



September 11, 2019

Good Morning Principal and SAC chair,

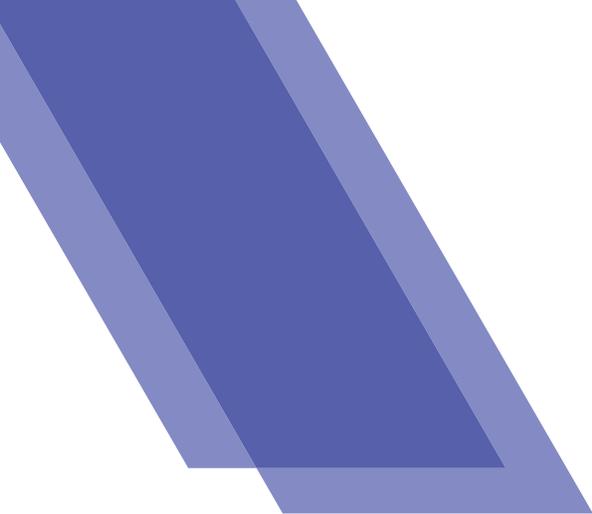
Please find below a number of updates.

- Attached is the **SAC Consultation Feedback Summary** from the work SACs across the province did during consultation on the *Extracurricular Activity Supervision Policy* (attached) recently released by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD). Thank you for all your input.
- **Save the date!** A professional development day is being planned by the EECD in consultation with regions for all SAC Chairs and Principals across the province. You will be receiving an invitation from the EECD to attend on **November 8th** when details have been finalized.
- *Did you know?* The EECD has a website for SACs, <http://www.ednet.ns.ca/SAC>
- *Did you know?* All communications to SAC Chairs and documents to support SACs can be found at www.hrce.ca - look for the purple button on the left hand side of the main page.
- GNSPES emails – Attached are *Terms of Use* from the EECD regarding the use of a GNSPES email account. I sent SAC Chairs and Principals an email on June 6th that outlines how to get your email account set up. If you have forgotten your password the principal must email techsupport@hrce.ca for assistance.

Thank you,

Susan

Susan Tomie
Director, School Administration



School Advisory Council
Consultations Feedback Summary:
Extracurricular Activity Supervision Policy

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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?

Extracurricular Activity Supervision Policy

Approval Date: August 2019

Effective Date: September 2019

1. Policy Statement

Extracurricular activities are a valuable and important part of education programming. Studies have linked involvement in these activities to students' having an increased sense of belonging in their communities and at school and to increased engagement in their learning. Extracurricular activities can also provide opportunities for families and community members to contribute to the school community.

Family and community engagement with schools can help improve student achievement and attendance, and encourage greater community-wide support for schools.

This policy focuses specifically on recognizing who can lead and supervise extracurricular activities for students. It aims to increase opportunities for family and community members to become registered volunteers with schools in their communities. This policy works in connection with other related regional centre for education (RCE), Conseil scolaire acadien provincial (CSAP), and provincial policies, including those involving volunteers.

2. Definitions

extracurricular activities: activities and experiences that do not fall within the scope of the regular curriculum and do not result in academic credit. Activities may occur on or off school property and outside of regular school hours.

registered volunteer: adults, 18 years or older, who are not employees of an RCE or CSAP but who interact with students, or groups of students, within a school or during activities associated with a school, including extracurricular activities. Registered volunteers are approved by school principals and must complete and provide proof of all necessary background checks.

Note: This definition does not include students in the public school system.

3. Policy Objective

This policy supports the ongoing safe and equitable provision of extracurricular activities for students, ensuring they are led and supervised by an employee of an RCE, CSAP, a registered volunteer, or a combination thereof.

4. Guiding Principles

This policy is built on the following guiding principles:

- 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 an RCE, CSAP, a registered volunteer, or a combination thereof.
- Inclusion is an important consideration for extracurricular activities.

5. Application

This policy applies to RCEs, CSAP, and all Nova Scotia public schools and associated programs. The directives outlined in this policy replace the directives in existing policies covering the same issue.

