



Policy number: OP - 17

Policy type: Operational

Adoption date: March 20, 2013

Last review/revision: September 17, 2026

Next review: 2030

Volunteer Policy

The volunteer program of the Southgate Public Library creates opportunities for community members to actively contribute to the Library's vision of excellence. The Library welcomes volunteers to participate in the operation of the Library while performing a valuable service to the community, becoming more familiar with the Library, and supplementing the efforts of paid staff. This volunteer policy provides guidance and direction to management, staff, and volunteers.

Section 1: Scope

1. Volunteers are used by the Library to enrich and enhance Library programs and services. Volunteers do not substitute for or replace paid staff.
2. This policy applies to all volunteers, including activities that take place outside the Library's primary facility.

Section 2: Responsibility for the Program

1. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO), or designate, oversees and coordinates the volunteer program by:
 - a. planning for effective volunteer utilization
 - b. assisting staff in identifying productive and meaningful volunteer assignments
 - c. recruiting suitable volunteers
 - d. training staff to supervise volunteers effectively
 - e. supporting volunteers through coaching, feedback, and any necessary follow-up
 - f. tracking and evaluating statistical data reflecting the contribution of volunteers to the Library
 - g. officially recognizing volunteers for their contributions
 - h. maintaining liaisons with other volunteer-utilizing programs and organizations in the community
2. Volunteer records shall be maintained for each individual, and these records will be treated with the same level of confidentiality as those of paid staff.



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3. Volunteers are encouraged to arrange any personal insurance coverage they feel is appropriate, as the Library operates under the insurance policies of the Township of Southgate, which do not extend coverage to volunteers.

Section 3: Volunteer Position Descriptions

1. Volunteer opportunities are developed by staff and proposed to the CEO, or designate. Proposals must include a description of the assignment, its duration, and a proposed start date. Meaningful and engaging roles support successful recruitment.
2. Volunteer position descriptions are developed in consultation with staff prior to recruitment.
3. Each position description includes: title, summary, responsibilities, qualifications, benefits, training requirements, time commitment, and supervisor.
4. Volunteer position descriptions are reviewed and updated at least every three years, or sooner if roles change significantly.

The Board may identify emerging needs or community opportunities aligned with the organization's strategic priorities and may refer these to the CEO, or designate, for consideration. All decisions regarding the creation, design, and implementation of volunteer roles remain the responsibility of staff.

Section 4: Tasks That May Be Performed by Volunteers

1. Volunteers will not perform any task or duty for which a licence or certification is required if the volunteer does not possess such licence or certification.
2. Volunteer tasks may include but are not limited to:
 - a. shelf reading and shelving
 - b. customer service for special service areas
 - c. special projects
 - d. care of library plants and/or gardens
 - e. reading buddies
 - f. advisory committees
 - g. supporting staff in preparation for programs (crafts, etc.)
 - h. helping to represent the Library at community events and distributing Library information



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Section 5: Eligibility for Volunteering

1. The term “volunteer” refers to a person who performs services for the Library without compensation or expectation of compensation, beyond reimbursement for pre-approved specified expenses, and who performs a task at the direction of, and on behalf of, the Library.
2. Family members of paid staff may volunteer with the Library but will not be placed under the direct supervision of their family members who are employed by the Library.
3. The minimum age requirement for volunteers is 14. For positions that require handling of money or supervision of children, volunteers must be at least 16 years of age.

Section 6: Recruitment & Assignment

1. Volunteers are recruited on a proactive basis with the intent of broadening and expanding the involvement of the community in their library. Applications to volunteer are also given appropriate consideration.
2. Volunteers are interviewed to ascertain their suitability for, and interest in, an assignment prior to being accepted. The interview determines the qualifications of the volunteer and their commitment to fulfill the requirements of the assignment. The interview should also answer any questions that the volunteer has about the library and the assignment.
3. A reference check may be made if appropriate for the volunteer assignment.
4. Volunteers in certain assignments may be asked to submit a Police Vulnerable Sector Check (PVSC). This cost will be reimbursed by the Library should the volunteer be accepted for assignment. When a required background check is not completed, the Library may be unable to proceed with the volunteer placement.
5. No volunteer will begin their assignment until they have been officially accepted for that position and have completed all necessary screening as determined by the CEO or designate.
6. Volunteers perform their duties in the presence of at least one paid staff member. Each volunteer will have a specific staff member to whom they report and who



will be responsible for day-to-day support and supervision.

