

Volunteer Handbook

Lloydminster Catholic School Division

Form 490.3

Reference: AP 490 Volunteers

November 2018

Welcome!

Thank you for making a commitment to the children and youth of our schools and Lloydminster Catholic School Division. Volunteers make a difference! Whether your time commitment is several hours a week or several hours each year, your participation as a volunteer is much appreciated and always welcome.

Volunteers play an integral role as partners in education in Lloydminster Catholic School Division. Volunteers make possible many student activities offered in our schools. Some of the many benefits of volunteering include:

- Supporting educational programs, learning and achievement
- Providing an opportunity to reflect ethnic and cultural diversity
- Enhancing student engagement and success
- Providing members of the community with opportunities to use their knowledge and skills
- Enabling members of the community to gain valuable experience, personal growth and satisfaction working with the young people

We hope that your volunteer experience in Lloydminster Catholic School Division will be rewarding and we look forward to working together to enhance opportunities for students.

This handbook has been prepared to help provide an outline of general information, procedures and responsibilities for volunteers in our schools. For the safety and well-being of students, all volunteers must abide by the procedures outlined in AP 490 Volunteers and this Handbook.

On behalf of the Director of Education and the Board of Education, thank you for the generous gift of your time.

Note: Lloydminster Catholic School Division wishes to thank Prairie Valley School Division for their written permission allowing our school division to use the contents contained in their handbook APM-5200.1 Volunteer Handbook.

Volunteering is Good for the Heart and Soul

General Expectations

You are part of an educational team. Volunteers who are committed to supporting student success are important members of the school team. Students benefit from contact with individuals who can share experiences and bring diverse perspectives into the classroom. The goals for the education team are to:

- Enrich the curriculum and students' learning opportunities
- Assist individual students and support teachers with non-instructional tasks
- Foster a school and community partnership for quality education
- Enhance all aspects of the educational process

Working closely with the classroom teacher and school staff means:

- Accepting direction and suggestions from teachers
- Respecting the privacy and confidentiality of teachers' and students' property and person by not going through personal work areas or discussing school matters away from the classroom
- Understanding that the assessment and evaluation of a student's learning can only be done by the teacher
- Supporting and improving education for all students
- Seeking guidance from the supervising staff member when you need additional information or instruction
- Sharing ideas and constructive comments with the supervising staff member
- Understand that teachers are responsible for student discipline

Volunteers are expected to:

- Wear dress that is appropriate for the activity
- Show respect for all staff and students and share concerns regarding students with the school staff and/or school administration only
- Notify the school if you are unable to volunteer on a scheduled date
- Check with the principal before bringing your children to the volunteer activity (such as younger siblings, etc.)
- Turn off your personal cell phone while in the classroom

Ground rules:

- Smoking or tobacco use on school division property is strictly prohibited (except for First Nations and Métis traditional cultural protocols);
- Weapons of any type are not allowed;
- Alcohol, cannabis and other drugs are prohibited. Anyone under the influence of drugs or alcohol is not allowed on school premises

- Use of school equipment for personal purposes is not permitted

Students are expected to treat school volunteers with kindness and respect. When this does not happen, we ask volunteers to seek assistance from the classroom teacher or administrator.

Sometimes a volunteer placement might not be a good fit. If your volunteer placement does not work for you, the teacher or the school, the assignment may be ended, modified or changed. Principals have the right to request volunteers to withdraw their services if they feel that this is in the best interests of the students, staff or the school.

Responsibilities of Volunteers

1. Understand and accept the students in terms of their own background and values.
2. Support and supplement the instructional program of the classroom teacher. The volunteer's role is to assist, not replace, staff members.
3. Communicate regularly with the supervising staff member via meetings, notes, log book, telephone or email.
4. Be prompt, dependable, and regular in attendance.
5. Learn as much about the school as possible, including the policies, people and programs. Know and observe all applicable regulations and procedures.
6. Discuss any issues that arise with the supervising staff member.
7. Notify the teacher or administrator if a student confides about an abusive situation. Staff will assist in reporting and follow-up.
8. Respect confidentiality with relationship to the school. Ensure that a child's work and behaviour in school are held in confidence.

Rights of Volunteers

1. To have a source of sound guidance and direction by a supervising staff member who is experienced, informed, patient, thoughtful and has the time to invest in giving guidance.
2. To have a suitable assignment with consideration for personal preference, temperament, life experience, education and employment background.
3. To have an appropriate part in planning and making suggestions.
4. To be recognized and appreciated.

Tips for Volunteers

1. Be patient when working with students. Give yourself time to learn your role.
2. Names are important. Make sure you say the student's name the way the student wants it to be said. Learn to spell it correctly. Make sure the student knows your name and can pronounce it correctly.
3. Treat individuals with respect and courtesy and expect the same in return.
4. Show that you are interested in the student as a person by listening carefully to what they say and showing you care by words and action.
5. Encourage and support student successes. Build self-confidence by praising them honestly and frequently. Remember attentiveness and effort can be as important as performance. Accentuate the positive and minimize the negative.
6. Avoid making comparisons between students, between teachers and between schools.
7. Always be fair and consistent.
8. Recognize that students make mistakes. Let them know that making mistakes is part of learning. Don't be afraid of making mistakes yourself.
9. Be trustworthy and honest in your approach and attitude.
10. If you must be absent, call the school and let them know. The students will be disappointed you can't come, but will be reassured that you care enough to call.

