



YORK REGION DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Policy #280.0, Volunteers in our Schools

The York Region District School Board welcomes volunteers in all schools. Volunteers, as education partners, provide a valuable service to students and schools in support of board priorities including, student achievement, equity and well-being. Volunteers bring their skills and talents and support positive communication between the school, parents and the community. Volunteers are representative of the diversity of our communities and they enrich schools and workplaces with their interests and experiences. The Board recognizes that principals and school staff play a key role in welcoming and supporting volunteers in the school.

Who has responsibilities?

- Board of Trustees
- Director of Education
- Superintendents of Education
- Principals
- Staff
- Volunteers

How is this policy and/or procedure related to Board priorities?

This policy and procedure supports the promotion of staff and student well-being through safe, caring and supportive schools and workplaces.

Legislative Context

[Education Act](#)

[Police Record Checks Reform Act](#)

[Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act](#)

Department

Education and Community Services

Human Resource Services

Related Documents

[Caring and Safe Schools](#)

[Conflict of Interest](#)

[Equity and Inclusivity](#)

[Field Trips](#)

[Human Rights: Code Related Harassment and Discrimination](#)

[Information Access and Privacy Protection](#)

[School Fundraising and Administration of School Generated Funds](#)

[Standards of Conduct](#)

[Use of Technology](#)

[Use of Private Motor Vehicles for Student Transportation](#)

[YRDSB Volunteer Handbook](#)

[Volunteer Confidentiality Agreement](#)

[Safety Orientation Checklist for Volunteers](#)

It is the expectation of the York Region District School Board that all employees, students and persons invited to or visiting Board property; or partaking/volunteering in Board or school-sponsored events and activities will respect the policies and procedures of the Board. The term "parents" refers to both parents and guardians in all Board policies and procedures.



Board Policy #280.0 Volunteers in our Schools

Policy Statement

The York Region District School Board welcomes volunteers in all schools. Volunteers, as education partners, provide a valuable service to students and schools in support of Board priorities including, student achievement, equity and well-being. Volunteers bring their skills and talents and support positive communication between the school, parents and the community. Volunteers are representative of the diversity of our communities and they enrich schools and workplaces with their interests and experiences. The Board recognizes that principals and school staff play a key role in welcoming and supporting volunteers in the school.

Application

This policy and its related procedure address the engagement of volunteers and outlines the responsibilities of the administrators, staff and volunteers while upholding the safety of students.

This policy does not apply to student teachers completing the requirements of graduation from an accredited Faculty of Education or York Region District School Board students engaged in Cooperative Education placements.

Volunteers shall not be involved in the evaluation of students, school personnel or program. In accordance with the [Municipal Freedom and Protection of Privacy Act](#), volunteers must maintain confidentiality with respect to personal information regarding students, their families, or staff, except as required to perform their duties and maintain staff and student safety.

Responsibilities

The Board of Trustees is responsible for:

- reviewing the Volunteers in our Schools policy in accordance with the priorities in the [Multi-Year Plan](#) and the approved policy review cycle; and
- understanding and communicating with members of the community about the Volunteers in our Schools policy, as required.

The Director of Education is responsible for:

- implementing and operationalizing the Volunteers in our Schools policy.

Definitions

Volunteer

An individual who agrees to undertake, without pay, a designated task that is compliant with current legislative requirements and collective agreements. Volunteers support a classroom, school or system-wide program under the ultimate responsibility of the principal at the school level. Volunteers are optional, the use of whom reflects decisions made at the school level.

History

Approved: 2001

Working Document: July 2012, November 2017

Revised: 2007, April 2013, July 2018



Board Procedure #280.0 Volunteers in our Schools

This procedure outlines the roles and responsibilities for the effective engagement of volunteers in schools in a manner which is compliant with legislative requirements and collective agreements, and which ensures that volunteers are able to add value to the education of students within a safe and respectful workplace and learning environment.

