



Ainslie Parklands Primary School

Respect - Responsibility - Resilience

VOLUNTEERS IN SCHOOLS POLICY

Latest DET Update: 20/06/2020

First Developed in This Format: February 2018

Updated: May 2019 and August 2020

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to explain the legal rights of volunteer school workers and the responsibilities of Ainslie Parklands Primary School in managing volunteers.

SCOPE

This policy applies to the recruitment, screening, supervision and management of all people who volunteer at our school.

GUIDANCE

Schools must have a school level policy for volunteers.

Schools must appropriately assess the suitability of a volunteer and ensure that they comply with any reasonable direction of a principal, including the school's child safety policy and code of conduct.

Schools must assess and verify the suitability of volunteers, refer to [Working with Children and Other Suitability Checks for School Volunteers and Visitors](#).

Volunteers should be inducted, trained and supervised according to the school's policies and procedures.

DEFINITIONS

Volunteer school worker

Defined in section 5.6.1 of the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic) as meaning a person who without remuneration or reward voluntarily engages in school work

Volunteer student worker

Defined in section 5.6.1 of the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic) as meaning a person who, without remuneration or reward, voluntarily engages in approved community work

Approved community work

Defined in section 5.6.1 of the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic) as meaning community work engaged in by a student of a registered school and approved by the principal of the school as school community work

A volunteer school worker is a person who voluntarily engages in school work, without payment or reward. School work means:

- carrying out of the functions of a School council (whether or not as a member of a School Council)

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- any activity carried out for the welfare of a school, by the School Council — any parents' club or association or any other body organised to promote the welfare of the school
- any activity carried out for the welfare of the school at the request of the Principal or School Council
- providing any assistance in the work of any school (or kindergarten)
- attending meetings in relation to government schools convened by any organisation which receives government financial support (note: a volunteer can receive payment for out of pocket expenses, such as travel costs, and can still be classed as a volunteer)

This is a broad definition and means that volunteers who participate in school activities, such as fundraising and assisting with excursions, are well protected from legal action by others.

A volunteer student worker is a person who voluntarily engages in approved community work, without payment or reward. Approved community work means work approved by the Principal of the school for a student of the school.

POLICY

The school will develop and implement school level policies and procedures for the recruitment, screening and management of volunteers, consistent with the requirements of [Ministerial Order 870: Child Safe Standards](#).

Assessing volunteer suitability

The school will assess and verify the suitability of volunteers, refer to the [Working with Children and Other Suitability Checks for School Volunteers and Visitors Policy](#).

The Principal has the discretion to determine the ongoing suitability of a volunteer working in their school and may make a decision at any time whether a person is suitable to volunteer at the school.

Managing volunteers

A volunteer is expected to comply with any reasonable direction of a Principal or their nominee. This will include the requirement to agree and abide by the school's child safety policy or statement of commitment to child safety and the school's *Child Safe Code of Conduct*. If a volunteer does not follow a reasonable direction from the Principal or nominee, the volunteer arrangement can be ended and/or they can be required to leave the school premises.

Volunteers will be inducted, trained and supervised according to the school's procedures for staff or volunteer induction and management. This includes being familiar with school level procedures for identifying and reporting suspected child abuse.

Reportable conduct scheme

The Principal notify the Employee Conduct Branch as soon as possible after becoming aware of a reportable allegation involving a volunteer, so that the Employee Conduct Branch can assess the allegations and report them to the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP), if required. Refer to [Reportable Conduct Scheme](#).

Failure to protect

Any staff member in a position of authority (Principal, Assistant Principal) who becomes aware that an adult associated with their organisation (such as an employee, contractor, volunteer or visitor) poses a risk of sexual abuse to a child under the care, authority or supervision of the organisation, must take all reasonable steps to remove or reduce that risk. This may include, for example, removing the adult from child-related work pending

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investigation. If a staff member in a position of authority fails to take reasonable steps in these circumstances, this may amount to a criminal offence. Refer to [Protecting Children — Reporting and other Legal Obligations](#).

Compensation for personal injury or property damage

Volunteer school workers are covered by the Department's worker's compensation policy if they suffer personal injury in the course of engaging in school work.

If a volunteer school worker suffers damage to their property in the course of carrying out school work, the Minister may authorise such compensation as the Minister thinks reasonable in the circumstances. Claims of this nature are to be directed to:

Legal Division
People and Executive Services Group
Department of Education and Training
2 Treasury Place
East Melbourne VIC 3002
legal.services@edumail.vic.gov.au

Liability

Volunteer school workers are indemnified for personal injuries or death (and at the discretion of the Minister, for property damage) suffered by volunteer school workers and volunteer student workers arising out of or in the course of engaging in school work or community work respectively.

Centrelink benefit recipients volunteering to work in schools

People who perform unpaid work in schools under the Work for the Dole program and community work programs or equivalent administered by Centrelink have personal accident insurance and public or product liability insurance cover provided by the Commonwealth Department of Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business and may perform work in schools.

Other Centrelink benefit recipients involved in voluntary work in order to fulfill their recipient obligations would not be expected to be covered by an Australian Government insurance scheme. Schools may however accept this group of Centrelink benefit recipients to work as volunteers in Victorian government schools, on the basis that they are insured by the Department.

A list of the activities that a Work for the Dole participant can undertake can be found on the [Work for the Dole](#) website.

