



HWDSB

Volunteer Handbook

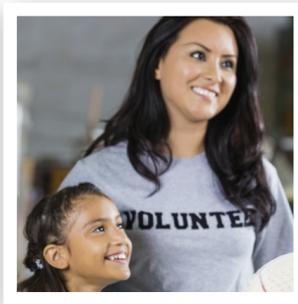


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Message from HWDSB

Thank you for volunteering your time in supporting our students in Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB).

HWDSB recognizes the invaluable role that our volunteers play in supporting student achievement and well-being. Your volunteer expertise enriches and expands learning opportunities for our students and greatly advances HWDSB's vision of all students achieving their full potential.

This volunteer guide is intended to help provide clarification and direction regarding your role as volunteer within HWDSB. Please feel free to contact your school principal should you have any questions or concerns regarding your volunteer experience. HWDSB values relationships with our volunteers and your input in providing relevant and responsive programming for our students.

We wish you all the best in your volunteering and thank you once again for offering your time for the benefit of our students.

Sincerely,



Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board

Terminology

Volunteer: An individual who agrees to undertake, without pay, a designated task that supports a student, a classroom, a school or an HWDSB system initiative. A Volunteer may act as a Coach/Expert for extra-curricular activities if they have satisfied all HWDSB requirements for screening, training and certification.

Student Volunteer: A volunteer who is an HWDSB student. To align with the Ministry of Education’s requirements and subject to applicable exceptions, the following volunteer activities of students shall not apply towards Community Involvement Hours:

- Any activity required by a class or course in which the student is enrolled (e.g. co-operative education portion of a course, job shadowing, work experience).
- Any activity during regular class time on a school day. An activity during lunch breaks or a ‘spare’ period is permissible.

Extracurricular Non-Staff Volunteer: A volunteer, who does not work for HWDSB, who supports extra-curricular activities, who has satisfied all HWDSB requirements for screening, training and certification, and who may act as an advisor or coach/expert.

Supervision: Overseeing an activity for safety, guidance, regulation or direction.

Advisor: An HWDSB staff member or extracurricular non-staff volunteer who provides supervision over an extracurricular activity.

Coach/Expert: An HWDSB staff member or extracurricular non-staff volunteer who provides direct instruction or expertise for a specific extracurricular activity. Coaches have also completed the training/certification required by the Ontario Physical and Health Education Association (OPHEA) or any recognized athletic governing authority.

Vulnerable Sector Screening: Used for applicants seeking employment and/or volunteering with vulnerable individuals, this is the collection of offence information (convictions, non-convictions and other relevant police contact information available) from a local police agency's records and other records where authorized. This includes sexual offence convictions for which the individual has received a pardon authorized by the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness.

Offence Declaration: A form each volunteer completes annually to list any Criminal Code convictions for which a pardon has not been granted since the volunteer last submitted a Vulnerable Sector Screening reviewed by the school principal.

Parent: This includes parents, guardians and caregivers.

Volunteer Driver: Drivers authorized by the principal who agree to transport students in their vehicle and meet requirements in the *Educational Excursion Volunteer Driver Form*.

*(Sources: HWDSB Policy No. 2.11 Volunteer, Directive for Policy 2.11 Volunteer)
These documents can be accessed by the link: www.hwdsb.on.ca/about/policies/ (see appendix for details) or through your school principal.*

How Do I Volunteer?

Let a school principal know that you want to volunteer. Principals are responsible for finding volunteers who meet the needs of their students. To find volunteers, principals consider the skills, knowledge and backgrounds of applicants. HWDSB listens to and responds to students interests whenever possible.

What Do I Need To Do To Volunteer?

- Talk with the principal about your interests and expertise.
- Complete a mandatory Vulnerable Sector Screening before you begin volunteering through Hamilton Police Services.

How To Complete a Vulnerable Sector Screening:

1. Complete the PDF form found on the Hamilton Police Service website: <http://www.hamiltonpolice.on.ca/HPS/Services/Records/Criminal+Record+Check.htm>
 2. Bring the completed form to Records Business Centre at 155 King William Street in Hamilton
 3. Or complete online at: www.policiesolutions.ca/checks/services/hamilton
- After receiving your police clearance, show the original to the principal to review. Keep the original document, which is valid for three years.
 - Each year, your school principal will ask you to complete an Offence Declaration form to declare any Criminal Code convictions since the last Vulnerable Sector screen.
 - Provide two references that you permit the school to contact.
 - Once accepted, complete an orientation training session.

