



Huron-Superior Catholic
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Volunteers in Schools
SUPERVISOR
MANUAL





THE VALUE OF VOLUNTEERING

"Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to our God in heaven."

Matthew 5:16

Volunteer activities are valued because they help develop the full potential of each child.

These benefits include:

- Cultivating school/community relationships.
- Enhancing and supporting student learning.
- Providing an enduring education that reflects the essence of our Catholic traditions.
- Providing members of the Catholic community and community at large with opportunities to share their gifts and talents.
- Gaining valuable experience that enhances their personal growth.
- Inspiring our young to be the best for our world.

Volunteering activities are extremely diverse. The type of activity and extent of involvement can vary immensely for a variety of reasons, including but not limited to:

- Volunteer interest, aptitude, availability.
- The scope and duration of events (e.g., visiting St. Kateri for one day is different from taking a group of students out of the country for a week and different from engaging in ongoing curriculum activities with a class).
- The amount of responsibility for students (e.g., coaching an athletic team for an entire season involves much more responsibility than assisting two students after class with their art work).

This manual provides guidelines for supervisors. The investment of time in screening, preparing, informing, and training volunteer **depends on** the degree of **impact the volunteer would reasonably have on your duty of care.**



RECRUITMENT

When it is necessary to recruit volunteers, schools may choose to do so according to their resources, community make-up and preference of others involved (e.g., staff and Catholic School Council). During this initial stage when you are considering volunteers for various activities, it is prudent to provide relevant information to any interested individuals (e.g., amount of time required, activities). Surveys, sign-up sheets, or direct contact/invitations can be used for recruitment.

SCREENING

The depth and degree of your screening will be dependent upon the volunteering activity and the volunteer's extent of interaction with and/or responsibility for students.

The following guidelines may help:

- Some degree of screening and selection is required for everyone.
- People expect and accept that their suitability for the volunteer role will be scrutinized.
- Remind yourself that volunteers are meant to help and not hinder you in your job. The benefits received should clearly outweigh the costs of screening, selection, supervising, and training.
- When in doubt, consult with colleagues.
- Know the members of your community and the parents as well as you can. The knowledge that teachers and other staff members have about prospective volunteers should be considered.
- Obtain assurances when selecting volunteers from a volunteer agency.
- Inform volunteers that they are in a position of trust and that they must maintain confidentiality as a condition for assisting in the school.
- The use of volunteers, in schools, is governed by a board policy. Refer to this policy for a clear outline of the responsibilities of the principal/supervisor and of the teacher/designate.
- See **Appendix A - Risk Analysis Guideline**.
- Select volunteers who demonstrate acceptable levels of commitment and whose values are aligned with the Board's Mission statement.



In selecting a volunteer, consider at least some of the following:

- Skills, knowledge, values.
- Ability to relate to the students.
- Past experiences (e.g., work, community, personal).
- What you learn in an interview with them.
- References.

ORIENTATION

All volunteers need to be properly welcomed and provided with some basic information.

The amount of information/effort required will vary according to the extent of activities anticipated for the volunteer. Schools must individually decide what orientation components to include at any given time. See **Appendix B – Orientation Checklist – Principal** and **Appendix C – Orientation Checklist – Teacher**.

ACTIVITIES

Every volunteer requires a clear understanding of his/her activities, duties and responsibilities. It is understood that these can change over time and often according to student/school needs.

The volunteer needs to know the activity objectives, how achieved, the parameters of the volunteers' involvement in the activity, and the reminder that, if they are unsure, they should ask.

Some guidelines to defining the elements of the role description are:

- The activities align with our Mission Statement and the School Improvement Plan.
- There are specific duties and responsibilities.
- The activities align with the volunteer's available time.
- There is a specific staff member who wishes to work with a volunteer.
- The activities do not take over the professional duties traditionally performed by paid staff.



- The activities provide volunteers with a sense of personal satisfaction and connection to the community.
- The volunteer is able to relate to the students.

NOTE: It may be appropriate and/or desirable that a volunteer work or not work with specific students (e.g., their own students, neighbours' students, specific preferences, skills or difficulties, age/gender fit). The reasons for these decisions should be reviewed with the volunteer.

TRAINING AND SUPPORT

Do provide these as required and according to the activities and responsibilities.

PERFORMANCE PROBLEMS

No one volunteers to do a bad job, but, you as a supervisor will occasionally be challenged by the performance of a volunteer. Though there are no specific laws or statutes conferring specific rights to volunteers and corresponding obligations or restrictions to employers, it is recommended that a due and fair process be followed in addressing problem areas.

