



MEMORANDUM

To: Newmarket Public Library Board

From: Todd Kyle

Date: November 18, 2015

Re: Criminal records checks for volunteers

The library's Volunteer Policy states that a criminal records check *may* be required in the case where the volunteer has occasion to be alone with a child or vulnerable adult. In practice, the library has required checks of Visiting Library Services (VLS) volunteers and Reading Buddies volunteers. The check required in these cases is the Police Vulnerable Sector Check, the deepest check available.

Performing a check is onerous on volunteers, as they are required to attend in person a police office in another municipality, and it is onerous on the Library, which pays the fee. Moreover, it has been determined that police checks for those under 16 years of age are of little or no value, as legislation prevents police records from being disclosed.

For this reason, Library staff have recommended that checks cease to be required of Reading Buddies volunteers, many of whom are under 16. These volunteers are reading with a young child (in grades 1 to 4) in a public area of the library and therefore are not "alone"; the child's parents are requested to remain in the building; and the recruitment process for the volunteers involves seeking a character reference from an authoritative adult. In consulting with Town of Newmarket Human Resources staff, it was determined that these factors provide the needed protection for vulnerable children.

VLS volunteers, who are mainly adults delivering books to vulnerable adults in their own home, in a private place with no direct supervision by staff, will continue to be subject to a Police Vulnerable Sector Check when needed.

The Board is not being asked to change a policy; this report is simply meant to inform them of a change in procedure which is consistent with existing policy.

The following motion is recommended:

THAT the Library Board receive the report on criminal records checks for volunteers.