Volunteer Roles and Responsibilities:

As a Volunteer, I:	As a Volunteer, I am NOT:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide new opportunities, teach new skills and build knowledge for students in HWDSB • Strengthen relationships with the school community and students • Maintain confidence of students' personal information that is shared while working with students • Work with school staff to ensure that my work respects staff Collective Agreements • Act as an HWDSB representative by following Board policies, and codes for dress and behaviour • Report incidents of misbehaviour and bullying to staff advisor or school principal • Work with my principal who may assign further duties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discipline of students • Evaluation of students • Identification/diagnosis of student learning strengths and difficulties • Able to be the sole supervisor for some Physical Education/Sports Athletics and need to work with a Staff Advisor. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Staff Advisor must be present for Hamilton-Wentworth Interscholastic Athletic Council (HWIAC), Southern Ontario Secondary Schools Association (SOSSA), Ontario Federation of School Athletic Associations (OFSAA) competitions • A Staff Advisor will accompany and be responsible for teams when participating in out-of-town or overnight competitions

Should any issues arise that cannot be resolved, the Principal holds the responsibility to find a more suitable placement or notify the volunteer of their dismissal.

Can I Drive Students As A Volunteer?

Driving students is not an expectation of volunteering. Driving students is considered on a case by case basis.

Should driving students be required, the school will provide a Volunteer Driver Form, which indicates agreement to drive students. The principal provides final approval. A driver must:

- Be 18 years of age or older
- Hold a valid Ontario Class G License
- Meet HWDSB's required insurance amount

For more information, please consult your school principal.

If I have an accident, am I covered under HWDSB insurance?

Volunteer drivers are not covered under HWDSB's Fleet Automobile insurance. If you are in an accident while driving students, you should contact your personal insurance company.

HWDSB's negligence insurance will apply to volunteers participating in a school-sponsored activity. This insurance does not include a loss-of-income provision if an injured volunteer loses time at work.

Volunteers are not provided with Workers' Safety Insurance Board (WSIB) or accident insurance through HWDSB.

HWDSB's liability insurance will protect volunteers supervising students for in school or co-curricular activities.

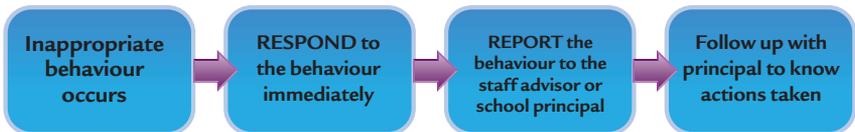
Some Helpful Hints!

- Build relationships with each student you are working with.
- Know their names and learn something about them.
- Help students in your group build relationships with each other.
- Keep your eyes on the children at all times. Do not leave them unsupervised. If you need a break, ask another adult to watch them!
- Sweat the small stuff – do not let the small behaviours go by or else those behaviours have a way of getting bigger!
- Children and youth are always watching and listening. Be sure to model the behaviours that you expect from them.
- Report inappropriate behaviours or anything that you find of concern to the principal.

HWDSB GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

The following guiding principles are based on HWDSB policies and policy directives. These documents can be accessed through the link: www.hwdsb.on.ca/about/policies/ (see appendix for details) or through your school principal.

We know that you will have an enjoyable experience with students in HWDSB. However, should an issue with or between students happen or students show inappropriate behaviour, the best way to deal with the student is as follows:



Code of Conduct

Guiding Principle:

Respect, Civility and Responsible Citizenship:

All members of the school community must recognize that a whole school approach is required and that they must contribute to a positive impact on the climate of the school. This includes:

- Demonstrating respect
- Treating one another with dignity
- Showing proper care and regard
- Modelling appropriate behaviour”

(HWDSB Code of Conduct Policy 6.3 - paraphrased).

What does this mean to me as a volunteer?

Volunteers play a key role in keeping students safe through modelling respectful and responsible behaviours. In your role, you have the ability to create a sense of self-worth through the promotion of a positive and safe environment for students to be responsible citizens who support one another.

How can I do this?

