

Volunteers in the School

General

1. The Principal shall ensure that all potential volunteers who have expressed an interest in working in his/her school are screened to ensure the right match is made between the work to be done and the person who will do it.
2. Screening practices may include but are not limited to the following steps as recommended by Volunteer Canada's Safe Steps Screening Program and the Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development *Best Practice Guide for Screening School Volunteers*:
 - a. Determine the risk;
 - b. Determine the requirements of the volunteer position and the respective screening requirements;
 - c. Establish a fair, consistent and appropriate recruitment process;
 - d. Use a standardized volunteer application form (please refer to Appendix A on Page 7);
 - e. Conduct interviews, where appropriate;
 - f. Conduct reference checks, where appropriate;
 - g. Request a Vulnerable Sector Check (formerly a Criminal Record Check) and Child Abuse Register Search before commencing volunteering;
 - h. Conduct orientation and training sessions;
 - i. Support and supervise;
 - j. Provide follow up and feedback to volunteers.
3. Prior to approval, all volunteers as defined in the Volunteers in the School Policy VI-C-I shall complete and provide the following documentation to the school Principal(s) of the school(s):
 - Volunteer Application Form, Appendix A on Page 7. The Volunteer Application Form shall be completed on an annual basis;
 - Vulnerable Sector Check. This check is valid for three years. Volunteers shall submit an official, original Vulnerable Sector Check provided by the RCMP or other issuing agency. A photocopy is not acceptable.
 - Child Abuse Register Check. This check is valid for three years. A validated copy of the original Child Abuse Register Check as provided by the Nova Scotia Department of Community Services will be accepted by authorized school board staff. In the event that the original document is not left with the school, the School Board staff person will view the original, maintain a copy of the original with a notation and date as to when the original was viewed; and
- Confidentiality Agreement. The Confidentiality Agreement shall be completed on an annual basis. Please refer to Page 15.
4. Volunteer Concern Protocol:

Concerns of volunteers or prospective volunteers may be processed as outlined in Appendix G: Volunteer Concern Protocol on Page 18.

Principal's Responsibilities

1. The Principal shall provide the Volunteer Application Form, Appendix A on Page 7 and shall ensure volunteers working in the school receive a copy of the Strait Regional School Board's Guidelines for Volunteers, Appendix B on Page 9.
2. The Principal will assess the risk associated with volunteer activities to determine the appropriate screening tools using the Risk Assessment Framework contained in Table 1 on Page 5 and may also use the Principal Checklist of Volunteer Screening Tools Based on Perceived Risk contained in Table 2 on Page 6.
3. The Principal shall provide a letter of support for the Child Abuse Register Check and Vulnerable Sector Check to the applicant. Please refer to Appendix D and E on Pages 13 and 14.
4. The Principal may also verify with the Department of Human Resources if a potential volunteer has already completed the screening process.
5. The Principal may choose to schedule a formal meeting or interview with the prospective volunteer prior to approval.
6. The Principal shall maintain a confidential file for each volunteer that includes all documents (Volunteer Application Form, screening tool(s) and confidentiality agreement) provided to the school as part of the approval process.
7. The Principal shall ensure that confidential files will be stored and managed in a secure centralized location to avoid unauthorized access, use, alteration disclosure or disposal of personal information. The confidential file for each volunteer should be maintained for a minimum of six years and longer if the volunteer continues to provide active service. The individual should provide a written confirmation that he/she is no longer serving as a volunteer prior to shredding of all documents. If an issue occurs while the individual is serving as a volunteer, the confidential file should be kept indefinitely in consultation with the School Board's FOIPOP Administrator.
8. The Principal shall also indicate in each file that a copy of the Guidelines for Volunteers has been reviewed with, and provided to, the respective volunteer.
9. In any instance where an invitation to volunteer in the Strait Regional School Board's schools has been given and there is an existing Criminal Record, the Principal shall contact the Director of Human Resources/designate who will make a decision regarding the volunteer's suitability in accordance with Policy V-A-2, Recruitment, Hiring and Retention of Employees and supporting procedures, PRO V-A-2.
10. In any instance where an invitation to volunteer in the Strait Regional School Board's schools has been given and the Child Abuse Register Search indicates that the volunteer could pose a risk to students, the invitation to volunteer shall be withdrawn immediately.
11. The Principal shall meet with approved volunteers to review the Guidelines for Volunteers and those specifically provided by the Principal for the respective volunteer role.
12. The Principal shall review with all volunteers the Allegations of Sexual Misconduct Involving Students Policy V-B-7 and supporting procedures, PRO V-B-7.

