



Volunteers

School Board volunteers are covered under OSBIE's liability policy for claims arising from negligent acts while acting within the scope of their approved duties on behalf of the School Board. The coverage available is the same that is available to all School Board personnel. Volunteers will be protected from lawsuits and statements of claims that may follow due to an allegation negligence. Examples that we have seen where the liability policy responds include: field trips, ski trips, volunteer coaches, classroom volunteers and yard duty volunteers. Lawsuits naming volunteers are typically related to a student injury as a result of alleged negligent supervision. For volunteers to be successful in their role, School Board staff play an important part in providing guidance and training to these individuals.

Volunteers should be familiar with School Board policies and procedures for organizing, directing, controlling and supervising school activities and/or trips. Areas of focus include:

- Emergency response protocols;
- Safety guidelines – School Board's excursion policy, OPHEA Guidelines, etc.;
- Student code of conduct/behavior - volunteers should not be responsible for administering discipline to students;
- Volunteers should be properly screened and subject to appropriate criminal background checks as outlined by School Board policy;
- Volunteer orientation provided by the lead teacher which communicates what duties are assigned and what is expected of the volunteer.

Volunteer Workers

What activities will the volunteers be performing and what equipment is being used? Treat volunteers as if they were a staff member. For example, are they loading and unloading material? Are they using power tools? If these activities require regular school staff to go through Health and Safety training, then the School Board would be responsible for providing this training to the volunteers as well.

Volunteer Coaches

Just like teachers or other School Board staff, volunteers being asked to assume duties to supervise sports activities would be expected to meet the same qualifications as set out by the sport governing bodies and/or the minimum recommendations set out in the OPHEA Guidelines.

Volunteer Drivers

One area where the School Board's insurance will not act as primary coverage for volunteers is for volunteer drivers. Automobile insurance is Provincially regulated so it is important for volunteer drivers to understand that there is no coverage provided by the School Board's insurance for damage to their vehicles even while being operated for approved School Board activities. Volunteer driver forms should be completed, signed and collected before the excursion, as required, as part of School Board policy.