



VOLUNTEERS HANDBOOK

Reference: OSAP 200.09.1

Volunteering in DND Schools



SHAPE
INTERNATIONAL
SCHOOL



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SECTION 1: PURPOSE AND PHILOSOPHY

1.1 Purpose

1.1.1 Welcome to the growing ranks of school volunteers. Through our school leaders, we hope to encourage increased participation and partnership in our local school community. For the children to reach their full educational, physical, emotional and social potential requires the commitment and involvement of all the members of the community: students, teachers, parents, guardians, community organizations and school administrators.

1.1.2 We recognize the importance of community involvement and volunteerism and many staff members contribute endless hours of volunteer time. The purpose of volunteers is not to replace the work of the teacher, but rather to assist the administration and staff in improving the quality of the school environment.

1.1.3 Volunteers do make a difference! Volunteer participation will be an opportunity for you to share with others in the enrichment of education for our students. You will discover the rewards of helping students achieve their personal best and at the same time gain useful experience yourself. We hope as well that the experience of volunteering in our schools will offer you a greater awareness of the variety of challenges and opportunities confronting our education system.

1.2 Philosophy

- (a) Structured programs in schools provide the optimum learning experience for students, teachers and parents.
- (b) Research indicates that parents volunteerism in schools enhances student self-esteem, increases academic achievement and cognitive development and improves student behaviour and attendance.
- (c) Teachers come to see parents as valued partners in extending and enriching the educational program. Teacher morale and job satisfaction improve through consistent support and cooperation with parents.
- (d) In addition, parents come to know they make a difference in the school through contributions of time and talent. The volunteer program serves as an outlet to utilize skills

and develop more positive attitudes about oneself and as a resource to acquire new knowledge about the education process and child development.

- (e) Staff recognizes volunteers as friends and partners in developing a quality learning environment. Teachers invite volunteers to become aware of the major responsibilities and procedures that are common throughout the school. Continuity and consistency are crucial to building a community guided by purpose and expectations.

SECTION 2: VOLUNTEER CODE OF ETHICS

2.1 Confidentiality

- (a) A volunteer 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.

2.2 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) Voluntarism in the school must not be used as an opportunity for parent-teacher conferences. Teachers need recess and lunch breaks; arrange appointments for other times.

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

2.4 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) Volunteers 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.
- (c) While volunteering in school, respect your own child's independence. Children may feel restricted if additional attention is given by volunteering parents.

2.5 Responsibilities

- (a) The Teaching Team is accountable for facilitating, monitoring, evaluating and providing continuity for the success of the volunteer program.
- (b) Staff is committed to welcoming volunteers, informing them about their tasks, providing materials, encouraging their initiatives and celebrating their efforts.

- (c) Volunteers 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.

SECTION 3: WHAT DO VOLUNTEERS DO?

3.1 Volunteers perform many different tasks in the DND Dependants Schools Overseas, such as:

- (a) Computer support
- (b) Resource room support
- (c) Site plan committees
- (d) Classroom
 - (i) serving as Home Room Representative
 - (ii) preparing curriculum materials
 - (iii) helping students read, coaching with projects/games
- (e) Field trips
- (f) Fund raising
- (g) Special events
- (h) Choir
- (i) Library support
 - (i) helping with automation/circulation
 - (ii) assisting with resources
 - (iii) preparing displays
 - (iv) repairing books
- (j) Photocopying and stapling
- (k) Reading programs
- (l) Assisting with playground supervision
- (m) Assisting teachers with teaching materials
- (n) Classroom cleanup
- (o) Coaching
- (p) Guest speakers
- (q) Advisory committees
- (r) Project work for staff
- (s) School beautification
- (t) Tutoring
- (u) Communications (telephone committees/newsletters/flyers)
- (v) Health programs
- (w) Chaperones
- (x) Clerical Duties
- (y) typing, duplicating, filing and collating material
- (z) making charts/teaching materials
- (aa) School Committee

SECTION 4: WHAT SHOULD A SCHOOL VOLUNTEER EXPECT?

4.1 A school volunteer should:

- (a) Be made to feel that the assistance given is worthwhile and contributes to the overall value of the program in which they are participating.
- (b) Be treated with respect and consideration by all students and staff.