13. The Principal shall provide all volunteers with an orientation to the school, including but not limited to schedules, break and lunch facilities and occupational health and safety requirements.
14. The Principal shall ensure that teachers notify parents/guardians in writing when individuals volunteer in their classrooms on a regular basis.
15. The Principal shall ensure the ongoing tracking of volunteers includes the provision of an identification badge and adherence to the school's sign in/sign out procedures.
16. If required, the Principal shall discontinue the services provided by a volunteer at any time.

Department of Human Resources Responsibilities

1. Individual schools and the Department of Human Resources will maintain the list of approved volunteers in a Volunteer Database once they have been screened for the Child Abuse Register Search and have completed a Vulnerable Sector Check through the school.
2. If an individual applies to volunteer at more than one school in the Strait Regional School Board and has already been approved to volunteer at one school, information on their approval status may be shared with another school(s) with their written consent
3. The Principal will submit to the Department of Human Resources the approved name of the volunteer and the date of the completed security checks.
4. Schools and the volunteer will be advised when the security checks have expired. At expiration, the approved volunteer's name and information will be removed from the Volunteer Database.
5. Prospective volunteers with a criminal record other than for acts of child abuse or acts of physical assault will not automatically be disqualified. The Director of Human Resources/designate shall review the circumstances surrounding the criminal record and consider the following factors when applicable:
 - a. The specific duties and responsibilities of the position in question and the relevance of the criminal charge(s) or conviction(s) to that position;
 - b. The length of time since the charge(s) and/or conviction(s);
 - c. Rehabilitative or other efforts undertaken by the applicant;
 - d. The risk posed to students, employees and/or Board property and equipment; and
 - e. Such other factors as are deemed appropriate under the circumstances.

Upon reviewing the additional information supplied by the potential employee the Director of Human Resources/designate may:

- a. Approve the potential volunteer to work in the various work locations of the SRSB ;or
- b. Disqualify the potential volunteer; or
- c. Request further information for consideration prior to any final decision to approve or disqualify.

The potential volunteer is notified of the Director's decision following the review.

6. Where areas of concern are identified, the final decision(s) concerning suitability for service shall be made jointly by the Principal in consultation with the Director of Human Resources/designate and other appropriate Board staff in consultation with legal counsel.

Appendix A: Volunteer Application Form
(This form will be kept on file at the school.)

Part 1

In order to ensure the safety of students, all volunteers other than those specific to student travel, must complete this form and comply with the Volunteers in the School Policy VI-C-1 and supporting procedures, PRO VI-C-1. **This application process does not include visitors to the school.**

All potential/prospective volunteers shall complete and provide this Application Form to the Principal of the school at which you wish to volunteer.

Volunteer's Name: _____

Volunteer's Role: _____

I have a student registered in this school and I have the same address found in PowerSchool.
Student Name(s): _____

I do not have a student registered in this school and my mailing address is:

Telephone

Email:

Please provide two references (not including family members). It is at the Principal's discretion as to whether or not a reference check will be completed.

Name

Telephone Number

I am aware that I am required to complete a Child Abuse Register Request for Search Form A and submit it to the Inverness Education Centre Academy.

I am aware that I am required to complete a Vulnerable Sector Check and submit it to Inverness Education Centre Academy.

Both of these documents are required and must be received prior to approval being granted to provide volunteer service.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Part 2

Once approved:

- I am an approved volunteer at Inverness Education Centre Academy and authorize the sharing of my documentation to the school named in this application.
- I have been provided with a copy and have reviewed the Volunteers in the School Policy VI-C-1 and supporting procedures, PRO VI-C-1.
- I have been provided a copy, have reviewed and signed the Confidentiality Agreement.
- I have been provided a copy and have reviewed the School Board Policy V-B-7, Allegations of Sexual Misconduct Involving Students, and supporting procedures, PRO V-B-7.
- I have been provided a copy and have reviewed the Guidelines for Volunteers.

By signing below, I am indicating that I have read all of the above documents. In addition, I am agreeing to the Guidelines for Volunteers as outlined and those specifically provided by the Principal for my respective volunteer role.

Volunteer Signature: _____ Date: _____

I have approved the above-named volunteer, have provided him/her with all required documentation and reviewed with them their role within my school.

Principal Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix B: Guidelines for Volunteers

The safety of students and school environments are of paramount importance to the Strait Regional School Board and every effort is made to mitigate risk to students.