- Get to know the schools Code of Conduct
- Give clear behaviour expectations and be consistent with enforcing your expectations
- Get involved if you see a student not treating other students, staff or volunteers with respect
- Encourage students to respect student and school property

Safe Schools

Guiding Principle:

“Every student is entitled to a safe and caring learning environment in which to learn. The right to be safe requires taking responsibility for demonstrating acceptable standards of behaviour including respect, civility, responsible citizenship, and safety” *(HWDSB Safe Schools Pillar Policy 6.0).*

What does this mean to me as a volunteer?

Safety for all students, staff and volunteers is of utmost importance. Volunteers need to do everything in his/her capacity to ensure the safety and well-being of all members of the school community. Furthermore, volunteers are expected to model mutual relationships that value, respect and promote citizenship amongst peers.

How can I do this?

- Model how to respect diversity of students, staff and volunteers (culture, ethnicity, ability, language, gender identity, etc.)
- Help students build relationships with other students (e.g., notice if someone is being left out and help them become involved)
- Model encouraging language and positive attitude

Bullying

Guiding Principle:

“Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB) recognizes the importance of healthy relationships and a positive school climate to create a safe, inclusive and caring environment. Bullying will not be accepted on school property, at school related activities, on school buses, or in any other circumstance (e.g. online), where engaging in bullying will have a negative impact on the school climate, or adversely affects a student’s ability to learn” (*HWDSB Bullying Prevention and Intervention, 6.2 of Safe Schools Pillar*).

What does this mean to me as a volunteer?

A school volunteer may encounter conflict and/or bullying among students. All reports of bullying, inappropriate behaviours and incidents need to be taken seriously. If you witness these behaviours, you must report this to the principal, who will follow up. You are not responsible for student discipline. HWDSB staff, students and visitors are also expected to follow the same behaviour guidelines.

How can I do this?

- Be present and do not leave students unattended
- Model respectful relationships
- Respond to all the small behaviours
- Teach students how to talk to their peers about bullying behaviours

Student Behaviour and Discipline:

Guiding Principle:

“All Board employees who work directly with students must respond to all student behaviour that negatively impacts on the school climate” (HWDSB Student Behaviour and Discipline Policy 6.4).

What does this mean to me as a volunteer?

When working with students as a volunteer, you are expected to deal with any behaviours that make other students feel unsafe, disrespected and excluded.

How can I do this?

- Ask the student(s) to stop the inappropriate behaviour
- State what they are doing and explain why it is inappropriate and/or disrespectful
- Ask the student(s) to correct the behaviour by apologizing, rephrasing, explaining their intentions, etc.

Suspension and Expulsion:

Guiding Principle:

“All Board employees who work directly with students must report to the Principal, all student behaviour for which suspension or expulsion may be considered” (HWDSB Student Behaviour and Discipline Policy 6.4).

What does this mean to me as a volunteer?

All incidence, no matter if they are large or small, need to be reported to the principal of the school. This is to ensure that the principal is aware of any activities taking place where a student would be considered for suspension or expulsion. HWDSB staff, students and individuals using the property are also expected to follow these expectations.

As awareness, a list of possible behaviours that would be considered for suspension or expulsion is provided below. **Please note**, you are not responsible for discipline of students you are working with. Your duty is to respond to immediate behaviours and report to the principal or staff member in charge.

SUSPENSION

What is it? Suspension is a decision by a Principal that prohibits a student from attending school or participating in school-related activities for a period of time (this cannot be longer than 20 days).

Possible reasons a principal will consider suspension:

- Threats to physically harm someone else
- Possession and under influence of alcohol
- Possession and under influence of drugs
- Swearing at a person in a position of authority
- Vandalism that causes extensive damage to the school
- Bullying behaviour
- Any activity within an HWDSB policy which a principal may suspend a student.

EXPULSION

What is it? Expulsion is a decision made by an Expulsion Hearing Committee of the Board that prohibits a student from attending his/her own school or all schools of the Board, and from participating in school-related activities (must be 21 days or more).

Possible reasons a principal will consider expulsion:

- Possible reasons a principal will consider expulsion:
- Possession of a weapon (knife, firearm, etc.)
- Using a weapon to threaten others
- Physical assault that requires medical treatment
- Sexual assault
- Trafficking weapons or illegal drugs
- Stealing others property
- Any act that is motivated by bias, prejudice, or hate
- Providing alcohol to minors (individuals under the legal age of 19)
- Bullying (if the pupil has been previously suspended for engaging in bullying and the pupil's continuing presence in the school creates an unacceptable risk to the safety of another person).

