

Toronto District School Board

Operational Procedure PR558

Title: **PARENT AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

Adopted: November 25, 1998

Revised: January 26, 2005; December 9, 2015; **October 23, 2018**

Authorization: Executive Council

1.0 OBJECTIVE

To provide a procedure for implementation of the Board's Parent and Community Involvement policy (P023).

2.0 RESPONSIBILITY

Associate Director

3.0 PROCEDURES

1.0. Commitment

- (a) The policy (P023) will be posted in a visible location in all school locations, administration buildings, and other appropriate Toronto District School Board (TDSB) sites;
- (b) The policy will be made available on the Board's website and referenced in appropriate Board publications;
- (c) The policy will be made available in various languages.

2.0. Communication

- (a) Each school, in consultation with the School Council, will establish a plan for improving two-way communication with parents at the classroom and school level, including the use of a variety of oral and written forms of communication, which build on existing mechanisms such as parent-teacher interviews, curriculum nights, school newsletters, and parent meetings;
- (b) The Board's website will be developed as an interactive forum for the exchange of information and ideas by parents and communities, as well as for the conveying of information about the school system;
- (c) Translation and interpreting services will continue to be provided to facilitate communication with non-English-speaking parents and communities;

- (d) School-based and central procedures will be established for reviewing documents intended for parents, prior to final publication, to ensure that that they are written in plain language;
- (e) Use of local and ethno-cultural community media will be expanded to provide Board information to diverse communities;
- (f) Parent-to-parent access will be facilitated by sharing lists of School Council Chairpersons and their contact information among School Councils within each Family of School, Ward, or quadrant, after following the appropriate procedures for consent.

3.0. Involving Marginalized Communities

- (a) Every two (2) years, the Learning Opportunities Index data, school achievement results, School Improvement Plans, and requests for assistance from Principals, School Councils, and communities, will be reviewed in order to identify schools with a significant need for support for outreach to marginalized parents and communities;
- (b) In consultation with Superintendents of Education and trustees, school communities are to be allocated resources required to implement community outreach programs, and provide an appropriate allocation to those school communities for that purpose will be determined;
- (c) The Board will be provided with progress reports on these community outreach activities in these schools and communities.

4.0. School Council Role and Operations

- (a) Each year, subsequent to the election of members, the School Council, in conjunction with the Principal, will review the regulations regarding the role of School Councils and the role of the Principal (Reg. 612/00) and a plan of activities consistent with that role will be established;
- (b) The School Council will incorporate, within its goals, a plan to encourage diverse participation in its activities and establish written procedures specifying how parents shall be consulted in the decisions of the Council, and publicize these procedures to all parents;
- (c) The Principal will provide to the School Council, as fully and as timely as possible, all relevant information about the school, its programs, its priorities and plans, to support its role;
- (d) The School Council will participate in the development of the School Improvement Plan, be informed of the progress of the plan at its meetings, and given an opportunity to provide advice to the school on its ongoing implementation;
- (e) A handbook of best practices on parent involvement in schools, including best practices for the operation of school councils, will be produced based on the experience of TDSB schools, and elsewhere, and made available to all School Councils and Principals;

- (f) Superintendents of Education will assume responsibility for monitoring the operation of School Councils in their respective Families of Schools, and provide support and problem-solving intervention as required, to facilitate their effective operation;
- (g) A system survey of School Councils will be conducted periodically to assess their effectiveness and to determine ways in which the system might provide further support for their work.

5.0. Enhancing Skills for Shared Participation

- (a) Workshops will be provided in each quadrant annually for School Council members on effective practices for School Councils and effective leadership of School Councils, using system and external community resources;
- (b) Workshops will be provided in each quadrant annually for Principals and Vice-Principals on building community relations, using system and external community resources.

6.0. Ward and Regional Parent Forums

- (a) Trustees, with the involvement of Superintendents of Education, will convene parent meetings of School Council members and other parents in their Wards for the purpose of communication and consultation on educational matters of concern to parents and the Board;
- (b) Executive Superintendents and Superintendents of Education, with involvement of trustees, will convene, where necessary, quadrant or regional parent forums to provide information and feedback on the implementation of programs including parental role in such programs;
- (c) Public consultations on specific policies will be conducted through Board task forces, review teams, or working groups, existing Ward forums, or special forums by quadrant or region, to receive parent and community input;
- (d) A parent conference will be convened every two (2) years in each region to provide an opportunity for parents to discuss a range of educational topics of current interest to parents and the Board.

