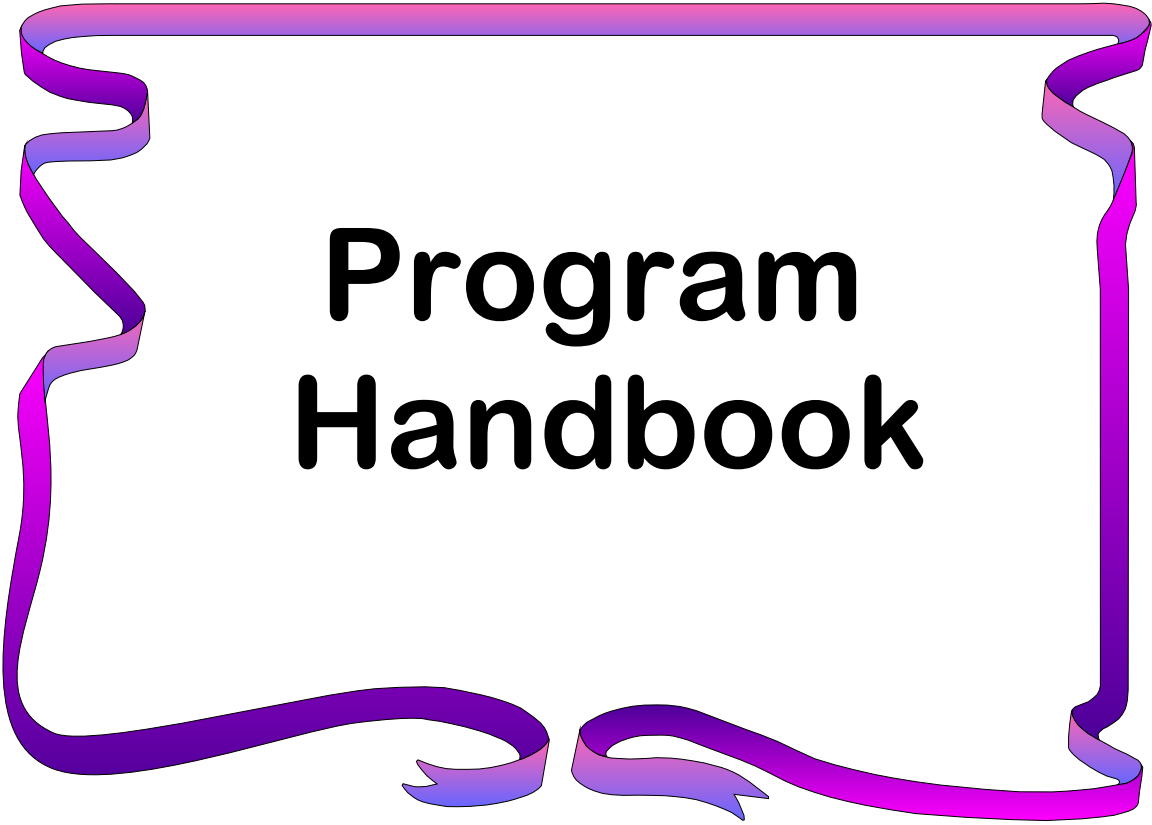


PEI Volunteers for Literacy (formerly Project LOVE)



Program Handbook

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We thank the National Literacy Secretariat (Service Canada)
for their financial assistance in preparing this Handbook

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PEI Volunteers for Literacy would like to acknowledge the assistance of Mary Merrill of Merrill Associates, STARS (Seniors Teaching and Reaching Students) of the Ohio Department of Aging, and Mary Lou Morrison, former Director of Student Services of the Eastern School Board for their assistance in preparing this manual.

Welcome to PEI Volunteers for Literacy!

The board members of PEI Volunteers for Literacy would like to welcome you to our inter-generational literacy project. We are very pleased to have you with us. You will be working together with older volunteers, teachers and students to provide some valuable individual attention to students in school.