It is essential that volunteers who support students understand their roles, responsibilities, expectations and standards for volunteering in schools including but not limited to:

1. Volunteers must meet the approval process for volunteers in the school as outlined in the Strait Regional School Board *Volunteers in the School*, Policy VI-C-1 and supporting procedures, PRO VI-C-1
2. Volunteers must complete Appendix A: Volunteer Application Form as provided by the School Administration.
3. Prior to approval, volunteers must provide the school Principal with a Vulnerable Sector Check and Child Abuse Register Check that is current within three (3) years.
4. It is the responsibility of any School Board volunteer, after having completed the screening process, to contact the Principal or the Director of Human Resources/designate should they be subject to an investigation, charge or conviction under the Criminal Code of Canada.
5. The Principal will meet with approved volunteers to review the *Guidelines for Volunteers* and those specifically provided for the respective volunteer role.
6. The Principal will conduct orientation and training sessions, as appropriate.
7. While in the school, all volunteers shall sign in at the school office upon arrival and wear an identification badge. This badge must be returned to the office at the end of each visit and the volunteer shall sign out prior to their departure from the school.
8. Volunteers have a duty to abide by Strait Regional School Board policies and procedures as well as applicable provincial legislation, policies and procedures.
9. In accordance with the Protocol and Guidelines for Child Protection Workers and School Personnel in the Strait Regional School Community and the Children and Family Services Act (Section 24), volunteers who have reasonable grounds to suspect a child may be abused or neglected has a legal obligation to immediately report the matter to the local Children's Services Agency. The volunteer shall also immediately inform the Principal that a report is or has been made to the Child Protection Agency.
10. Volunteers must adhere to the Allegations of Sexual Misconduct Involving Students Policy V-B-7 and supporting procedures, PRO V-B-7.
11. Individuals, organizations or groups presenting in a school shall adhere to the Use of Instructional Time Policy III-B-6 and supporting procedures, PRO III-B-6.
12. Volunteers who are involved in athletic activities must abide by the Nova Scotia School Athletic Federation Handbook.

13. Volunteers are role models for students and the school community.
14. It is essential that all school staff and volunteers collaborate to work respectfully, positively, cooperatively and professionally.
15. Volunteers need to be aware that school staff has the responsibility to report any behavior of a volunteer that is deemed inappropriate or may pose a risk to student and staff safety.
16. Volunteers are expected to respect the privacy of the students and are required to maintain confidentiality at all times. As such, volunteers shall sign a confidentiality agreement prior to providing volunteer service.
17. To promote a positive, respectful and professional working relationship between the principal, staff and volunteers in the school, it is essential that the role, responsibilities and expectations for volunteers are clearly defined and communicated.
18. Volunteers shall adhere to only those specific responsibilities and expectations defined by the Principal and supervising Teacher.
19. The school staff fulfills specific roles and is responsible for student achievement, assessment, behavior and communication with parents/guardians.
20. Under staff direction, the volunteer will assist students in becoming successful independent learners.
21. Volunteers are expected to communicate regularly with the relevant teacher, lead chaperone, or administrator. Volunteers are expected to take questions, concerns and suggestions to the relevant teacher, lead chaperone, administrator or duty supervisor. Communication about students and student issues with anyone other than listed previously is prohibited.
22. Volunteers are required to refer problems with student behavior to the relevant teacher, lead chaperone, or administrator.
23. Volunteers must treat students in a respectful, dignified and fair manner with due consideration to the students' physical, social and psychological development as well as cultural and academic diversity.
24. Volunteers shall not have access to student records. Student records are strictly confidential. Required information related to student health and safety shall be provided by the School Board staff member as appropriate.
25. Volunteers must be reliable and committed to supporting the school and shall notify the school administration in advance if absent.

Recognition

Volunteering is the giving of time, energy and concern to others. It is an honourable and cherished responsibility of our society. The Strait Regional School Board wishes to thank each and every volunteer for their participation and dedication to our students, staff and school communities. Together we can make education and the functions which support it a solid foundation upon which to build a lifetime of successful achievement for students and those who work in the public education system.

**Appendix C:
Bringing the Community into our Schools
Public Schools Branch, Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood
Development**

Who is covered or not covered under the school boards' liability policy for members of our communities who are coming into schools?