The following reminders may be helpful:

- Volunteers require and deserve ongoing supervision.
- Volunteers require adequate orientation and training.
- Volunteers benefit from clear expectations, regular feedback, and discussion.
- Volunteers benefit from support and recognition.
- Are personalities or specific tasks the issue?
- Is reassignment possible?
- Are similar standards being applied to staff?
- If difficulties arise, follow due process, be sincere and forthright.
- Terminate if necessary. Ultimately, you are held responsible for the volunteer's actions.



OTHER PROCEDURES

It may be appropriate to provide volunteers, depending on their scope of activities, with information on the following:

- **Evacuation Procedures:** The response and evacuation procedures to be followed when a school receives a bomb threat, or other possible emergency.
- **Child Abuse:** The legal obligation of employees and volunteers to report suspected child abuse and the procedures for dealing with such incidents.
- **Emergency Weather Conditions:** Recommended action in the event of extreme weather conditions, such as snowstorms.
- **Field Trip Guidelines:** All aspects of the safe conduct of student on field trips, including issues of insurance and volunteer drivers.
- **Fire Drills:** The requirements of each school to have a fire safety plan.
- **Fire Hazards:** The precautions to be taken to control fire hazards, if applicable to the activity.
- **Oral Medication:** The guidelines that govern the administering of oral medication to students and procedures for the school.
- **Privileged Records:** The legal responsibility of the principal for the management of privileged, confidential information about students.

RECOGNITION

Volunteers give their time, energy, skills and resources because they wish to contribute to activities and objectives that they ultimately see as worthwhile. The activities engaged in and results achieved will provide some intrinsic reward and recognition. Some suggestions for acknowledgement by school staff are:

- Consideration (and implementation) of volunteer suggestions.
- Regular encouragement, praise, and appreciation.
- Acknowledgement of contributions through communication channels (e.g., school newsletter) and/or annual school events.
- Invitation to special school events (e.g., recognition assemblies).
- See **Appendix D – Ways to Recognize Volunteers** for more ideas.



POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES - VOLUNTEERS IN THE SCHOOL

There are a variety of tasks and duties, too numerous to list fully here, that volunteers may be asked to perform, depending on their interests, skills, abilities and time availability. **NOTE: All activities must be conducted under supervision.** Volunteers may be asked to **assist** in such activities as:

Instruction-Related Assistance

- Preparing manipulatives, under the direction of the teacher.
- Assisting groups with lessons taught by the teacher.
- Assisting the teacher in conducting group discussions.
- Acting as a presenter in an enrichment or topic of special interest.
- Reading aloud to small groups.
- Supervising student work areas.
- Assisting students with computers and other technology.

General Non-Instructional Assistance

- Obtaining learning resources and related equipment (e.g., books, i-books, LCD projectors).
- Arranging materials for lessons, as directed by the teacher.
- Setting up activity centres (e.g., reading or math areas), as directed by the teacher.
- Setting up, operating, and removing technology for presentations.
- Distributing and clearing away equipment.
- Organizing resource materials (e.g., items in the book room or library).
- Arranging and supervising games.
- Coaching school teams.
- Overseeing routine health tasks (e.g., guiding hand washing after art activities).
- Supporting with clean-up time.
- Organizing programs or assemblies.
- Supervising students on tours and field trips.
- Assisting young students with outdoor clothing.
- Putting up bulletin boards.



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- Serving on the Catholic School Advisory Council.
- Serving hot lunches (e.g., pizza, pasta).
- Raising and/or collecting funds.
- Preparing items for graduation or other large events.
- Designing school newsletters, slide shows, or multimedia presentations.

Promoting our Catholic Faith

Assisting students with prayer or faith-based activities, such as art projects, creating rosaries, or dramatizations (e.g., Stations of the Cross, Christmas story, Easter story).

- Promoting and providing education on parish ministries.
- Providing opportunities for Christian service.
- Promoting and providing education about social justice initiatives.

ADDRESSING STAFF CONCERNS ABOUT VOLUNTEERS

CONCERN	STRATEGIES
Volunteers take too much time to supervise.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">. recruit, select carefully. provide good orientation. work with a buddy. clarify expectations and roles. create good procedures and establish checkpoints
Professional standards are compromised because volunteers aren't trained. Students are at risk when volunteers deliver service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">. select volunteer assignments carefully. monitor to ensure assignment is appropriate. provide appropriate training and information. schedule regular meetings between staff and volunteers. ensure volunteers understand their rights and responsibility to ask for clarification when needed



