



# Volunteers in HCDSB Schools - A Parent/Guardian Guide

***Faith in action is LOVE – and love in action is SERVICE***

*- St. Teresa of Calcutta*

Revised December 2023

## **Volunteers in Halton Catholic District School Board Schools**

HCDSB recognizes that parents, guardians and community members offer valuable support to staff in providing learning opportunities for students, assisting in the daily operations of schools, and helping students realize the gifts they have been granted by our Creator God.

Volunteers model caring and cooperative relationships, promote Catholic values and encourage a safe, inclusive, and welcoming learning and working environment.

### **HCDSB Policies and Procedures**

Volunteers in HCDSB schools are required to adhere to all HCDSB policies and procedures applicable to the volunteer role, which also include governing legislation, such as, the Education Act, the Ontario Human Rights Code, and the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA).

### **Eligibility Requirements: Vulnerable Sector Check and Annual Criminal Offence Declaration Form**

- Volunteers must be at least 18 years of age, unless they are in an HCDSB secondary school program (e.g., Co-op; Sports Leadership; Community Service Hours).
- Volunteers 18 years of age and over shall submit a Vulnerable Sector Check (VSC) to the Principal prior to volunteering and every four (4) years thereafter.
- A VSC shall be dated to within 120 days of submission to the Principal.
- A VSC may be provided for more than one school, e.g., elementary and secondary, as long as the VSC meets the eligibility requirements.
- Returning volunteers must complete an Annual Volunteer Criminal Offence Declaration Form before commencing duties at the start of each school year.
- Volunteers are required to inform the Principal immediately of any convictions incurred since the last VSC and/or Annual Volunteer Criminal Offence Declaration Form.
- The Principal may, at any time and at their sole discretion, request a new VSC.

### **HCDSB Code of Conduct**

HCDSB upholds the fundamental beliefs outlined in the [Ontario Code of Conduct for the Education Sector](#) and the rights and responsibilities of all under the [Ontario Human Rights Code](#).

It is the policy of the HCDSB to provide a safe, welcoming, and inclusive working and learning environment for staff and students.

HCDSB's Progressive Discipline and Safety in Schools policy and the Ontario Code of Conduct apply to students, teachers, staff members, parents, guardians, and volunteers, whether they are on

school property, in virtual environments, on school buses, at school-related events or activities, or in other circumstances that take place off school property or outside the regular school day that could have an impact on the school climate.

### **Volunteer Rights & Responsibilities**

The act of volunteering recognizes that community service is an essential contribution to the growth and success of our students, schools and school communities.

Volunteers are granted rights and charged with responsibilities as part of their role.

#### ***Volunteers have the right to:***

- be treated with respect and dignity by staff, students and others in accordance with related HCDSB policies and procedures
- sufficient training, orientation, and information regarding HCDSB policies and procedures specific to the volunteer role
- share their skills and provide input into volunteering opportunities and/or needs
- request information from the Principal and/or designate to support their role
- terminate volunteer activities at any time

#### ***Volunteers have the responsibility to:***

- treat students, staff and others with respect and dignity, and in accordance with HCDSB policies and procedures
- maintain the privacy and confidentiality of all student and staff related information
- follow the directions of the Principal/supervisor, inform them of any issues that may arise, seek clarification and ask for assistance as required for their role
- respect the defined boundaries of volunteer tasks and/or events
- feel comfortable with the type of activities being performed
- perform activities in a manner consistent with the expectations and norms of the school/board
- provide a reasonable standard of service in performing volunteer activities

### **Volunteer Role**

Volunteers:

- are not responsible for, or involved in, the delivery of curriculum or extra-curricular programs without staff supervision

- are not involved in the evaluation of students, school personnel or programs
- are not given unnecessary access to the personal information of students, their families, or staff
- perform their role in accordance with HCDSB's legal obligation to supervise and protect students to the standard of care of a prudent parent in similar circumstances

## **Health & Safety**

Volunteers are required to:

- follow Principal/supervisor instructions during fire and evacuation drills. The students and staff have rehearsed for these eventualities
- report any health or safety incidents to the Principal and/or supervisor immediately even if there appears to be no injury to self, others, or, damage to equipment
- report any student discipline concerns to a staff person
- report any first aid incidents immediately to the Principal and/or supervisor to ensure school protocols and procedures can be followed by an informed staff member
- Volunteers are not covered by WSIB, and their personal property including vehicle, is not covered by HCDSB insurance.

## **Volunteer Coaches/Experts**

[HCDSB Procedure VI-71 Concussion Safety](#) provides school administrators, school staff, appropriate others (e.g., coaches, volunteers) and parents/guardians with information, requirements, and resources in the training, awareness, prevention, identification, and management of concussions, in accordance with PPM 158 School Board Policies on Concussion; Rowan's Law (Concussion Safety) 2018, and the Education Act.

A diagnosed concussion can have a mild or an extensive impact on a student's learning – cognitively, physically, emotionally and/or socially.

All volunteers involved in intramural/extracurricular sports are required to review Procedure VI-71 Concussion Safety and direct any questions to the Principal.

## **Duty to Report**

It is the legal obligation of every Ontario resident to report any case of suspected child abuse to the Children's Aid Society (CAS).

Where, in the course of volunteer activities with the HCDSB, the volunteer believes (based on facts, circumstances or disclosure) there are reasonable grounds to suspect that a student is, or may be in need of protection, the volunteer shall immediately:

- notify the Principal or designate
- contact the Halton Children's Aid Society (905-333-4441) to **report** the facts and circumstances there is reasonable suspicion the student is in need of protection
- the volunteer may ask the Principal to support them to make the call.

Advising the Principal or designate does not absolve a volunteer of the legal obligation to personally report to Halton CAS. No other person is to report on behalf of the volunteer.

Advising the Halton CAS does not absolve the volunteer of the obligation to notify the Principal of the report.

### **Privacy & Confidentiality**

HCDSB volunteers will uphold complete privacy and confidentiality requirements regarding any staff member or student.

Under no circumstance should any information regarding students or staff be shared with others in the community. All information shall remain private and be held in strict confidence.

Volunteers are not permitted access to any student information without the explicit consent of the Principal. Accessing any student records or personal information would be a breach of privacy and confidentiality.

Volunteers must not express any comments harmful to the reputation of any student or staff member.

### **Volunteer Drivers**

Volunteer drivers must complete the *"Authorization to Transport Students Participating in School Events Form"* if transporting students to school/board approved events.

Use of a volunteer's car must be authorized by the Principal.

Refer to [VI-14 Transportation of Students in Private Vehicles Driven by Volunteer Drivers](#) for more information.

Volunteers are not covered by WSIB, and their personal property including vehicle, is not covered by HCDSB insurance.

**References:**

[HCDSB Code of Conduct](#)

[O. Reg. 298 Operation of Schools](#)

[Policy II-37 Volunteers in Catholic Schools](#)

[Procedure VI-108 Volunteers in Catholic Schools](#)

[Policy II-20 Child Abuse](#)

[Policy II-42 Medical Health Conditions](#)

[Policy II-45 Equity and Inclusive Education](#)

[Procedure VI-14 Transportation of Students in Private Vehicles Driven by Volunteer Drivers](#)