



Student Handbook

www.von.ca

Developed: May 2023
Practice Quality and Risk Team
Review/ Revise: May 2026





Dear Student:

Welcome to VON! Thank you for choosing our organization to support your learning needs. We truly hope that you find your experience with us rewarding, interesting, and fulfilling. VON provides safe, high-quality care for clients and families across a variety of services in Ontario and Nova Scotia. VON employs regulated and unregulated staff, and supports volunteers in providing innovative programs in the communities we serve. We are pleased to welcome you as a valued member of this care team.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Bella Panchmatia', is positioned below the text 'With best wishes,'.

Bella Panchmatia, M.S., R.N

Chief Nursing Officer, Practice, Quality, and Client Safety
VON Canada



Introduction and Objectives

VON is pleased to welcome students from a range of disciplines. We are passionate about the safe care that we extend to clients and their families in their communities. Our staff embrace the valuable contribution that students make to client and family care.

We are committed to providing you with a safe and high-quality learning experience during your time with us. In order to maximize your experience as a student, please review this handbook prior to your clinical experience and keep it as a reference.

This handbook is intended to meet the following objectives:

- Welcome you and help you familiarize yourself with the physical and cultural environment at VON.
- Provide you with the information necessary to safely enjoy your learning experience with VON.
- Review and submit all of the documentation required to start your placement.

About VON

Touching the Lives of Canadians Every Day

Today at VON Canada, we deliver more than 75 different programs and services through 52 local sites staffed by 5,000 health care workers and more than 9,000 community volunteers.



Our Vision: Every life lived to the fullest

Our Mission: We help people live in their homes and communities by delivering the caring support that they and their families need.

Our vision and mission reflect our commitment to providing care that helps make every day as full of meaning and hope as possible. As a registered charity and not-for-profit corporation, our business is all about the difference we make in people's lives. This commitment sets us apart: *everything we do is focused on helping people to live their best lives possible. Every day.*

We believe that everyone has the right to receive care, regardless of their circumstances. That's why VON works hard to raise donations that are used to bring valued care to our clients and their families. Our values help guide how we work as a team and with our clients and families:

Our Values:

- **Respect** – we support others honestly, openly and fairly
- **Compassion** – we listen and serve with sensitivity, empathy and concern
- **Excellence** – we commit to everyday improvement in all that we do

We strongly believe that clients and their families have the right to make informed decisions about their care, and we encourage them to become partners in both the planning and delivery of their care. Personal and cultural values are part of that, and we ensure that every Plan of Care we develop responds to the needs and concerns of our clients and their families. Together with our clients and their families, we contribute to the health and improved quality of life of Canadians in their homes and communities, where they want to be.



Student Placement Guidelines

VON Welcome to Students

During your first day with VON your orientation will occur via online learning or classroom instruction. We look forward to welcoming you to your placement and reviewing relevant topics and expectations.

Prior to starting your placement, we confirm with your school that you have met our pre-placement requirements including:

- Clear Criminal Record Check (Nova Scotia: both a Vulnerable Sector Check and Child Abuse Registry Check)
- TB testing
- COVID Vaccination X2
- Mask Fit testing (students without a mask fit test cannot be present for any Aerosol Generating Medical Procedures)

The following topics will be reviewed during your orientation:

- Mission, vision, values
- Programs and services
- Privacy
- Exceptional Client experience
- Infection Prevention and Control
- Safety (WHMIS, Client Safety, Emergency and Disaster Procedure, Point of Care Risk Assessment)
- Ethics
- Falls Prevention
- Consent
- ~~Absence Process~~
- ~~VON Policy Review~~
- ~~How to be a guest in the client's home~~

In addition, the VON Nurse Manager or program designate at your site will provide an overview of key VON policies to ensure client safety and student understanding of the expectations of VON in providing safe, quality care. The Nurse Manager or designate will provide the *VON Student Placement Checklist* form for you to sign after you have received

orientation to the following:

Forms to be signed by you (these are provided):

- VON Student Placement Checklist
- Confidentiality and Non-Disclosure Agreement (Student Placements – Clinical)
- Student Emergency Contact form

COVID- 19 and Student Placements

VON is committed to providing safe and supportive student placements and COVID-19 required careful attention to ensure students understood the importance of infection prevention and control measures (IPAC). One focus of your orientation includes required learning modules related to IPAC. These modules are part of the learning pathway you are required to complete prior to starting your placement.

Alternatively, your onsite orientation may include this in your initial orientation.

VON Practice, Quality, and Risk Management

VON is committed to providing a quality, evidence-informed clinical practice environment. VON supports all staff in having access to point-of-care policies and guidelines to support safe clinical practice in all programs and services. VON employees, volunteers, and students are responsible for being aware of policies and processes that support the work they do.



