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| JAMES BAY LOWLANDS SECONDARY SCHOOL BOARD |
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| ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE GENERAL ADMINISTRATION: NO. 195 | |
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| Effective | August 21, 2019 |
| Last Revised | June 30, 2023 |

USE OF VOLUNTEERS

PURPOSE

The James Bay Lowlands Secondary School Board encourages the use of volunteers at Northern Lights Secondary School. The Board recognizes that volunteers enhance the learning opportunities available to students, improve parent-teacher communication, and encourage community involvement in the school.

System and school administrators of the Board have developed this administrative procedure to support the benefits of having volunteers in the school, while also ensuring the safety and welfare of the students.

This administrative procedure sets out the responsibilities of the principal and staff to plan for the effective use of volunteers and to protect all students in their care.

DEFINITIONS

Volunteer: A volunteer is a parent/guardian or community member who agrees to undertake, without pay, a designated task that supports a classroom, the school, or a Board-sponsored activity. When not specifically stated, the term “volunteer” refers to both parent and community volunteers. Co-op students are not defined as volunteers.

Management of Volunteers: Management includes procedures for screening, orienting, training, supervising, and recognizing volunteers.

Criminal Background Check: In respect of a school board, this means a document concerning an individual that was prepared by a police force or service from national data on the Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) database. The background check contains information concerning the individual’s personal criminal history.

Offence Declaration: Offence declaration means a written declaration signed by an individual, listing all the individual’s convictions, warrants, and charges for offences under the *Criminal Code (Canada)* up to the date of the declaration that are not included in a criminal background check or the last offence declaration collected on behalf of the board.

PROCEDURES**1. Valued Partners**

- 1.1 Parents, guardians, and community members are welcome as volunteers in Northern Lights Secondary School. They can provide valued support to students and the school staff.
- 1.2 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.
- 1.3 Volunteers are valued education partners who foster interaction and co-operation among the home, school, and wider community.

2. Board Expectations

- 2.1 The recruitment, screening, selection, and assignment of volunteers is the responsibility of the school principal.
- 2.2 The principal will determine when volunteers require a Vulnerable Sector Criminal Background Check, based on the nature of the volunteer service provided. Volunteers in regular contact with students require a vulnerable sector criminal background check. The required form can be obtained from the local police force and maintained in the school office to issue to volunteers.
- 2.3 The principal shall collect an offence declaration annually thereafter from the individual if he or she continues to volunteer at the school.

3. Responsibilities of the Principal

- 3.1 The principal is responsible for promoting a positive, safe, and secure learning and working environment for students and staff members.
- 3.2 The principal or designate is responsible for:
 - a) determining the volunteering needs of the school;
 - b) the recruitment, selection, and screening of volunteers;
 - c) approving and defining volunteer assignments;
 - d) training and orientation;
 - e) the supervision of volunteers;
 - f) the assessment of the volunteer program; and
 - g) appropriate recognition of the volunteers.
- 3.3 The principal, at the beginning of the school year, will consult with staff to determine the needs, preferences, and tasks which could be supported by a volunteer. Staff members should also be surveyed to assess their commitment and expertise in working with volunteers. The concerns of staff should be noted and resolved if volunteers are to be successful in the school.

- 3.4 A teacher has the right to decline school volunteer service.
- 3.5 An invitation to parents and guardians to be volunteers in the school will be most successful if specific tasks are defined. The volunteers then have a clear understanding of the activities in which they may be involved.
- 3.6 Volunteers must be made aware of health and safety issues, legal liability, procedures for reporting suspected child abuse, and school emergency procedures such as a fire drill or school lockdown. Volunteers must be aware of and follow the school code of conduct, and must know the process to follow if they encounter difficulties with a student.
- 3.7 Periodic review of the overall volunteer program is necessary to measure its impact and to make adjustments necessary to its ongoing success.

4. Duty of Care

- 4.1 All staff members have a high “duty of care” under the *Education Act*, the *Child and Family Services Act* and other legislation. Though certain duties and responsibilities can be delegated to volunteers, staff members cannot divest themselves of this duty of care.
- 4.2 The principal retains the authority to accept or decline any volunteer’s offer of service without appeal and to halt, without appeal, volunteer activity.

5. Requirement for Confidentiality

- 5.1 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.
- 5.2 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 and staff, but must not share information with anyone other than appropriate staff. Volunteers will also refrain from expressing opinions that would cause harm to the reputation of the staff or students.
- 5.3 Volunteers are not permitted to have free access to student records for any reason. Under no circumstances will a volunteer be given such personal information as home phone numbers, addresses, and birth dates, without the consent of the parent/guardian or student who is sixteen or older. Volunteers who are assisting administration and/or office staff will often need to access this information. This is permissible only if there is a staff member directly supervising the volunteer.
- 5.4 Volunteers 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 will share only the necessary information.

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

Legal:

Education Act, section 169.1 Board Responsibility for Student Well-Being

Education Act, subsection 171 (1) Powers of Boards: Voluntary Assistants

Education Act, section 265 Duties of Principal: Care of Pupils

Child and Family Services Act—Duty to Report

Ontario Regulation 521/01 Collection of Personal Information: Criminal Background Check

Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

Board:

Board Policy GOV-01 Values, Vision, and Mission

Board Policy GOV-20 Safe School Environment

Administrative Procedure 358 Child in Need of Protection

Administrative Procedure 406 Collection of Personal Information: Criminal Background Check