

NLSchools refers to all public K-12 English schools under the jurisdiction of the Department of Education, Education Operations Branch and all employees providing services and supports to such schools, including those who work in school facilities, student transportation, program implementation, student services, and procurement.

Policy Name

Volunteers in Schools

Policy Statement

The Department of Education, Education, Operations Branch, recognizes and supports the important role that parents/guardians and other community members play in supporting the delivery of programs and services in its schools, while maintaining the safety of students and the integrity of programs and services. Therefore, the Education Operations Branch shall ensure that, through the school administration, appropriate procedures are in place for the screening, selection, orientation, training, supervision, recognition, and evaluation of volunteers at the school level.

Background

Volunteers make a valuable contribution to educational programs and services as well as co-curricular and extra-curricular activities, and the school community in general. Volunteers can also derive a sense of satisfaction from their involvement and build important skills in becoming contributing community members. NLSchools recognizes its responsibility to ensure students' safety and security, and that appropriate measures are taken when selecting volunteers.

Scope

This policy is applicable to all schools and programs operated by NLSchools, including co-curricular and extra-curricular programs, and to all those who aspire to volunteer for the various programs and services within and associated with schools.

Definitions

Volunteer

An individual who, with the approval of the principal or department-level personnel, agrees to undertake a task that supports student learning within a classroom, a school

or a setting directly related to a school activity. Such a task is undertaken without pay and under the supervision of a school administrator/teacher or educational professional from within NLSchools.

Low Risk Settings/Situations

Volunteers who are under the direct and constant supervision of a teacher are considered low risk. A low risk situation might also include the engagement of volunteers in open common areas of the school, where teachers are present, or volunteers who do not come into contact with students (e.g., volunteers assisting a teacher in the Learning Resource Centre, or in the main office assisting with the recess order).

Medium Risk Settings/Situations

Volunteers who might be working with a large group of students in an isolated area of the school with frequent supervision by a school administrator/teacher or educational professional are considered to be in a medium risk setting (e.g., a volunteer non-teaching coach for a school team or extra-curricular club who meets with students in the gym or a room within the school where the teacher sponsor does periodic checks on the activities of the group).

High Risk Settings/Situations

Volunteers who work with small groups/individual students in an isolated area of the school, coach school teams, or participate in off-site field trips are considered to be in a high risk setting. These volunteers will be under occasional supervision of a school administrator/ teacher or educational professional (e.g., a volunteer for an offsite field trip to a post-secondary institution, or a volunteer for an overnight trip with a team).

Certificate of Conduct

Refers to the screening process of requiring a criminal reference check, including a vulnerable sector query, by a police force including, but not limited to, the [Royal Canadian Mounted Police \(RCMP\)](#) and the [Royal Newfoundland Constabulary \(RNC\)](#).

Criminal Offence Declaration (COD)

A Criminal Offence Declaration is a written declaration by an individual, listing any and all charges and convictions for criminal offences under the [Criminal Code of Canada](#) and provincial Acts since last submitting a [Criminal Record Check](#) or [Criminal Offence Declaration \(COD\)](#), up to and including the date of the declaration.

Criminal Record Check

A criminal record check will determine if a person has been charged or convicted of a crime.

Vulnerable Sector Check

A vulnerable sector check is to be used by a person applying for a position with a person or organization responsible for the well-being of one or more children or vulnerable persons, if the position is a position of authority or trust relative to those children or vulnerable persons and the applicant wishes to consent to a search being made in criminal conviction records to determine if the applicant has been convicted of a sexual offence listed in the schedule to the Criminal Records Act and has been pardoned

Policy Directives

1. Prior to being approved for volunteer duties, all aspiring volunteers will be required to complete a **Volunteer Information Form** and a **Volunteer Agreement** that will be reviewed by the school principal/department personnel.
2. All aspiring volunteers will also be required to complete a Criminal Offence Declaration (COD) to be submitted to the school principal on an annual basis.
3. In addition to submitting an annual Criminal Offence Declaration (COD) aspiring volunteers for medium or high risk settings/situations will be required to obtain a Criminal Record Check, including a Vulnerable Sector Check, from a police force including, but not limited to, the RCMP or the RNC.
4. Volunteers for medium or high-risk settings/situations must provide an updated satisfactory Certificate of Conduct every two years.
5. NLSchools reserves the right to require that any active volunteer provide an updated satisfactory Criminal Record Check at any time during a school year.
6. The principal shall ensure that volunteers are provided with orientation appropriate to their volunteer roles and responsibilities.
7. The principal shall ensure that volunteers are advised of policies and expectations relevant to the volunteer events and tasks.
8. The principal shall ensure that volunteers are provided with a level of supervision appropriate to their volunteer roles and responsibilities.
9. The personal information of volunteers shall be treated as confidential, and will be collected, maintained, used, disclosed and disposed of in accordance with the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act and NLSchools policy.