You will be working closely with your supervising teacher in your school. However, the board wants to keep in touch with you as well. We will provide training, help with transportation, promote the project, hold some recognition events, and help resolve any problems you may have with the school or your role as a PEI Volunteers for Literacy volunteer. Any suggestions you have to improve the project in your school are welcome.

There will probably be meetings at your school for you and your fellow volunteers. Our coordinator will drop in from time to time to see how things are going. If you have any questions, suggestions, or problems, please feel free to call the office at 902-368-4695. The Board meets on the second Wednesday of each month at 161 St. Peters Road in Charlottetown. All volunteers are welcome to attend these meetings. Please join us if you can!

Thank you for volunteering your time, talents and energies through PEI Volunteers for Literacy. You have an important opportunity to help in the education and development of the students you serve. We wish you great success.

We have designed this handbook to give you information that will help ensure a successful experience for you as a volunteer in Island schools. Please read the information carefully.

Purpose

The purpose of PEI Volunteers for Literacy is to provide opportunities for older people to do meaningful volunteer work with students in PEI schools. PEI Volunteers for Literacy volunteers go into the schools once a week to work with students one-on-one with reading, writing or other school subjects.

This project is inter-generational in nature. We believe that the generations can benefit from contact with each other and that greater understanding between generations will result from these projects. Older volunteers can make a positive difference in the lives and scholastic performance of today's students.

History

In 1993, the PEI Literacy Alliance brought together a group of literacy workers, teachers, and older people to discuss ways they could help students in schools achieve their educational goals.

The group decided to apply to Health Canada (under their New Horizons program) to support a pilot project modeled on a program called L.O.V.E. in Nova Scotia. They formed a board, and drafted an application. In September 1993, federal Health Minister Mary Collins called together the board to announce that they had funded the project for three years. Two schools were chosen to pilot the project. In January, several other schools expressed interest in developing projects, and PEI Volunteers for Literacy has grown since then.

After the Health Canada project was completed, the Board applied to the National Literacy Secretariat and received funding. In 1999, the Minister of Education for Prince Edward Island announced that his department would provide yearly support for Project L.O.V.E., under the Literacy Initiatives Secretariat.

In 2003, a research team from UPEI undertook a study of the project in order to quantify the benefits to the students of intervention with older adults. One recommendation was to consider a change of name, to reflect the greater permanence of the program and offer some options for additional literacy work. In January 2006 the Board changed the name to PEI Volunteers for Literacy, and this change was ratified at the annual meeting in June, 2006.

Our Mission

1. To provide students and teachers with a positive role model of older people to encourage a change of attitudes toward aging
2. To develop opportunities for older people to do volunteer work with students in a meaningful way
3. To facilitate inter-generational activities

Policies

Overview

The purpose of these policies is to provide general direction to volunteers and staff involved with volunteer and management efforts. The PEI Volunteers for Literacy Board reserves the right to change any of these policies anytime. We expect all project participants to respect these policies. Any changes to, or exceptions from these policies must be obtained in writing from the program coordinator before volunteers are placed. This program has been designed to involve older volunteers in Prince Edward Island schools.

The activities of PEI Volunteers for Literacy volunteers focus on improving the academic skills of young students. This may include tutoring in the classroom, mentoring, reading with children at school, or helping with homework. Volunteers should not be engaged in any activity that does not provide a direct benefit, such as clerical work and research unless these activities are in support of direct service. Such activities may not be the primary service of the project. In all cases service activities may not duplicate the routine functions of current workers or may not displace employees.

Volunteers are **not** employed staff and they are **not meant to take the place** of staff. They are to be recognized as volunteers who supplement and support the work of staff.

Literacy volunteers can be a valuable resource to the schools, staff and students of Prince Edward Island. Older volunteers have the right to:

1. meaningful assignments
2. fair treatment as “partners-in-service”
3. proper training and supervision
4. recognition for their hours of service

In exchange, volunteers agree to:

5. perform their assignments to the best of their abilities
6. honor the goals, rules and regulations of PEI Volunteers for Literacy, and the schools in which they serve
7. hold confidential all information they receive regarding a specific student’s school records, family, background, etc.

