

# **Hiring Qualified Interpreters to Provide Service for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Child in Your District**

**This document is endorsed by the  
Family Network for Deaf Children (FNDC) and the**



**Westcoast Association of Visual Language Interpreters (WAVLI)**



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**Table of Contents**

<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>PROFILE OF DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING STUDENTS.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>THE NEED FOR QUALIFIED INTERPRETERS.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>INTERPRETER TRAINING/EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>INTERPRETER AS MEMBER OF THE EDUCATIONAL TEAM .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>DUTIES &amp; RESPONSIBILITIES: .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS OF INTERPRETERS .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>CODE OF ETHICS AND GUIDELINES FOR PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>SUPERVISION AND EVALUATION.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>REMUNERATION .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>REFERENCES .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>APPENDIX A - SCREENING TOOLS.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>APPENDIX B - AVLIC’S CODE OF ETHICS AND GUIDELINES FOR PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>APPENDIX C - JOB POSTING – SAMPLE.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>APPENDIX D - RECOMMENDED RESOURCES.....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>APPENDIX E - MINISTRY OF EDUCATION GUIDELINES.....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>APPENDIX F - MUSCULOSKELETAL INJURY .....</b>	<b>23</b>

## Introduction

With the implementation of mainstream education for deaf and hard of hearing students across the province, administrators have faced the relatively new challenge of recruiting and retaining qualified interpreters<sup>1</sup>. The skill level of individuals hired to provide interpretation has proven as diverse as the needs of the students they serve; from rudimentary signing skills to complete fluency. Today, school administrators are more aware of the complexity of interpreting and the need for interpreters to enter the workplace with a sound foundation in interpreter training. Still, districts often struggle with how to recruit the most qualified service provider.

Currently, the province of BC serves approximately 1 400<sup>2</sup> students who are deaf or hard of hearing in neighbourhood public schools and the growing rate of students who use sign language and sign supported speech as their primary mode of communication in local community schools has increased the need for the specialized services of interpreter professionals. The purpose of this document is to assist school administrators in the hiring and retaining of qualified interpreting staff for deaf and hard of hearing students. This document also offers a profile of this student population to demonstrate the necessity of qualified interpreters. By following the guidelines and information provided within this document, districts will be able to provide students who are deaf and hard of hearing with a higher degree of access to education as well as a more positive overall school experience.

This document is funded and endorsed by the Family Network for Deaf Children (FNDC), a provincial parents' group for families of deaf and hard of hearing children, and endorsed by the Westcoast Association of Visual Language Interpreters (WAVLI), the provincial professional association of sign language interpreters. The author would like to thank FNDC, and the WAVLI / CAEDHH Educational Interpreter Committee for their continued commitment to working collaboratively toward best practice in service provision for students who are deaf and hard of hearing. A special thank you also to the Manitoba Association of Visual Language Interpreters (as

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this document the term 'interpreter' will be used to refer to those individuals who, as part of their job description, regardless of job title or level of training, provide communication access services for students who are deaf or hard of hearing. Some of these access services however, do not require a sign language interpreter but rather an oral interpreter who works with non-signing children, most of whom are hard of hearing and/or have a cochlear implant.

<sup>2</sup> The Ministry of Education estimates there are approximately 300 children in the provincial school system who use sign language as their primary mode of communication while the remaining 1100 use a variety of communication modes.

cited in *Professional Standards and Role Guidelines for American Sign Language-English Interpreting in Educational Settings*) for their innovative research and contributions in this area.

## **Profile of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students**

Students with hearing loss come to the classroom with a diverse range of communication, technological, social and developmental needs. Some have little hearing or no hearing at all, some have no knowledge of sign language while others are fluent, some benefit from a sophisticated use of technology such as cochlear implantation, while others use no technology at all. The individual educational and communication needs of each deaf and hard of hearing student is outlined in an Individual Education Plan (IEP) according to the requirements specified in the BC Ministry of Education Special Education Services Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines, Section E. It states, “a critical part of the assessment process is determining the method of communication to be used in the educational setting. School districts are responsible for assessing the most enabling language(s) and/or technology support(s) to allow the student who is deaf or hard of hearing to fully access the curriculum and for providing staff with the qualifications to meet the specific communication needs of individual students” (p.77).