Administrative Procedures

1. Screening and Selection of Volunteers

- 1.1 The principal or relevant NLSchools personnel are responsible for the overall screening and selection process of volunteers.
- 1.2 All forms required by policy must be received and approved, prior to a volunteer participating in a school activity.
- 1.3 In selecting volunteers, the qualifications of the volunteers and the age and number of children with whom the volunteers will interact shall be taken into consideration.
- 1.4 All volunteers must complete a **Volunteer Information Form** and a **Volunteer Agreement**.
- 1.5 Volunteers in low risk settings must also complete a [Criminal Offence Declaration \(COD\)](#) prior to commencing volunteer duties and on an annual basis after that. [A Certificate of Conduct is not required for low risk volunteers.]
- 1.6 Volunteers in medium and high risk settings must complete a [Certificate of Conduct, including a Vulnerable Sector Check](#) satisfactory to NLSchools prior to becoming a volunteer, and every second year after that. A [Criminal Offence Declaration \(COD\)](#) must be completed in the year when a Certificate of Conduct is not required.
- 1.7 An individual will not normally be permitted to volunteer where a charge or conviction is reflected on a [Criminal Offence Declaration \(COD\)](#) or [Certificate of Conduct](#). However, where a record of offence is noted, the school administrator may review the circumstances and take into account the length of time since the offence was committed, the relevance of the criminal charge(s)/conviction(s) to the volunteer position and the risk posed to students, staff or operations. The school administrator, in consultation with the relevant Senior Management Official (School Systems) will make a final determination on suitability for volunteer duties.
- 1.8 The school administrator/department personnel must ensure that volunteers possess the experience, skills and/or credentials appropriate to the duties assigned to them. They will also ensure that, where necessary, the volunteer provides sufficient proof of his or her credentials, such as certificates or licenses.
- 1.9 A record of all volunteers must be maintained at the school for each school year.

2. Orientation, Supervision, Evaluation and Recognition of Volunteers

- 2.1 The school administrator/NLSchools personnel shall ensure that orientation and

training appropriate to the volunteer position is provided in a timely manner. Such orientation should address the expectations for volunteers, confidentiality, health and safety, relevant policies and other related matters. A copy of the [Guidelines for Volunteers](#) should also be provided during orientation.

- 2.2 School administrators/NLSchools personnel shall ensure that volunteers are supervised as necessary based on the tasks that they perform and their level of skill/expertise. Supervision will reflect the level of risk (low, medium, high).
 - a) All volunteers are to be advised of the person that they report to at the school/worksite, such as a teacher sponsor, volunteer coordinator or the school administrator/manager.
 - b) In the event that volunteer(s) are in the school with students, unaccompanied by a teacher sponsor (high risk), then there must be at least two volunteers present for the activity or event, who have both met all of the volunteer requirements.
- 2.3 Any concerns regarding the conduct of a volunteer or concerns regarding violation in policy must be reported to the school administrator. They are responsible for following up on all complaints regarding volunteers and for intervening appropriately, such as providing the volunteer with feedback and clear expectations and, if necessary, terminating the volunteer's services and reporting the matter to the relevant Director of Schools.
- 2.4 Volunteers are not permitted to be used as replacements for paid personnel. Financial compensation is also not permitted for volunteering with a school or NLSchools. Volunteers may be reimbursed for reasonable out-of-pocket expenses.
- 2.5 The recognition of volunteers for their contributions is encouraged. The school administrator or designate shall determine appropriate methods to recognize volunteers for their work. Tips on recognizing volunteers are available through a variety of resources, including the [Community Sector Council](#).

3. Confidentiality and Privacy

All employees and volunteers are governed by the [Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act \(ATIPPA\)](#).

- 3.1 Volunteers have the right to have their personal information handled in a confidential and sensitive manner. Personal information for the volunteer screening process must be collected, maintained, used, disclosed and disposed of in accordance with the [ATIPPA](#).
- 3.2 Volunteers must only be permitted access to personal information for students or

other individuals on a limited basis, as required to perform their duties. Volunteers are expected to handle such information in a confidential manner, in accordance with [ATIPPA](#). Any information gathered must only be used in the context of the volunteer activity and not for any other purpose, and must be returned to the school for storage, shredding, deleting or other appropriate disposal. Once a task is completed, volunteers should no longer retain hard copy or electronic copies of documents containing personal information.

- a) Volunteers may be required to complete a confidentiality agreement, as determined necessary by the school administrator/designate.
- 3.3 Volunteers must respect others' beliefs and values and not impose their personal views on others, or become involved in the personal affairs of students or employees.

Guidelines for Volunteers

School administrators may develop additional guidelines, in addition to those mentioned below, to suit the specific needs of their school and its activities.

School Volunteers are expected to:

- Be respectful of staff and students at all times.
- Be prompt and on schedule.
- Notify the school in advance if unable to volunteer at the scheduled time.
- Treat all information that they have access to in the course of their duties in a confidential manner. In particular, a student's ability level, behavior or personal circumstances must not be discussed outside the school setting.
- Ensure that students under their care respect school property and school discipline codes. If problems arise, they should be reported promptly with necessary details to the appropriate school personnel, sponsor/administration.
- Talk privately to the sponsor/administrator about any difficulties that they encounter in working with students or other school personnel.

Volunteers should not:

- Engage in direct teaching of students except where authorized by the school administrator or designate and under direction from a teacher.
- Provide direct assistance to students with special needs except where authorized by the school administrator or designate and under direction from a teacher.
- Assume any duties or responsibilities in relation to the diagnosis of learning strengths or difficulties or the evaluation of a student's progress.
- Become involved in disciplining students when a teacher is present, or anything beyond a minimal level of intervention/discipline in the absence of a teacher.
- Engage in work traditionally performed by support staff.