6. Policy Directives

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

Principals or their designates may allocate responsibility for supervising extracurricular activities to

- an employee of an RCE or CSAP who has volunteered to lead the activity
- a registered volunteer

Principals must consider all available options for supervising extracurricular activities including employees of RCEs, CSAP, and registered volunteers.

Principals or their designates have the authority to make the final decisions on whether or not to offer an extracurricular activity, who will lead the activity, and the appropriate ratio of adults to students for that activity.

Any registered volunteers who are supporting or leading extracurricular activities must meet all safety requirements and background checks respecting working with students as required by the RCE or CSAP. Registered volunteers must also meet certification and safety requirements set by any organization or body responsible for the oversight of the activity that they are supervising.

School administrators and employees of an RCE or CSAP must ensure that all policies and procedures are followed in conducting all necessary background checks for both employees and registered volunteers assigned to supervise extracurricular activities. These checks must be provided to the school and up-to-date in accordance with policies related to volunteers.

7. Responsibilities

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD) is responsible for

- communicating the *Extracurricular Activity Supervision Policy* to the appropriate staff at the RCEs and CSAP.
- ensuring that RCE and CSAP personnel understand their roles and responsibilities related to this policy.

RCEs and CSAP are responsible for

- reviewing and amending policies and procedures related to supervision of extracurricular activities to reflect these directives.

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- communicating the *Extracurricular Activity Supervision Policy* to school administrators.
 - providing support to school administrators when implementing the policy.

Employees of the RCE or CSAP are responsible for

- adhering to all RCE or CSAP and provincial policies related to extracurricular activities.

Principals and vice principals are responsible for

- ensuring all required policies, procedures, and forms related to supervising extracurricular activities are implemented at the school level.
- ensuring that all employees of the RCEs, CSAP, and registered volunteers participating in or leading extracurricular activities, complete orientation on relevant RCE and CSAP policies and are aware of any necessary information required to ensure the safety of the students they are supervising.
- ensuring opportunities for supervising extracurricular activities are available to teachers and community and family members, and that registered volunteers are supported in schools.
- ensuring that parents of students participating in extracurricular activities are informed about who is leading the activity or activities.

Registered volunteers are responsible for

- completing all processes and forms as required by RCE or CSAP policies.
- acting within the scope of their duties as a registered volunteer with the RCE or CSAP to maintain accident and liability coverage under the School Insurance Program (SIP).
- adhering to any other RCE, CSAP, or provincial policies related to their interactions with students (e.g., student transportation policy, school trip policy, volunteer policy).

8. Monitoring

EECD staff are responsible for monitoring this policy and reviewing it annually. As part of the yearly review, staff may recommend amendments, as needed.

9. References

This policy should be read in context with other policies including those related to volunteers, student protection, school trips, and the transportation of students. Please seek out the relevant policies for your RCE or CSAP.

TERMS OF USE – GNSPES Accounts for SAC Chairs

GNSPES accounts designated for School Advisory Councils (SACs) must only be used to conduct official SAC business.

Users should be aware of and keep in mind the provisions of the following:

- Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
- Personal Information and International Disclosure Protection Act
- Provincial School Network Access and Use Policy (www.ednet.ns.ca/document-depot)
- Provincial Privacy of Student Information Policy (www.ednet.ns.ca/document-depot)
- Digital Resource Assessment (DRA) for GSuite
(https://drive.google.com/a/gnspes.ca/file/d/0B7Ev_gwf02s2RzJqLTlsaFI0U0k/view?usp=sharing)

The Digital Resource Assessment (DRA) that was signed by each Regional Executive Director/ Superintendent indicates that one of the primary risk mitigation strategies when using GNSPES accounts is to limit the collection of personal information and avoid storing that information on cloud services.

Records created by SACs during the course of their work may be subject to the Nova Scotia Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIPOP) Act. More information on the Act can be obtained from the Information Access and Privacy managers in the Regional Centres for Education and the Conseil scolaire acadien provincial.

Passwords for all SAC GNSPES accounts will be automatically reset each school year.

Please note that GNSPES is not the same as G Suite, a brand of cloud computing, productivity and collaboration tools, software, and products developed by Google. The GNSPES accounts for SAC Chairs provide access to a number of tools and services, only one of which is part of G Suite.