THE SCHOOLS

Legal References: *Education Act: Section 171 (1) 4. Voluntary Assistants - Duties Assigned by Principal; Guideline - Ontario Schools Code of Conduct*

Related References: *Administrative Procedure 204 Program Planning; AP 265 Co-instructional Activities; AP 266 Field Trips and Excursions; AP 307 Safe Arrival: Elementary Schools; AP 351 Code of Conduct; AP 401 Criminal Background Checks; AP 405 Allegations Against Employees and Volunteers; AP 589 Transportation; O.P.H.E.A. Guidelines*

1. Participation of Volunteers

- 1.1 This administrative procedure has been established to encourage the participation of volunteers in the schools of Avon Maitland District School Board.
- 1.2 Volunteers enhance learning opportunities, support school-based services and promote a safe and secure learning and working environment.
- 1.3 Parents, guardians and community members are welcome in the schools of Avon Maitland District School Board. They can provide valued assistance to students and staff members by assisting school staff with or without direct supervision and with appropriate safeguards. Volunteers can help in many ways including: field trips, fund raising campaigns, providing small group and one-on-one assistance to students, co-curricular activities and extra-curricular activities.
- 1.4 The personal interests, background, and commitment of volunteers can enhance the programs, services, and educational opportunities for students.
- 1.5 Volunteers are valued education partners who foster interaction and co-operation between and among parents/guardians and members of the school community for the benefit of students. Volunteering provides valuable experience, personal growth and satisfaction.
- 1.6 In the interests of providing an inviting educational environment, which promotes the well being of all persons, it is the intent of Avon Maitland District School Board to promote a safe and secure school and working environment for students and staff.
- 1.7 It is understood that a volunteer serves without remuneration. Co-op students are not defined as volunteers.
- 1.8 This administrative procedure will provide guidelines for principals in recruiting, selecting, training, assigning and supervising volunteers in the schools.

2. Administrative Procedures

- 2.1 The principal is authorized "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*, Section 171 (1) 4.)
- 2.2 The principal is responsible, subject to existing guidelines detailed in this procedure, for:
 - 2.2.1 Determining the volunteering needs for the school;
 - 2.2.2 The recruitment, selection and screening of volunteers;
 - 2.2.3 Approving and delineating the task and the assignment of the volunteers;
 - 2.2.4 The training and orientation of the volunteers;
 - 2.2.5 The supervision of the volunteers;
 - 2.2.6 The assessment of the volunteer program; and
 - 2.2.7 The recognition of the volunteers.
- 2.3 A co-ordinator of volunteers, who is a staff member, may be designated in each school. The principal and/or co-ordinator may then designate or delegate other staff members to act as the direct supervisor for the volunteer.
- 2.4 A volunteer is covered by the board's liability insurance while working within the scope of activities as set by the board while adhering to appropriate safeguards. This insurance protects a volunteer who may be named in a lawsuit arising out of an injury to a student.

3. Guidelines for Administrators or Supervisors

3.1 Determining the Volunteering Needs for the School

Principals may consult with the school staff and the school council at the start of each school year to determine needs which could be supported with a volunteer, and develop an inventory list.

3.2 Recruitment, Selection and Screening

- 3.2.1 The recruitment, selection and screening process is aimed at meeting the needs of the school while also filling the individual needs of the volunteer.
- 3.2.2 All staff members of the board have a high "duty of care" under the *Education Act*. Though certain duties and responsibilities can be delegated to volunteers, **Avon Maitland District School Board staff members cannot divest themselves of this duty of care.**
- 3.2.3 The investment of time in screening, preparation, and training of the volunteer should be in proportion to the time, extent and nature of involvement the volunteer will have with the students, i.e. the degree of impact and risk that the volunteer would reasonably have under the "duty of care".
- 3.2.4 Recruitment
 - 3.2.4.1 Principals will inform the school community of the volunteer needs within their schools.
 - 3.2.4.2 Recruitment surveys are an excellent vehicle for informing the staff and the community about the various ways that volunteers can help in schools. [See Form 495A Volunteer Survey (sample)].
 - 3.2.4.3 Recruitment information meetings are an effective method of sharing information with potential volunteers.

3.2.5 Selection

3.2.5.1 In selecting a volunteer, the principal will consider some or all of the following:

- a) skills, knowledge, certification, credentials, values;
- b) past and background experiences i.e. work, community, personal;
- c) interview results and impressions; and
- d) references.

3.2.5.2 The principal, in consultation with the staff receiving the volunteer, will determine the best fit for the volunteer's assignment. Parent/guardian volunteers are not usually placed in a classroom with their own children.

3.2.6 Screening

3.2.6.1 Volunteer applicants external to the school must be interviewed by school administration. This can be an informal process for candidates who are well known to the school and/or working under the direct supervision of school staff. A more formal interview protocol will be particularly helpful for new volunteer candidates. When parents/guardians who wish to volunteer in their home school are well known within the school community the principal, in consultation with staff, may screen and approve the volunteer candidate. Consideration should be given to the level of risk involved.

