SOUTH SLAVE DIVISIONAL EDUCATION COUNCIL

CRIMINAL RECORD CHECKS FOR STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS
POLICY GCEA

PURPOSE

The South Slave Divisional Education Council is committed to providing a safe and secure learning and working environment for students, staff and visitors.

Council recognizes its position of trust with respect to students, schools and community resources and is committed to protecting the physical, emotional, intellectual and psychological well-being of students.

To support this responsibility and comply with applicable legislation, regulations, directives and policies, SSDEC requires appropriate screening of employees, contractors and volunteers, particularly those who work directly with or have unsupervised access to students.

REGULATIONS

General Responsibilities
The Department of Human Resources, SSDEC and individual schools are responsible for implementing procedures consistent with the GNWT Criminal Record Check Policy and applicable requirements.

Principals are responsible for ensuring appropriate screening measures are applied to volunteers and contractors hired or arranged by the school or SSDEC who may have access to students.

Contractors hired or managed by GNWT Infrastructure or another external authority remain the responsibility of that hiring or contracting authority. Where these contractors work in schools during school hours or when students are present, Principals shall ensure appropriate site access controls are in place to protect student safety.

Disclosure and Ongoing Screening
Staff, contractors and volunteers must notify the Superintendent or supervising Principal of any criminal charges at the time charges are laid, excluding minor traffic violations.

The Superintendent, Principals and their designates may deny, restrict or suspend an individual's access to schools or school-sanctioned activities where criminal records, pending charges or other relevant circumstances raise concerns about safety or suitability. Restrictions may remain in place pending further review or investigation.

Failure to disclose criminal charges as required by this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or removal from volunteer or contractor duties.

Criminal Record Checks and Vulnerable Sector Checks shall be renewed every five (5) years, or sooner where required by GNWT policy, the Superintendent or circumstances warranting further review.

A satisfactory Criminal Record Check or Vulnerable Sector Check is one that does not reveal convictions, outstanding charges or findings that, in the opinion of the Superintendent or designate, are incompatible with the position, duties or access being considered.

Employment Screening

Job advertisements for SSDEC positions shall indicate that a current and satisfactory Criminal Record Check may be required as a condition of employment.

Positions involving direct contact with students require a satisfactory Vulnerable Sector Check prior to assignment.

New employees may be permitted to begin work upon submission of a signed statutory declaration, provided a satisfactory Vulnerable Sector Check is received within sixty (60) calendar days of commencing employment.

Until a satisfactory Vulnerable Sector Check is received, the Superintendent or designate may impose conditions, including supervision, restricted duties or other measures necessary to protect student safety.

Prospective and current employees, including casual employees, who have a confirmed criminal record may be employed or continue employment only with the approval of the Superintendent or designate, in consultation with the Department of Human Resources.

Contractor and Volunteer Screening

Contractors hired or arranged by the school or SSDEC, and volunteers, must provide satisfactory Criminal Record and Vulnerable Sector Checks before undertaking duties that involve:

- Working one-on-one with students
- Supervising groups of students without direct supervision by a regular employee
- Participating in overnight trips or school-sanctioned travel

Contractors and volunteers assisting with school activities under direct supervision may also be required to provide Criminal Record and Vulnerable Sector Checks at the discretion of the Principal or designate.

Contractors hired or managed by GNWT Infrastructure or another external authority shall follow the screening requirements of that hiring or contracting authority.

When external contractors are working in schools during school hours or when students are present, Principals may implement additional access controls, including:

- Visitor sign-in and identification requirements
- Escorts or supervision while on school property
- Restricted access to designated work areas
- Scheduling work outside instructional hours where practical

Screening Results and Suitability

Where a Criminal Record Check or Vulnerable Sector Check produces an inconclusive or possible match, a fingerprint-based Certified Criminal Record Check shall be required to confirm the results.

Where a casual employee, contractor or volunteer has a confirmed criminal record, relevant charges or concerning screening results, the Principal shall assess the individual's suitability for the proposed duties and obtain approval from the Superintendent before assignment.

Criminal Record Checks and Vulnerable Sector Checks completed for other organizations may be accepted at the discretion of the Superintendent or designate, provided the checks are current, verified and appropriate to the duties being considered.

All costs associated with Criminal Record Checks and Vulnerable Sector Checks are the responsibility of the individual unless otherwise approved by the Superintendent or designate.

Records and Confidentiality

Criminal Record Check and Vulnerable Sector Check documentation, or confirmation that screening has been completed, shall be maintained securely and treated as confidential.

Access to screening information shall be limited to the Principal, Superintendent, Department of Human Resources or designated individuals with a legitimate need to know. Screening documentation shall be retained and disposed of in accordance with applicable privacy and records retention requirements and shall not be kept longer than necessary.

Only confirmation of satisfactory screening shall be placed in an employee's personnel file unless otherwise required.

Implementation and Compliance

Principals are responsible for monitoring and ensuring compliance with this policy for casual employees, contractors and volunteers within their schools.

The Superintendent or designate is responsible for decisions requiring divisional approval under this policy.

Reference: Education Act - Section 46
GNWT Criminal Record Check Policy
GNWT Guide to Applying the Criminal Record Check Policy
Royal Canadian Mounted Police Criminal Record Check procedures.

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