

# Volunteering

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## *Welcome to Entre Lacs School*

Volunteers in Canada represent about 180,000 organizations, 6.5 million volunteers and 1.3 million employees. You are now part of this large and generous team! As a volunteer, you can be extremely active in your children's education. Your life experience, your skills and knowledge can be used in a school and contribute to students' well being.

A historical reminder : Entre Lacs School's mission is to promote the growth of francophone education in the community from kindergarten to Grade 12 through a healthy environment that respects and integrates cultural and education differences. It offers an environment that supports the students in their will to get a French education and later choose their professional training in French. One of its missions is also to inform the communities of the South Okanagan of its existence, its services and identity. Entre Lacs School grows and gets more and more support from the community. It is acknowledged as an indispensable element of educative and socio-cultural development of the youth from kindergarten to Grade 12. It is the core of multiculturalism and plays a primary role in gathering the members of the French community in the South Okanagan.

We can be proud indeed! The moving of the elementary and secondary programs of Entre Lacs School from Trout Creek to Penticton in September 2004 was not easy. Thanks to a collective work of the administrative and teaching staff, the parents, the volunteers and the students, the challenge was met. The 83 students from Penticton, Summerland, Naramata, Okanagan Falls, Kaleden and even Oliver could start the new school year with no problem. The school not only had new buildings but also a name "Entre Lacs" which refers to its exceptional geographical situation and maybe also to the bridge it aims to cast between two cultures.

Did you know that the volunteers from Entre Lacs were the most involved of all the schools of the French School Board of BC in 2004?

## Thank you volunteers!

We want to thank all the volunteers who spent some time and still do to serve education. Special thanks to Mrs Lina Roy for her tremendous help the year the school moved. Thank to all of you who will join us to help improve the quality of education in our community.

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## *French School Board*

The French School Board is convinced that educating children is a task that must be shared between members of the staff, parents and the community. The active participation of the parents, as well as the appropriate call to volunteers as resource-people, bring considerable benefit towards the improvement of the intellectual, social, linguistic and cultural skills of the children. Moreover, the participation of volunteers improves the communication and relationship between the school, the parents and the community.

Volunteers are encouraged to participate in activities that benefit the school and for which they are qualified. The French School Board tries to strengthen the link with the community in the safest possible environment for the students.

We have all heard stories we would rather hope had never happened. Unfortunately, time can't be rewound. All we can do today is make sure that such things will not happen again. The top priority must be to try and avoid any abuse, wounds, fraud or other risky situations so as to protect the children, volunteers, school staff and people who take part in the school activities.

# Practical Guide for Volunteers

Being a volunteer for the French School Board of BC means being useful without expecting payment in return.

## Benefits

All the people involved, i.e. the volunteers, the students and the teachers draw some benefits from the work of volunteers:

### To volunteers:



- They are glad to bring an important contribution to the community.
- They get the students' and teachers' recognition and respect.
- They help create a link with the school community.
- They acquire new skills and knowledge.

### To students:



- Their learning environment is made more stimulating thanks to the volunteers' different life experiences, skills and multiple interests.
- They get support and help to overcome obstacles, become more motivated and increase self-confidence.
- They benefit from activities that make the learning process richer.

### To teachers:



- More time for other activities in class.
- Extra help for the students.
- New experiences, skills and interests.
- Groups can be supervised by volunteers.
- Help for developing teaching resources.

## **What is a parent as described in the school law of British Columbia?**

A volunteer is a parent or a person who is committed to helping a school by accomplishing certain tasks in the school without payment. This commitment has to be agreed upon by the school.

This policy does not apply to students or school staff who may volunteer.

*Direction* refers to the principal or the persons at the head of the school.

## **Vulnerable person**

This term refers to a person who finds it difficult to protect him or herself and thus would be more exposed to violence or aggression. A person can be vulnerable because of their age, disability, handicap or temporary or permanent circumstances.

## **What is the role of a volunteer and what is his or her relationship with the school staff?**

A volunteer is a person who deliberately chooses to perform an activity or provide a service to one or more people on behalf of the School Board and the school without being paid in return. Nevertheless services as a volunteer cannot be used to perform activities that would result in replacing a member of the school staff [art. 26.1 (1) and 85 (4) of the School law].

The role of volunteers must be to support the teaching and training personnel in their work. Volunteers must not perform tasks that involve making decisions relative to programs or education. Volunteers cannot be assigned tasks that do not respect the law on students and families' confidentiality. Volunteers should not have access to students' records.

Even if volunteers cannot access these records, they might get to hear some information about members of the school community that are not public. They have to commit to keep this kind of information secret.

## **Divulgence**

If a student mentions a case of abuse or if the volunteer has reason to believe that an abuse has been committed, this must be reported to the teacher in charge of the student, or to the school principal. Volunteers must be aware that all School Board members have the duty to report any case of child abuse to the local service of child protection.

## What you can do with the personnel

Volunteers' tasks vary according to the school needs. Here are some examples of fields in which volunteer services would be appreciated:



- Supervising school clubs
- Training sport teams
- Trips, excursions and special days
- Organizing parties
- Translating documents
- Helping in the preparation of performances
- Decorating
- Preparing snacks
- Sensitizing to sciences
- Preparing lectures
- Raising funds

## Here are some projects or activities that are usually organized in our school



PAC (Parents' Association)	Driving
Canadian Tire Money	Book Fair
Showcase at the municipal library	Christmas dinner
Class representative	Hot meals
Science Fair jury	Race club
Theme baskets	Chess club
Students' Council	Dance club
Campbell soup tags	Year end party
Fund raising	Choir
Talk about your job	Helping students read
Sport days	Translation
Teachers' Week	

## Practical advice

A volunteer is part of an adult team that provides educative resources to students. You have to understand the role of the school personnel, their work, as well as their personality and the way they teach so as to be able to respond to the students' and the school needs as a result of your skills and your personal interests.