Determining these needs is typically the responsibility of the student’s Case Manager (e.g., teacher of the deaf and hard of hearing) who collaborates with parents and other professionals. Interpreters who have graduated from an interpreter training program often provide unique insight and expertise to the educational team, and carry out their duties based on the collaboratively developed IEP.

## **The Need for Qualified Interpreters**

Students with hearing loss who require interpreting services rely on the work of an interpreter for clear and unimpeded communication and access to education. The United Nations has declared it a right for all deaf and hard of hearing individuals to have education delivered in the appropriate language and mode of communication for the individual by *trained* professionals. Yet, many deaf and hard of hearing students are not currently provided equal access to education because of the unqualified interpreters currently working with them in the classroom. (Winston, 2006.)

Administrators face challenges in meeting the needs of students with hearing loss for a variety of reasons, including a lack of exposure to the interpreting profession and limited access to information which would help access qualified interpreters easily. As a result, there often exists a glaring discrepancy between the increasing deaf and hard of hearing student population and the number of qualified interpreters being hired to meet the rising needs of schools.

#### INTERPRETER TRAINING/EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

Employers can expect interpreter training program graduates to have anywhere from a two year college diploma to a four year undergraduate degree, or even a graduate degree in interpreting from one of several masters programs in the United States. And, although post secondary education is not a prerequisite for Canadian college and university interpreting programs, many of the graduates have attained diplomas or degrees prior to entering the interpreting program; often with a major in education, or other discipline directly applicable to interpreting.

Interpreter training programs have continued to evolve and expand over time to integrate current research, deepen the curriculum, and have a more holistic approach to interpreting than ever before. For example, interpreter training programs across Canada now require students have an advanced level of sign language skill upon entrance. Upon graduation, interpreting students exit programs fluent in American Sign Language (ASL) and have entry level interpreting skills. They are able to assess the linguistic and cultural demands of an interpreting situation and respond with the most effective interpretation. Interpreting program graduates complete their education with the sophisticated capacity to adapt and modify their use of language to accommodate the needs of any individual with hearing loss. Interpreter training programs provide interpreters with the ability to consistently provide an accurate and unbiased interpretation.

Graduates of interpreter training programs should be members of the Association of Visual Language Interpreters of Canada (AVLIC) and their local affiliate chapter. As members, interpreters are required to apply the Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Professional Conduct (See *Appendix B*) to effectively to meet the unique needs of school age children while working within the parameters of the professional standards.

Overall, graduates of interpreter training programs learn how to best render an accurate interpretation in any situation; to practice with integrity, impartiality, and the highest standard of professional accountability.

For professionals providing oral interpretation<sup>3</sup>, fluency in sign language and an in-depth knowledge of the interpreting process is an asset to satisfy the diverse range of student needs. Some children, for example, may require a combination of oral interpreting and sign language support. Others may begin the school year without sign language support but later in the semester find it is a required service. Interpreting program curricula focuses on further developing the interpreting students' language ability while concurrently studying the complexities of the interpreting process required whether providing oral or sign interpreting. Interpreters are taught how to produce work that meets the individual requirements of each deaf and hard of hearing person with whom they work and, make appropriate decisions regarding service delivery. Decisions regarding student support supplemental to interpreting are often made in consultation with the teacher of the deaf and hard of hearing.

### **Interpreter as Member of the Educational Team**

The interpreter functions as part of the educational team which includes the classroom teacher, a teacher of the deaf and hard of hearing, and others involved in the education of the deaf or hard of hearing student. Traditionally, educational interpreters have been under the supervision of the school principal but work in collaboration with the classroom teacher and teacher of the deaf and hard of hearing to support student achievement of prescribed learning outcomes and IEP goals. As part of the team, classroom interpreters are able to share their specialized experience and education accumulated over years of training. Interpreters can offer insight into language acquisition, development, and usage. Interpreters can comment on the effects of hearing loss on a student's school experience. This input is crucial to IEP, parent-teacher conferences, teacher/student communication, and the larger school based team because of the interpreter's unique expertise.

While a member of this team, the interpreter always considers the importance of confidentiality and the role it plays in building a trusting relationship with the student and other professionals. Likewise, other members of the team must respect the interpreter's intimate role and the unique impact the interpreter has on the student's life.

*The primary role and responsibilities of interpreters in classrooms must remain consistent.*

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<sup>3</sup> There are currently no college or university programs in Canada that focus on oral interpreting skills only.