- a. The following individuals **are considered volunteers** under the school boards' liability policy while working within the scope of their duties for the school board:
- School team coaches approved by the principal.
 - School board staff offering programs after hours as part of their duties for the school board.
 - Community members offering to do a "physical education demo" for students. (Note: There can be no physical participation of students during the demo.)
 - Community members doing a presentation/seminar for students.
 - Community members or university students assisting a teacher in the activity of a school-approved activity under the direct supervision of the teacher-in-charge. The teacher-in-charge is responsible for ensuring that the community member or university student is suitably qualified and capable of providing the required service.
- b. The following **are not** covered under the school boards' liability policy and will need to purchase liability insurance:
- School board staff offering programs after hours that are not part of their duties for the school board, after hours utilizing school facilities and taking fees to "cover costs".
 - If teachers are bringing in higher level help (leadership) for activities they are not comfortable teaching, the school will have to confirm that the higher level help is qualified, certified and has commercial general liability insurance for \$1,000,000. This would apply to classrooms and after-school programs. (Examples: yoga instructors, dance instructors, field hockey clinics, cooking classes, etc.)
 - University students while on work placements are normally covered by their university's liability policy. If they are leading an activity at a school, they must be certified and qualified in the activity. As well, university students should check with their university to make sure that the university's liability policy will extend to cover them while they are providing higher level help to teachers that are not comfortable teaching the activity.
 - After school programs that are not organized and operated by the school board must arrange their own insurance.

Where can community members get insurance?

- a) Local insurance broker, or
- b) Members of Recreation Nova Scotia may purchase general liability insurance through a program that is designed and is suitable for volunteer recreation groups. This maybe a helpful resource to those in the community looking for liability insurance. Their link is:
<http://www.recreationns.ns.ca/insurance/>.

Appendix F: Confidentiality Agreement

Introduction

Privacy and the protection of confidential and personal information is a serious issue and one of which all employees and volunteers need to be aware when undertaking their role with the Strait Regional School Board. Failure to do so can have legal ramifications. Employees and volunteers also need to be aware that confidentiality still applies after employment and volunteerism with the Board ceases.

Definitions

For the purposes of this agreement, the following definitions apply:

“Employee” means a person employed by, or in an employee-like relationship, with the Strait Regional School Board.

“Board” means offices, schools and work sites of the Strait Regional School Board.

“Supervisor” is the person to whom the employee or volunteer reports.

“Volunteer” is an individual, who is not an employee of the Strait Regional School Board, and who interacts with students or groups of students as defined in the Volunteers in the School Policy VI-C-1.

‘Confidential information’ means:

- (a) or an opinion about an individual whose identity is apparent or can be reasonably ascertained from the information or opinion whether true or not. That is, information which allows an individual to be identified; or
- (b) any information that the Strait Regional School Board specifies as confidential; or
- (c) any information not on the public record and not available upon request.

Confidential information can appear in any form and be recorded on any medium, including but not limited to:

- (b) Written records
- (c) Electronic records
- (d) Social media
- (e) Information conveyed verbally

In accordance with Section 3(1)(i) of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIPOP) Act, “personal information” means recorded information about an identifiable individual, including:

- i. the individual’s name, address or telephone number,
- ii. the individual’s race, national or ethnic origin, colour, or religious or political beliefs or associations,

- iii. the individual's age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status or family status,
- iv. an identifying number, symbol or other particular assigned to the individual,
- v. the individual's fingerprints, blood type or inheritable characteristics,
- vi. information about the individual's health-care history, including a physical or mental disability,
- vii. information about the individual's educational, financial, criminal or employment history,
- viii. anyone else's opinions about the individual, and
- ix. the individual's personal views or opinions, except if they are about someone else.

This agreement has been developed by the Strait Regional School Board to ensure that you understand your responsibilities. If you do not understand any part of this document or if you have uncertainties about its interpretation, you should discuss the matter with your Supervisor or designate. **Please read the Confidentiality Undertakings carefully.**

Confidentiality Undertakings

- i. I will comply with the legislation, policies and procedures of the Strait Regional School Board relating to confidentiality.
- ii. The employee and/or volunteer regards as confidential, and does not divulge other than through professional channels any information of a personal or domestic nature concerning either students or their home environment, obtained through the course of his/her professional and/or volunteer duties.
- iii. I will not disclose confidential information to any third party without the prior permission of the Strait Regional School Board.
- iv. I will not copy or remove original files, forms or other confidential documents from offices, schools and work sites of the Strait Regional School Board.
- v. I understand that my obligations under this Agreement continue to have full force and effect when I am no longer an employee or volunteer of the Strait Regional School Board.

(Confidentiality Agreement)

THIS AGREEMENT is made on the _____ day of _____ 20____

BETWEEN

STRAIT REGIONAL SCHOOL BOARD

AND _____

SIGNED for and on behalf of the **STRAIT REGIONAL SCHOOL BOARD**

INSERT NAME and TITLE

Date

Declaration

I declare that I have read this confidentiality agreement and understand my responsibilities regarding the privacy and the protection of confidential and personal information. I understand that a breach of this agreement may impact on the right to privacy of an individual or Board and may lead to legal and/or disciplinary proceedings.

