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Dear educator,

Thank you for inviting an OJEN volunteer to speak to your class. Each year, over 1600 legal professionals across the province volunteer with OJEN. These judges, lawyers, paralegals and police officers take time out of their busy schedules to share their knowledge and experience, and to connect with your students.

OJEN's approach to justice education is not just about giving youth information about the law; it is also about building their legal capability - the knowledge, skills, opportunities, and resources they need to manage legal conflict in their lives. Since our formation in 2002, OJEN has brought the legal, educational and community sectors together to collapse some of the barriers to access to justice in Ontario. Schools are vital centres of public legal education and support, and our school-based justice education programs will always be at the core of OJEN's work.

As an educator, you are one of OJEN's most valuable and crucial partners in our justice education efforts. A young person's first exposure to the law and the legal system is often in school. We appreciate your efforts to enrich your students' learning by inviting guest speakers into your classroom. We created these orientation materials to support you and your guest speaker as you two prepare for this classroom visit.

In addition to classroom visits, OJEN offers a range of justice education programs and [classroom resources](#) to engage students and meet curriculum expectations. We offer opportunities to observe court in session, and [annual programs](#) like the Charter Challenge and Twitter moot. These experiential opportunities take law off the pages of the textbook and into real life.

We also host low-cost or free professional development opportunities for teachers, including our annual [Summer Law Institute \(SLI\)](#) and workshops throughout the province. These programs offer you a forum for learning, dialogue and exchange with leaders from the legal system. You can also visit our website to browse through OJEN's library of [recorded webinars](#) on a range of legal topics.

Please sign up for our newsletter, which contains the latest news on our work and upcoming opportunities, at ojen.ca/en/subscribe. If there's any way we can better support you, we encourage you to reach out to us at info@ojen.ca.

On behalf of our staff, Board, and partners in the justice sector, thanks once again for the work that you do!

Sincerely,

Jess Reekie
Executive Director, Ontario Justice Education Network

Hosting OJEN volunteers in your classroom

Classroom visits are an exciting way for students to meet and have conversations with legal professionals. OJEN's classroom speakers include judges, justices of the peace, lawyers, paralegals, police officers, law school students, court staff, and others. They may not have previous experience engaging with or teaching young people. We have given our volunteers some basic guidelines on what to expect, but they will be happy to hear more about your students, their needs and your educational goals for the visit. After your OJEN contact introduces you, the volunteer should reach out shortly by email, but feel free to begin the conversation first.

Before the visit

- OJEN will brief volunteers on the nature of your request. Please reach out to them directly to review any specific information beforehand.
- If you have requested a particular program (e.g., a specific mock trial), our facilitators and/or volunteers will be familiar with its content and the agenda for your class.
- If you requested a speaker on a particular legal topic, then the volunteer will use the time as they see fit or as you recommend.
- You should confirm with the volunteer:
 - The time, location, size, and grade of your class;
 - What the volunteer should do when they arrive;
 - The kind of technology or visual aids available in your classroom (e.g. chalkboard or white board, reliable wifi, a PowerPoint presentation system);
 - What needs to be printed (e.g. handouts, worksheets);
 - Security protocols or public health requirements that are in effect at your school;
 - How the volunteer should access your class' online platform (if remote/virtual);

Logistics

- Volunteers will go to the main office unless you have told them otherwise.
- We suggest that volunteers arrive 15-20 minutes before the class starts.
- Make sure you have exchanged contact information and the volunteer can reach you at the last minute, in case of emergency.
- If the volunteer needs you to print a class set of materials, they should send you the materials with their request at least a day in advance.
- For online classes, please log on about 10-15 minutes before class starts to ensure the volunteer can get in and prepare.

Preparing your students

- Tell your students who is coming to speak and why.
- Introduce some background content to get them ready, if necessary.
- Have students prepare questions they would like to ask.
- Choose one or two students to thank the volunteer on behalf of the class.

During the visit:

- Please remain in the classroom while the volunteer is present. Classroom management is still your responsibility.
- Most volunteers are experienced public speakers, but usually with adult legal audiences. Feel free to interrupt them to:
 - Seek clarification
 - Make connections to your curriculum
 - Segue between activities
 - Prompt more student engagement
- Volunteers **cannot** give legal advice. They are not able to answer students' questions about their own or friends' or relatives' legal cases or problems.

Please let us know how your classroom visit goes! We always welcome feedback at info@ojen.ca or through your OJEN staff contact. If you have any difficulties or concerns about interactions with a volunteer, please contact us immediately.