Specific Procedures

The school is committed to implementing and following practices which protect the safety and wellbeing of children and our staff and volunteers. The school fully recognises the valuable contribution that volunteers make to our school community and the work that we do.

The procedures set out below are designed to ensure that the school's volunteers are suitable to work with children and are well-placed to make a positive contribution to the school community.

Becoming a Volunteer

Members of our school community who would like to volunteer are encouraged to approach a class room teacher, fill out a volunteer request form or respond to a call for volunteers e.g. working bees as applicable.

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Attendance

Volunteers (other than those engaging in weekend work) will be required to register at the administration office daily, and wear a visitors' badge whilst in the school.

Volunteers will be invited to use the staff room and facilities.

Suitability Checks Including Working with Children Checks

Note: The *Working with Children Act 2005* (Vic) only sets out the minimum requirements for WWC Checks. The Child Safe Standards are another law relevant to schools that requires appropriate screening measures/suitability checks to be undertaken in relation to volunteers and visitors. To ensure compliance with both pieces of legislation and Department policy, the school may choose to go above the minimum requirements under the WWC Act, depending on the nature and risk of the activities the volunteer will be engaged in and the opinion of School Council.

Working with Students

The school values the many volunteers who assist in our classrooms, with sports events, camps/excursions and other events and programs]. To ensure that we are meeting our legal obligations under the *Working with Children Act 2005* (Vic) and the Child Safe Standards, we are required to undertake suitability checks which may include a Working with Children Check, proof of identity, work history involving children and/or reference checks.

Considering our legal obligations, and our commitment to ensuring that our school is a child safe environment, we will require volunteers to obtain a WWC Check and produce their valid card to the general office for verification in the following circumstances:

Volunteers who are not Parent/Family members of any student at the school are required to have a WWC Check if they are engaged in child-related work regardless of whether they are being supervised.

Parent/Family Volunteers who are assisting with any classroom or school activity involving direct contact with children in circumstances where the volunteer's child is **not** participating, or does not ordinarily participate in, the activity.

- **Parent/Family Volunteers** who assist with excursions (including swimming), camps and similar events, regardless of whether their own child is participating or not.
- **Parent/Family Volunteers** who regularly assist in school activities, regardless of whether their own child is participating or not.
- **Parent/Community School Council Members** sitting on School Council with student School Council members, regardless of whether their own child is a student member or not
- In future, the School Council may consider adding other categories where members would like to impose a requirement for a WWCC or other suitability check, relevant to the school context.

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In addition, depending on the nature of the volunteer work, the school may ask the volunteer to provide other suitability checks at its discretion (for example, references, work history involving children and/or qualifications). Proof of identity may also be required in some circumstances.

Non-Child-Related Work

Please note: At law, volunteers who are not engaged in child-related work (e.g. fete planning and organisation) do not need a WWC Check under the WWC Act. However, the Child Safe Standards require appropriate suitability checks (at the discretion of the school) for any **child-connected** work which is work performed where children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

On some occasions, parents/carers and other members of the school community may volunteer to do work that is not child-related. For example, School Council, participating in sub-committees of the School Council, fete coordination, other fundraising groups that meet in the evenings] during which children will not be, or would not reasonably be expected to be, present.

Volunteers for this type of work are not required to have Working with Children or other suitability checks as they are not engaged in child-related work and children are not generally present during these activities. However, the school reserves the right to undertake suitability checks, including proof of identity, Working with Children Checks, at its discretion if considered necessary for any particular activities or circumstances.

Please note: the school will keep a record of the evidence you produce and will advise you in advance when the WWC Check is about to expire.

Management and Supervision

Volunteer workers will be expected to comply with any reasonable direction of the Principal (or her/his nominee). This will include the requirement to follow our school's policies, including, but not limited to our Child Safety Policy/Statement of Commitment to Child Safety, our Child Safety Code of Conduct and our Statement of Values and School Philosophy. Volunteer workers will also be expected to act consistently with Department of Education and Training policies, to the extent that they apply to volunteer workers, including the Department's policies relating to Equal Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination, Sexual Harassment and Workplace Bullying.

The Principal has the discretion to make a decision about the ongoing suitability of a volunteer worker and may determine at any time whether or not a person is suitable to volunteer at the school.

The school will provide any appropriate induction and/or training for all volunteer workers. The Principal (or nominee) will determine what induction and/or training is necessary depending on what type of work the volunteer will be engaged in.

All volunteers will be provided induction in relation to the school's child safety practices, including reporting obligations and procedures. Our school has a Mandatory Reporting (Child Protection) Policy which all staff and volunteers should be aware of.

The Principal (or nominee) will determine what supervision, if any, of volunteers is required for the type of work being performed.

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FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Reference:

<https://www.education2.vic.gov.au/pal/volunteers>

Please refer also to the school's *Working with Children (Suitability) Check – Volunteers & Visitors Policy*, the *Visitors to the School Policy*, *Protecting Children - Reporting & Other Legal Obligations Policy*, the *Fundraising Policy* and the Child Safe Standards.

REVIEW PERIOD

This policy, first developed in this format in May 2019 and updated in August 2020, will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle or if guidelines change (latest DET update mid-June 2020).

A mandatory policy
School Council Approval No Longer Required
Consultation is recommended

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