- (c) Be given a suitable assignment in line with their areas of interest, skills, and, if possible, convenience of location.
- (d) Be given clear instructions and any training necessary for particular volunteer assignments.
- (e) Be given proper orientation to the school with introductions to key personnel and information provided as to parking, storage of personal items, washroom and coffee/lunch facilities.
- (f) Be provided with direct support from staff if difficulties arise.

SECTION 5: WHAT IS EXPECTED OF A SCHOOL VOLUNTEER?

5.1 A school volunteer has the following responsibilities:

- (a) to remember that the principal has ultimate responsibility for all personnel, policy and programs in his/her school, including volunteers;
- (b) to follow the policies of the school (i.e. signing-in procedures where requested, local school behaviour codes);
- (c) to be reliable. Accepting a school volunteer assignment means a regular commitment to be there - promptly and on schedule. Also, notifying the school in advance if you do have to be absent;
- (d) to assist under the direction of qualified staff following their instruction closely. Work only with those staff members who request your help and work only with pupils referred to by these teachers;
- (e) to remember that volunteers are in the school to assist and supplement – not replace the role of paid staff;
- (f) when asked, to offer constructive feedback to staff on your experience as a volunteer and make good use of their evaluation of your performance;
- (g) to remember you are a role model for students and the school community. Please maintain the highest standards of confidentiality and ethics.

SECTION 6: GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEERS

6.1 Suggested guidelines to assist with volunteer:

- (a) A school volunteer is not a teacher or an educational programming assistant, not a therapist or a counsellor, but first of all a friend who accepts the students as they are. The volunteer can convey by his/her interest, attitude and sincerity that the student is a worthwhile person. Only when people feel good about themselves are they able to learn.
- (b) Ask questions freely about programs, policies and equipment at a time appropriate both for the staff member and for yourself. Follow the staff person's established procedures. Talk to the teacher about any difficulties at appropriate times, not in front of students or parents.
- (c) Share your experiences and talents. Let the teacher know in what you excel (telling stories, singing, playing instruments, handcrafts, computer use, photography, etc.)
- (d) Try to learn the names of students.
- (e) Help students to tackle their work but do not do their work for them. If they get off-track, help them get back on in a tactful manner.
- (f) Work at the student's level; sit or stand with him/her. Show your interest and involvement.
- (g) Speak in a positive way to students – point out the things they have done right, the things they do well. Rushing them or nagging causes more problems than it solves. Belittling a person or making comparisons is harmful.

- (h) Remind students of appropriate behaviour if they are disruptive or break rules. Show by example a calm, responsible attitude for dealing with problems. Remember though that corrective discipline is the responsibility of the principal and the teaching staff.

SECTION 7.0 – STUDENT BEHAVIOUR AND DISCIPLINE

7.1 An approach to student discipline: The DND Dependants Schools Overseas has a clearly defined policy on student behaviour and discipline. The school strives to provide a supportive, caring and orderly climate that will enable students to develop skills that can help them achieve their full potential intellectually, physically and socially, in accordance with the School’s mission statement. The purpose of the Staff School Policy is to describe an approach to student discipline and to specify the procedure applicable to student suspensions. Good school discipline means a sense of order prevailing in the classroom, throughout the building and on the school grounds. The sense of order offers security and comfort as well as a background for teaching and learning. Discipline should proactively encourage and acknowledge good behaviour and support actions, which promote the pursuit of the best possible learning climate. The DND Dependants School Overseas Code of Conduct will therefore incorporate strategies for fostering, recognizing and rewarding positive behaviour. Finally, school discipline is a process involving several partners in education; namely, the DND Dependants Schools Overseas, the educators, the parents and guardians, the students and the community. By working together, these partners can create, in each school, a teaching and learning environment that allows every student to reach his/her potential. Volunteers should be made aware of the Safe Schools Policy and the Code of Conduct in order to successfully support the efforts of the school staff.

SECTION 8: VOLUNTEERS AS MENTORS/HELPERS

8.1 “A Position of Trust”: Volunteers who work in a one-to-one relationship with students has a unique opportunity to help these students build feelings of competence and self-esteem, thus creating an environment for enhanced achievement. But with opportunity comes responsibility. As a student begins to realize that there is someone who does care, who takes a personal interest in the individual, that student may show increasing trust in the volunteer. It is essential that nothing happen to damage that trust.

