

AVRCE Volunteers in School Policy

The AVRCE has had a *Volunteers in Schools* Policy since 1999. As stated in this policy, the Regional Centre for Education takes its obligation seriously to ensure safe environments for learning by taking all reasonable steps to minimize risks and threats to students. Because student safety is a top priority, in January 2015, this policy underwent an extensive review to ensure that any potential gaps in practice are closed or minimized. All recommendations for change were presented to our school community members and was circulated to our school stakeholders for the opportunity to respond to the proposed changes and to provide further input. To highlight some of the changes:

- clearly defines volunteers versus visitors;
- requires volunteers to complete a standard application form for any volunteering;
- will continue to require the completion of Criminal Records Check (including the Vulnerable Sector) and Child Abuse Registry checks prior to working with students but will now require re-checks be completed every (3) three years; and,
- as of January 8, 2015, will require all current volunteer to renew their Criminal Records Check (including the Vulnerable Sector) and Child Abuse Registry if it has been over (3) three years since it was last completed.
- Only Criminal Record Checks and Child Abuse Request for a Search Approval Letters dated within six (6) months received by the Human Resources Department will be accepted.

The changes to the *Volunteers in Schools* policy are not to discourage volunteering in the AVRCE. It is to employ the best practices to ensure our policy is as effective as possible for decreasing the chances of student harm from volunteers. We will be reminding our volunteers throughout the remainder of the school year so that we are well prepared for such events, as Class Trips.