

FORM F498-2	
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INFORMATION FOR VOLUNTEERS

VOLUNTEER CONTRIBUTIONS

Parents, guardians and community members are welcome as volunteers in district schools. They can 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. Volunteers are valued education partners who foster interaction and co-operation among the home, school and wider community.

What Can School Volunteers Do?

- Supervise on school excursions.
- Supervise on special activity days (fun fairs, fund raising, food days, etc.)
- Provide general classroom support.
- Provide specific support in the library, office or other areas of the school.
- Assist in Food for Learning programs.
- Coach/assist with school teams, music, drama.
- Become a school council representative, a board or school committee representative.
- Provide career education by mentoring, doing presentations, conducting discussions or interviews.
- Pediculosis (head lice) screening.
- Be a volunteer driver for excursions.
- Support school clubs.

RECRUITMENT AND SCREENING

The recruitment process is aimed at filling the needs identified by the principal in consultation with the staff and school council, while drawing upon the strengths of interested potential volunteers. All involved have a high duty of care under the *Education Act* and certain duties cannot be given to volunteers. An invitation should be extended to parents/guardians to volunteer in their schools. The principal in consultation with staff should determine the best fit for a volunteer. Generally it is not recommended to place a parent in the same classroom as his/her child.

A Volunteer Application, Form F498-1 can be obtained from the school office. When parents or guardians who wish to volunteer in their home school are well known within the school community the principal, in consultation with staff, may screen and approve the volunteer candidate.

All volunteers will require a vulnerable sector check. The required vulnerable sector check form for the local police authority can be obtained from the school office. Once an acceptable vulnerable sector check is on file with the school, the principal shall use Form F498-2 to collect an annual offence declaration from the volunteer if he/she continues to volunteer at the school.

Existing volunteers who have a vulnerable sector check on file at the school that is more than two years old and who have not completed an annual offence declaration will be required to obtain a new vulnerable sector check and then may file an offence declaration with the school annually thereafter.

The principal retains the authority to accept or decline any volunteer's offer of service without appeal and to halt, without appeal, volunteer activity.

VOLUNTEER EXPECTATIONS

Volunteers must be made aware of confidentiality of information, health and safety processes, legal liability, procedures for reporting suspected child abuse, and school emergency procedures. 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 Board Code of Conduct and the School Code of Conduct. The above information will be provided to you as part of your orientation.

In order to be successful as a volunteer you should:

- Follow the procedures of your assigned school. The principal has ultimate responsibility for all procedures, programs and personnel in his/her school, including volunteers.
- Be a supportive team player. Remember that volunteers are in the schools to supplement, not replace, the roles of paid staff and to act in a cooperative manner.
- Demonstrate a non-judgmental, positive and caring attitude toward students and staff. In the community, be a positive advocate for Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board.
- Follow instructions of supervising staff closely. Work with those staff members to whom you have been assigned. Work only with pupils referred to you by staff, at times and in locations where staff support is available. Notify staff if changes occur.
- Seek guidance and support from staff if directions are not clear or other difficulties arise and be available for discussion with supervising staff at mutually convenient times.
- Understand that all volunteer assignments commence on a trial basis and staff or the volunteer may request changes.
- Be reliable. Accepting a school volunteer assignment means a regular commitment to be there promptly, and on schedule. If an absence is unavoidable, please notify the school in advance.
- Be aware that the school is responsible only for those contacts arranged by the school. Any additional contact is a personal responsibility that must include guardian/parental consent.
- Adhere to Board and School Codes of Conduct. A copy of these documents can be obtained from the school office.
- Model the Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board Growing With Character Attributes:
 - a) **Caring** - We demonstrate concern for self and others.
 - b) **Co-operation** - We work as a team for a common good.
 - c) **Honesty** - We choose to live truthfully.
 - d) **Humour** - We celebrate the fun in life.
 - e) **Integrity** - We do what is right for ourselves and others.
 - f) **Respect** - We value ourselves, others and our environment.
 - g) **Responsibility** - We have a sense of duty to fulfill commitments.
 - h) **Trustworthiness** - We can be counted on to do what is right.