Interpreting is the primary function of interpreters in educational settings and should not be compromised by non-interpreting tasks that may require them to leave the classroom or otherwise be inaccessible to the student. Nor should interpreters ever be put in a position that may jeopardize their relationship with a deaf or hard of hearing student, such as taking on a disciplinary role.

Interpreters require preparation time outside the regular school hours to adequately perform their duties and should be paid for this preparation time. Preparation time may include becoming familiar with upcoming lessons, collaborating with the classroom teacher, other interpreters and/or the teacher of the deaf and hard of hearing, and researching sign language vocabulary.

When tutoring is needed by the student, ideally, it should be done by the classroom teacher or teacher of the deaf and hard of hearing. Alternatively, the interpreter may conduct the tutoring session alone, if training and direction has been provided. Tutoring may include previewing or reviewing curriculum materials in both ASL and English and assistance with assignments or tests.

The following is a list of duties and responsibilities interpreters are able to assume as part of their position.

#### DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES:

- facilitate communication between the student, his/her hearing peers, the classroom teacher, teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing, school administration, parents and staff within the school environment
- prepare for interpreting work by becoming familiar with course information, technical language and teaching styles
- review vocabulary and reinforce specific concepts covered in class as needed
- participate in educational team meetings and provide information on the student's ability to successfully access communication
- contribute to educational goal setting as it pertains to student's access to communication
- consult and collaborate with teachers on a regular basis
- educate the deaf and hard of hearing students on the interpreting role by explaining students' rights and interpreter duties, boundaries and responsibilities
- encourage responsibility and independence in deaf and hard of hearing students
- provide information about cultural and linguistic differences that may impact students' performance and behaviour

- act as consultant to teachers and other staff regarding the interpreting role
- interpret test questions and scribe students' answers into written English when necessary
- adhere to school district performance standards, policies, practices and regulations
- participate regularly in interpreting specific professional development opportunities
- maintain an Active membership with the provincial and national professional interpreting associations and abide by the Association of Visual Language Interpreters of Canada (AVLIC) Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Professional Conduct (see *Appendix A.*) (Manitoba Association of Visual Language Interpreters, 1997.)

In the educational setting, it is understood that when interpreting is not required, other duties may be assigned; these duties typically vary according to students' needs, the educational setting and district.

## **Required Qualifications of Interpreters**

As an integral part of the educational team, it is essential that the interpreter providing services for students has the necessary qualifications. Below is a list of qualifications interpreters must possess in any educational setting in order to best meet the needs of deaf and hard of hearing students.

Qualifications include:

- Graduation from an ASL-English interpreting program
- Active membership in the Westcoast Association of Visual Language Interpreters
- Basic understanding of hearing loss and its effect on the social, physical and psychological development of deaf and hard of hearing individuals
- Basic knowledge of language acquisition and development
- Knowledge of community, provincial and national resources available to students and their families
- An awareness of deaf culture specifically and cultural diversity generally, and its relationship to students' development and self-perception
- Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships and work collaboratively as a member of an educational team
- Strong interpersonal, organizational and communication skills
- Ability to establish trust and rapport with students and staff
- Commitment to professional development specific to interpreting



- Knowledge of the basic aspects of children’s educational, physical, social and emotional development
- Understanding of the basic principles of educational practices, the function of support services, and the role of interpreters as part of an educational team
- Undergraduate degree preferred
- Minimum 1 year of interpreting experience preferred

*When trained interpreters are unavailable, individuals who are fluent in ASL as determined by successfully completing a recognized screening may be considered as temporary candidates. See Appendix A for a list of recommended screening options. ((Manitoba Association of Visual Language Interpreters, 1997.)*

Districts experiencing difficulty recruiting qualified interpreters may require assistance in advertising. Some effective advertising strategies available include:

- 1 developing the posting from the attached sample job posting (*See Appendix C*).
- 2 advertising through professional sources such as the WAVLI and AVLIC website and employment posting services ([www.wavli.com](http://www.wavli.com) or [www.avlic.ca](http://www.avlic.ca))
- 3 screening applicants using one of the suggested screening resources (*See Appendix A*).

