Legal Requirements
ONFE Volunteers in Education requires all volunteers to read and accept the following Volunteer Guidelines and Code of Ethics before proceeding with your application.

Volunteer Guidelines and Code of Ethics

The Volunteer and the School

- The Principal has the final and overall responsibility for the school including volunteers.
- The Principal may designate a staff member as the School Volunteer Coordinator.
- Volunteers must observe the school's operational and administrative policies.
- Problems and complaints are always solved in the school, not in the community. Questions and problems which the teacher and volunteer are not able to resolve satisfactorily should be directed to the principal and/or the School Volunteer Coordinator.
- The teacher and the volunteer should understand that the placement will be on a trial basis until both are confident that the assignment is appropriate.
- The time commitment and responsibilities of the assignment should be understood by both the volunteer and the teacher.
- Volunteers should not be left alone in an isolated area of the school. The teacher is always responsible for the students and volunteers.
- Volunteering at a school is a privilege which may be withdrawn by the principal at his/her discretion.

Rights

A volunteer has the right to:

- Be properly interviewed, selected and provided with a job description
- Be offered a position which is worthwhile, challenging and which will promote learning and growth
- Be given information about administrative structures and insurance

- Expect that her/his tasks have been planned
- Orientation, initial and on-going training
- Receive support from the designated supervisor
- Be treated as a non-paid staff member and given appropriate recognition
- Be kept informed about what is happening in the organization
- Be trusted with necessary confidential information

Responsibilities

A volunteer has the responsibility to:

- Choose an organization he/she can respect and support and be sincere in the offer of service.
- Accept only a volunteer position he/she believes and feels will meet his/her skills, interests and available time.
- Ensure he/she understands the policies and structures of the organization.
- Prepare for each work assignment: follow organizational guidelines and use time wisely.
- Acknowledge the need for training and participate fully.
- Consult with the supervisor when unclear on policy or action and provide constructive feedback which will improve effectiveness.
- Work as a team member, understanding the function of paid staff and staying within the bounds of the volunteer's position.
- Keep abreast of organizational changes.
- Respect confidentiality.
- Honour the commitment to be there on time - students and teachers depend on you.

Confidentiality

While volunteering in a school you may learn personal information about a student's background, learning abilities or social difficulties. It is important to respect every student's privacy and keep all such information strictly confidential. When discussing volunteer experiences with your family or friends, omit any confidential information about students, including their names.

Disclosure

Duty to report

Keeping the most vulnerable members of our community safe is the responsibility of everyone. If you have any reason to believe that a child is in need of protection or is at risk of harm, make the call to Children's Aid.

If you have reasonable grounds to suspect a child is in need of help, you need to make the call. It isn't up to you to prove or investigate the abuse but it is up to you to reach out and help protect the child.

Under Section 125 of the Child and Family Services Act every person who has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is or may be in need of protection must promptly report the suspicion and the information upon which it is based to a Children's Aid Society. This includes persons who perform professional or official duties with respect to children, such as health care workers, teachers, operators or employees of childcare programs or centres, police, and lawyers.

It is not necessary to be certain that a child is or may be in need of protection to make a report to a children's aid society. "Reasonable grounds" refers to the information that an average person, using normal and honest judgment, would need in order to decide to report. This standard has been recognized by courts in Ontario as establishing a low threshold for reporting.

The role of the Children's Aid Societies is to investigate calls made by the public using a professional and standardized process. The person making the report should bring forward their concerns and Children's Aid will determine if there is a sufficient basis to warrant further assessment of the concerns about the child.

Behaviour

Every classroom has its own character depending on the mix of students and the personal style of the teacher. The teacher is solely responsible for all matters related to behaviour and discipline. The volunteer helps to make the teacher aware of any concerns about student behaviour. It is important for the volunteer to support the teacher's efforts in promoting positive behaviour.

Please request a copy of the ONFE Handbook for Parents and Community Volunteers in our Schools for more information volunteers@onfe-rope.ca

Thank you for volunteering!