CONFIDENTIALITY

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 environment.

The proper use of privileged information is very important in a school setting. It protects the students and staff and at the same time 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. The volunteer should also refrain from expressing opinions that would cause harm to the reputation of staff or pupils.

Volunteers are not allowed to have access to student's records for any reason. Under no circumstances will a volunteer be given such personal information as home phone numbers, addresses, birth dates, without the consent of the parent/guardian or student who is sixteen or older. Volunteers who are specifically assigned to assist administration and/or office staff may need to have access to some personal information. This is permissible only if there is staff member directly supervising the volunteer.

The volunteer will be privy to only that personal information which they need 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 information and seek guidance from the principal if clarification is needed as to what information is permissible to share with the volunteer.

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. There is nothing wrong with the volunteers possessing such knowledge or personal opinions. However, 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 each pupil or professional.

If a concern or inquiry arises, the volunteer should speak with the appropriate supervising staff member in a timely manner. Should further assistance be required, the staff member and volunteer should speak with the principal in a timely manner.

A volunteer has every right to expect that his or her participation will be treated with the same confidentiality and respect.

DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE

The board, in partnership with other local school boards and the Hastings Children's Aid Society have developed a thorough Procedural and Information Guide regarding child abuse reporting. A copy of the Reporting Child Abuse Procedural and Information Guide is available at the school office. Volunteers will be informed in their orientation by the principal regarding the process for reporting.

DISCIPLINE

Establishing and maintaining welcoming, inclusive, and safe learning environments is important to the achievement and well-being of our staff and students. Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board has clearly outlined expectations regarding conduct for staff, parents, visitors and students in its Code of Conduct.

Discipline should be left to the teacher or the principal and only in extreme circumstances should the volunteer intervene for the purpose of safety. Volunteers should communicate to the teacher or principal regarding any behaviour situation. Volunteers should expect intervention and assistance from staff to deal with a problem situation; and to be treated with normal courtesy by all students with whom they work. Imposing of consequences is the school staff responsibility.

EXCURSION VOLUNTEERS AND VOLUNTEER DRIVERS

Procedure 230 – Out of School Learning is to be followed for the purposes of excursion volunteers and volunteer drivers. All volunteer supervisors must complete a signed Form F230-5 Excursion Volunteer Application Form and submit it to the principal for approval prior to the trip.

Volunteers are expected to know and support the school Code of Conduct and to report any inappropriate student conduct. Volunteers are expected to adhere to the trip schedule, model appropriate behaviour and dress and to refrain from smoking or using alcohol while supervising the students.

The Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board's insurance policy provides liability insurance to protect both staff and volunteers who are working within the scope of their duties for the board. This coverage responds to law suits that are brought against staff or volunteers who are supervising school events and provides protection to the \$12 000 000.00 limit.

If the excursion involves the use of volunteer drivers, the principal will ensure that Form F230-6 Excursion Authorization for Drivers is completed and that this information is communicated to parents and that consent is obtained for each excursion for students to travel in specified private vehicles with specific volunteer drivers.

When private vehicles are driven during excursions, whether they be driven by teachers, volunteers, or students over the age of 18, their car insurance is primary. Their insurance coverage would apply before any other insurance. Only if the claim exceeds the liability limit carried on the owner's auto policy, would the board's excess insurance for non-owned automobiles apply, and then only for the amount in excess of the limit.

For the personal protection of excursion drivers, it is recommended that drivers carry a minimum of \$1 million of Third Party Automobile Liability Insurance. Volunteers and board employees who use their personal vehicles for transporting students to school activities should advise their insurance carrier.

Excursions are deemed to have commenced when the staff member, volunteer, or student leaves his or her dwelling or place of regular employment for the purpose of a school excursion and shall continue until such time as he or she returns to his or her dwelling or place of regular employment.

The Ontario School Boards' Insurance Exchange (OSBIE), of which The Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board is a member, has taken the risk management position that drivers should be at least 18 years of age and have a valid Driver's License with a "G" class.