7.0. Community Advisory Committees

Equity Programs Advisory Committee

- (a) An Equity Programs Advisory Committee (replacing the Community Equity Reference Group) will be established and maintained to provide advice to the Board on matters concerning the implementation of the Equity policy, and to identify issues of broad community interest regarding equity in education, for the consideration of the Board and staff;
- (b) Membership of the Equity Programs Advisory Committee will include representatives of current recognized equity-seeking groups with an interest

in public education, parents from recognized Community Liaison Groups, and designated staff representation.

Early Years Advisory Committee

- (c) An Early Years Advisory Committee will be established and maintained to provide advice to the Board on matters concerning the implementation of the Early Years policy, and to identify issues of broad community interest concerning Early Years programs, for the consideration of the Board and staff; The current Child Care In Schools Advisory Committee becomes a subcommittee of the Early Years Advisory Committee and reports through it;
- (d) Membership of the Early Years Advisory Committee will include representation from the related Early Years areas of interest across the TDSB (child care, parenting/family literacy, First Duty projects, family resource centres, Ontario Early Years Centres, and other programs for children up to 6 years of age), and designated staff representation.

Parent Involvement Advisory Committee

- (e) A Parent Involvement Advisory Committee (replacing the Parent Community Network) will be established and maintained to provide advice to the Board on matters concerning the implementation of the Parent Community Involvement policy, and to identify educational issues of broad community interest for the consideration of the Board and staff;
- (f) Membership for the Parent Involvement Advisory Committee will include one parent and an alternate for each Ward through a nomination and selection process overseen by each trustee, and to include up to five (5) representatives appointed by recognized Community Liaison Groups through a nomination and selection process supervised by the Central Coordinator, Community Services, and designated staff representation.

General

- (g) The term of office for community members of these Community Advisory Committees will be two (2) years;
- (h) The Board will appoint trustee members to serve on Community Advisory Committees, including one trustee co-chair for each committee who will co-chair with a parent or community member as selected by the committee;
- (i) The Director will designate staff as non-voting resources persons to Community Advisory Committees;
- (j) Board employee groups who wish to be considered for representation on any Community Advisory Committees must submit such requests including a rationale, to the Board for its consideration and approval. Membership by employee groups on Community Advisory Committees will not include the right to vote;

- (k) The schedule of meetings for each Community Advisory Committee will be established in advance and published;
- (l) Minutes of Community Advisory Committees will be formally recorded and made available;
- (m) The Board may establish ad hoc advisory committees, task forces or working groups as needed, which may include parent or community members, to address time-limited issues under consideration by the Board;
- (n) The Board or its standing committees may refer any matter on its agenda to Community Advisory Committees for comment.

8.0. Community Liaison Groups

- (a) The following criteria for Community Liaison Groups will continue: the majority of active membership (i.e., who attends meetings of the group) must be parents of Board students; open to membership by any parent who supports its purpose and goals; establishment of a formally elected or appointed leadership; democratic operating group practices; purpose and goals are consistent with mission and policies of the Board; sharing of minutes and reports with the Board;
- (b) Groups wishing to be recognized by the Board under the established criteria must submit a formal application with appropriate supporting documentation to the Central Coordinator, Community Services who will consider the request in consultation with the Associate Director prior to registering the group as a Community Liaison Group;
- (c) The Associate Director will assign central staff to liaise with Community Liaison Groups;
- (d) Community Liaison Groups will provide accessibility to its operations by making available notices of meetings through appropriate Board communication systems, where feasible;
- (e) Staff will provide a periodic update to the Board on the status of Community Liaison Groups.

9.0 Supervisors of Extra-curricular Activities in Schools

The Toronto District School Board supports the voluntary supervision of extra-curricular activities by teachers and is committed to the effective use of volunteers under the direction and supervision of teachers for the safety and security of students, staff, and volunteers. In extenuating circumstances, parents and community volunteers may be recruited, screened, and assigned sole/direct supervision/coaching/mentoring roles for a school's extra-curricular activities in order to meet the needs of the school as determined by staff and students in consultation with the School Council.

