



**MOOSONEE DISTRICT
SCHOOL AREA BOARD**

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE HUMAN RESOURCES: NO. 495	
Effective	May 3, 2016
Last Revised	August 20, 2023
Last Reviewed	August 20, 2023

VOLUNTEERS IN THE SCHOOL

PURPOSE

The Moosonee District School Area Board and its system and school administrators encourage the use of volunteers. The presence of volunteers enriches the educational experience of students in Moosonee Public School. While recognizing the need and benefits of having volunteers in the school, the Board and its administrators also have the responsibility to ensure that the safety and welfare of the students is of the highest priority.

This administrative procedure has been established to support the participation of volunteers and to direct their involvement in the school. It addresses the responsibilities of the principal and staff to plan for the effective use of volunteers and to protect all students in their care.

DEFINITIONS

Volunteer: A volunteer is a parent/guardian or community member who agrees to undertake, without pay, a designated task that supports a classroom, the school, or a Board-sponsored activity. When not specifically stated, the term “volunteer” refers to both parent and community volunteers. Co-op students are not defined as volunteers.

Parent Volunteer: A parent volunteer is a parent or guardian who currently has a child enrolled in and attending Moosonee Public School, or is a member of the community who continues as a volunteer in the school without interruption after his or her child has left the school.

Community Volunteer: A community volunteer is a member of the community who does not have a child enrolled in the school.

Management of Volunteers: Management includes procedures for screening, orienting, training, supervising, evaluating, and recognizing volunteers.

Supervision: Supervision is the oversight of an activity for regulation or direction. [See Appendix A for categories of supervision.]

PROCEDURES

1. Board Expectations

1.1 The Moosonee District School Area Board supports participation by parent and community volunteers in Moosonee Public School and on school-sponsored trips.

1.2 This administrative procedure provides for volunteer participation under the direction and supervision of school administrators and the staff in order to ensure the safety and security of students, the staff, and volunteers.

- 1.3 School administrators and the staff will work in cooperation with recognized community organizations involved in recruiting, screening, and placing volunteers.
 - 1.4 Implementation of this administrative procedure at the school level is the responsibility of the principal.
 - 1.5 Volunteers in the school are assigned at the discretion of the principal and in accordance with the restrictions and requirements outlined in this administrative procedure and in other Board policies and procedures.
 - 1.6 All provisions of Board policies, administrative procedures, and negotiated collective agreements supersede any statements regarding the use of volunteers in this procedure, unless specifically stated.
- 2. The Contribution and Role of Volunteers**
- 2.1 Volunteers provide valued support to students and the school staff. The personal interests, background, and commitment of volunteers can enhance programs, services, and educational opportunities in the school, while volunteering can provide valuable experience, personal growth, and satisfaction for volunteers.
 - 2.2 Volunteers are valued education partners who foster interaction and co-operation among the home, school, and wider community.
 - 2.3 Volunteers enhance and support student and school activities at the request of and under the supervision of Board staff, and the principal in particular.
 - 2.4 Volunteers serving in any capacity are to be assigned appropriately in order to augment and supplement staff supervision of school activities or programs. Where school staff members are not available to supervise an activity, a volunteer may be assigned that task, assuming that all of the procedures for screening, orientation, and training have been adhered to by the principal.
 - 2.5 Volunteers cannot assume any responsibility for the diagnosis of learning strengths or difficulties, the assignment of learning experiences, or the evaluation of student progress.
- 3. The Principal's Responsibility**
- 3.1 The principal is responsible for promoting a positive, safe, and secure learning and working environment for students and staff members. The principal is responsible for:
 - a) determining the volunteering needs of the school;
 - b) the recruitment, selection, and screening of volunteers;
 - c) approving and delineating volunteer assignments;
 - d) ensuring that any activity to which a volunteer is assigned is a school- sponsored activity;
 - e) the training and orientation of volunteers;
 - f) the supervision of volunteers;
 - g) the assessment of the volunteer program; and
 - h) appropriate recognition of the volunteers.
 - 3.2 The principal, at the beginning of the school year, will consult with staff to determine the needs, preferences, and tasks which could be supported by a volunteer. Staff members should also

be surveyed to assess their commitment and expertise in working with volunteers. The concerns of staff should be noted and resolved if volunteers are to be successful in the school.

- 3.3 Generally, it is not recommended to place a parent in the same classroom as their child.
- 3.4 Volunteers must be made aware of health and safety issues, legal liability, procedures for reporting suspected child abuse, and school emergency procedures such as a fire drill or school lockdown. Volunteers must know the process to follow if they encounter difficulties with a student and are expected to be aware of and adhere to the school Code of Conduct.
- 3.5 Periodic review of the overall volunteer program is necessary to measure its impact and to make adjustments necessary to its ongoing success.
4. **Duty of Care**
 - 4.1 All staff members have a high “duty of care” under the Education Act, the Child and Family Services Act, and other legislation. Though certain duties and responsibilities can be delegated to volunteers, staff members cannot divest themselves of this duty of care.
 - 4.2 All volunteers must be assessed as to their suitability for placement within a school or program setting. The principal will ensure that, prior to any medium-risk or high- risk assignments as set out in Appendix A, parent and community volunteers have been screened in keeping with Administrative Procedure 410 Criminal Background Checks, and that references have been requested and verified. The cost of the criminal background check will be invoiced to the Moosonee District School Area Board.
 - 4.3 The principal may collect an offence declaration annually from volunteers if they continue to volunteer at the school.
 - 4.4 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”. The degree of impact and risk is related to how closely the volunteer works with students. [See Appendix A.]
 - 4.5 When parents or guardians who wish to volunteer for low-risk assignments are well known within the school community the principal, in consultation with staff, may screen and approve the volunteer candidate.
 - 4.6 The principal retains the authority to accept or decline any volunteer’s offer of service without appeal and to halt, without appeal, volunteer activity.
 - 4.7 All volunteers will be given an orientation to the school. As appropriate to the services they are providing, they will be informed about relevant Board policies and administrative procedures, and to the role, responsibilities, and expectations for volunteers.
 - 4.8 The activities of volunteers will be supervised, evaluated, and recognized once they are placed in an assignment.
 - 4.9 Appropriate in-service training will be provided for the staff who have supervisory responsibilities for volunteers to ensure the effective management of all volunteers.