CONCERN	STRATEGIES
Volunteers don't respect confidentiality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . do similar standards apply to staff? . make pledge of confidentiality a part of orientation . give examples of breaches of confidentiality . enforce the rules . terminate as warranted . be a role model for others
Volunteers are unreliable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . establish clear guidelines and expectations for attendance and cancellation . enforce rules when broken . address unacceptable behaviour . speak to the person immediately . terminate if a pattern emerges
You can't fire volunteers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . you can
Volunteers will replace paid employees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . be sure volunteers are used ethically . be sensitive to, and individually assess, specific issues and circumstances . ensure volunteer services enhance, not replace, services; replacement could constitute contracting out and could be in breach of legal obligations
Volunteers aren't committed to the students' welfare as I am – they just drop in at their own convenience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . ensure volunteers attend as expected/agreed to . involve staff in planning for how and when volunteers will be used . give staff opportunity for input on volunteer activities . involve staff in orientation and training . introduce staff to successful, committed volunteers . clarify volunteer roles/expectations . assign well-established volunteers to affirm the value of the program . allow staff to exercise their right to refuse a volunteer



Good relationships between staff and volunteers require some simple and inclusive maintenance:

- Give clear and complete instructions.
- Communicate: let people know how they are doing.
- Give credit when it is due.
- Involve people in decisions.
- Promote a sense of belonging and value for the volunteer.
- Apply similar standards of treatment for both staff and volunteers.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. CAN THE BOARD BE HELD LEGALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE WRONGFUL ACTS OF A VOLUNTEER TO A STUDENT?

Yes. The Board has a duty to ensure that volunteers who interact with students have adequate knowledge or training. The volunteer, in turn, has a duty to provide a reasonable standard of service in performing volunteer activities. No task should be undertaken without the authorization of the volunteer's supervisor.

2. ARE VOLUNTEERS BOUND BY LEGISLATION GOVERNING THE INSTITUTION?

Yes. All those working within an institution, either for paid or on a voluntary basis, are governed to a varying degree by relevant legislation and regulations, as well as any policies and practices.

3. ARE VOLUNTEERS PERMITTED TO SEE STUDENT ACADEMIC RECORDS?

No. Volunteers may be provided information related to student records depending on the activities being performed; however, access to written student records would be a breach of confidentiality.

4. SHOULD VOLUNTEERS REPORT INCIDENTS AND ACCIDENTS?

Yes. The failure to report an incident or accident with injury to a person or damage to property (or the potential of same) could have legal implications for the Board.



5. WILL VOLUNTEERS BE PROTECTED FROM UNFOUNDED OR MALICIOUS COMPLAINTS OR ACCUSATIONS?

Yes. The Board will take all reasonable measures to investigate and resolve such issues. To do so is in everyone's best interests.

6. ARE VOLUNTEERS PROTECTED AGAINST ACCIDENT AND INJURY?

Yes. As required under the Education Act, volunteers are insured under the Board's Group Accident Insurance Policy, providing they are acting in good faith and in a reasonable manner.

7. ARE VOLUNTEER DRIVERS PROTECTED AGAINST LIABILITY ISSUES?

Yes. For volunteer drivers, the school board policy provides excess liability insurance over and above the owner's primary insurance.

*The above questions and answers should be considered seriously by all volunteers. Basically, you should be aware of the fact that **you are not to perform any duties unless you have received proper training and know the scope of your duty**, or unless in an unusual situation, you have been instructed by a staff person. **Never do anything of which you are not sure; always ask.***



APPENDIX A

RISK ANALYSIS GUIDELINES

The Board and its employees have a **high duty of care under the Education Act**. Though certain duties and responsibilities can be delegated to volunteers, **Board employees cannot divest themselves of this duty of care.**

1. Assess the risk involved with this **particular student or student group**. For example:
 - No student involved or present
 - High school vs. intermediate vs. primary
 - Students with special needs
2. Assess the risk involved with this **particular type of activity**. For example:
 - Art-work – helping teacher vs. helping student
 - Reading with one student vs. a group of students
 - Coaching
 - Chaperoning
 - One-time short-term event vs. infrequent different activities vs. regular repeated activity vs. one-time long-term event
3. Assess the risk involved with this **particular setting**. For example:
 - In school, others present or not
 - Out of school, others present or not
 - Out of city, others present or not
4. Assess the risk based on the **nature and extent of supervision**. For example:
 - Supervisor almost always there
 - Sporadic supervision
 - Little or no supervision during most of the activity
5. Assess where the candidate is within the **police record check process**.



6. Apply the **Reasonable or Prudent Person Test/Standard**. Consider the degree or level of care that a person of average skill, judgement, memory and experience would take in a given set of circumstances
7. **Assess the risk on an ongoing basis** and act accordingly. The duty of care is ongoing, and any change in circumstances should be assessed accordingly.
8. A volunteer's **negligence** may account for or result in an accident and unintentional harm, but it is not an excuse, in the eyes of the student, the family, or the law.
9. When in **doubt – consult**.