Where there is no staff volunteer, the Principal will communicate with the School Council and have the support of their school Superintendent for activities which require volunteers. The Principal's decision regarding the activity and the volunteer is final with no appeal.

This section of the procedure is intended to address the use of volunteers in all capacities in school-sponsored activities that can safely and reasonably be operated with volunteers, as deemed by the Principal. Volunteers are not intended to be last minute replacements for staff.

Within a school, volunteers are assigned at the discretion of the Principal and in accordance with the restrictions and requirements outlined in this and other Board policies and procedures.

Types of Activities and Responsibilities for Volunteers and the Principal

TYPE OF ACTIVITY	SUPERVISION REQUIREMENTS	VOLUNTEER SUPERVISOR REQUIREMENTS	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PRINCIPAL
Non-athletic Extracurricular Activities (e.g., school clubs)	As per TDSB Excursion Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer Interview Form • Reference Check • Police Reference Check 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess school needs in consultation with the School Council and Superintendent of Education • Assess the suitability of the volunteer • Assign volunteer to activity as deemed appropriate • Provide school orientation and training as necessary • Ensure compliance with the TDSB’s Excursion and other related policies • Inform parents of volunteer-led activities • On-going supervision and evaluation of the volunteer to ensure their conduct and performance meet expectations
Athletic Activities - Elementary (Non -League Participation)	As per OPHEA Guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same as above • Demonstrate proficiency of the sport identified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same as above • Determine proficiency of the sport identified
Athletic Activities - Elementary (League Participation)	As per OPHEA Guidelines Volunteer/ Community Coach only with a Teacher/ Principal Present (as per TDESAA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same as above • Demonstrate proficiency of the sport identified • Complete Coaches Training Seminar as outlined by TDESAA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same as above • Determine proficiency of the sport identified • Ensure that a staff supervisor is assigned to the activity
Athletic Activities - Secondary (Non -League Participation)	As per OPHEA Guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same as above • Demonstrate proficiency of the sport identified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same as above • Determine proficiency of the sport identified

TYPE OF ACTIVITY	SUPERVISION REQUIREMENTS	VOLUNTEER SUPERVISOR REQUIREMENTS	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PRINCIPAL
<u>Athletic Activities - Secondary</u> (League Participation)	As per OPHEA Guidelines Volunteer/Community Coach only with a Teacher/Principal Present (as per TDSSAA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same as above • Complete Coaches Training Seminar as outlined by TDSSAA • Hold current Coaching Certificate in related area (NCCP) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same as above • Determine proficiency of the sport identified • Ensure that a staff supervisor is assigned to the activity

9.1 Liability

The Board’s liability insurance policy protects both staff and volunteers who are working within the scope of their duties for the Board. In any school-sponsored activity that is undertaken by a volunteer, the Board’s liability insurance regarding negligence will apply. Volunteers should be aware that the Board’s insurance does not include a loss-of-income provision should the volunteer sustain an injury that prevents him/her from resuming his/her normal employment.

9.2 Screening and Management of Volunteers

All volunteers must be assessed for their suitability for placement within a school or program setting by the school Principal or designate.

The process of screening and management of volunteers begins with the application/recruitment process. Volunteers are subject to ongoing screening and management throughout their extra-curricular commitment until the commitment has ended.

9.3 Volunteer Supervision of Students

Recognizing that the welfare of students is at all times of paramount importance, all Board employees are required to exercise their full responsibility for the care, welfare, and supervision of the students. In this regard, all volunteers must be assessed as to their suitability for placement within a school or program setting.

The following activities may not be run without the direct supervision of Board staff:

- Overnight excursions;
- Invitational tournaments outside of Toronto - Athletic competitions that are part of the regular season of play are exempt from stipulation;
- Any activity that requires teacher supervision according to TDESAA, TDSSAA, and OFSAA rules;
- Curricular or class-related excursions/field trips;
- Any activities which require travel outside of Toronto.

