



TEACHER ASSISTANT HANDBOOK

*To be read in conjunction with this handbook:
OSAP: 200.11 series Teachers Assistants*



**SHAPE
INTERNATIONAL
SCHOOL**



**ÉCOLE
INTERNATIONALE
SHAPE**

Teacher Assistant Handbook

INDEX

SECTION 1 – DUTIES

SECTION 2 – JOB FUNCTION

SECTION 3– PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS

SECTION 4 – VOLUNTEER CODE OF ETHICS

SECTION 5 – SALARY/BENEFITS PACKAGE

SECTION 1.0 - DUTIES

1.1 The following list illustrates general duties, which may be assigned to a Teacher Assistant:

- (a) Assist individual students in performing activities initiated by the teacher.
- (b) Supervise children in the hallway, lunchroom, and playground.
- (c) Assist in monitoring supplementary work and independent study.
- (d) Reinforce learning in small groups or with individuals, while the teacher works with other students.
- (e) Provide assistance with individualized program materials.
- (f) Assist the teacher in observing, recording, and charting behaviour.
- (g) Assist the teacher with crisis problems and behaviour management.
- (h) Assist in preparation/production of instructional materials and modifications.
- (i) Carry out instructional programs designed by the teacher.
- (j) Work with the teacher to develop classroom schedules.
- (k) Carry out tutoring activities designed by the teacher.
- (l) Assist the classroom teacher to involve the student with special needs in classroom and extra-curricular activities.
- (m) Assist in the observation and assessment of students as requested by the teacher/supervisor.
- (n) Maintain records relative to specific programming and student performance as requested by teacher/supervisor.
- (o) Assist in related duties, which may be assigned because of specific needs (the maintenance and/or preparation of instructional and life skills materials, for example).
- (p) Participate in parent-teacher conferences and assist with parent communication on request.
- (q) Supervise and/or participate with students in community-based programming when requested.
- (r) Assist the teacher to provide program adjustments that are suitable to the student's behavioural and emotional make-up.
- (s) Assist the teacher(s) in following tasks of effective behavioural management.
- (t) Assist with student dressing and feeding.
- (u) Assist with sensory integration programming as outlined by the teacher.
- (v) Administer medication and chart its distribution.
- (w) Assist with toileting and toilet training programs.
- (x) Assist with a student's daily hygiene.
- (y) Work directly with students in different settings where a teacher is not available at the site (work experience placement, for example).
- (z) Support students in their participation in activities in the community.
- (aa) Support and train students in work placements.
- (bb) Reinforce social and personal skills to ensure the successful inclusion of the student with special needs.
- (cc) Attend professional development programs related to needs of students in the program.

Teacher Assistant Handbook

- (dd) Assist with communication development under the direction of the teacher and/or Speech and Language Pathologist.

1.2 Elementary and secondary school teacher assistants perform some or all of the following duties:

- (a) Assist students with lessons under direct supervision of classroom teacher.
- (b) Monitor and report to classroom teacher on student progress.
- (c) Assist in preparation of learning materials and environment.
- (d) Accompany and supervise students during activities in school gymnasiums, laboratories, libraries, resource centres and on field trips.
- (e) Assist special needs students, such as those with mental or physical disabilities, with mobility, communication and personal hygiene.
- (f) Prepare classroom displays and bulletin boards.
- (g) Operate or assist teacher in operation of projectors, tape recorders and other audiovisual equipment and office equipment such as photocopier, fax machine and computer.
- (h) Carry out behaviour modification, personal development and other therapeutic programs under supervision of professionals such as special education instructors, psychologists or speech-language pathologists.
- (i) Monitor students during recess or noon hour.
- (j) Assist with classroom inventory.
- (k) Assist in school library or office and perform other duties assigned by school principal.

1.3 Instructional duties the Teacher Assistant **should not perform**:

- (a) Be solely responsible for a classroom or a professional service.
- (b) Be responsible for the diagnostic functions of the classroom.
- (c) Be responsible for preparing lesson plans and initiating instruction.
- (d) Be responsible for assigning grades to students.
- (e) The Teacher Assistant may be left alone in the classroom for short periods of time when the teacher is called away. The teacher, however, continues to maintain responsibility for the classroom.
- (f) Assume full responsibility for supervising assemblies or field trips.

1.4 Non-Instructional duties the Teacher Assistant **should not perform**:

- (a) Assume full responsibility for supervising and planning activities.
- (b) Take children to clinic, dental or medical appointments unless authorized personnel grant permission.
- (c) Prescribe new educational activities and materials for children.
- (d) Grade subjective or essay tests.
- (e) Regulate pupil behaviour by corporal punishment or similar means.