Volunteers and staff are “partners-in-service” in implementing the mission of PEI Volunteers for Literacy. Each partner must understand and respect the needs and abilities of the other. Volunteers are a valuable human resource assisting in the work of educating young students. Staffs are encouraged to develop creative ways in which these older

volunteers can be of service. An older volunteer should not be assigned to work with a staff person without that staff person's consent.

Each volunteer assigned to a position with PEI Volunteers for Literacy must have a clearly identified supervisor in the school. This person will be responsible for direct management of that volunteer. This can be the classroom teacher with whom the volunteer works or the teacher/coordinator for the school. When a volunteer works with a classroom teacher, who is not the teacher/coordinator s/he may direct any questions to the teacher/coordinator if the classroom teacher is unable to answer them. The volunteer is requested to call the PEI Volunteers for Literacy coordinator if there are any problems which the school cannot resolve.

Some schools have a volunteer who is a Captain. This person is responsible for maintaining contact between the school and the volunteers. S/he is also responsible for keeping in touch with the PEI Volunteers for Literacy office.

Background Check

Because PEI Volunteers for Literacy volunteers work with children who are vulnerable group, they will be asked to provide the names of two character references when they join the program. PEI Volunteers for Literacy also requires all new volunteers to consent to having a criminal records check by the R.C.M.P. or the appropriate municipal police force. Any costs for this service will be reimbursed by PEI Volunteers for Literacy. The results of this check must be presented to the supervising teacher at the school, but they remain the property of the volunteer.

Confidentiality

Volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all information they learn while working as a volunteer. This information could concern a student, a student's family, staff members, volunteers, other people or program business.

Information about a specific student, her family, medical history, progress, developmental level and background is not to be discussed with anyone outside the program or school. Names of students and students' families are to remain confidential.

Insurance

All PEI Volunteers for Literacy volunteers are covered by liability insurance by the School Board in which they work. However, they are required to travel to and from school in an insured vehicle, even when they are requesting reimbursement for mileage from PEI Volunteers for Literacy

**PLEASE NOTE: This insurance only covers volunteers
while they are on school property.**

Volunteers must be official members of PEI Volunteers for Literacy and the principal must know when they are in the school. For this reason, we ask all volunteers to sign in when they arrive at the school and wear their volunteer identification badges while in the school. Volunteer identification badges are provided free of charge by PEI Volunteers for Literacy.

Hours of Service

Most PEI Volunteers for Literacy volunteers attend school for one half-day per week -- either a morning or an afternoon. Some volunteers may choose to attend school for two such periods per week. Any more hours must be negotiated with the school and PEI Volunteers for Literacy. All volunteer service will be performed during regular school hours.

Travel Costs

PEI Volunteers for Literacy volunteers may be eligible for travel costs at the current rate of 30 cents per kilometer for travel to and from their residence and the school. They may also be able to take advantage of the special arrangements PEI Volunteers for Literacy has made for taxi service in some municipalities.

Travel forms will be available from the teacher/coordinator or the Captain at the school, or directly from the PEI Volunteers for Literacy office. Completed forms must be sent to the PEI Volunteers for Literacy office (P.O. Box 2000 Charlottetown PE C1A 7N8) for reimbursement.

Attendance

Volunteers are expected to be present to perform their volunteer assignments on a regularly scheduled day and time. If you need to miss a day, please try to find another volunteer to replace you. If this is not possible please call the school to notify them of your absence.

Smoking/Perfumes/Foods

All schools in Prince Edward Island are designated smoke-free. Some students in some schools have serious allergies to perfumes or to some foods. Please ask if there are

restrictions in place. As a precaution, please do not provide food as a treat for your students, in case they are allergic. Stickers or other such non-food rewards are safer. Praise and other verbal rewards are the best of all.