3.2.6.2 Volunteers who are community members but not parents or guardians, may require a higher level of screening. Particularly when there is a lack of supervision (high risk) this requires that the applicant provide a list of three references which will be checked by the principal. [See Form 495B Volunteer Coaching Application (Sample from O.P.H.E.A.); Form 495C Suggested Criteria for Non-Teacher Coaches (sample from O.P.H.E.A.); The Criminal Reference Check and Vulnerable Sector Screening (VSS) will be retained by the Principal in a secure manner.

3.2.6.3 If it is necessary for a volunteer to have direct contact with students under minimal or no direct supervision (high risk) by the principal or another staff member (e.g. coaching an athletic team, overnight trips with students) the applicant must provide a recent Criminal Reference Check at their own expense (if there is an expense). If the Criminal Reference Check indicates any record of offences, the principal must discuss the suitability of the candidate with the supervisory official responsible for human resources.

3.2.6.4 Volunteers who have submitted a **Criminal Background Check** and Vulnerable Sector Screening once may provide an annual declaration offence to continue to participate in activities involving direct contact with students with minimal or no direct supervision by the Principal or other staff (see Form 495J Offence Declaration – Volunteers). The Offence Declaration would be retained for the school year and then updated with a new Offence Declaration. Outdated Offence Declarations must be shredded.

3.2.6.5 The principal retains the authority to accept or decline any volunteer's offer of service without appeal and to halt, without appeal, volunteer activity.

3.3 Delineating and Approving the Volunteer Task/Assignment

- 3.3.1 All volunteers should be provided with a clear description of their activities, duties, responsibilities, rights and the parameters of their involvement. Where a staff supervisor exits, the roles and responsibilities of the volunteer and the staff supervisor shall be delineated. The relationship between the volunteer and the staff supervisor should be discussed.
- 3.3.2 Volunteers must be provided with procedures to be followed if they encounter difficulties with students. Volunteers must be made aware of health and safety issues, safe schools, customer service and accessibility, equity, Municipal Freedom of Information, legal liability, reporting abuse procedures, and emergency procedures (e.g. fire drill).
- 3.3.3 A volunteer contract must be signed by the volunteer and the principal. A formal contract may not be necessary for incidental volunteering (e.g., a one day field trip).

3.4 Training & Orientation

- 3.4.1 A tour of the school and introduction to staff is helpful and thoughtful, especially for new volunteers.
- 3.4.2 Principals should provide to volunteers and review with them, an information orientation package which will include:
 - a) Expectations and role description of the task assignment;
 - b) A copy of relevant and related school rules and routines (i.e., student code of conduct, emergency procedures, etc.);
 - c) A review of procedures related to discipline issues;
 - d) Strategies for dealing with the management of student behaviour;
 - e) A review of procedures and protocol for use of school equipment (i.e., photocopier, gym storage);
 - f) A statement concerning legal liability; [See Form 495D Statement of Liability Insurance; Form 495E Volunteer Driver Form]
 - g) A statement concerning confidentiality issues; [See Form 495F Statement about Confidentiality and Privacy]
 - h) A statement on disclosure of abuse by a student; [See Form 495G Statement on Disclosure of Abuse by a Student to a Volunteer] and
 - i) A review of procedures related to health and safety issues. [See Form 495H Statement on Health and Safety Issues; and Form 495I Standard Health and Safety Requirements]
 - j) Information about the Board's Liability Insurance Coverage

3.5 Supervision and Review

- 3.5.1 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.
- 3.5.2 Some volunteers will be directly supervised by a staff member (i.e., a volunteer helping the school secretary would be directly supervised by the school secretary and a volunteer assigned to a grade three classroom would be directly supervised by the classroom teacher).
- 3.5.3 It is essential to monitor the activities of individual volunteers and to regularly provide them with feedback.
- 3.5.4 The principal and/or school co-ordinator may wish to provide a formal individual review when the extent of individual involvement and support to students is regular and substantial.
- 3.5.5 Volunteers may request a performance review and/or a reference to take to possible interviews for employment.

3.6 Review of the Volunteer Program

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

3.7 Recognition of the Volunteers

The efforts and assistance of the volunteers should be recognized. The type of recognition may vary from school to school (e.g., acknowledging contributions through the school newsletter, annual school recognition assembly, event, luncheon, etc., invitation to special school events).

3.8 List of Related Forms:

- Form 495A Volunteer Survey (Sample)
- Form 495B Volunteer Coaching Application (Sample from O.P.H.E.A.)
- Form 495C Suggested Criteria for Non-Teacher Coaches (Sample from O.P.H.E.A.)
- Form 495D Statement of Liability Insurance
- Form 495E Volunteer Driver Form
- Form 495F Statement about Confidentiality and Privacy
- Form 495G Statement on Disclosure of Abuse by a Student to a Volunteer
- Form 495H Statement on Health and Safety Issues
- Form 495I Standard Health and Safety Requirements
- Form 495J Offence Declaration – Volunteers