Application of Procedure

Volunteers foster a strong school and community partnership and support learning opportunities for students. This procedure applies to any person, including staff, who are engaged in school related activities on a voluntary basis and outlines the use of the appropriate [Vulnerable Sector Screening](#) and [Annual Offence Declaration](#) checks for staff and volunteers in our schools.

A vulnerable sector screening may provide the following information:

- criminal record (adult and/or young offender, including summary offences);
- outstanding charges;
- probation, prohibition and other judicial orders which are in effect;
- convictions/pending charges under [Child and Family Services Act](#); and
- suspect/culprit information, where the release of such will not hinder any ongoing investigation.

Definitions

Confidentiality Agreement

A legal agreement between two or more parties that is used to signify that a confidential relationship exists between the parties.

A volunteer signs a [Confidentiality Agreement](#) to indicate their consent to keep confidential any information related to the staff and/or students in the school.

Police Vulnerable Sector Screening

A background check completed by the police and is required of individuals who intend on working or volunteering with the vulnerable sector.

Vulnerable Person

A person who, because of their age, a disability, or other circumstances, whether temporary or permanent is;

- (a) in a position of dependence on others, or
- (b) otherwise at a greater risk than the general population of being harmed by a person in a position of authority or trust relative to them.

Annual Offence Declaration

The [Annual Offence Declaration](#) form requires that volunteers list any convictions for offences under the Criminal Records Act (Canada) up to the date of the declaration. This form is required for existing staff and volunteers annually at the beginning of each school year.

Responsibilities

The Director of Education shall:

- allocate staff and resources to support the Volunteers in our Schools procedure.

The Director of Education, Associate Director(s), Coordinating Superintendent(s) and Superintendent(s) of Education shall:

- support and provide system direction in the application of the Volunteers in our Schools policy and related procedure.

Superintendents of Education shall:

- support principals in the processes associated with volunteer selection and supervision.

Principals shall:

- **with regard to the recruitment and selection of volunteers;**
 - determine volunteer needs for the school in consultation with staff,
 - inform the community of volunteer opportunities and the school's orientation process through a variety of means, such as but not limited to, newsletters, school council meetings, meet-the-teacher and curriculum evenings, school website, workshops for volunteers, school handbooks, use of multi-language services,
 - encourage volunteer participation that is representative of the diversity of our school communities,
 - request and verify references, as required and
 - make arrangements to give volunteers an orientation to the relevant school and Board policies and procedures and to the role, responsibilities and expectations of volunteers;
- **with regard to screening volunteers;**
 - ensure that volunteers comply with Board requirements with respect to Police Vulnerable Sector Screenings and Annual Offence Declarations, as directed in the Vulnerable Sector Screening Board memo,
 - Individuals bear the cost for the Vulnerable Sector Screening. On a case-by-case basis and through consultation with administration, the cost may be covered by the school;
 - review any exception to the requirement for a Police Vulnerable Sector Screening with the Superintendent
 - require volunteers to sign a [Confidentiality Agreement](#),
 - store Confidentiality Agreements, [Annual Offence Declarations](#) and Police Vulnerable Sector Screenings in a secure place in the school office, and
 - contact the superintendent of education regarding the involvement or use of a volunteer if information gathered during the screening process indicates a concern;
- **with regard to assigning and training volunteers;**
 - arrange an orientation to the school,
 - ensure the specific roles and responsibilities are clear,
 - ensure volunteers are aware of the [YRDSB Volunteer Handbook](#) and that it is reviewed, as required
 - share relevant school and Board policies, procedures and protocols, including but not limited to [Safety Orientation Checklist for Volunteers](#), school evacuation, first aid, and working with students who present a risk of injury,
 - ensure that volunteers are not assigned sole responsibility for the supervision of students or activities,
 - consider the suitability of the placement of a volunteer in a classroom with the volunteer's own child,
 - ensure staff are aware of their duties to support and supervise the work of volunteers in schools, as outlined in the YRDSB Volunteer Handbook, and

- ensure that volunteers are aware of the expectations related to the appropriate use of technology and social media with respect to students and school activities.
- **with regard to the supervision of volunteers;**
 - provide appropriate feedback, including, but not limited to, affirmations, thanks, recognition at assemblies, for the work that the volunteer has done within the school community;
 - ensure that volunteers do not have access to confidential student information, including but not limited to, Ontario Student Records,
 - ensure volunteers are compliant with relevant school and Board policies, procedures and protocols,
 - address any performance or staff concerns, including those with respect to confidentiality, liability and supervision-related issues, and
 - determine whether a change in volunteer assignment or a decision to terminate volunteer activity is necessary.

