



Vancouver Board of Education

VOLUNTEER CONDUCT AGREEMENT

Dear Volunteer,

Thank you for agreeing to be a volunteer. We appreciate that you are willing to share your time and expertise in our school system. To ensure the safety of all students in our school, we ask that each volunteer review the following Board policies as well as the attached document entitled Guidelines for Adults Interacting with Students. These guidelines apply to all employees and volunteers within the Vancouver School District and are intended to help ensure that your volunteer experience with us will be rewarding and successful for all involved.

Policy AC: Non-discrimination

The Board of School Trustees (the "Board" believes in equitable treatment for all individuals regardless of race, colour, ancestry, ethnic origin, religion, socio-economic status, gender, sexual orientation, physical or mental ability, or political beliefs. The letter and spirit of the Canadian and B. C. Human Rights Acts shall be carefully observed, enforced, and supported, so that all members of the school community may work together in an atmosphere of respect and tolerance for individual differences.

This policy of non-discrimination shall prevail in all matters of instruction and course selection: in employment, promotion, and assignment of staff; in providing access to facilities; in the choice of instructional materials and the provision of career guidance and counselling; and in all matters pertaining to community relations. Specifically, the Board will not tolerate hate crimes and propaganda, and will vigorously enforce policy and regulations dealing with such matters.

Policy ACB: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Transsexual, Two-spirit, Questioning

The Board of School Trustees (the "Board" is committed to establishing and maintaining a safe and positive learning environment for all students and employees including those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, two-spirit, or who are questioning their sexual orientation or gender identity. These students and employees, as all students and employees, have the right to learn and work in an environment free of discrimination and harassment. The letter and spirit of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the B. C. Human Rights Acts and the Collective Agreements shall be carefully observed, enforced, and supported, so that all members of the school community may work together in an atmosphere of respect and tolerance for individual differences. Specifically, the Board will not tolerate hate crimes, harassment or discrimination, and will vigorously enforce policy and regulations dealing with such matters.

Policy GBCBA: Sexual Harassment

The Board of School Trustees (the "Board" recognizes and is committed to the right of all employees to work in an environment free from sexual harassment. To this extent, the Board will not tolerate any conduct that could be classified as sexual harassment and will make every reasonable effort to ensure that no employee be subject to such harassment.

Definition: Sexual harassment may be defined as any unwanted sexual attention of a persistent or abusive nature made by a person who knows or ought reasonably to know that such attention is unwanted, or implied or expressed threat of reprisal in the form of actual reprisal or the denial of

opportunity for refusal to comply with a sexually oriented request, or sexually oriented remarks and behaviour which may reasonably be perceived to create a negative psychological and emotional environment for work.

The alleged victim of sexual harassment may be male or female. The harasser may be of the same or opposite sex of the victim. The harasser may be a manager, supervisor, co-worker, or subordinate.

Policy GBEB: A Smoke-Free Working and Learning Environment

The Board of School Trustees (the "Board" is concerned about the health and safety of all its students and staff. The Board is committed to providing a healthy, smoke-free working and learning environment and has declared all its buildings and school grounds as "no-smoking" areas as of 1990 September 01.

The Board also believes that, in the interest of promoting good health practices, non-smoking role-modelling by staff, together with an effective health education program and counselling, will be a significant factor in encouraging non-smoking behaviour in students.

Policy JHG: Reporting Child Abuse

Every person who has reason to believe that a child needs protection under Section 13 of the Child, Family and Community Services Act must promptly report to a child protection social worker.

If an employee suspects that a student has been or is likely to be physically, sexually or emotionally abused or neglected, or otherwise in need of protection under the Act, he/she must follow the district protocols and procedures: Responding to Alleged Abuse and Neglect of Students by Non-VSB Employees. Guidance and clarification can be provided by the employee's supervisor and/or the VBE Abuse Prevention Coordinator.

Policy IGAC: Teaching About Religion

The School Act requires that all schools: "...must be conducted on strictly secular and non-sectarian principles...The highest morality must be inculcated, but no religious dogma or creed is to be taught." The Board of School Trustees (the "Board" subscribes to the principle of secular and non-sectarian public schools and directs that no religious indoctrination of any kind be permitted in the district's schools.

I have read, understand and agree to abide by the Board policies listed above, as well as the expectations contained within the VBE Guidelines for Adults Interacting with Students document provided to me. In addition, I agree to keep confidential any information relating to individual students or staff members that I become privy to during my work as a volunteer. If, at any time, I make a decision that contravenes these expectations, I understand that I may be asked to cease volunteering within the Vancouver School District.

Volunteer Signature: _____, Date: _____

Volunteer Name _____ School/Site: _____

Vancouver Board of Education Guidelines for Adults Interacting with Students

Statement of Purpose

The Vancouver Board of Education is committed to creating a safe and respectful learning environment for students. The purpose of these Guidelines is to clarify and affirm the Vancouver Board of Education's expectations of all adults in interactions with students of the Vancouver school district. For the purpose of this document, "adult" refers to any person working, volunteering or otherwise interacting with students on school grounds or at school activities.

It is expressly recognized that all employee groups are subject to collective agreements, terms and conditions of employment, professional and/or union codes as well as legislation. For example, teachers are regulated by the *School Act*, their Collective Agreement, the BC Teacher Regulation Branch Standards and the BC Teachers' Federation Code of Ethics. These Guidelines do not supersede nor replace such codes/documents and statutory requirements, but rather provide a set of common expectations for adult-student interactions applicable to all employee groups and other adults (i.e. parents and volunteers) who interact and engage with Vancouver school district students.

