

Procedure Title	Volunteer Program		
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Revision Dates	October 2, 2002; March 20, 2013; November 15, 2023	Related Forms	AF 7330; AF 7331
Review Date		Originator	Administrative Council
References			
AP 7381-D "Volunteers Screening Procedure (Sensitive Positions)"; AP 1435-D "Accessibility Standards for Information and Communication"; Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), 2005; AP 2101-D "Access to Board Premises"; AP 6850-D "Duty to Report - Child Maltreatment (Suspected)"			

1.0 RATIONALE

- 1.1 Volunteers are a valuable asset to Bluewater District School Board. This procedure defines the purpose of volunteers in the system.
- 1.2 A volunteer is a person who freely chooses to do school-related work under the supervision of the school administrator or designate.
- 1.3 Volunteers who are parents, guardians, and community members are welcomed into our schools and provide valued assistance to students and staff in many ways, i.e., field trip helpers, fundraising campaigns.
- 1.4 The personal interests, background, and commitment of volunteers enhance the programs, services, and educational opportunities for our students.
- 1.5 Volunteers are valued partners to foster interaction and cooperation between and among the school, parents/guardians, and the school community for the benefit of students. At the same time, volunteers gain valuable experience, personal growth, and satisfaction.
- 1.6 It is understood that a volunteer is a person who serves without remuneration. Co-operative education students are not defined as volunteers.

2.0 SYSTEM EXPECTATIONS

Bluewater District School Board expects that school administrators adhere to the following procedures when supporting school programs with volunteers.

- 2.1 The school administrator is responsible, subject to existing guidelines, for:
 - a) determining the volunteer needs for the school;
 - b) the recruitment, selection, and screening of volunteers;
 - c) approving and delineating the tasks and the assignment of the volunteers;
 - d) the training and orientation of the volunteers;
 - e) providing supervision and feedback to volunteers;
 - f) the evaluation of the volunteer program; and
 - g) the recognition of the volunteers.
- 2.2 A school coordinator may be designated in each school by the school administrator to act as direct supervisor.

- 2.3 A volunteer is covered by the board's liability insurance while working within the scope of their duties for the board. This insurance protects a volunteer who may be named in a lawsuit arising out of an injury to a student.

3.0 GUIDELINES FOR ADMINISTRATORS/COORDINATORS OF VOLUNTEERS

3.1 DETERMINING VOLUNTEER NEEDS

School administrators should consult with school staff at the beginning of the school year to determine the needs of the school, preferences, and tasks/assignments which could be supported with a volunteer.

3.2 RECRUITMENT, SCREENING AND SELECTION

3.2.1 Recruitment

A communication will be sent out to parents/guardians of each school regarding the school volunteer program in Bluewater District School Board in their school.

3.2.2 Screening

- a) Depth and degree of screening by school administrator and/or school coordinator will be dependent on volunteering activity, the extent of interaction with and responsibility for students, and the degree of "sensitivity of position" of the volunteer.
- b) A "sensitive position" is one that involves working with a student unsupervised by a school administrator or a member of the teaching staff.
- c) The school administrator should implement a formalized screening process for overnight or one day excursions or involvement with athletic teams.
- d) Components of screening volunteers will include:
 - i. brief interview;
 - ii. completion of standard registration form to be used system wide;
 - iii. provision of personal references upon request of the school administrator or designate; and
 - iv. volunteers in "Sensitive Positions" are required to complete a criminal background check as per procedure AP 7381-D.

3.2.3 Selection

- a) In selecting a volunteer, administrators will be considering at least some of the following selection criteria:
 - a) skills, knowledge, values;
 - b) background experiences i.e., work, community, personal;
 - c) results and impressions; and
 - d) references.
- b) The school administrator, in consultation with the staff receiving the volunteer, should determine the best "fit" in placing the volunteer. Generally, a parent/guardian is not placed as a volunteer with their own children.
- c) **The school administrator retains the authority to accept or decline any volunteer's offer of service.**

3.3 APPROVING AND DELINEATING THE TASK/ASSIGNMENT

- 3.3.1 The school administrator and staff, when developing the needs inventory of the school, will clearly define and describe the tasks (job description) and expectations for the volunteers. The direct supervision relationship for the volunteer will also be clarified.

3.3.2 Volunteers will demonstrate a clear understanding of their activities, duties, responsibilities, rights, and the parameters of their involvement. This may be in the form of a job description or consist of simple explanatory notes or verbal instructions at the time of the activity.

3.3.3 Volunteers should be made aware of health and safety issues, accessibility, confidentiality, legal liability, their duty to report suspected child maltreatment (AP 6850-D), and emergency procedures e.g., fire drills.

3.4 TRAINING AND ORIENTATION

3.4.1 All volunteers need to be properly welcomed and provided with essential information. A tour of the school and introduction to staff is helpful and thoughtful, especially for new volunteers.

3.4.2 Training related to the role will be provided as appropriate. AODA training is mandatory and must be documented.

3.4.3 In accordance with AP 2101-D “Access to Board Premises”, the school administrator must establish and implement a practice to ensure that volunteers are easily identified. Volunteers will wear an identification tag or button that makes them known to students and staff. This identification tag will be picked up at the school office upon arrival when the volunteer signs-in and be dropped off when the volunteer signs-out when leaving the school.

3.5 SUPERVISION AND REVIEW

3.5.1 The school administrator is ultimately responsible for the actions and activities of any volunteer within the school or working with students in co-curricular/extra-curricular activities. This includes the supervision of the volunteers.

3.5.2 Many volunteers will be more directly supervised by another school staff member.

3.5.3 It is essential to monitor the activities of individual volunteers to regularly provide them with feedback.

3.5.4 Volunteers may request a reference for employment interviews or post secondary school admission.

3.6 REVIEW OF THE VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

3.6.1 Periodic monitoring and review of the overall volunteer program is necessary to measure its success and to provide direction necessary for ongoing success.

3.6.2 An annual audit or year end review/evaluation of the volunteer program may be undertaken as well as a mid-year check of operating plans and objectives. Input from participating volunteers and staff would be most helpful in a review of the volunteer program and planning for the next school year.

3.7 RECOGNITION OF VOLUNTEERS

3.7.1 Volunteers give their time, energy, skills, and resources. They provide a vital link with the school community. Their efforts and assistance must be recognized.

3.7.2 The type of recognition may vary from school to school. Some suggestions are:

- a) encouragement, praise, and thanks on a regular basis
- b) acknowledging contributions through the school newsletter
- c) annual school recognition assembly, event, luncheon, etc.
- d) invitation to special school events
- e) providing reference letters, if requested