Note: WAVLI is available to assist school districts with establishing or revising job specifications for educational interpreters. In addition, consultation is available to work with CUPE regarding job specifications and remuneration. WAVLI can be reached at [president@wavli.com](mailto:president@wavli.com)

## **Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Professional Conduct**

Adherence to an ethical code is a valued standard for any professional organization. The AVLIC *Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Professional Conduct* (COEGPC) was established to provide guidelines for all Canadian interpreters. The COEGPC helps ensure that professional discretion is used and quality service is provided in all interpreting circumstances. The COEGPC states five guiding principles for interpreting practice: professional accountability, competence, non-discrimination and integrity in professional relationships and business practices. (*See Appendix B*). Each principle is detailed to help interpreters navigate any interpreting situation or ethical dilemma.

## **Supervision and Evaluation**

One aspect of the *Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Professional Conduct* requires interpreters continually strive to maintain and enhance their skills throughout their career. As part of this dedication to ongoing professional development, it is recommended that a policy for regular evaluation be integrated into the school year for educational interpreters.

As previously mentioned, interpreters have traditionally been under the supervision of the school principal while working in close collaboration with the classroom teacher and teacher of the deaf and hard of hearing. School-based evaluators (e.g., teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing) have been able to assess the general performance of interpreters such as punctuality, but unable to evaluate sign language levels and interpreting success. This has left interpreters without the benefit of valuable feedback and direction directly related to interpreting. Therefore, enlisting the assistance of interpreting professionals, such as sign language interpreting instructors, will enable the interpreter to be evaluated in all areas of performance. Areas to be considered when evaluating interpreters include:

- 1 accurate and professional interpreting performance
- 2 appropriate language match between interpreters and deaf and hard-of-hearing students
- 3 appropriate and comfortable inter-personal relationships between interpreter and deaf and hard of hearing student and staff
- 4 potential for repetitive strain injury, or musculoskeletal injury
- 5 the availability of ongoing professional development opportunities relating specifically to interpreting

Students should be encouraged to offer feedback as they are best able to measure the quality of the interpreting they are receiving. In addition, it is imperative that older deaf and hard of hearing students have the right to advocate for themselves and be given the necessary avenues to have their concerns and feedback addressed regarding the service they are given in the classroom.

## **Remuneration**

WAVLI can provide consultation for districts that are interested in establishing new class specifications/positions for Interpreters. WAVLI is also willing to consult with CUPE to establish the terms of these positions. Interpreters in educational settings should be compensated and receive

benefits that reflect their responsibilities, education, experience, skills, and professional preparation. Therefore, it is recommended that:

- 1 interpreters be considered on par with other non-teaching professionals
- 2 hours of work for interpreters be a full teaching day, including preparation time, with negotiable overtime remuneration for interpreting activities and events outside regular class times
- 3 a procedure for substitute interpreting be established using a pre-approved list of qualified interpreters
- 4 ongoing professional development opportunities specific to interpreting be made available with release time and reimbursement for professional development fees

## **Summary**

Literacy, social skills, and attaining the tools necessary to meet the demands of a modern economy are what the majority of British Columbians assume they will gain from their public school education. However, when non-qualified interpreters are hired to work in educational settings with deaf and hard of hearing students, the students' education is compromised. "It would be unconscionable and unacceptable to place any student with a teacher who is not qualified. In fact, a teacher who is not qualified would not be a teacher at all. Yet, data shows that deaf and hard of hearing students are subjected to unqualified, uncertified interpreters regularly." (Winston, 2006). When a student requires interpreting services, these children rely on an interpreter to accurately relay instruction to them on a daily basis. It is essential students receive a consistently high quality of interpretation. Language is the connection to all aspects of human development and identity. Language is multi-dimensional. It is key to our understanding of culture, social understanding, self-awareness, perception of life chances and interpersonal communication. Given the importance of language, it is essential that careful consideration be given when hiring interpreters.

It is our hope that with this document, administrators will have a better understanding of the recommended qualifications and responsibilities of the classroom interpreter and therefore, be better prepared to hire the best qualified candidate to work with the deaf and hard of hearing child in their district.

