

3110: SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS (AP)

Approved: 03 03 11

POLICY

The Board believes that the education of students is an undertaking that should be shared among its employees, parents and members of the community. The active involvement of parents and appropriate use of volunteers as helpers has the potential to provide considerable benefit to the intellectual and social development of students. In addition, the participation of volunteers increases communication and positive relationships between the school, parents and the community.

Involvement of volunteers is encouraged in activities for which the volunteer is qualified, and that benefit the school. While encouraging the community context of schooling, the Board expects its schools to be safe, secure environments for students. Therefore the use of volunteers must be supported by appropriate safeguards respecting the selection and use of volunteers. The school board, through its employees, must maintain control of school programs and school-sponsored activities.

This policy and its associated administrative procedures are to be considered “rules” within the meaning of sections 7.1 and 85(2)(c)(v) of the *School Act* and to be construed in accordance with the terms of the *School (Protection of Parent Volunteers) Amendment Act, 2001*. Subject to these rules and the *School Act* and regulations, a volunteer may provide services at or for a school, provided it does not result in the displacement of an employee.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

1.0 DEFINITIONS

- 1.1 “Parent” means a parent as defined in the *School Act*.
- 1.2 A volunteer is a parent or other person who has made a commitment that has been accepted by a school to assist the school by handling a number of tasks, at or for the school, without expectation of compensation.
- 1.3 This policy does not apply to students and to school staff members who volunteer.

2.0 THE ROLE OF VOLUNTEERS AND RELATIONSHIPS WITH SCHOOL STAFF

- 2.1 Volunteers must not be used to provide services that would result in the displacement of an employee (SA s. 26.1(1), 85(4)).

- 2.2 Volunteers should function as complementary extensions of the staff responsible for the teaching-learning situation; they should not undertake tasks that require their making programmatic or educational decisions.
- 2.3 Volunteers must not be assigned tasks that would violate the privacy of students or their families, and shall not be provided access to student records, except that contact information may be provided where required, e.g. for callback programs.

3.0 STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES FOR VOLUNTEERS AND VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS

General

- 3.1.1 Recruitment, selection, assignment and training of volunteers is done at the local school level. Interested individuals should contact the local school principal or designate.
- 3.1.2 The principal or principal's designate shall be responsible for:
 - i) Defining tasks assigned to volunteers in general terms, in consultation with the supervising staff member
 - ii) Screening and selection of volunteers and specific assignments
 - iii) Decisions regarding the continuation or discontinuation of a volunteer's services or a volunteer based program
 - iv) Overall supervision of volunteers and arranging for specific supervision of volunteers
 - v) Discussing with all staff, volunteers and the school's parent advisory council, the board policy on volunteers in the schools and these regulations, as required.

3.2 Screening, selection and Assignments

- 3.2.1 Volunteers are to be selected on the basis of an ability to deal with students, skill in performing needed services, previous related experiences, interest in the work and personal character. Applicants shall complete a School Volunteer Information/Application Form – Attachment I
- 3.2.2 The Principal or designate should review the application and consider the need for reference checks and/or the need to interview the potential volunteer; giving consideration to the nature of the volunteer activity, the extent of supervision by teaching staff and knowledge of the potential volunteer.
- 3.2.3 When a volunteer will not be under direct supervision of a teacher, principal or vice principal and will have regular and ongoing involvement with students, a Criminal Record Review, interview and reference checks must be carried out. Principals may waive one or more of these processes where they deem it unnecessary – for example, the applicant has been otherwise screened such as for a Block Parent program or the applicant's background is well known, such as a recent graduate from the school.
- 3.2.4 The purpose of an interview is to:

- i.) understand the person's character, motivation and interests;
- ii.) identify the person's talent, skills, and certifications relevant to the proposed activities;
- iii.) assess their suitability to work with students;
- iv.) consider their potential contributions to the school;
- v.) decide whether to accept or reject the offer of service; and
- vi.) specify an appropriate placement of accepted volunteers.

3.2.5 The interviewer is permitted to request a Criminal Record Review and/or references as an aid to decision-making in relation to the selection and placement of a prospective volunteer. Circumstances where an interviewer could be more likely to request this type of checking include:

- i.) minimal direct supervision
- ii.) student contact which will be extensive or individual in nature
- iii.) discomfort with interview responses

3.2.6 Should a Criminal Record Review of a volunteer or information from a law enforcement agency indicate a criminal offence or pending charge, the principal is authorized to notify the Superintendent who shall determine if the offence or offences are such to prohibit participation as a school volunteer.

3.2.7 It must be recognized that some applicants will not be suitable for volunteer work in a school setting.

3.2.8 Interviews, reference checks and Criminal Record Reviews shall be documented.

3.2.9 All information obtained through the application forms and interview is to be treated as confidential and only disclosed as necessary to staff with whom the volunteer works. Criminal record information is only disclosed as necessary for making a decision on the suitability of the applicant.