9.4 Level of Vulnerability

The degree of screening is dependent on the level of vulnerability of students and volunteers. Levels of vulnerability are outlined in the following table:

LEVEL OF VULNERABILITY	
Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• in the classroom under direct supervision of staff• in open, common areas (for example, hallways, library, gym) with intermittent observation of staff
Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• in isolated areas working with a group of students without direct staff supervision
High	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• in isolated areas working with one or two students• coaching or other group activity off-site

Most volunteer activities in the school are considered low vulnerability; for example, if the volunteer is working in the classroom or an open, common area with a group of students under direct supervision or intermittent observation by staff. Where the Principal deems the volunteer activity to be of low risk, and the volunteer has the necessary skills and/or experience, the Principal or designate may allow the candidate to volunteer without screening as outlined below.

9.5 Volunteer Placement

Where the Principal deems the volunteer activity to be of medium to high vulnerability (and for all community volunteers), the Principal or designate will complete the screening procedure that follows:

- (a) Before the parent (medium to high vulnerability activity) or community volunteer begins placement:
 - (i) complete a Volunteer Application Form (Form 558A);
 - (ii) complete and file Volunteer Reference Check (Form 558B). If possible, two different types of references are required (professional or personal/character). The applicant should provide written permission to contact referees;
 - (iii) complete a School/Volunteer Agreement, completed annually and which will indicate that a volunteer has provided a Vulnerable Sector Screening form within the last six months and that it has been reviewed by the Principal. Required every three years for returning volunteers who have not taken more than a one year break from volunteering;
 - (iv) conduct orientation to the school/Board and provide information regarding school/Board policies concerning volunteers such as discipline, confidentiality, and disclosure of abuse;
 - (v) provide training for the specific volunteer position.

- (b) After the volunteer begins the placement, the Principal or designate is responsible for:
- (i) ongoing supervision and evaluation of the volunteer. If a volunteer's performance is deemed unsatisfactory, the supervising staff member will inform the volunteer, review performance, retrain or reassign or advise the volunteer that his/her services are no longer desired;
 - (ii) immediately reporting and appropriately dealing with a staff member's concerns or doubts regarding the volunteer's character or actions, in accordance with Board policies and procedures;
 - (iii) if the degree of risk assigned to a volunteer's task significantly changes, or if a volunteer is assigned a new task with a higher risk level, the screening process should be reviewed. In some circumstances, the volunteer assignment may be modified or cancelled;
 - (ii) volunteers are responsible for providing the level of supervision required by the Ontario Physical and Health Education Association (OPHEA), where applicable, and for following all Board policies and procedures.

9.6 Training and Orientation

The Principal or designate will review the utilization of the volunteers as they relate to other Board policies/procedures. Training shall include, but is not be limited to:

- a) Safe Schools;
- b) Code of Conduct;
- c) Managing Interactions with Parents;
- d) Communication with Students; (face-to-face, written, electronic, etc.)
- e) Bullying;
- f) Respectful Working and Learning Environments;
- g) Handling of confidential Student Information;
- h) Emergency Action Plan;
- i) Health and Safety Related Training (e.g., anaphylaxis, blood borne pathogens);
- j) Concussions.

4.0 APPENDICES

Form 558A: Volunteer Application Form

Form 558B: Volunteer Reference Check

Form 558C: Volunteer Waiver, Release, and Indemnity Agreement

5.0 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

Policies:

- Dealing with Abuse and Neglect of Students (P045)
- Excursions (P033)
- Parent and Community Involvement (P023)

Procedures:

- Board Code of Conduct (PR585)
- Code of On-line Conduct (PR571)
- Community Use of Board Facilities (Permits) (PR666)
- Employee and Community Partners Conflict of Interest (PR673)

Legislative Acts:

- O. Reg. 612/00, School Councils and Parent Involvement Committees
- *The Education Act*, Regulation 298 95/96, s. 11

Other Documents:

- Ontario College of Teacher Professional Advisory: Safety in Learning Environments: A Shared Responsibility, 2013
- Ontario College of Teacher Professional Advisory: Use of Electronic Communication and Social Media, 2011
- Physical Education Safety Guidelines (Elementary and Secondary, Ontario Association for the Supervision of Physical and Health Education (OPHEA)), 1997
- TDESAA Constitution, Toronto District Elementary Schools Athletic Association, 2015-2016
- TDSSAA Constitution, Toronto District Secondary Schools Athletic Association, 2015-2016