## References

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## **Appendix A - Screening Tools**

There are currently no established, commercially available pre-hire screening tools for classroom interpreters working in Canada. A highly recommended and affordable American product is the *Boys Town Pre-Hire Screening* out of the Boys Town National Research Hospital in Omaha, Nebraska. For more information contact Sandy Woods at 402-452-5059 or visit the Educational Interpreting Performance Assessment (EIPA) page at [www.classroomroominterpreting.com](http://www.classroomroominterpreting.com)

Other options include contacting both the provincial and national professional interpreter associations, WAVLI and AVLIC, for recommendations of local experienced interpreters who are qualified to provide assistance in the interview and screening process. Contact information may be found at [www.wavli.com](http://www.wavli.com) and/or [www.avlic.ca](http://www.avlic.ca)

## **Appendix B – AVLIC’s Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Professional Conduct**

The Association of Visual Language Interpreters of Canada (AVLIC) expects its members<sup>4</sup> to maintain high standards of professional conduct in their capacity and identity as an interpreter. Members are required to abide by the Code of Ethics and follow the Guidelines for Professional Conduct as a condition of membership in the organization.

This document articulates ethical principles, values, and standards of conduct to guide all members of AVLIC in their pursuit of professional practice. It is intended to provide direction to interpreters for ethical and professional decision-making in their day-to-day work. The Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Professional Conduct is the mechanism by which the public is protected in the delivery of service.

### **VALUES UNDERLYING THE CODE OF ETHICS & GUIDELINES FOR PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT**

AVLIC values:

- 1. Professional accountability:**  
Accepting responsibility for professional decisions and actions.
- 2. Professional competence:**  
Committing to provide quality professional service throughout one’s practice.
- 3. Non-discrimination:**  
Approaching professional service with respect and cultural sensitivity.
- 4. Integrity in professional relationships:**  
Dealing honestly and fairly with consumers and colleagues.
- 5. Integrity in business practices:**  
Dealing honestly and ethically in all business practices.

**Members are to understand that each of these core values and accompanying sections are to be considered when making ethical and professional decisions in their capacity and identity as an interpreter. These values are of equal weight and importance.**

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<sup>4</sup> Members, for the purpose of this document, refers to both Deaf and hearing individuals who hold either Active or Supporting membership.

## Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Professional Conduct

### 1.0 **PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY: Interpreters accept responsibility for all professional decisions made and actions taken.**

#### 1.1 **Confidentiality**

- 1.1.1 Members will respect the privacy of consumers and hold in confidence all information obtained in the course of professional service. Members may be released from this obligation only with their consumers' authorization or when ordered by law.
- 1.1.2 Where necessary, a member may exchange pertinent information with a colleague in order to provide consistent quality of service. This will be done in a manner that protects the information and the consumers.
- 1.1.3 Members need to be aware that other professional codes of conduct may impact upon their work. In such circumstances, members will make appropriate professional decisions and conduct themselves in a manner befitting the setting and the profession.

#### 1.2 **Professional Conduct**

- 1.2.1 Members will hold the needs of consumers primary when making professional decisions.
- 1.2.2 Members shall recognize that all work undertaken by them on an individual basis, whether pro bono or paid, will ultimately reflect the integrity of themselves and of the profession.
- 1.2.3 Members shall conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times. They shall not badger or coerce individuals or agencies to use their professional services.
- 1.2.4 Members shall take into account the limitations of their abilities, knowledge and the resources available to them prior to accepting work. They will remove themselves from a given setting when they realize an inability to provide professional service.
- 1.2.5 Members must be aware of personal circumstances or conflict of interest that might interfere with their effectiveness. They will refrain from conduct that can lead to substandard performance and/or harm<sup>5</sup> to anyone including themselves and consumers.
- 1.2.6 Members are accountable to AVLIC and to their local chapter affiliate for their professional and ethical conduct. Further, members are responsible to discuss and resolve, in a professional manner, issues arising from breaches of ethical or professional conduct on the part of individual colleagues after they are observed. In the case where these breaches are potentially harmful to others or chronic, and attempts to resolve the issue have not been successful, such conduct should be reported to AVLIC and/or their local chapter affiliate in a manner directed by the appropriate grievance procedure.

#### 1.3 **Scope of Practice**

- 1.3.1 Members will refrain from using their professional role to perform other functions that lie beyond the scope of an interpreting assignment and the parameters of their professional duties. They will not counsel, advise, or interject personal opinions.
- 1.3.2 When functioning as part of a professional team (e.g., education, legal, medical and mental health settings) it is understood that members will limit their expertise to interpretation. In

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<sup>5</sup> Harm refers to injurious behaviour that causes distress to the person. This can include but is not limited to actions which are sexual, physical, emotional or verbal in nature. It can also include performance of duties while under the influence of alcohol, drugs or mind-altering substances.

such settings, it may be appropriate for members to comment on the overall effectiveness of communication, the interpreting process and to suggest appropriate resources and referrals. This should be done only within the context of the professional team.

