



**School Advisory Council**  
**Consultations Feedback Summary:**  
Extracurricular Activity Supervision Policy



# Contents

- Policy Summary** ..... 1
- School Advisory Council Policy Consultation** ..... 1
  - Clarity ..... 2
  - Ease of Implementation ..... 2
  - Volunteer Recruiting and Involvement Assistance ..... 3
  - Volunteer Eligibility and Responsibilities ..... 3
- Acknowledgements** ..... 4
- Appendix A: Draft Extracurricular Activity Supervision Policy Summary** ..... 5
- Appendix B: Guiding Questions** ..... 7



## Policy Summary

The *Extracurricular Activity Supervision Policy* is intended to provide increased opportunities for volunteer involvement in schools, and follows the guiding principles below:

- The safety and security of students should be the first and foremost consideration.
- The involvement of family and community members as registered volunteers in extracurricular activities is valued and important in cultivating relationships between communities and schools.
- Extracurricular activities can be led by an employee of a regional centre for education (RCE), Conseil scolaire acadien provincial (CSAP), a registered volunteer, or a combination thereof.
- Inclusion is an important consideration for extracurricular activities.

## School Advisory Council Policy Consultation

School advisory councils (SACs) across Nova Scotia were introduced to the policy and consultation questions (Appendices A and B) in November and December 2018. The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD) received responses from 122 SACs between November 1, 2018 and January 31, 2019. The SACs that responded represented the following grade levels:

Grades represented by SACs*	# of responses
Elementary school (P–6)	90
Junior high/middle school (7–9)	24
High school (10–12)	12
P–12	5
Other	6

\* SACs could choose more than one response, therefore, the total number of responses is greater than 122.

Specific questions and discussions about the draft policy are categorized as follows:

- clarity
- ease of implementation
- volunteer recruiting and involvement assistance
- volunteer eligibility and responsibilities

## Clarity

Do you feel this policy is clear and easy to understand?	
Yes, very clear	26%
Somewhat clear	47%
Not very clear	24%
Difficult to understand	2%

As part of the feedback received, SACs requested a scan of current RCE and CSAP extracurricular supervision policies. It was also requested that EECD

- include or expand definitions for “employee of an RCE or CSAP”, “responsible adult”, “extracurricular activities”, and “volunteer”.
- acknowledge within the policy that RCE and CSAP employees also volunteer their time when it comes to the supervision of extracurricular activities.
- edit or provide further clarification on identified phrases within the policy, such as “safe and equitable provision of extracurricular activities”.
- provide clearer links to other related policies or procedures.
- create provincial consistency regarding the requirements for volunteer background checks.
- include language about the inclusion of all students and supporting students who have complex needs.

## Ease of Implementation

Do you foresee any issues implementing this policy at your school?	
No, this should not be difficult to implement	34%
Yes, there may be problems implementing the policy	22%
Not sure	42%

Many SACs were unsure of how difficult it would be to implement this policy or anticipated that there may be issues with implementation. Some concerns raised regarding implementation involved

- increasing the administrative burden for recruiting, vetting, and supervising volunteers.
- ensuring principals retain the authority for making the final decisions regarding who will and will not lead an extracurricular activity.

### Logistical considerations from SAC feedback

- Include required adult-to-student ratios for various grade levels and activities.
- Consider potential issues around access and security of school buildings after-hours, especially in rural schools without evening custodians, and the potential burden on volunteers.
- Provide more guidance around student transportation to and from extracurricular activities.

### Access to information considerations from SAC feedback

- Keep parents informed on who is leading the extracurricular activity and what personal information belonging to students will be disclosed to volunteers.
- Require certain student registration information be provided to volunteers when participating in extracurricular activities (e.g., information about medical needs, emergency contacts).
- Require an employee be present for activities that are considered higher risk.

## Volunteer Recruiting and Involvement Assistance

### Do you think that this policy will be helpful to principals in terms of recruiting people to supervise extracurricular activities?