Volunteer Information/Procedure Checklist

When you first meet with your supervising staff member, plan to discuss the following:

- Days and times to work with classroom/school.
- Procedures to keep in touch e.g., regular meetings, telephone conversations, notes, informal meetings, email.
- Alternate plans for days when the supervising staff member is absent.
- How the students will address the volunteer (school or volunteer's preference of having students use first name or Mr. /Ms. /Mrs.).
- Materials, strategies or games to be used.
- Teacher/supervisor's classroom/school policies, procedures and rules (e.g., emergency procedures, the student code of conduct, procedures related to student discipline, bell times, notification of absence, workplace health and safety, use of equipment and

school communication protocols, accident reporting, student restroom and drink privileges, inclement weather procedures, where volunteer leaves personal belongings, whether volunteer may use the staff room).

- Dates of required and suggested training.
- Protocol for informing school/teacher/student about volunteer absence.

If you work in academic areas with students, you should also discuss:

- Pertinent background information about the student(s) the volunteer will work with (within the standards of student information confidentiality).
- Special strengths of the student(s).
- Special needs of the student(s).
- Tips for working with specific students (learning style and reinforcement techniques).
- Proceeds for taking student(s) out of classroom for individual work.
- Designation of work area location.
- Alternate plan if student is absent.

Student Confidentiality

In Lloydminster Catholic School Division, the requirement of confidentiality applies to all staff members and volunteers (AP Form 490-1.) Volunteers are in a privileged position when involved in school learning environments, therefore:

- Volunteers are expected and required to keep all student information, and school information, obtained while working as a volunteer for the school division confidential. This includes all academic, medical and personal information.
- It is essential that you keep information about students confidential and do not discuss students or their progress with others, even their parents. Do not reference a student's abilities in front of other students. The only person who should be told about a student's work is the student's teacher.
- Any information explicitly shared or implicitly observed is to be kept confidential. If discussion is necessary, it must occur with the classroom teacher and/or the school administration only.
- If parents ask about their child's progress or what is occurring in the classroom, direct them to the student's teacher.

Diversity in Schools

Respect for Human Diversity applies to all schools and individuals in Lloydminster Catholic School Division. Students in Lloydminster Catholic School Division come from many different families, cultures, and communities – each with its own set of values and beliefs. Because of the many different ethnic groups represented in Lloydminster Catholic School Division, children speak many different languages and have many different beliefs and customs. Each individual must honor the beliefs and habits of their own culture, while learning to respond to the beliefs and habits of the school culture.

Cultural differences may affect a student's background knowledge, learning style, behaviour and social skills. Specifically, you may experience cultural differences with regards to:

- Varying learning styles
- Eye contact
- Sense of time
- Student motivation
- Personal space
- Gender diversity

Emergency Response Protocols

All volunteers should be familiar with the School Action Plan for Emergencies (SAFE) AP 314. Consult with the supervising staff member or check with office staff to ensure you know how to respond to fire and emergency procedures. If you are not sure of the procedures, please ask staff for clarification.

First Aid

Schools have first aid procedures and/or action plans. Consult with the supervising staff member regarding your responsibility related to a first aid matter. Please inform the school administration if you have First Aid training.

Criminal Charges and Convictions

Volunteers must submit an acceptable criminal record check as part of the volunteer application process.

In addition, any volunteer must, no later than two working days after having been charged with an offence, notify the principal of all charges. The principal will follow established procedures to determine whether the volunteer may continue to volunteer at the school.

Transporting Students in Private Vehicles

The School Division favours the use of school buses to transport students. In accordance with AP 260 – Student Travel, volunteer drivers must comply with the stipulations outlined in Section 5.4.

Respectful School Environments

The Lloydminster Catholic School Division AP 403 – Harassment Employees commits to an educational environment that is free from discrimination and harassment, including sexual harassment, bullying and intimidation. Volunteers are expected and required to respect and uphold LCSD policy, LCSD Administrative Procedures and the procedures of the school.

Lloydminster Catholic School Division believes all employees, students and volunteers have a right to work and learn in a safe environment and a right to be treated with dignity, respect and fairness. A safe environment produces a climate conducive to both learning and working. A safe environment is free from hostile, intimidation or offensive conduct by anyone.

Safe Interactions with Students

The School Division expects volunteers to set a good example for students. All interactions with students should be professional and focused on teaching learning and achievement. Therefore, in their role as volunteers, individuals may not:

- Take a student or students on private outings
- Initiate social activities with students
- Engage in social media with students
- Engage in physical contact with students

Communication

Electronic communication must be done through school sanctioned systems. Volunteers are not to:

- Say or write things to a student that you would be uncomfortable sharing with the student's parents, teacher or school administrator
- Make any comments that are based on gender or could be construed as sexually inappropriate
- Make any comments and/or innuendos that are sexual in nature or could be construed as sexually inappropriate
- Make jokes that belittle or diminish another person
- Give students compliments that focus on physical attributes
- Initiate conversations or correspondence of a private and/or personal nature with students, including via electronic media.

Related Administrative Procedures

- AP 165 – Safe Schools
- AP 260 – Student Travel
- AP 311 – Harassment (Students)
- AP 403 – Harassment (Employees)
- AP 314 – School Action Plan for Emergencies (SAFE)
- AP 305 – Student Code of Conduct
- Board Policy 16: Safe and Caring Schools

To review Lloydminster Catholic School Division Administrative Procedures, go to www.lcsd.ca and click on the “Administration” tab and choose Procedures & Forms.