Managing Interactions with Parents

Guiding Principle:

“Parents are welcomed, encouraged, respected, recognized and valued as collaborative partners in their children’s learning and development” (HWDSB Parent Engagement Policy No. 2.2).

What does this mean to me as a volunteer?

During your volunteering, you may have interactions with parents. HWDSB recognizes and values collaborative partnerships with all members of the school community. As a volunteer, you are expected to model open, inclusive and respectful interactions with members of the school community at all times. Any behaviours that contradict these expectations must immediately be brought to the attention of the school Principal.

How can I do this?

- Create and maintain open communication with all members of the school community
- Model respectful dialogue and relationships with community members
- For inappropriate behaviours, ask the person to stop the unwanted behaviour(s) and remind them of expectations
- If inappropriate behaviours persist or if the situation escalates, remove yourself from the situation and notify the school principal immediately

Respectful Working and Learning Environments

Guiding Principle:

“All members of the school community shall treat one another with dignity, respect, civility, sensitivity and courtesy, especially when there is a disagreement” (HWDSB Respectful Working and Learning Environments: Conflict Prevention and Resolution Directive for Policy 5.3).

What does this mean to me as a volunteer?

As a volunteer, you may encounter conflict with members of the school community. As a representative of HWDSB, you must always model behaviours that are respectful. Any unresolved conflicts that arise during your volunteering must be reported to the school principal.

How can I do this?

- Set clear expectations and model how to respect the diversity of students, staff and volunteers (culture, ethnicity, ability, language, gender identity, etc.)
- For inappropriate behaviours, ask the person to stop the unwanted behaviour(s) and remind them of expectations
- If inappropriate behaviours persist or if the situation escalates, remove yourself from the situation and notify the school principal immediately

Handling of Confidential Student Information

Guiding Principle:

“HWDSB respects and promotes the protection of privacy for all staff and students. HWDSB collects personal information to support the provision of educational services to its students and/or the employment of HWDSB employees” (*HWDSB Privacy and Information Management Policy No. 3.13*).

What does this mean to me as a volunteer?

During your volunteer work, you may have access to personal information of HWDSB students and/or staff. Volunteers must ensure that such information is kept confidential by using it only as directed by the school principal.

How can I do this?

- Keep any confidential information to yourself
- Keep any written documentation in a secure and private place
- Do not copy any private information. Return it to the person who provided it to you (*e.g., school principal*) when you are done with it
- Do not discuss and/or disclose any private information with anyone

Emergency Action Plan

Guiding Principle:

“Advisors are responsible for preparing for and implementing the Emergency Action Plan for each site where the activity will take place and abide by any activity-specific safety guidelines as outlined by the Ontario Physical and Health Education Association” (*HWDSB Volunteer Directive for Policy 2.11 – see Appendix K of Directive for sample Emergency Action Plan*).

What does this mean to me as a volunteer?

Volunteers acting as advisors must prepare and communicate Emergency Action Plans for all extra-curricular activities in which they are providing supervision. The school Principal and advisor will complete the development of the Emergency Action Plan and inform all necessary persons of directives.

How can I do this?

- Get to know the school's Emergency Action Plan in the Student Handbook
- Give clear expectations regarding the Emergency Action Plan to all participants

Health and Safety Related Training

Guiding Principle:

“Members of the school community work together to implement outcomes found in the Healthy School and Workplace Strategy that provide [all members of the school community] with leadership and learning opportunities that promote a healthy learning and working environment” (*HWDSB Healthy School and Workplace Pillar Policy No. 4.0*).

What does this mean to me as a volunteer?

Volunteers will work with the school principal to support the health and safety of all members of the school community. Volunteers will participate in applicable training related to their volunteer work as directed by the school principal (e.g., anaphylaxis, blood borne pathogens). Additional training is available if the principal suggests that this will help support your volunteer work.

How can I do this?

- Participate in any related training as requested by the school principal
- Familiarize yourself with the needs (e.g., medical) of the students' you work while maintaining their confidentiality
- Have all required materials and supports (e.g., First Aid Kit, emergency contact numbers) with you to ensure the health and safety of all participants

Concussions

Guiding Principle:

“School staff / volunteers will understand and follow Concussion Directive; attend and complete concussion training as part of the annual compliance training; be able to recognize signs, symptoms and respond appropriately in the event of a concussion” (*HWDSB Concussion Directive for Policy No. 4.2 – Medical Health Supports*).

