



**YMCA of Hamilton/Burlington/Brantford  
Volunteer Position Description**

**Voices against Bullying  
Volunteer Family Support Advocate**

**Purpose:** The volunteer family support advocates will provide advocacy and support services to the student and/or family of student experiencing bullying at school. The role of the advocate will be to provide a supportive presence in conversations between school staff and parents/guardians/caregivers and de-escalate through a solution-focused approach.

**Volunteer Job Title:** Volunteer Family Support Advocate – Voices against Bullying

**Reports/Support to:** Program Manager (VAB); Program Assistant (VAB)

**Location:**

- Varying (YMCA & HWDSB)

**Key Responsibilities:**

- Share knowledge of school board's policies and procedures regarding violence and bullying to parents/guardians/caregivers
- Assist the student/parent/family in navigating the process and provide support with problem-solving as required
- Provide a supportive presence in conversations between school staff and parents/guardians/caregivers where support is desired
- Sharing knowledge of additional community support resources available inside and outside the school system with the family/school administrators
- Provide information and knowledge on how to advance reporting cases within the board system.
- Facilitate referrals as needed to professional mediators and mental health resources

**Qualifications:**

- Minimum of 18 years of age
- Familiarity with the education system in Ontario and ability to work with the school systems with diverse staff and clientele is an asset
- Understanding and sensitivity in dealing with members of different cultural and racial backgrounds, including visible and invisible dimensions of diversity
- Basic understanding of bullying and its impacts on targeted students and their families
- Previous experience in a similar advocacy and/or support role will be considered an asset



- Strong ability to facilitate communication with patience, empathy and responsibility with a key focus on maintaining confidentiality
- Good interpersonal, presentation, negotiation and organizational skills
- Ability to read, write and speak English
- Ability to read, write and speak in a second language is an asset
- Basic knowledge of the Hamilton community and resources
- Must provide current a **Vulnerable Sector Check** as per the Association's policy and reference check
- If you are onboarded, prior to your start date and as a condition of your volunteer placement, you will be required to provide **proof that you are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 or have a valid Human Rights exemption**

#### **Time Commitment:**

- Training - Attend 16 – 20 hours of comprehensive in-person training (Fall of 2022 – dates TBD)
- Advocacy Role – time commitment will be varying and dependent on referrals
- Must be available for the school year of 2022-2023

#### **Training and Supervision:**

- Volunteers will receive the following trainings:
  - YMCA Orientation
  - 16 – 20 hours of comprehensive in-person group training (details below)

#### **Voices against Bullying Training:**

The Volunteer Family Support Advocates will receive comprehensive training on the following:

- Understanding types of bullying, aggression, harassment and violence
- Introduction to relevant provincial status including the Ontario Human Rights Code, the Ontario Education Act, and relevant criminal statutes
- Explanation of HWDSB school board policies and procedures on bullying and violence
- Steps on supporting and advocacy for the targeted student
- Step-by-step advocacy process guide
- Clarity of the role of advocacy and an understanding of its boundaries and limitations
- Understanding uniquely vulnerable, higher-risk community groups, including racialized, indigenous, newcomer and LGBTQ+ communities
- Recognition of personal trauma triggers and how to deal with them
- Recognition of vicarious trauma symptoms and how to get support
- De-escalation strategies
- Introduction to Kathleen Hilchey's "Strong & Kind" language model
- How to create a safety plan for the student targeted
- Confidentiality and privacy obligations, constraints and limitations
- When and how to involve teachers, coaches, principals, trustees or superintendents
- Introduction to community support services and resources



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www.ymcahbb.ca

**Benefits:**

- Volunteers are valued members of the YMCA Volunteer Team
- Coverage under the YMCA comprehensive general and liability insurance
- Reference letter provided upon request
- Gain valuable experience working with youth, families, school board administration

**This is an unpaid volunteer position. Interested applicants can email their resume to:**

Subject Line: Voices against Bullying – Volunteer Family Support Advocate

Contact Person: Julie Schaafsma

Email: [Julie.schaafsma@ymcahbb.ca](mailto:Julie.schaafsma@ymcahbb.ca)

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