5. Legislated Requirements

- 5.1 Volunteers are expected to adhere to the requirement for confidentiality under the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and to comply with administrative procedures as they relate to them and their role within the school.
- 5.2 The appropriate use of privileged information is very important in a school setting. It protects the students and staff and ensures all volunteers the right to be treated with the same degree of confidentiality and respect. In a school environment volunteers will acquire information about students or staff. Volunteers should not share information with anyone other than appropriate staff.
- 5.3 Volunteers are not permitted to have free access to student's records for any reason. Under no circumstances will a volunteer be given such personal information as home phone numbers, addresses, and birth dates, without the consent of the parent/guardian. Volunteers who are assisting administration or the office staff may need to access this information. This is permissible only if there is a staff member directly supervising the volunteer.
- 5.4 Volunteers will be given only personal information which is needed for a consistent purpose to perform the function they have been assigned. In some circumstances, the volunteer may require background information on a student to best understand the particular needs of the student for the purpose of providing proper assistance. The teacher would share only the appropriate, essential information.
- 5.5 Volunteers are in a position to learn and observe more about staff members than would be learned or observed in a regular parent to teacher relationship. In no case should such knowledge or opinions be shared in the community. Likewise, care must be taken to refrain from expressing comments harmful to the reputation of any student or staff member.
- 5.6 If a problem develops, the line of communication regarding a situation in the school is always first with the staff member concerned and then, if necessary, with the principal.

6. Liability

For any school-sponsored activity that is undertaken by a volunteer, the Board's liability insurance regarding negligence will apply. Volunteers need to be aware that the Board's insurance does not include loss of income provisions should the volunteer sustain an injury that prevents the volunteer from resuming his or her normal employment.

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

Legal:

Education Act, Section 171 (1) para. 4: Voluntary Assistants—Principal's Right to Assign and Terminate Volunteer Duties

Education Act, Section 265 Duties of Principal: Care of Pupils

Ontario Regulation 298 Operation of Schools, Section 6 Emergency Procedures

Ontario Regulation 298 Operation of Schools, Section 20 Duties of Teachers: Ensure Safety Procedures are Carried Out

Ontario Regulation 521/01 Collection of Personal Information: Criminal Background Check

Child and Family Services Act

Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

Board:

Board Policy GOV-08 Safe Schools

Board Policy GOV-09 Safe Schools: School Code of Conduct

Board Policy GOV-18 Health and Safety: Working Environment

Board Policy GOV-21 Access to School Premises

Board Policy GOV-26 Emergency Response Plans

Administrative Procedure 160 Emergency Lockdown Procedures

Administrative Procedure 317 Anaphylaxis

Administrative Procedure 323 Reporting Child Abuse

Administrative Procedure 410 Criminal Background Checks

Moosonee Public School Code of Conduct

SAFETY GUIDELINES

LEVELS OF SUPERVISION—Teachers or Volunteers

The Ontario Physical and Health Association (OPHEA) has produced Physical Education Safety Guidelines to assist school boards in formulating site-specific safety guidelines for physical education, intramural sports programs, and inter-school athletics at the elementary and secondary school levels.

The guidelines designate three categories of supervision:

- **Constant visual supervision:** Constant visual supervision means that a teacher or volunteer is physically present, watching the activity in question. Only one activity requiring constant visual supervision may take place while other activities are going on.
- **On-site supervision:** On-site supervision involves a teacher or volunteer presence, but not necessarily constantly viewing one specific activity.
- **In-the-area supervision:** In-the-area supervision means that the teacher or volunteer could be in the area while another activity is taking place nearby.

LEVELS OF RISK—Volunteers

The process of screening for volunteers begins at the moment a person applies or is recruited, to the time he or she terminates this commitment. The degree of screening is dependent upon the volunteer activity, the extent of interaction with and responsibility for students, and the degree of direct supervision of the volunteer.

The levels of risk are outlined below:

- **Low Risk:** Low-risk activities refer to classroom activities that are under the direct supervision of the staff. Activities in open common areas such as a hallway, library, or gym, with intermittent observation are also considered to be of low risk.
- **Medium Risk:** A medium-risk activity refers to an occasion when a volunteer is working with a group of students in an isolated area.
- **High Risk:** A high-risk activity is when a volunteer is working in an isolated area with one or two students, or is coaching or supervising other group activities off-site.