- 1.3.3 Members will refrain from manipulating work situations for personal benefit or gain. When working as independent contractors, members may promote their professional services within the scope of their practice. When working under the auspices of an agency or other employer, it is not ethical for the members to promote their professional services independent of the agency or employer.

#### **1.4 Integrity of Service**

Members will demonstrate sound professional judgment and accept responsibility for their decisions. Members will make every attempt to avoid situations that constitute a real or perceived conflict of interest. Members will ensure there is full disclosure to all parties should their ancillary interest be seen as a real or perceived conflict of interest.

### **2.0 PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE: Interpreters provide the highest possible quality of service through all aspects of their professional practice.**

#### **2.1 Qualifications to Practice**

Members will possess the knowledge and skills to support accurate and appropriate interpretation. It is recognized that members work in a range of settings and with a variety of consumers. This demands that members be adept at meeting the linguistic needs of consumers, the cultural dynamics of each situation, and the spirit and content of the discourse.

#### **2.2 Faithfulness of Interpretation**

Every interpretation shall be faithful to and render exactly the message of the source text. A faithful interpretation should not be confused with a literal interpretation. The fidelity of an interpretation includes an adaptation to make the form, the tone, and the deeper meaning of the source text felt in the target language and culture.

#### **2.3 Accountability for Professional Competence**

- 2.3.1 Members will accept full responsibility for the quality of their own work and will refrain from making inaccurate statements regarding their competence, education, experience or certification.

- 2.3.2 Members are responsible for properly preparing themselves for the work contracted.

- 2.3.3 Members will accept contracts for work only after determining they have the appropriate qualifications and can remain neutral throughout the assignment.

#### **2.4 Ongoing Professional Development**

- 2.4.1 Members will incorporate current theoretical and applied knowledge, enhance that knowledge through continuing education throughout their professional careers and will strive for AVLIC certification.

- 2.4.2 Members will aim to be self-directed learners, pursuing educational opportunities which are relevant to their professional practice. This could include but is not limited to peer review, collegial consultation, mentoring and regular feedback regarding specific areas of skill development.



**3.0 NON-DISCRIMINATION: Interpreters approach professional services with respect and cultural sensitivity<sup>6</sup> towards all participants.**

**3.1 Non-discrimination**

Members will respect the individuality, the right to self-determination, and the autonomy of the people with whom they work. They will not discriminate based on ethnicity, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion, personal beliefs and practices, social status or any other factor.

**3.2 Communication Preferences**

Members will respect and use the form of communication preferred by those deaf and hard of hearing consumers for whom they provide service.

**3.3 Deaf Interpreters**

The services of a Deaf interpreter may be required when working with individuals who use regional sign dialects, non-standard signs, foreign sign languages, and those with emerging language use. They may also be used with individuals who have disabling conditions that impact on communication. Members will recognize the need for a Deaf interpreter and will ensure their inclusion as a part of the professional interpreting team.

**4.0 INTEGRITY IN PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS: Interpreters deal honestly and fairly with consumers and colleagues while establishing and maintaining professional boundaries.**

**4.1 Professional Relationships**

Members shall understand the difference between professional and social interactions. They will establish and maintain appropriate boundaries between themselves and consumers. Members will assume responsibility to ensure relationships with all parties involved are reasonable, fair and professional.

**4.2 Impartiality**

4.2.1 Members shall remain neutral, impartial, and objective. They will refrain from altering a message for political, religious, moral, or philosophical reasons, or any other biased or subjective consideration.

4.2.2 Should a member not be able to put aside personal biases or reactions which threaten impartiality, the member will examine options available to them. This may include not accepting the work or withdrawing their services from the assignment or contract.

**4.3 Respect for Colleagues**

4.3.1 Members will act toward colleagues in a spirit of mutual cooperation, treating and portraying them to others with respect, courtesy, fairness and good faith, etc.

4.3.2 Members have a professional obligation to assist and encourage new interpreting practitioners in the profession.

4.3.3 Members shall not abuse the good faith of other members or be guilty of a breach of trust or the use of unfair tactics.

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<sup>6</sup> Cultural sensitivity refers to being aware of and responding to the uniqueness of each individual and of each context within which we work.