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## **Practical advice—*With the school staff***

- ✓ Acknowledge and always support the teacher's position in front of the students. They represent the authority. Do not hesitate to ask questions or get directions if you have doubts about procedures, a particular activity or the role you are expected to play.
- ✓ Being part of a team requires being able to adapt to unexpected events.
- ✓ Be discreet and reliable about confidential issues that relate to the class, the students and the personnel.
- ✓ Respect your commitment. Be quick and reliable, punctual and assiduous. Keep the principal and the personnel informed of your absence ahead of time.
- ✓ Keep good communication, choosing the right time to receive or give feedback.
- ✓ Show your enthusiasm and try to spread your energy and commitment.
- ✓ Promote the volunteer program and the work that personnel accomplish at the school.
- ✓ Make sure you always have a positive attitude.

## **Practical advice—*With the students***

Some of the following advice can also help you establish a good relationship with the students.

- ✓ Try and remember the students' names and make sure that you pronounce them correctly.
- ✓ Keep a warm and friendly attitude. Show your interest in what the students say and do.
- ✓ Be respectful. Treat others the way you would like them to treat you.
- ✓ Respect people's privacy. Keep confidences to yourself unless it is something the teacher should absolutely know about.
- ✓ Be patient.
- ✓ Try to avoid making promises that you cannot keep. Your approach and attitude will help create mutual trust.
- ✓ Make sure the students understand that mistakes are part of their training. Do not dread making mistakes yourself.
- ✓ Be positive with the students. Congratulate them often in a reasonable way.
- ✓ Accept the students the way they are. You are not expected to evaluate their capacities, their progress or their behavior. Judge them as little as possible.
- ✓ Fulfill your commitment. Students expect you to be there, if you are going to be absent, let them know ahead of time. Keep your word, students never forget.

## The ideal volunteer



Accepts what they have been asked to do and does it conscientiously.

Is pleasant and treats others with equity.

Trusts others' ability to make decisions and does not try to manage everything.

Adapts his or her help to the needs, the goals and the demands of the person they are assisting.

Tries to establish a real dialogue with that person and acknowledges his or her needs, desires and well-being.

Is a person who likes and tries to learn and values new experience.

## Required qualities

Professional integrity

Reliability and punctuality

Team spirit

Able to encourage others

Is non-judgmental

Flexibility

Availability



## Your rights

- ☑ Go through an interview, be selected according to the procedure and get the list of the required tasks.
- ☑ Be attributed interesting tasks that are challenges and help training and personal growth.
- ☑ Be informed of the administrative structures.
- ☑ Expect your tasks to be planned.
- ☑ Benefit from orientation and training.
- ☑ Receive the support of the person who supervises you.
- ☑ Be treated like a member of the staff with no salary and get the appropriate acknowledgment in return.
- ☑ Be informed of the way the School Board works.

## A volunteer also has responsibilities

- ☑ Follow all the behavioral criteria that the School Board asks its personnel to follow.
- ☑ Not be under or in possession of illegal drugs or alcohol beverages when supervising students in the school, when performing tasks supported by the school or when assisting in extra-school activities, or in any other activities involving students.
- ☑ Respect privacy.
- ☑ Ask questions and share their worries in respect to Conseil Scolaire Francophone protocol.
- ☑ Follow all appropriate and applicable laws including the individual's rights in British Columbia.
- ☑ Accept a volunteer's task only if it appears to match his or her competence.
- ☑ Ask questions of the person who supervises the volunteers, and give positive feedback.
- ☑ Keep informed of changes.
  
- ☑ Respect one's commitment to punctuality. A volunteer must be reliable.



## Selecting volunteers

The French School Board has an obligation to do everything possible to protect the members of the school community. Nevertheless, it does not have an obligation to accept any person who wishes to become a volunteer. It has the moral and legal obligation to carefully select volunteers. The selection does not only lie on what is supposed to be done, it also lies on precise legal principles established according to the “*obligation of diligence*”. The CSF acknowledges that the presence of volunteers in schools always includes a certain degree of risk.

### Questionnaire—Annex 1

The persons who are willing to become volunteers will have to complete a questionnaire requiring personal information.

### Respect of confidentiality—Annex 2

You might come across some information relating to members of the school community which is not public. In order to respect confidentiality, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire.

### For driver volunteers—Annex 3

A copy of one's car insurance, driver's license and another form which will be provided.

### Application form—Annex 4

Interested persons will have to complete an application form. This form must be provided to the RCMP, along with a Criminal Record File Application and an ID.

### Criminal record verification—Annex 5

The CSF asks that any person who wants to become a volunteer, especially if there is a high risk in the task involved, provide a criminal record document (less than six – (6) – months).

Here is the procedure established to facilitate the volunteer's task :

- Complete the form for the verification of criminal record and bring it to the RCMP at the following address: 1168 Main Street, Penticton. Note that you will also have to provide an piece of identification.
- A stamped envelope with the school address will be provided to you.
- The « Criminal Record verification » is a confidential document that will be filed in the principal's office in a sealed envelope.

### **When these documents have been received, the principal will meet the prospective volunteer for an interview.**

*Volunteers are visitors and must refer to the secretary's office to sign a register when they arrive at the school, unless other dispositions have been taken or approved by the principal. A visitor's badge will be provided.*