7. All volunteer placements begin with a 30-day probationary period. During this time, the CEO, or designate, will support the volunteer with periodic informal check-ins. It is also the responsibility of the volunteer to inform the CEO, or designate, of any issues of concern. At the end of the probationary period, a formal interview between the CEO, or designate, and the volunteer will take place to evaluate the extent to which the objectives of both the Library and the volunteer are being satisfied. Ongoing check-ins and feedback will continue beyond the probationary period to support the volunteer's performance and engagement.
8. The Library strives to meet volunteer expectations and offer a satisfactory volunteer experience for both parties. However, it may be necessary to explore options such as renegotiating the terms of the assignment or reassignment.
9. Volunteers who are at any time reassigned to a new assignment will be interviewed for that assignment and receive all appropriate training for success before they begin.

Section 7: Orientation and Ongoing Training

1. Volunteers receive training to provide them with information on:
 - a. knowledge and skills necessary to perform their volunteer assignment
 - b. the operation of the program or service to which they are assigned
 - c. the purpose and requirements of the assignment
 - d. any health and safety hazards that may be encountered during the course of the assignment
2. Volunteers are required to complete training mandated by legislation.

Section 8: Responsibilities of Volunteers

Volunteers should actively perform their duties to the best of their abilities and remain committed to the mission, vision, and values of the Library. Volunteers are expected to abide by the established policies and procedures of the Library.

1. Volunteers are responsible for respecting and maintaining the confidentiality of all privileged information they may access while serving as volunteers, whether this information relates to staff, volunteers, library users, other individuals, or library



business. Concerns about confidentiality will be reviewed promptly and may result in ending the volunteer assignment and/or participation in the volunteer program.

2. The library or the volunteer may choose to end the volunteer relationship at any time. Volunteers are encouraged to provide notice to their supervisor as soon as possible so that assignments and services can be adjusted appropriately.
3. When a volunteer expects to be absent from a scheduled shift, they should inform their supervisor in advance. Ongoing attendance concerns will be reviewed with the volunteer and may result in changes to, or the conclusion of, the volunteer assignment.
4. Volunteers must obtain approval from the CEO, or designate, prior to taking any action or making any statement that might affect or obligate the Library.
5. Volunteers are responsible for presenting a positive public image and must dress appropriately for the conditions and performance of their duties. Volunteers must wear their volunteer identification badge while performing their duties.
6. Volunteers are expected to track their hours and provide any other required information to the CEO, or designate, in a timely and accurate manner.
7. Volunteers must be covered by their own vehicle insurance where their assignment involves the use of a vehicle. Volunteers are responsible for their own parking tickets and fines incurred during volunteer assignments.

Section 9: Dismissal

1. Volunteers are expected to follow Library policies and procedures and to carry out their assignments in a satisfactory manner. When concerns arise, the Library will review the situation and may end the volunteer assignment where appropriate.
2. While on Southgate Public Library property and/or while performing volunteer activities on behalf of the Library, volunteers are expected to maintain respectful, professional behaviour. If concerns arise, the supervisor will discuss them with the volunteer and may provide written guidance outlining expectations and an



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opportunity for improvement. If the concern is not resolved within a reasonable time, the volunteer assignment may be ended.