SECTION 2.0 – JOB FUNCTION

2.1 Teacher Assistants work under the direction and guidance of professional teaching staff.

- (a) **Part of a Collaborative Team:** The Teacher Assistant works within a cooperative, collaborative “team” concept under the direction and guidance of professional teaching staff. The Teacher Assistant is an integral part of the school-based team.
- (b) **Reinforcement of Skills:** The Teacher Assistant is directly responsible to the professional teaching staff to reinforce the skills taught by the classroom teacher.

Teacher Assistant Handbook

- (c) **Behaviour Management:** The Teacher Assistant assists the professional teaching staff with behaviour intervention strategies.
- (d) **Communication:**
 - (i) Communication between home and school is the direct responsibility of the professional teaching staff. The Teacher Assistant assists in this process by providing information to the professional teaching staff.
 - (ii) Communication among the members of the instructional team is also a concern. It is essential that there be a clear understanding of the Teacher Assistant's specific role within team communication. The school team must determine the specific tasks for which the Teacher Assistant will be responsible. It is essential that the Teacher Assistant understand the lines of authority within the school and the person to whom he/she is responsible.

SECTION 3.0 – PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS

3.1 With regard to accepting responsibilities, the Teacher Assistant is advised to:

- (a) Engage only in non-instructional and instructional activities to which they have been assigned. Some tasks require specific training. Before a Teacher Assistant is assigned to such tasks the specific training must be provided.
- (b) Communicate progress or concerns about students to parents only if directed to do so by the teacher(s).
- (c) Refer concerns expressed by parents, students or others to teacher(s).
- (d) Recognize that the professional teaching staff has the ultimate responsibility for the instruction and behaviour management of children and follow the directions prescribed by him/her.

3.2 With regard to relationships with student and parents the Teacher Assistant is advised to:

- (a) Only discuss a child's progress, limitations and/or educational program only with the supervising teacher in the appropriate setting. If contacted directly by a parent the Teacher Assistant should refer the parent to the teacher or principal.
- (b) Only discuss school problems and confidential matters with appropriate personnel and when students are not present.
- (c) Refrain from engaging in discriminatory practices based on a student's handicap, race, sex, cultural background or religion.
- (d) Respect the dignity, privacy, and individuality of all students, parents and staff members.
- (e) Present themselves as positive adult role models.

3.3 With regard to relationships with teachers, the Teacher Assistant is advised to:

- (a) Recognize the role of the teacher as the supervisor.
- (b) Express differences of opinion only when students are not present.
- (c) Establish communication and a positive relationship with the teacher.
- (d) Discuss concerns about the teacher or teaching methods directly with the teacher.

Teacher Assistant Handbook

- (e) Discuss concerns only with the principal if issues are not resolved.
- (f) Avoid discussing teacher problems with students, other teachers, Teacher Assistants or parents.

3.4 With regard to the relationship with the school, the Teacher Assistant is advised to:

- (a) Accept a personal responsibility for continued skill improvement.
- (b) Become familiar with school policies and procedures.
- (c) Represent the school and its programs in a positive manner.
- (d) Utilize proper grievance procedures when problems cannot be resolved.
- (e) Refrain from:
 - (i) discussing school problems and confidential matters, including personalities, outside of school circles;
 - (ii) discussing administrative, interdepartmental and interschool problems in the presence of pupils; and
 - (iii) discussing problems with those who cannot assist in the solution.

3.5 Team Work:

- (a) Teacher Assistants are allocated to schools or programs, not to students. While some Teacher Assistants may be scheduled to work with specific students, they are required to work where the principal, or his or her designate, assigns them. In school situations where there are particularly challenging students and more than one Teacher Assistant is assigned to a program, it is expected that they will share in the provision of services for each student.
- (b) The Teacher Assistant works as part of a collaborative team and must accept the responsibility of a positive team member. The classroom or Learning Assistance Teacher develops all special education programming; however, parents, Teacher Assistants and other involved personnel shall be given the opportunity to have input into the program. Teacher Assistants are not to be responsible for devising or changing a program for students. They assist teachers in providing education service.

3.6 Student Self Concept:

- (a) Students have one important common need, the need to earn approval and encouragement. It is necessary to establish educational programs in such a way that students may experience success at small, sequential tasks. In order that students recognize this growth, it is necessary that they be praised. As the student gains self-confidence, so will she/he gain as a learner?
- (b) It is often difficult for the teacher to notice the little successes of each student. The Teacher Assistant can provide an invaluable service by providing encouragement and praise, and reinforcing all learning.

Teacher Assistant Handbook

3.7 Student Advocacy: The Teacher Assistant should see herself/himself as an advocate for the rights of all students. The rights of all students should be promoted. All students have the right to an appropriate education and equality of benefit from the school. It is generally held that the ideal for each student is to be able to self-advocate and handle most life situations as independently as possible.

3.8 Working with the Entire Staff: Although Teacher Assistants may work with only a few classroom teachers and students; they are encouraged to get to know the entire school staff. The Teacher Assistant is also encouraged to view the school staff as a larger unified team and to interact, at some point, with each staff member, if only informally through staff functions. There are many benefits to being part of a unified staff.