APPENDIX B

ORIENTATION CHECKLIST – PRINCIPAL

A comprehensive orientation would include the following

- ☐ A complete review of the Volunteer Manual, including Mission Statement
- ☐ Review of school specific information:
 - Site plan
 - School handbook
 - Code of conduct
 - Safety plan / evacuation procedure
 - Medication
 - Confidentiality
 - Other information relevant to the activity
- ☐ A review of the following:
 - Role description
 - Schedule, absence, sign-in procedures
 - Training and support
 - Recognition
 - Evaluation

Criminal Record Check (copy kept on file)

Child Abuse Reporting

- ☐ Questions of Volunteers
- ☐ Other _____



APPENDIX C

ORIENTATION CHECKLIST – TEACHER

When you meet your volunteer:

- ❑ Introduce yourself and show the volunteer around your teaching / working area.
- ❑ Discuss the days and times that the volunteer will be working with you.
- ❑ Discuss the communication procedures with the volunteer (e.g., regular conferences, importance of calls if absent, notes in mailbox).
- ❑ Discuss plans for occasions when a substitute teacher will be in charge of the volunteer's activities.
- ❑ Decide on the name that students are to use in addressing the volunteer; this is especially important for student volunteers who may wish to be called by their first names.
- ❑ Talk about your own expected procedures and any rules for student behaviour, emergency procedures, and schedules.
- ❑ Indicate how you will inform the volunteer of the daily assignment or tasks to be completed (e.g., folder, note, brief meeting).
- ❑ Decide with the volunteer when to start and discuss the initial tasks or expectations.
- ❑ Share helpful hints with the volunteer such as:
 - Listen to what the students are saying in order to understand their level of development.
 - Present information or directions in a way that encourages students to seek clarification or ask questions.
 - Provide students with simple, direct explanations, illustrations or instructions.
 - Allow for further explanation, illustration or demonstration by making minor changes to the presentation method.
 - Seek the assistance of the teacher if the student seems confused, perplexed or unable to demonstrate understanding.
 - Ask if you're unsure of anything.
 - Other information as determined by yourself and/or Principal/Supervisor.



APPENDIX D

WAYS TO RECOGNIZE VOLUNTEERS

As a Catholic learning community, we are dedicated to excellence in education and desire to live the values of Jesus. In doing so, we are called to affirm, reverence, and respect each person as a Child of God. Those who commit themselves to service to our school communities are to be applauded for their generosity and commitment. Remember to honour and recognize those who serve our school communities. Below are some simple ways to do so.

- ☐ Be pleasant, courteous, and smile.
- ☐ Greet them by name in the morning, during the day, and at the end of the day.
- ☐ Put up a volunteer suggestion box.
- ☐ Treat them to refreshments (e.g., coffee and cake).
- ☐ Reimburse them for assignment-related expenses.
- ☐ Ask them for a verbal update on how things are going.
- ☐ Send them a birthday or other greeting card.
- ☐ Give them service certificates or plaques.
- ☐ Plan annual recognition occasions, such as receptions, luncheons, or social events.
- ☐ Post a volunteers' honour roll in your building's reception area.
- ☐ Respect their wishes, preferences, individuality, and sensitivities.
- ☐ Provide them with pertinent information and take time to explain it to them.
- ☐ Keep challenging them.
- ☐ Provide good pre-service training.
- ☐ Help develop their self-confidence.
- ☐ Give them additional responsibilities.
- ☐ Invite them to participate in team planning sessions.
- ☐ Enable them to grow on the job.
- ☐ Enable them to grow out of the job.
- ☐ Send newsworthy information about their work to the media.
- ☐ Create pleasant surroundings.
- ☐ Welcome them to coffee breaks.
- ☐ Enlist them to train other volunteers.



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- ❑ Take time to talk to them.
- ❑ Make good plans and thorough pre-arrangements.
- ❑ Recommend them to prospective employers.
- ❑ Provide opportunities to attend workshops or professional learning sessions.
- ❑ Write them thank-you notes.
- ❑ Celebrate their outstanding projects and achievements.
- ❑ Nominate them for a volunteer award.
- ❑ Provide them with useful tools in good working condition.
- ❑ Be a real person.
- ❑ Instigate happy surprises.
- ❑ Promote a “Volunteer of the Month” space.
- ❑ Plan a “Recognition Edition” of the school newsletter.
- ❑ Say, “We missed you.”
- ❑ Maintain safe working conditions.
- ❑ Award special citations for extraordinary achievements.