

AP 300.3: Volunteers

1. Definitions

“Parent or guardian” means a parent or guardian, as defined in the School Act

A volunteer is a parent, guardian 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.

This policy does not apply to students or to school staff members who volunteer.

2. The Role of Volunteers and Relationships with School Staff

- 2.1. Volunteers must not be used to provide services that would normally be provided by an employee.
- 2.2. Volunteers should function as complementary extensions of the staff responsible for the teaching/learning situation; they should not undertake tasks that require them to make program 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.

3. Staff Responsibilities for Volunteers and Volunteer Programs

3.1. General

- 3.1.1. Recruitment, selection, assignment and training of volunteers will be done at the local school level. Interested individuals should contact the local school Principal or designate. District-wide protocols and forms shall be used.
- 3.1.2. The Principal, or designate, shall be responsible for:
- 3.1.3. Defining tasks assigned to volunteers, in general terms, in consultation with the supervising staff member(s).
- 3.1.4. Screening, selection and interviewing where necessary, of volunteers and specific assignments.
- 3.1.5. Orientation and training of volunteers.
- 3.1.6. Decisions regarding the continuation or discontinuation of a volunteer’s services or a volunteer-based program.
- 3.1.7. Overall supervision of volunteers and arranging for specific supervision of volunteers.

- 3.1.8. Discussion with all staff, volunteers and the school's Parent Advisory Council of the Board policy on volunteers in schools.
- 3.1.9. Handling complaints from volunteers.
- 3.1.10. The Principal may delegate to individual staff members the responsibility for assigning tasks to volunteers and monitoring their performance.
- 3.1.11. Activities within a classroom shall be coordinated and be under the direction of the classroom teacher. Activities outside a classroom shall be coordinated with and be under the direction of the supervising staff member. The supervising staff member (teacher or other) shall determine the specific tasks assigned to a volunteer.

3.2. Approval of New Volunteer Functions or Programs Relating to Program Delivery

The Principal will advise the Superintendent, or designate, of any new program delivery initiatives that are to be of an ongoing nature and dependent on volunteer support. The Superintendent, or designate, will initiate appropriate communication with Unions representing employees prior to the start of the program.

3.3. Screening, Selection and Assignments

- 3.3.1. All volunteers must complete a School Volunteer Information/Application Form, including a release to allow reference checks to be conducted.
- 3.3.2. The Principal or designate should review the information/application in light of the School Volunteers Screening Checklist 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.
- 3.3.3. All volunteers are required to undergo a criminal records check, if necessary.
- 3.3.4. Notwithstanding 3.3.1 or 3.3.3, volunteers who participate in large single type events such as spring teas, graduations, fairs etc., do not need to complete a School Volunteer Information/Application Form, or undergo a criminal record check.
- 3.3.5. When a volunteer will not be under the direct supervision of a teacher or Principal or Vice-Principal and will have regular and ongoing involvement with students, an interview and reference checks may be carried out.
- 3.3.6. The Principal may waive an interview and/or reference check where he/she deems it unnecessary. (e.g., the applicant has been otherwise screened such as for a Block Parent Program.)
- 3.3.7. The School District will pay the costs of a criminal records check where a fee is charged.

- 3.3.8. Should a criminal record search 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.
- 3.3.9. Interviews, reference checks and criminal record checks shall be documented.
- 3.3.10. All information obtained through the application forms and interview is to be treated as confidential, and kept on file at the school or Board office.
- 3.3.11. A volunteer's services may be terminated at the discretion of the Principal or Superintendent.

3.4. Orientation

- 3.4.1. An orientation program for volunteers should be conducted by the Principal or designate, when needed. The orientation process should include:
 - 1. A general orientation to the school.
 - 2. Processes of signing in by volunteers.
 - 3. Staff responsibilities with respect to volunteers.
 - 4. Review of school confidentiality protocol.
 - 5. Confidentiality requirements for volunteers.
 - 6. Emergency procedures, including emergency evacuation.
 - 7. School code of conduct and relevant District policies, including: anti-discrimination and harassment policies; overview of the special programs and/or services at the school; review of applicable collective agreement provisions; accident procedures, including reporting of incidents; school calendar.
- 3.4.2. The supervising staff member shall provide any necessary supervision or direction specific to the volunteer's tasks, with particular attention to procedures relating to the safety of students.
- 3.4.3. 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/guardian or of the student, if of appropriate age and capacity. If there is no consent, the volunteer must not work with the student.

3.5. Supervision and Monitoring

3.5.1. Volunteers are visitors and must report to the office on arrival at the school, unless other arrangements have been made or approved by the Principal or designate.

3.5.2. Schools will maintain a list of volunteers and a log book to record the date, name and activity engaged in by the volunteer.

3.6. Notification of Parents/Guardians

Principals or supervising staff members will inform parents/guardians when their child is working on a regular basis as an individual or on a group basis with a volunteer.

4. Conduct of Volunteers

4.1. Volunteers are required to:

1. Meet all the criteria of conduct and deportment required of School District staff, including the District harassment and non-discrimination policies.
2. Not be under the influence of or in possession of illicit drugs or alcohol while students are under their care, while on school property, at school-sponsored functions, on extra-curricular trips or at any activities involving students.
3. Maintain confidentiality and keep all information received and observations made about students, families and staff within the confines of the school.
4. Have no access to student records.
5. Direct all questions and concerns through District protocols.
6. Comply with all relevant and applicable legislation, including the Human Rights Code.

4.2. Complaints about volunteers will be handled by the school Principal, or designate.

5. Annual Review

The Principal, or designate, will review the school's volunteer programs with the Parent Advisory Council and the School Planning Council at the beginning of each school year.

6. Approval of Volunteer Support in Areas Normally Handled by CUPE Personnel

6.1. Initiatives that require volunteer support in areas of maintenance or construction work normally performed by CUPE personnel (e.g., construction of playground equipment) will be communicated to the Secretary-Treasurer who will initiate appropriate communication with the CUPE Executive.

6.1.1. A detailed plan, including a sketch of the proposed project, showing location on the school site (if applicable) is to be forwarded to the Secretary-Treasurer.

- 6.1.2. The project will be reviewed by the District Safety Officer and Maintenance personnel to ensure safety of the students and no potential interference with maintenance of buildings and grounds or to underground services.
 - 6.1.3. The project, after being reviewed by the District Safety Officer and Maintenance personnel, will be returned to the Secretary-Treasurer for review with the Union Executive for their support.
 - 6.1.4. In all cases, the project will be supervised by an appropriate District Maintenance worker that will be provided by the District.
- 6.2. Initiatives requiring volunteer support in all other areas of work normally performed by CUPE personnel will be communicated to the Secretary-Treasurer who will initiate appropriate communication with the CUPE Executive.

7. Liability, Insurance and Expenses

- 7.1. Claims (other than for libel or slander) against volunteers for damages or acts or omissions in providing volunteer services for the Board are barred by the School Act, except where the volunteer has been guilty of dishonesty, gross negligence, and/or malicious or willful misconduct. The Board's liability insurance coverage applies to volunteers in the same way as it does to employees.
- 7.2. 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.
- 7.3. No honorarium or fee for services may be paid to volunteers. Volunteers may be reimbursed for expenses approved by the Principal.