3.9 Student Assessment: The formal assessment of each student is the responsibility of the teacher. Teacher Assistants should, indeed, be part of the assessment process, and assist the teacher with gathering the necessary information. Each Teacher should discuss with his or her Teacher Assistants a plan for student assessment, and precisely how the data will be gathered.

3.10 Abuse:

- (a) A close working and trust relationship often develops between a Teacher Assistant and student. Because of this trust a student may disclose information regarding abuse, sexual, physical or otherwise. All disclosures must immediately be brought forward to the teacher.
- (b) The Teacher Assistant should also take care to not place herself/himself in situations where she/he could be falsely accused of abuse. It is recommended that the Teacher Assistant discuss with her/his supervisor and, if necessary, the parents any concerns she/he has regarding this issue.

3.11 Student Independence:

- (a) Teacher Assistants must guard against the tendency to perform tasks for the student that the student is able to do for herself/himself. It must be understood that independence is a necessary prerequisite to eventual self-determination and self-advocacy.
- (b) It is necessary to allow the student to persevere in a task if the student is to be successful and gain the self-esteem and feeling of independence, which this success brings.
- (c) The student, however, must not be allowed to experience prolonged and repeated frustration. Should this happen, it may be necessary to look at partial participation, peer coaching or restructuring the task.

SECTION 4.0 – TEACHER ASSISTANT – CODE OF ETHICS

4.1 Confidentiality:

- (a) A Teacher Assistant operates in a position of trust. Personal information pertaining to students must be kept confidential. Children's actions, responses, progress or problems at school are not for sharing in the community.
- (b) Conversations between parents, teachers and students in the school are confidential. Refrain from discussing these outside the school. Refer any concerns to the Teaching Team.

Teacher Assistant Handbook

4.2 Communication:

- (a) Parents of children you work with may consult you regarding their progress. Always direct parent concerns to the classroom teacher. It is the school's responsibility to inform parents when children are receiving tutorial assistance.
- (b) If problems or concerns arise, first discuss them with the appropriate staff member and, if necessary, the Teaching Team.
- (c) Teacher Assistants are given an e-mail account. As such, they are expected to use it regularly (daily).

4.3 Dependability: The school relies on your support. Follow through on tasks by attending to scheduled times and please give notice of absence whenever possible.

4.4 Respect for Others:

- (a) Children learn from watching you. Practicing patience and understanding towards the children and staff helps learner's value and apply these qualities.
- (b) Teacher assistants deserve to be treated with respect by staff and students. If student behaviour/language is inappropriate and a request for change ignored, seek the assistance of a teacher or principal. Administering discipline at school is a teacher's responsibility.

4.5 Responsibilities:

- (a) The Teaching Team is accountable for facilitating, monitoring, evaluating and providing continuity for the success of the teacher assistant program.
- (b) Staff is committed to welcoming teacher assistant, informing them about their tasks, providing materials, encouraging their initiatives and celebrating their efforts.
- (c) Teacher assistant are committed to respecting school rules and procedures, performing assigned tasks to the best of their ability, working cooperatively with all staff and seeking clarification when necessary.

4.6 Teacher Assistant – Confidentiality Agreement: Prior to being assigned Teacher Assistants duties in a DND Dependants School Overseas, the principal will review the Teacher Assistants Handbook with you and ask you to sign the Teachers Assistant – *Confidentiality Agreement* which may be found at Annex J to this OSAP.200.11.1

4.7 Teacher Assistants Handbook: Teacher Assistants handbook – a resource handbook is available and may be obtained by contracting the Canadian School Principal

SECTION 5.0 – SALARY/BENEFITS PACKAGE

CLASSIFICATION	RATE OF PAY
Non-instructional TA • Bus Supervisor	See Annex A to OSAP 200.11.1 – Salary/Benefits Package for Teacher Assistants

Teacher Assistant Handbook

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mid Day Meal Assistant • Swimming Program Assistant 	
<p>Instructional TA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kindergarten Assistant • Elementary Assistant • Secondary Assistant • Library assistant • FFL and EFL Assistants • Technology Assistant 	<p>See Annex A to OSAP 200.11.1 – Salary/Benefits Package for Teacher Assistants</p>
<p>Note 1: Included in the daily rate and pro rated per hour rate is \$2.00 per diem (or \$0.29/hr) paid in lieu of benefits (sick leave + employer’s contribution to insurance) and 4% for vacation/holiday pay. Instructional and non-instructional Teacher Assistants shall receive a salary increment on the anniversary date of their employment with the DND Dependents Schools Overseas. The maximum is three increments.</p>	
<p>Maximum hours that may be worked per day: up to 7 hours per day/35 hours per week. Hours authorized by DGCB/DEM on individual basis. Maximum number of teaching day’s preschool year: up to 194.</p>	