#### **4.4 Support for Professional Associations**

Members shall support AVLIC, its affiliates, and other organizations representing the profession and the Deaf community.

### **5.0 INTEGRITY IN BUSINESS RELATIONSHIPS: Interpreters establish and maintain professional boundaries with consumers and colleagues in a manner that is honest and fair.**

#### **5.1 Business Practices**

- 5.1.1 Members will refrain from any unfair competition with their colleagues, including but not limited to: (a) engaging in comparative advertising (b) willfully undercutting; or (c) artificially inflating fees during times when market demand exceeds supply.
- 5.1.2 Members will conduct themselves in all phases of the interpreting situation in a manner befitting the profession, including negotiating work and contracts, obtaining suitable preparation material, and choice of attire and professional demeanor.
- 5.1.3 Members will honour professional commitments made when accepting work, and will follow through on their obligations. Members may not unilaterally terminate work or a contract unless they have fair and reasonable grounds to do so.
- 5.1.4 Members shall take reasonable care of material and/or property given to them by a consumer and may not lend such or use it for purposes other than those for which it was entrusted to them.

#### **5.2 Accurate Representation of Credentials**

- 5.2.1 Members shall not by any means engage in, nor allow the use of, statements that are false, misleading, incomplete, or likely to mislead consumers or members of the public.
- 5.2.2 Members will refrain from making inaccurate statements regarding their competence, education, experience or certification. Only members certified by AVLIC (COI) may use the term "certified" in printed, electronic, signed or oral transmission. This may include, but is not limited to, interpreter directories, business cards and forms, promotional materials, resumes or publications they have authored.

#### **5.3 Reimbursement for Services**

- 5.3.1 Members will bill only for services provided. Members will negotiate fees, including cancellation policies, preferably in writing or contract form before service is provided. Members will be sensitive to professional and community norms when establishing fees for services.
- 5.3.2 Members may also provide bartered or pro bono service in situations where the profession of interpreting and the livelihood of other practitioners will not be threatened.

## Appendix C - Job Posting – Sample

Note: Professional interpreters across Canada generally agree the term “interpreter” is the only appropriate title to be applied to qualified employees providing sign language or oral interpretation in educational settings.

The primary function of the interpreter is to interpret between people who do not share a common language, such as the deaf and hard of hearing student(s) and their hearing peers, classroom teachers, parents, school staff and administration in the classroom, as well as school activities such as assemblies, field trips, teams, clubs and other educational experiences.

### QUALIFICATIONS:

- Graduation from an ASL-English interpreting program
- Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships and work collaboratively as a member of the educational team
- Strong interpersonal, organizational and communication skills
- Ability to establish trust and rapport with students and staff
- Knowledge of the basic aspects of children’s educational, physical, social and emotional development
- Understanding of language implications on the education of deaf and hard of hearing students and competency in adapting to various signing styles along the communication continuum
- Knowledge of the basic principles of educational practices, the function of support services, and the role of interpreters as part of an educational team
- Demonstrated commitment to professional development specific to interpreting
- Minimum 1 year of interpreting experience preferred
- Active membership in the Association of Visual Interpreters of Canada (AVLIC) & Westcoast Association of Visual Language Interpreters
- Bachelors degree an asset

### DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Facilitate communication between the student, his/her hearing peers, the classroom teacher, school administration, parents and staff within the school environment by
  - providing interpreting services based on the communication as specified in the student’s individual education plan. Communication modalities may include a combination of ASL, contact signing and spoken language.
- Participate on the school’s educational team for deaf and hard-of-hearing students by:
  - regularly consulting and collaborating with teachers
  - performing duties to support student achievement of the educational objectives
  - reviewing vocabulary and reinforcing specific concepts covered in class
  - provide information about cultural and linguistic differences that may impact students’ performance and behaviour

- Prepare for interpreting by becoming familiar with course information, technical language and teaching styles
- Educate students regarding the interpreting role by encouraging responsibility and independence
- Educate teachers and other staff regarding the interpreting role
- Interpret test questions and students' answers when necessary and student's signed answers into written English when required
- Adhere to school district performance standards, policies, practices and regulations
- Participate in interpreting specific professional development
- Tutor, under the direct supervision of the teacher, as required
- Maintain an Active membership with the provincial and the national interpreting organizations and abide by the AVLIC Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Professional Conduct (*see Appendix A.*) (Manitoba Association of Visual Language Interpreters, 1997.)