This document does not address every possible situation or provide an exhaustive review of acceptable and unacceptable conduct. It provides a framework within which the Board expects adults to exercise common sense and good judgment when interacting with students. It endeavours to find a balance between encouraging positive and appropriate interactions between adults and students, and discouraging inappropriate and harmful interactions.

Awareness and understanding of these Guidelines will strengthen a working culture in the Vancouver school district which is already deeply committed to student safety, security and well-being.

Rationale

Students have the right to a safe, caring, orderly school environment, free from discrimination and harm. Students also have the right to a learning environment in which clear expectations of acceptable adult behaviour are held and met.

The "Guidelines for Adults interacting with Students" seek to establish an environment where anyone in the school community feels safe to come forward with concerns of adult misconduct towards students. Strong well-publicized Guidelines will discourage the formation of a code of silence that can become entrenched in school culture, and inform adults, volunteers, parents and students of the behavioural expectations for all adults within the Vancouver school district.

The Adult's Position of Trust and Authority

An adult is not a peer of the students. Adults are in a position of trust and authority in relationship to students and therefore their interactions with students must focus on meeting the needs of the student.

In working with students, adults must take great care that their actions and motivations will not be misinterpreted. The burden of responsibility and accountability rests with the adult. The onus is on the adult to remove him/herself from any physical or verbal contact with students that could lead to the initiation or perception of any form of abuse or

harassment. Personal and Professional Boundaries

Adults must respect each student's right to personal boundaries in all interactions. Some students may be able to tell the adult if they are uncomfortable with the comments or conduct of the adult. Other students may be reluctant to communicate their discomfort due to the adult's position of authority over them. It is the responsibility of the adult to be sensitive to, and respectful of, the personal boundaries of all students whether or not the student communicates discomfort with the interaction.

When interacting with a student, an adult is advised to consider the appropriateness of her/his conduct in relation to such factors as the student's age, developmental level, cultural and educational background.

If a student's behaviour toward an adult is, or appears to be, of a sexual nature, the adult must let the student know the behaviour is inappropriate and not allow it to continue. If an adult has an interaction with a student which is cause for concern he/she should discuss the situation immediately with an administrator, his/her supervisor or associate superintendent. Adults are expected to refer matters beyond their expertise or role to the appropriate district or community resource person.

Acceptable and Unacceptable Behaviour

Adults are expected to behave in a manner that maintains and enhances public trust in the school district and models appropriate behaviours to students. The following examples are not exhaustive but illustrative.

Examples of Acceptable Behaviour are:

- Respectful language, tone and attitude towards students;
- Respect for students' personal/physical boundaries;
- Age-appropriate forms of touching such as comforting a hurt or upset child with a side by side hug or pats on the shoulder or back as positive reinforcement;
- School-related communication with students through the use of VSB email with a copy to the student's parent/guardian, or by telephone through the student's family phone;
- Supporting diversity within the school population (e.g. ethnic groups, gay and lesbian students/families).

Examples of Unacceptable Behaviour are:

- Humiliation of students (e.g. demeaning comments, intimidation);
- Inappropriate touching of students (e.g. massaging, stroking, caressing);
- Physical or Corporal discipline of students (e.g. shoving, hitting);
- Discrimination or harassment prohibited under the B.C. Human Rights Code including that based on race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religion- family status, socio-economic status, physical or mental disability, sex or sexual orientation;
- Being under the influence of recreational drugs and alcohol while supervising or interacting with students;

- Disrespectful language towards students;
- Sharing or soliciting overly personal/private information;
- Texting or Online communication with students on the adult's personal email or being "friends" on a social networking site;
- Engaging in any sexual behaviour with a student, with or without consent;
- Exposing students to or involving students in, any activities involving staff, volunteer or student nudity;
- Inappropriately disclosing confidential student-related information (beyond a "need-to-know" basis);
- Asking students to keep secrets.

Off-Campus Supervision

An adult must inform an administrator or supervisor of any off-campus outing with an individual or group of students. Volunteers shall be advised of expectations for their roles as supervisors and should understand the regulations outlined in VBE policy.

An adult must be particularly aware of maintaining professional boundaries with students when in more informal settings, such as on field trips. Social activities with students should be confined to school-related activities.

Considerations when Working with Very Young or Special Needs Students

Students with disabilities and very young students are particularly dependent on adults for their safety and well-being. Where possible, an adult should inform a staff member when he/she is going to be alone with a student.

In the course of their work with students who are dependently disabled or physically challenged, adults may be involved in lifting, toileting, assisting in physiotherapy programs, and taking care of students' personal hygiene needs. These activities should be carried out with the utmost respect for the dignity of the student.

Concerns

The "Guidelines for Adults Interacting with Students" are intended to support students, staff, parents and volunteers to safely inform supervisory staff if they have concerns about the safety or security of students and/or witness adult behaviour contrary to these Guidelines.

Where there is concern about adult behaviour or conduct that is inconsistent with these Guidelines, this should be reported to an administrator or associate superintendent. Such reports shall be treated in a confidential manner (with information restricted to a need-to-know basis).

Every adult has a legal responsibility to report suspected or disclosed cases of sexual, physical, emotional abuse or neglect of a student following the VBE Protocols and Procedures.