3. Serious concerns that may result in immediate dismissal include, but are not limited to:
 - a. insubordination
 - b. unwillingness or inability to support and further the mission, vision, and values of the Library
 - c. theft of Library property
 - d. illegal, violent or unsafe acts
 - e. abuse or mistreatment of Library users, staff, partners, or other volunteers
 - f. smoking in unauthorized areas
 - g. intoxication during assigned shifts
 - h. being under the influence of, possessing, selling, or otherwise being involved with illegal drugs
 - i. behaviour that would reasonably be construed as harassment

Related Documents:

Township of Southgate Volunteer and Student Placement Policy



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Appendix A: Volunteer Interest and Skills Form

Applicant Information

Date		Preferred contact method	☐ Phone ☐ Email ☐ Text
Full name			
Preferred name		Pronouns optional	
Address			
Phone home		Phone mobile/work	
Email			

Emergency Contact

Name		Relationship	
Phone home		Phone mobile/work	

Applicants Under 18

Please note: Volunteers must be at least 14 years old.			
Birth date	Day: _____ Month: _____ Year: _____	School/Grade	
Parent/guardian name		Parent/guardian phone/email	
Parent/guardian signature		Date	



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Volunteer Interests

Please tell us what type of volunteer opportunity you are interested in. Volunteer roles are developed based on Library needs and may include program support, special projects, community events, or skill-sharing opportunities. General operational tasks, such as shelving, may be considered for occasional or longer-term volunteer opportunities when appropriate, particularly for high school volunteers seeking volunteer hours. Please check all that apply.

- Program support, including set-up, take-down, craft preparation, or assisting staff during programs
- Leading or co-leading a program based on skills, knowledge, hobbies, culture, profession, or lived experience
- Special event support, including community events, author visits, or outreach activities
- Technology, digital literacy, or one-on-one help opportunities
- Reading, literacy, tutoring, or conversation-based support
- Local history or genealogy
- Gardening, outdoor learning, environmental activities, or Library garden support
- Displays, creative projects, art, music, writing, crafting, or maker activities
- Friends of the Library involvement
- Other:

Skills, Experience, and Program Ideas

Skills, experience, interests, languages, hobbies, certifications, training, or community knowledge you would like to share:

If you are interested in offering or leading a program, describe your idea, intended audience, preferred format, and any supplies, space, equipment, or staff support needed:



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Accessibility or accommodation needs (optional):

Friends of the Library

Southgate Public Library also has a Friends of the Library group. Please indicate if you would like to learn more about joining or supporting the Friends of the Library: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Availability

Please indicate the day(s) and time(s) when you are available to volunteer.

	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Morning					
Afternoon					
After school					
Evening					
Flexible/varies					

Preferred frequency or time commitment: ☐ One-time ☐ Short-term ☐ Ongoing ☐ Other: _____

How many hours per week or month would you like to volunteer, if applicable? _____

References

Reference	Name	Relationship	Phone/Email
1			
2			



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Acknowledgement

- I understand that volunteer assignments are based on Library needs, available roles, and alignment with my skills, interests, availability, and required screening.
- I understand that some volunteer assignments may require an interview, reference check, Police Vulnerable Sector Check, orientation, training, or other screening before a placement begins.
- I understand that volunteers are required to complete training mandated by legislation, including AODA training where applicable.
- I agree to follow Library policies, health and safety procedures, staff direction, and the volunteer code of conduct.
- I agree to respect the privacy and confidentiality of staff, volunteers, Library users, and Library business.
- I understand that submitting this form does not guarantee a volunteer placement.
- I consent to being contacted by Southgate Public Library about current or future volunteer opportunities related to this application.

Privacy notice: Personal information collected on this form will be used to assess volunteer interests, availability, suitability, screening requirements, and placement opportunities with Southgate Public Library. Information will be handled in accordance with applicable privacy requirements and Library practices.

Applicant signature	Date
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Library Use Only

Received date		Interview date	
References checked	☐ Yes ☐ No	PVSC required	☐ Yes ☐ No
Status	☐ Approved ☐ Not approved ☐ On file ☐ Follow up required		
Placement/role		Supervisor	
Start date		Orientation/training completed	☐ Yes ☐ No
Notes			