Disciplinary Procedures

PEI Volunteers for Literacy reserves the right to reassign or dismiss volunteers if their actions are not in the best interests of the volunteer and /or the literacy program. Reasons for dismissal include, but are not limited to:

- Inappropriate behavior with a student
- Release of confidential information
- Sporadic attendance
- Misconduct or insubordination
- Misuse of alcohol or controlled substances
- Theft of property or misuse of equipment or materials
- Failure to abide by the organization's or school policies

PEI Volunteers for Literacy will take corrective action if necessary. This action will be reasonable, consistent with the offense, and take into consideration the volunteer's disciplinary record.

Corrective action for minor offenses is:

First offence -- an oral reprimand

Second offence -- a written reprimand

Third offence -- dismissal from the program

For a major breach in behavior the above corrective action does not necessarily apply. A major offense may constitute grounds for immediate dismissal from the PEI Volunteers for Literacy program.

Major offences include:

- physical psychological or verbal abuse
- failure to act/negligent action
- exploitation/mistreatment
- unapproved behavior/inappropriate intervention/inconsiderate treatment

The volunteer will be disciplined immediately by the teacher/coordinator with approval from the PEI Volunteers for Literacy coordinator. Except in the case of sexual abuse, neglect and/or mistreatment, the seriousness of the infraction must be considered when deciding on the appropriate corrective action. Sexual abuse must, by law, be reported

immediately to the Department of Social Services, and they will take appropriate action.

Definitions

In January 1999 the Eastern School District produced a Policy Statement on Caring Places to Learn/Safe School Environment. The following definitions come from that document:

VERBAL ABUSE: The use of language which is insulting, hurtful, offensive, reproachful, or which ridicules, disparages or belittles another person. Verbal abuse may include but is not limited to bullying, discrimination, sexual innuendo, or threats.

SEXUAL MISCONDUCT OR ABUSE: Sexual misconduct is sexual or gender-based harassment of another person. Sexual abuse is defined as any activity of a sexual nature in which a student's sexual integrity is violated and may include acts of touching, fondling, exhibitionism, harassment, exploitation, molestation, intercourse.

VIOLENCE: Any actual or threatened physical interference with another person who has or might reasonably have had the effect of impairing another person's health, welfare or safety.

BULLYING: To use any means to coerce or intimidate another person by force or threats of any kind.

DISCRIMINATION: Any distinction, exclusion, restriction, differential treatment or preference of any individual or group of individuals based upon race, religion, creed, colour, gender, marital or family status, national or ethnic origin, age, physical or mental disability, political belief, sexual orientation, source of income, or socio-economic status of any individual or class of individuals that has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the right of every individual and every group of individuals to full and equal recognition on the basis of personal merit and to the exercise of human rights and freedoms.

Grievance Procedure

We encourage communication as the most effective way to resolve problems. However, all PEI Volunteers for Literacy volunteers have the right to appeal a dismissal to the PEI Volunteers for Literacy Board. If you have been dismissed and would like to appeal that decision, please send a letter to the PEI Volunteers for Literacy office outlining your

reasons for appealing the decision. Board members of PEI Volunteers for Literacy will consider your request and notify you of their decision as soon as possible.

Interviewing and Placement of Volunteers

PEI Volunteers for Literacy, in collaboration with each school, is responsible for interviewing prospective volunteers. The interview will determine the interests and abilities of the potential volunteer, their suitability to a particular job, and their “fit” with the program --its mission and style of operation.

Proper volunteer placement will take into consideration volunteer assignments that use the volunteer’s unique skills, interests, abilities and experience. The goal of PEI Volunteers for Literacy is to provide older volunteers with meaningful educational assignments in schools. We hope this will improve the student’s performance and foster a greater understanding of the senior population.

Volunteer Position description

Each volunteer will be provided with a written position description that identifies the activities s/he is requested to perform with assigned students. Written position descriptions outline the duties, expectations, and responsibilities of both the volunteer and PEI Volunteers for Literacy

Position descriptions define the scope of the volunteer’s work and act as a risk management procedure. A copy of the volunteer position description, signed by the volunteer, will be held on file at the school.

Orientation

PEI Volunteers for Literacy and the school will provide an orientation session for the volunteers before the project begins. The materials in this handbook will be reviewed briefly, and all volunteers will be provided with a copy.