## **Appendix D - Recommended Resources**

### **Books/Documents**

Association of Visual Language Interpreters of Canada. 2000. *Oral Interpreting: An AVLIC Position Paper*. Edmonton, Alberta: Self published.

Chafin Seal, B. 2003. *Best Practices in Educational Interpreting*. Toronto: Allyn and Bacon.

### **Websites**

Family Network for Deaf Children  
[www.fndc.ca](http://www.fndc.ca)

Westcoast Association of Visual Language Interpreters  
[www.wavli.com](http://www.wavli.com)

Association of Visual Language Interpreters of Canada  
[www.avlic.ca](http://www.avlic.ca)

Boys Town National Research Hospital  
[www.classroominterpreting.com](http://www.classroominterpreting.com)

### **Personal Contact**

Access contact information for the professional associations listed above, WAVLI and AVLIC, from their websites.

## **Appendix E - Ministry of Education Guidelines**

Where a district determines that a student's program will include the services of a visual language interpreter, often referred to as an interpreter or sign language interpreter, the visual language interpreter should meet standards established by:

- the Registry of Interpreters of the Deaf, Inc. (R.I.D); or
- the Association of Visual Language Instructors of Canada (AVLIC);
- or be a graduate of the Douglas College Visual Language Interpreter Training Program or an equivalent program from another institution.

### **Supporting cochlear implant recipients**

School boards should ensure that specialist educators have appropriate qualifications to support students who need services after they have had surgery for cochlear implantation.

## Appendix F - Musculoskeletal Injury

Sign language interpreters, like others in occupations involving repetitive movements, are at risk for musculoskeletal injuries. Fisher and Woodcock (2007) report that nearly one in four interpreters has been diagnosed with tendonitis, arthritis or carpal tunnel.

Multiple factors contribute directly and indirectly to these cumulative injuries. For example, the physical and mental nature of interpreting places unavoidable stress on the upper body, particularly the neck and shoulder areas. (Fisher and Woodcock, 2007) Repetitive movement combined with each interpreter's capacity, vulnerability and tolerance levels challenge the body. Repeated wear and tear over time often results in any one or combination of a series of disorders often referred to as work-related musculoskeletal injuries.

Woodcock and Fisher (2007) note that interpreters in salaried positions face workload challenges, often working alone more hours and more often than freelance interpreters. This suggests that they are at greater risk for pain and discomfort associated with interpreting.

Several studies (Delisle, A., Durand, M., Imbeau, D., Lariviere, C., Feuerstein, M., Marshall, L., Shaw, W. S., & Burell, L. M., Madden, M., Smith, Susan M., Kress, Tyler A. and Hart, William M.) reinforce the importance of education on injuries to protect the health and safety of all working interpreters in the provision of quality services. Understanding the risks and the measures to reduce harm extends to employers and those who purchase the services of interpreters.

With these views in mind, AVLIC promotes the following practices.

- Adopt recruitment and retention practices that match applicants' skills to the position
- Reduce exposure limits in the workload through team interpreting, scheduling a balance of work and rest periods, and varying job tasks
- Provide training and development to interpreters and their supervisors/managers on prevention, early reporting and management of injuries (Delisle, Durand, Imbeau, Lariviere, 2004 and NTID, n.d.)
- Establish policies that facilitate advanced access to subject matter to reduce the mental demands of interpreting
- Provide a climate where reporting of injuries is encouraged. (RID, 1997)
- Modify/reassign job duties for injured interpreters (NTID, n.d.)

This appendix is intended to bring attention to the matter and is not a summary of all relevant information. For further detail, please contact AVLIC at [www.avlic.ca](http://www.avlic.ca).

### REFERENCES

- Delisle, A., Durand, M., Imbeau, D., Lariviere, C. (2004). Suivi de deux interventions visant la prevention des troubles musculo-squelettiques aux membres superieurs en milieu de travail (Follow-up of two interventions to prevent upper limb musculoskeletal disorders in the workplace). Retrieved Nov. 2004, from Institut de recherche Robert-Sauve en sante et en securite du travail. Montreal (Quebec) Web site: <http://www.irsst.qc.ca>
- Feuerstein, M., Marshall, L., Shaw, W. S., & Burell, L. M. (2000). Multicomponent intervention for work-related upper extremity disorders. *Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation*, Vol. 10, No. 1:71-83.
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