Yes, it will make it easier	37%
It will not have an affect one way or the other	40%
No, this will make it harder to run extracurricular activities	21%

Feedback indicated that clearer expectations upfront, such as through this policy and associated guidelines, could help facilitate recruitment of volunteers. Other comments regarding volunteer recruitment included

- appreciation for the flexibility the policy offers to have volunteers lead activities without an employee present and that the definition of volunteers includes community members.
- concern that some volunteers may be turned away by the burden and cost associated with the screening process and background checks (e.g., Vulnerable Sector Check).
- concern that volunteers may be more reluctant to lead an activity without an employee present.

## Volunteer Eligibility and Responsibilities

SAC members wanted to know how volunteers would be screened before being able to interact with students. They also wanted more information on

- the eligibility criteria that will be considered when screening potential volunteers and if volunteer orientation will be made available to all volunteers.
- how inexperienced volunteers should be supported.
- support available for volunteers who may be more comfortable leading activities in collaboration with employees who can handle potential behavioural or other issues that may arise. Some students may not treat a volunteer with the same respect they would a teacher or school employee.

- student safety regarding volunteers potentially speaking or behaving inappropriately with students (e.g., yelling, language, disciplinary practices) without an employee present to intervene.
- whether volunteers will be expected to have knowledge of school emergency procedures, such as fire evacuation protocols, when leading activities without an employee present.
- volunteer liability and whether or not volunteers are covered under the School Insurance Program (SIP) if something happens to a student under their supervision.

## Acknowledgements

The Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development would like to thank the members of school advisory councils throughout the province who provided input on the *Extracurricular Activity Supervision Policy*. Their thoughtful review and constructive feedback was essential to the development of the document.

# Appendix A: Draft Extracurricular Activity Supervision Policy Summary

## Objective

This policy supports the ongoing safe and equitable provision of extracurricular activities in schools, ensuring these activities are led and supervised by a responsible adult.

## Definitions

“Extracurricular Activities” refers to activities and/or experiences that do not fall within the scope of the regular curriculum and do not result in academic credit.

“Volunteer” refers to an individual who is not an employee of a regional centre for education (RCE) or the Conseil scolaire acadien provincial (CSAP) but who interacts with students, or groups of students within the school, or during activities associated with the school, including extracurricular activities.

## Guiding Principles

- The safety and security of students is the first and foremost consideration
- Involvement of volunteers and community members in extracurricular activities is valued and viewed as important in cultivating community and school relationships
- Extracurricular activities can be led by school staff, volunteers, or a combination of the two

## Application

This policy applies to all RCEs, the CSAP, and all Nova Scotia public schools and associated programs that fall under those education entities.

The directives outlined in this policy replace directives in existing policies covering the same issue.

## Directives

School administrators must have access to a range of options with respect to supervision to support the availability and delivery of extracurricular activities in their schools.

The principal or designate may assign responsibility for the supervision of extracurricular activities to:

- An employee of the RCE/CSAP
- A volunteer as defined by this policy

The Principal cannot limit supervision to one of the above groups or the other.

Any volunteer supporting or leading an extracurricular activity is required to meet all safety requirements established by the RCE/CSAP with respect to working with students. Volunteers are also required to meet certification and/or safety requirements set by any organization or body responsible for the oversight of the activity that they are supervising.

School administrators and RCE/CSAP staff must ensure that all policies and procedures are followed in conducting any and all necessary checks for both staff and volunteers assigned to supervise extracurricular activities. These checks must be in place and up-to-date.



## Appendix B: Guiding Questions

Do you feel this policy is clear and easy to understand?

- Yes, very clear
- Somewhat clear
- Not very clear
- Difficult to understand

Are there any areas you feel require modification or additional clarification? Please explain.

Do you foresee any issues implementing this policy at your school?

- No, this should not be difficult to implement
- Yes, there may be problems implementing the policy
- Not sure

*Please explain:*

Do you think that this policy will be helpful to principals in terms of recruiting people to supervise extra-curricular activities?

- Yes, it will make it easier
- It will not have an affect one way or the other
- No, this will make it harder to run extracurricular activities

*Please explain:*

Do you think that this policy will help encourage/facilitate greater parent/community involvement in your school? Please explain.

Do you foresee any issues with volunteers leading activities with school staff? Please explain.

Do you foresee any issues with volunteers leading activities when school staff are not present? Please explain.

Do you have any other thoughts on the policy that you would like to share?