Information which will be covered in an orientation session may include:

history of the program	program purpose/mission
structure of the program	funding
responsibilities of volunteers	length of commitment
possible assignments	resources

supervision/staff
reporting procedures
confidentiality
dismissal/appeal process

group meetings/support
safety regulations
absenteeism

Training

PEI Volunteers for Literacy and/or the school will provide the training necessary for the volunteer to successfully fulfill the volunteer job duties. Training sessions may include such topics as:

- ▶ Early child development
- ▶ Ways of dealing with challenging behavior
- ▶ Learning difficulties
- ▶ Observation and behavior routines
- ▶ Literacy teaching techniques
- ▶ Abuse--what to look for--reporting and responsibility
- ▶ Support and encouragement techniques
- ▶ How to develop a mentor relationship
- ▶ Problem solving strategies
- ▶ Creating a learning environment
- ▶ Working with parents/families
- ▶ Available resources

Annual Review

PEI Volunteers for Literacy volunteers are invited to participate in an annual discussion about the project and their participation in it. The purpose of this discussion is:

- ▶ To encourage communication between volunteers, teacher/coordinators and PEI Volunteers for Literacy board members and staff
- ▶ To provide the volunteer with information
- ▶ To help identify and develop important skills

Volunteers may also be asked to give input to an overall evaluation of the PEI Volunteers for Literacy Program.

Recognition

Schools may provide recognition or appreciation events for their volunteers at different times through the year. In addition, PEI Volunteers for Literacy will hold an event, usually in June, which is a combination of the Annual General Meeting and a yearly wrap-up of PEI

Volunteers for Literacy

All PEI Volunteers for Literacy volunteers are considered members of PEI Volunteers for Literacy and are eligible to attend and vote at the Annual General Meeting. All returning volunteers receive a book bag in recognition of their first year. In addition, there may be from time to time other recognition activities provided by PEI Volunteers for Literacy

Risk Management

Schools have an obligation to protect volunteers as well as their employees. A volunteer may fall and get hurt. A volunteer can accidentally damage equipment. A volunteer's car may be damaged while in the parking lot. Programs that involve children and other vulnerable populations have an extra obligation to create safeguards for all involved.

Risk Management is the process of developing good day-to-day operating policies, procedures and training. Volunteer orientation and training provides volunteers with the tools needed to work safely and to reduce the risks associated with the school environment. For example, volunteers may need to know where to find the first aid kit or the nurse's office.

The most effective way to manage risks is to develop standardized procedures and policies. Some policy examples are:

- Volunteers will complete a volunteer application
- Volunteers will sign a written position description confirming their duties and responsibilities
- Volunteers should stay within the parameters established in written position descriptions
- Volunteers must sign in at the school office and wear a volunteer identification badge while on school grounds
- No school volunteer may leave the building with a child
- Volunteers will rarely be left alone with a student
- Volunteers will never discipline a student
- Volunteers will never initiate meetings with students after school hours or outside of school
- No volunteer is authorized to serve as a school volunteer outside of the school

Sample Forms

1. Volunteer's Bill of Rights
2. Code of Ethics/Confidentiality Statement
3. Position Description
4. Volunteer Application

Volunteer Bill of Rights

1. The Right to be treated as a “partner-in-service”.
2. The Right to a suitable assignment with consideration for personal preference, temperament, life experience, & education.
3. The Right to thoroughly planned and effectively presented job training.
4. The Right to know as much about PEI Volunteers for Literacy and the school as possible, including its policies, staff and programs.
5. The Right to continuing education, and information about new developments and opportunities.
6. The Right to sound guidance and direction by someone who is experienced, well-informed, patient and thoughtful.
7. The Right to an orderly, designated place to work, wherever possible.
8. The Right to a variety of experiences.
9. The Right to be heard, to have a part in planning, to feel free to make suggestions and to have respect shown for an honest opinion.
10. The Right to recognition of their contributions.