8.2 This means that the volunteer must:

- (a) be a genuine friend and role model for the student,
- (b) accept the student as an individual,
- (c) follow through on all promised commitments.

SECTION 9; DISCLOSURE OF POSSIBLE ABUSE

9.1 Legal obligation

- (a) It is the legal obligation to report any suspected case of child abuse. If a child indicates to a volunteer that he/she has been or is the victim of abuse, or if a volunteer has strong suspicions that a student may be an abuse victim, the volunteer must inform either the supervising teacher or the principal.
- (b) One of the most difficult things to handle may be when the student who asks the person in whom they have confided to “promise not to tell”. A volunteer cannot make such a promise and should be clear about that to the child. Don’t try to “counsel” the child. Remain merely a sympathetic “listening ear” without being judgmental or trying to offer solutions. Assistance and counselling should come from those professionals with the responsibility and experience to provide it.

SECTION 10: SPEAKING ABOUT CONFIDENTIALITY

10.1 Confidentiality

- (a) Perhaps one of the greatest obstacles in the path of effective use of volunteers, especially parent volunteers, is the worry on the part of teachers and principals regarding the possible misuse of privileged information. Once anyone begins to work in a school setting, he/she becomes privy to knowledge about children's behaviour patterns, academic ability, emotional maturity, relationships with others, etc. In some cases, information of this nature is imparted in order that the volunteer might work more effectively with the child. In other cases, it is simply acquired in the course of frequent contact in the school.
- (b) In addition, volunteers are in a position to learn more about staff members than would normally be learned from their "public image". One also forms personal opinions about the professional competency of the individual teachers and principals.
- (c) There is nothing wrong with the volunteer possessing such knowledge and arriving at personal conclusions. This knowledge or these opinions, however, should never be shared in the community or with anyone who has no legitimate need to know. Similarly, care must be taken not to make comments harmful to the reputation of any pupil, professional or other volunteer.
- (d) If problems develop, the line of communication regarding a situation in the school is always first with the staff member concerned and then, if necessary, with the principal.
- (e) A volunteer has every right to expect that his or her participation will be treated with the same confidentiality and respect.

10.2 Volunteers – Confidentiality Agreement:

- (a) Prior to volunteering in a DND Dependants School Overseas, the principal will review the Volunteers Handbook with you and asking you to sign the *Volunteers – Confidentiality Agreement* which may be found at Annex A to this OSAP 200.09.1

SECTION 11: RECOGNITION

11.1 Volunteering is "the giving of time, energy, and concern. It is an honorable and cherished responsibility of our society".

11.2 The staff wishes to thank each and every volunteer for their participation and dedication to the students of DND Dependants Schools Overseas.

11.3 Together we can make each child's years in the DND Dependants Schools Overseas a solid foundation upon which to build a lifetime of successful achievement.

SECTION 12: VOLUNTEER GUIDELINES

12.1 Volunteers are asked to report to the main office to sign in and receive a volunteer tag. Coats can be left in the staff room. Please do not leave valuables unattended in the building. Contact the staff member with whom you are working to receive directions and materials.

12.2 As valued members of the school, parents are welcome to use the staff room for coffee and tea. Please be sensitive to the fact that the staff room is often a workroom for teachers. Children are not allowed in that area.

12.3 Please make other arrangements for siblings. Experience has shown that trying to divide your attention between the volunteer tasks at hand and keeping an eye on the children, does a disservice to both. Children in the office area and workrooms pose a safety concern. The workroom space/materials are not for children's use.

SECTION 13: OCCUPATION HEALTH AND SAFETY

13.1 First Aid: Volunteers need to be aware of "Hygiene Procedures for Handling Blood and Other Body Fluids of All Persons".

- (a) Wear gloves
- (b) Alert administration and/or teacher
- (c) Attend to the injury or spill
- (d) Wash hands before removing gloves and again after removing gloves.

First Aid kits are available in several locations in the school. As well, staff members have been trained in First Aid.

13.2 Treatment of Individuals: Abuse, harassment, or bullying of students, volunteers, parents or anyone else, will not be tolerated.

13.3 Disaster Plan: Familiarize yourself with the School Disaster Plan, including class fire drill and lock down procedures. If you are working with children away from their classrooms, lead them out of the building by the nearest exit.