Staff shall:

- **support volunteers by:**
 - welcoming them as a support to the school and staff,
 - ensuring volunteers are aware of the [YRDSB Volunteer Handbook](#) and that it is reviewed, as required
 - providing appropriate feedback, including but not limited to, affirmations, thanks, recognition at assemblies, for the work that the volunteer has done within the school community,
 - providing a visible, well-trafficked area for volunteers to work with students where required, such as, but not limited to, the Learning Resource Centre, a hallway just outside a classroom or a room with glass windows and an open door,
 - reminding volunteers to use the adult facilities not the student facilities, such as but not limited to, staff change rooms and washrooms, and
 - bringing to the principal's attention for discussion and follow-up any difficulties with the work or behaviour of a volunteer in the school.
- **understand and take reasonable measures to ensure that volunteers;**
 - do not assume any responsibility for the diagnosis of learning strengths or difficulties, the assignment of program, or the assessment and evaluation of pupil progress,
 - are not put into compromising, one-on-one situations with students or in situations where a staff member is not immediately available,
 - maintain confidentiality in accordance with the signed Confidentiality Agreement,
 - are aware of the expectations related to the appropriate use of technology and social media with respect to students and school activities,
 - are provided with appropriate feedback to support them in the performance of assigned duties,
 - maintain confidentiality of information related to matters concerning students and staff, and
 - are not solely responsible for the supervision of students.

Volunteers shall:

- **understand that they;**
 - must review the [YRDSB Volunteer Handbook](#), as available on the Board's website,
 - must comply with all Board requirements regarding Police Vulnerable Sector Screenings and confidentiality,
 - are assigned appropriately in order to support staff in their provision and supervision of school activities and programs,
 - enhance and support student and school activities at the request and under the supervision of Board staff, and the principal in particular,
 - must work with a designated staff member in certain types of activities which require particular training and education in order to protect students, volunteers and staff,
 - must participate in any training or orientation sessions offered to volunteers in the school that would assist them in their role as volunteers,

- must be aware of the school's expectations for appropriate conduct and demeanor when interacting with staff and students, and comply with the Board's [Standards of Conduct](#) policy and procedure and [Human Rights: Code Related Harassment and Discrimination](#) policy and procedure,
 - must follow the [Use of Private Motor Vehicles for Student Transportation](#) procedure and use the related [Trip Driver Authorization](#) form, where applicable;
 - must avoid potentially compromising situations with students, such as, but not limited to, one-on-one situations or working with students in isolated areas,
 - must be aware that confidentiality is essential since in their roles, they may come to know sensitive information, such as, but not limited to, a student's academic ability, relationship with others, behaviour, and
 - are not responsible for disciplining students.
- **when volunteering;**
 - report their presence in the school to the office, prior to beginning each volunteer activity,
 - wear identification as outlined by the school to help identify volunteers to staff and students,
 - maintain confidentiality of personal and/or private information at all times,
 - not assume responsibility for the diagnosis of learning strengths or difficulties, or the assessment, evaluation and communication of student learning and achievement,
 - speak to the student's teacher or the principal (if the teacher is not available) about concerns related to a student's behaviour,
 - let the school know when they are going to be absent from or late for a commitment to volunteer at a particular time, and
 - if experiencing difficulty in carrying out assigned duties, bring the concern to the teacher supervisor and/or to the principal, as appropriate.

History

Approved: September 2003

Working Document July 2012, November 2017

Revised 2007, February 2011, April 2013, July 2018