What does this mean to me as a volunteer?

Volunteers must be informed of and follow protocols as indicated on the Concussion Directive. Volunteers will attend any related concussion training as directed by the school Principal.

How can I do this?

- Participate in any concussion related training as requested by the school principal
- Ensure that you have taken every precaution for safe participation of students (e.g., proper protective equipment, instructions, supervision)
- Familiarize yourself with any applicable medical information (e.g., concussion history)

Physical Education (Ontario Physical Health and Education Association - OPHEA)

Guiding Principles:

“Volunteer Coaches/Experts must meet the OPHEA Criteria for ‘Non-Staff Coaches/Experts’ (see Appendix F of HWDSB Volunteer Directive) including the completion of the ‘Volunteer Coaching/Expert Application Form’ (see Appendix G of HWDSB Volunteer Directive) and interview by the principal or designate.”

“All activities included in the OPHEA Guidelines (see Ontario Physical and Health Education Association Guidelines) require a minimum of one Advisor and one Coach/Expert” (*HWDSB Volunteer Directive for Policy 2.11*).

What does this mean to me as a volunteer?

Volunteers of OPHEA designated activities are responsible for meeting the volunteer requirements as listed above. Volunteers must ensure that proper supervision, equipment and practices are present during all extra-curricular activities. Volunteers will consult with the school principal and other school staff to satisfy all supervision requirements.

How can I do this?

- Ensure that you have taken every precaution for safe participation by the students (e.g., proper protective equipment, instructions, supervision)
- Immediately stop any behaviours that put students safety in risk
- Immediately stop any activities should the conditions for safe participation change (e.g., inclement weather, poor field conditions)
- Have all required materials and supports (e.g., First Aid Kit, emergency contact numbers) with you to ensure the health and safety of all participants

Modeling and Encouraging Sportsmanship

Sportsmanship includes, “fair play, respect for opponents, and polite behaviour by someone who is competing in a sport or other competition” (*Merriam-Webster Dictionary*).

Guiding Principles:

“Volunteers will follow dress and behaviour codes as established by the school, will report to the school office on arrival, and, if applicable, will wear an identification badge while in the school” (*HWDSB Policy No. 7.16 – Volunteer Participation in Board Activities*).

“Coaches will encourage their players to conduct themselves at all times in a sportsmanlike behaviour, promoting desirable attitudes and behaviour – especially leadership, cooperation and the pursuit of excellence. Coaches will reprimand their players for unsportsmanlike behaviour” (*Constitution of the Hamilton-Wentworth Interscholastic Athletic Council – September 2013*).

What does this mean to me as a volunteer?

Volunteers will model and encourage appropriate school behaviour at all times. Volunteers will demonstrate HWDSB values of equity, inclusion and student development during their volunteer time.

Volunteers will work with school staff as appropriate to ensure the continued development of sportsmanlike behaviours among student-athletes.

How can I do this?

- Set clear expectations and model how to respect the diversity of students, staff and volunteers (culture, ethnicity, ability, language, gender identity, etc.)
- For inappropriate behaviours, ask the person to stop the unwanted behaviour(s) and remind them of expectations
- If inappropriate behaviours persist or if the situation escalates, notify the school principal and/or teacher-advisor and work with them in developing a plan to support the student

Final Notes:

Thank you once again for volunteering your time with HWDSB. We hope that you benefit from this experience as much as the students and school communities you serve. As a volunteer, you are part of a team in supporting positive student development. Know you are not alone. Please seek clarification, ask questions and offer your input. You are encouraged to keep this guide handy to support your volunteer work.

ACCESSING POLICIES AND DIRECTIVES:

Work in HWDSB is informed by policies and directives. As volunteer, you may wish to access these documents. To do so:

1. Visit the Board’s website: www.hwdsb.on.ca
2. From the homepage click on “[Policies](#)”
3. From the Policies page, access policies and directives on the following topics:
 - Equity and Diversity
 - Engagement
 - Finance and Administration
 - Healthy Schools and Workplace
 - Human Resources
 - Safe Schools
 - Student Achievement



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