Volunteer Code of Ethics/Confidentiality Statement

As a volunteer I realize that I am subject to a code of ethics (moral principles or values) similar to that which binds the professionals in the field in which I work. Like teachers, I assume certain responsibilities and expect to account for what I do in terms of what I am expected to do. I will honour the goals, rules and regulations of the program. I will keep confidential matters confidential.

I interpret volunteer to mean that I have been accepted as a “partner-in-service” and I expect to do my work according to standards, as the paid staff members expect to do their work.

I promise to take to my work an attitude of open-mindedness, willingness to be trained, interest and attention. I believe my attitude toward volunteer work should be professional. I believe that I have an obligation to my work, to those who direct it, to my colleagues, to my students, and to the public.

Being eager to contribute all that I can to the goals of this program, I accept this code of ethics and will follow it carefully and cheerfully.

I understand and agree that in the performance of my duties as a volunteer with PEI Volunteers for Literacy, I must hold in strictest confidence any observations I may make or hear regarding students, students’ families or school staff.

Signature of Volunteer

Date

Position Description

TITLE: Literacy Volunteer

GOAL: Our goal is to provide opportunities for meaningful, educational support in schools to assist students who need extra help, or to help schools reach their educational goals for students.

QUALIFICATIONS: All PEI Volunteers for Literacy volunteers must be older than the students they work with. They must be physically able to come to the school once a week. They must be interested in helping children with patience and understanding. They must give students positive reinforcement and their full attention, rather than material rewards.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

- ♥ Volunteers must be committed to coming to school once a week
- ♥ Volunteers must work with students on assignments provided by the teacher
- ♥ Volunteers will work with the students assigned to them by the school
- ♥ Volunteers must remember that they are there to support the school system by providing individual attention to students who will benefit from it

ORIENTATION/TRAINING:

Volunteers are expected to attend orientation or training sessions provided by PEI Volunteers for Literacy and by the school.

TIME AND PLACE: The time of volunteer service is negotiated by the volunteer and the school at the beginning of the school year. If you find that your schedule has changed, please contact your coordinating teacher for assistance.

COMMITMENT: Schools often need more volunteers than PEI Volunteers for Literacy can provide; therefore, any commitment of time is valuable to them. The usual commitment is from October to May, excluding all school holidays.

SCHOOL CONTACT:

The teacher/coordinator for your school is _____

The school telephone number is _____

BENEFITS: Volunteers may apply for reimbursement of travel costs: either taxi fares or mileage reimbursement from PEI Volunteers for Literacy

PEI Volunteers for Literacy Volunteer Information Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: Day: _____ Night: _____

Which days are you available to volunteer? _____

Which time of day is best for you to volunteer? Morning Afternoon

Do you prefer to work with a certain school grade? Yes No

If yes, which grade/s would you prefer? _____

Do you have your own transportation? Yes No

(Assistance is available for those who don't have their own transportation)

Experience and/or Special Interests: _____

Previous Volunteer Experience: _____

Why do you want to volunteer with PEI Volunteers for Literacy? _____

In which activities would you like to be involved?
(Check as many boxes as you like)

Reading and listening to reading Cooking Crafts
Art Music Dancing

Would you like to be a special speaker? What topics would you speak about?

Security Section:

A) Everyone who works with children must provide information to ensure that the children are safe. If you are interested in working for PEI Volunteers for Literacy, you must provide two references of people 19 years of age or over who have known you for at least 12 months, and are not members of your immediate family. Please provide both names and telephone numbers.

1. Name: _____ Phone #: _____

2. Name: _____ Phone #: _____

I hereby authorize PEI Volunteers for Literacy to contact my listed references. I understand that the misrepresentation or omission of information requested is just cause for non-appointment as a PEI Volunteers for Literacy volunteer.

Signature: _____

B) You must also go to your local police station (municipal or R.C.M.P.) to request a Criminal Background Check. These checks may take one week, so you must allow time for the report to come back before your first visit to the school. You must show the results of the Criminal Background Check to the teacher/coordinator or the classroom teacher and mail a copy to our office for our files.