VON Occupational Health and Safety

VON is committed to providing a healthy and safe work environment (both physically and psychologically) for its workers, and to preventing occupational illnesses and injuries. We strive for zero preventable incidents, injuries, and illnesses, and to exceed the safety experience of other home and community care organizations. VON supports the prevention of occupational illness and injury at all levels of the organization and recognizes the need for clarity of roles and responsibilities and the need for cooperation in all health and safety matters between each worker and their colleagues, and with VON's union partners.

OVERALL RESPONSIBILITIES OF All VON Employees (including Management), Volunteers and Students:

1. Participating in training, understanding, and working in compliance with the requirements of the VON Safety Management System, OHS Acts, and with established roles and responsibilities;
2. Working in compliance with the Safety Management System, including Safe Work Practices and Procedures;
3. Taking every reasonable step to create and maintain a safe and healthy workplace to the extent of their authority and ability to do so;
4. Consulting and co-operating with the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee
5. Cooperating fully with any investigation of health and safety issues and incidents, and with any person performing a duty or exercising a power conferred by the OHS Acts;
6. Understanding that should any personal crisis or safety issue arise during the precepted clinical experience, the preceptor may call 911 to obtain the necessary assistance.

ROLES & EXPECTATIONS

Student

While on placement, the student operates under VON program policies and procedures. Students are responsible to demonstrate their skills safely by performing the assigned tasks and incorporating feedback as necessary. In addition, some key responsibilities of the student include but are not limited to:

- If applicable, establish reliable travel arrangements.
 - This includes, arranging meeting locations, arriving on time, notifying your mentor and faculty or program supervisor if you are sick or late, and arranging suitable make-up hours.
- Completing, submitting, and adhering to all required placement documentation, which may include a student information form, confidentiality form, and policy and procedure review, and additional reviews as required by the program.

- Demonstrating professional conduct at all times including:
 - Only performing tasks that have been learned in theory and lab courses with preceptor supervision.
 - Maintaining client confidentiality at all times.
 - Demonstrating respectful engagement with clients, families, and VON staff and volunteers.
 - Participating as part of the collaborative multidisciplinary team.
 - Completing all required documentation and paperwork prior to the end of each scheduled shift.
 - Demonstrating enthusiasm for learning.
 - Being receptive and responsive to feedback.

Expectations for Appearance

Students are expected to dress professionally at all times and adhere to the following:

- Please note VON is a scent-free organization.
- Clothes must be clean, odour and perfume free and well-maintained. Avoid clothing with rips or tears, branding, or slogans.
- Students must bring a pair of safe, clean, flat, closed-in shoes (no sandals or footwear with open areas) to wear inside the home, clinic, or activity setting. Regular outdoor footwear needs to be closed-in and safe as well.
- If longer than shoulder length, hair must be tied up neatly.
- Facial hair must be kept neatly groomed.
- For students providing direct client care:
 - For your safety, please do not wear any jewellery that could become entangled or pulled by clients.
 - Students are expected to wear their school's standard uniform to home visits or clinic settings including a name tag that is visible at all times.
 - Students must maintain short, clean natural nails with no nail polish or artificial nails.
 - For IPAC purposes no rings, bracelets, or wristwatches may be worn.



Preceptor

The preceptor operates under VON Program policies and procedures and is responsible to observe, evaluate, communicate with, and promote safety for the student being precepted. In addition, some key responsibilities of the preceptor include:

- Adhering to VON policies and procedures for precepting students
- Preceptor is to *always be present with the student when providing clinical care to clients.*
- Notifying the VON site office and the student of any sick or absent days to ensure adequate time for rescheduling
- Communicating with the student to arrange travel
- Ensuring that clients consent to student involvement prior to participating in their care
- Ensuring client safety
- Observing the student, providing guidance and feedback, and completing any necessary school forms as required.
- Encouraging the student to ask questions and solve problems.
- Allowing the student opportunities to practice skills.
- Allowing the student to demonstrate entry-level skills and tasks that are within the scope of practice of the student.
- Documenting, reporting and communicating the student's performance to VON Managers/ Supervisor and education provider during and at the end of the placement.
- Referring all concerns/conflicts to the VON manager and education provider contact.

The VON Nurse Manager or Clinical Educator

The VON Nurse Manager or Clinical Educator and the education provider collaborate to ensure parties' needs are met during the placement. These expectations include what the VON program requires for student placements, scheduling students, and managing performance concerns. The VON Nurse Manager or Clinical Educator oversees student orientation and ensures students have an overall positive experience with VON.

STUDENT FORMS

- VON Student Placement Checklist (*Unregulated Care Provider or Regulated Care Provider*)
- Confidentiality and Non-Disclosure Agreement (Student Placements – Clinical) (Ontario or Nova Scotia document)
- Student Emergency Contact form

STUDENT EVALUATION

Near your final placement week, you will receive a survey to evaluate your placement. We value your input and would like to learn more about what went well during your placement, and your suggestions for improvement. Your feedback is confidential and will be used to improve the learning experience for future students.

We hope you enjoy community care and have a very rich learning experience with us.