SIGNED by _____
Signature of Volunteer or Employee

Date

In the presence of:

Signature of Supervisor

Date

Appendix G: Volunteer Concern Protocol

It is essential that all steps in this process are completed in sequence with the aim of resolution at the school level whenever possible.

1. The Strait Regional School Board believes that problem-solving begins at the school level. The volunteer must first discuss the issue with the school administration.
2. The volunteer and school administration should make every effort to resolve matters at the school level.
3. When the school administration becomes involved, he/she must provide a response, in writing, to the volunteer outlining the recommendation and rationale for the school decision. Please refer to the attached Principal Response to the Volunteer Concern on Page 22.
4. In instances when a volunteer is not satisfied with the written response from the school administration, he/she should direct the issue in writing, within 30 days, to the Strait Regional School Board by completing the Volunteer Concern Reporting Form on Page 20.
5. Written volunteer concerns will not be processed if the required, preceding steps and written documentation at the school level have not been completed.
6. The Superintendent of Schools will review each Volunteer Concern and request that the Director of Human Resources/designate lead the response to the volunteer. Several Directors may be involved in responding to the volunteer concern in a collaborative manner in order to fully address all aspects of the volunteer concern.
7. Upon receipt of the Volunteer Concern Reporting Form, the Director of Human Resources/designate will notify the school administration and the local school board member of the volunteer concern. In addition, issues that relate to African Nova Scotia or First Nations communities shall also be discussed with the respective school board member.
8. Within ten (10) business days of receiving the Volunteer Concern Reporting Form, the Director of Human Resources/designate will process the written volunteer concern, confer with the volunteer and school administration and provide a written response to the volunteer.
9. If the volunteer does not agree with the written response of the Director of Human Resources/designate, the issue may be appealed, in writing, within ten (10) business days of receiving the decision of the Director of Human Resources/designate, to an Appeals Committee consisting of the Superintendent of Schools and two Board Members. Please use the attached Volunteer Notification of an Appeal of a Concern on Page 23. The request must include a timeline, the reason for an appeal and the expected resolution.
11. The two Board Members will be selected on a rotational basis with the exception of those board member(s) involved in the discussion outlined in Guideline # 9 above.
12. Upon receipt of a written appeal request, the Board Secretary will consult with all parties involved to establish a mutually convenient date and time for the appeal and the right of the volunteer to appear in person with or without a support person (personal or professional). If the parties involved choose not to participate in the appeal process, the appeal panel will meet at the predetermined date and time to render its decision.

13. The appeal panel may request others to attend at its discretion.
14. Participants are expected to be respectful of all others in the appeal hearing while others present information to the appeal panel. There is no cross examination of presenters. Appeal panel members may ask questions of each presenter through the Chair of the panel.
15. Within twenty (20) business days of receiving the notice of the appeal, the Appeals Committee shall hold a hearing and confirm, revoke or vary the decision of the Director.
16. The format of the appeal hearing is as follows:
 - a. Welcome
 - b. Introduction of all present
 - c. Introduction of the concern
 - d. Director/school administration provides perspective, comments and response
Volunteer/support person provides perspective, comments and response
 - e. Questions from appeal panel members
 - f. Hearing concludes
17. Within three (3) business days of the hearing, the Superintendent, on behalf of the panel, shall notify in writing, as appropriate, the volunteer, school administration and Director of the decision of the Appeals Committee.
18. The decision of the Appeals Committee shall be final and binding.
19. In an appeal process, the official file will be retained in the office of the Superintendent of Schools for a period of at least one year from the date of the Appeals Committee decision, after which the file will be destroyed.

Volunteer Concern Reporting Form

Confidential

School: _____ Principal/Designate: _____

Name of Volunteer _____

Address: _____ Postal Code: _____

Telephone No.: _____

Summary of Concern (Please add separate sheet if more space is required):

Date/Particulars of Concern:

Date/Particulars of Volunteer Consultation with the School Administration:

Date/Particulars of Written Principal Response, with letter attached (Principal Response to the Volunteer Concern):

Signature of Volunteer: _____ **Date:** _____

Please fax, mail or email (PDF format) this signed form to:

Superintendent of Schools
Strait Regional School Board
16 Cemetery Road
Port Hastings, NS B9A 1K6
Fax: 902-625-2281; srsb@srsb.ca