3.2.10 Assignments must take into account the volunteer's interests and abilities.

3.2.11 A volunteer's services may be terminated at the discretion of the principal.

3.3 Orientation

3.3.1 An orientation program for volunteers should be conducted by the principal or designate when needed. The orientation process should include:

- i.) a general orientation to the school
- ii.) processes of signing in by volunteers
- iii.) staff responsibilities with respect to volunteers
- iv.) confidentiality requirements for volunteers:
 - no access to student records;
 - must maintain confidentiality and follow school protocol regarding volunteer related concerns;
 - direct all questions and concerns through district protocols;

- must keep all information received and observations made within the confines of the school
- v.) emergency procedures
- vi.) school code of conduct
- vii.) overview of the special programs and/or
- viii.) services at the school
- ix.) review of applicable collective agreement provisions
- x.) accident procedures, including reporting of incidents
- xi.) school calendar

3.3.2 The supervising staff member shall provide any necessary supervision or direction specific to the individual's tasks, with particular attention to procedures relating to safety of students.

3.3.3 Where a volunteer works directly with a student who has a medical condition that could foreseeably result in a medical emergency (e.g. anaphylactic shock) to which the volunteer may have to respond, the volunteer shall be provided with appropriate information with the consent of the student's parent, or the student if of sufficient age and capacity. If there is no consent, the volunteer should not work with the student if not knowing about the medical condition could compromise the student's safety.

3.3.4 Where a volunteer works directly with a student whose behaviour under certain conditions could constitute a safety risk to the volunteer, the volunteer shall be provided with appropriate information with the consent of the student or student's parents. If such consent is not obtained, the assignment shall be adjusted so that there is no foreseeable safety risk to the volunteer.

3.4 Supervision and Monitoring

Volunteers are visitors and must report to the office on arrival at the school unless other arrangements have been made or approved by the principals. Schools will maintain:

- i.) list of volunteers
- ii.) log book to record date, name and activity engaged in by a volunteer.

3.5 Notification of parents

Principals or supervising staff members are encouraged to inform parents when their child is working on a regular basis on an individual or group basis with a volunteer.

4. CONDUCT OF VOLUNTEERS

4.1 Volunteers are required to:

- i.) meet all of the criteria of conduct and deportment required of School District staff
- ii.) maintain confidentiality and keep all information received and observations made about students, families, and staff, within the confines of the school.
- i.) Complaints about volunteers should be handled by the school principal or designate.

5. SPECIAL PROVISIONS GOVERNING COMMUNITY COACHES

- 5.1 A community coach is a coach of a school team who is not an employee in the school district.
- 5.2 A community coach must have a staff sponsor. A staff sponsor may be a principal or vice-principal or teacher.
- 5.3 Community coaches and their staff sponsors must comply with B.C. School Sports Association guidelines and policies.
- 5.4 Community coaches must be determined by the administration to have the necessary ability to work with young people and the appropriate level of training required for the sport and age level in question, especially in high risk sports. Community coaches must also undergo a Criminal Record Review. The qualifications of the community coach and other pertinent data should be recorded on School Volunteer Information/Application Form.
- 5.5 Staff sponsors are expected to be in the building during practices or should arrange for a designated staff contact for those times when the sponsor is not present. Staff sponsors must be present at all games, tournaments and travel events of that team. In a secondary school, the principal or vice-principal may choose to take responsibility for waiving this requirement with some community coaches at his/her discretion for games, tournaments and travel events not involving overnight travel. Parents should be advised of all travel and supervision arrangements.
- 5.6 Student coaches and coaches under nineteen years of age must be under the direct supervision of a teacher sponsor at all times.
- 5.7 Student teachers operate, as in all other aspects of their placement, under the supervision of their sponsor teacher.
- 5.8 The principal may waive the requirement for a staff sponsor on a temporary basis where satisfied that student safety will not be prejudiced.

6. LIABILITY, INSURANCE AND EXPENSES

- 6.1 Claims (other than for libel or slander) against volunteers for damages for acts or omissions in providing volunteer services for the board are barred by section 91(1.1) of the *School Act*, except where the volunteer has been guilty of dishonesty, gross negligence, malicious or willful misconduct. The board's liability insurance coverage applies to volunteers in the same way as it does to employees.

- 6.2 Where any incident or accident occurs that may conceivably give rise to a claim against a volunteer or the school board, the volunteer must promptly provide all information to the school to enable the school to inform its insurers. Failure to do so may prejudice coverage.
- 6.3 The district provides injury insurance coverage for volunteers.
- 6.4 No honorarium or fee for services may be paid to volunteers.

7. ANNUAL REVIEW

- 7.1 The principal or designate will annually inform parents about the school's volunteer program and review the school's volunteer programs with the Parent Advisory Council.

AP3110: APPENDIX I - SCHOOL VOLUNTEER INFORMATION/APPLICATION FORM

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____ Tel: (250) _____

1. Reasons for wishing to volunteer in this school.

2. Volunteer activities of interest to you.

3. Previous related experience/training.

References we may contact:

Name	Telephone
1)	_____
2)	_____
3)	_____

Office use only (attach notes/documentation)

- Interview
- Reference check
- Criminal Record Review