



# VOLUNTEERS IN SCHOOLS

## Policy

### **PURPOSE:**

As of August 1 2016 all schools are required to be compliant with the new child safe standards. The Child Safe Standards are compulsory minimum standards for all Victorian schools, to ensure they are well prepared to protect children from abuse and neglect. The purpose of this policy is to ensure volunteers are approved to work with children and meet legal requirements.

### **AIMS:**

To provide guidelines for parents/adults/young persons who volunteer to assist in the school, recognising that volunteers add significantly to the human resources available to the school and consequently deserve encouragement, effective management, support and recognition.

### **DEFINITION:**

In accordance with Division 6 of Part II of the *Education Act 1958* a volunteer school worker means a person who without remuneration or reward voluntarily engages in school work namely:

- The carrying out of the functions of the council of a state school;
- The carrying out of activities for the welfare of a State school by the council or a parent's club or association;
- The giving of assistance in the work of any school.
- Attending meetings in relation to government schools convened by any organization which receives government financial support

### **GUIDELINES:**

1. The Principal of the school or the School Council may seek volunteers formally through the school newsletter, written invitations and personal approaches, as well as informally through conversations.
2. The class teachers may seek volunteers to support their class programs as needed.
3. Volunteers offering their services to school will need to complete a 'Working with Children Check'<sup>i</sup> before they work with students. (The application form is available from Australia Post.) Refer to DET Circular S347-2006 for full details on the WWC Act 2005.
4. The Principal of the School Council may terminate any invitation to a person to assist a school as a volunteer school worker.
5. A volunteer school worker will at all times comply with any direction or instruction given to him/her by the Principal or relevant classroom teacher.
6. Volunteers will be provided with appropriate training before commencing their volunteer role to assist them in carrying out their tasks at school in an effective manner.
7. Volunteers will be encouraged to familiarize themselves with the following documents located on the QHPS website

- a. Occupational Health and Safety
  - b. Privacy and Confidentiality
  - c. Appropriate behaviour when working with students
  - d. Volunteer Policy and any relevant codes of practice
8. Volunteers are required to carry out tasks in a manner consistent with school expectations/values, including the maintenance of a professional, cooperative and confidential working environment.
  9. Volunteers should maintain appropriate standards of conduct at all times – this includes speaking style/language, respect for personal space and care with any physical contact.
  10. Volunteers will be expected to respect the professional standing and roles of school staff members.
  11. School Staff members and volunteers will be expected to treat each other with respect.
  12. Volunteers may be sought to assist with school camps and excursions. School Council requires that volunteers assisting with offsite school camps provide a satisfactory police records check prior to their participation.
  13. Department of Education and Training policy states that ‘Accredited Police Records’ and ‘Working with Children’ checks are required for volunteer workers who come into regular contact with students at the school’.
  14. Volunteers are not to approach classroom teachers on controversial issues. Such issues are to be addressed through the Principal or Assistant Principal.
  15. If staff has any issues related to the volunteers program they should be brought to the attention of their Unit leader, Assistant Principal or Principal.
  16. Concerns by staff or parents regarding the work of a volunteer should be raised with the Principal or Assistant Principal immediately. Such concerns will be discussed promptly with the volunteer concerned and appropriate action taken.
  17. Volunteers will be required to sign in at the office on their arrival if they are not a parent working with an individual class.
  18. Volunteers will be invited to use staff toilets and staffroom facilities.
  19. Volunteer workers undertaking schoolwork on behalf of, and with the approval of, the school council or principal are indemnified as to their personal liability in similar terms to teachers.
  20. A volunteer school worker who suffers injury arising out of or in the course of engaging in any school work is entitled to be paid compensation in accordance with the provisions of the Workers Compensation Act 1995 as if the person was a worker employed by the Department and the personal injury suffered arose out of or in the course of employment with the Department.
  21. Individual or groups of volunteers will be acknowledged in the newsletter, publicising their contributions to the school.
  22. A morning tea will be provided in Term 4 to thank volunteers for their contributions throughout the year.

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| <b>Date Implemented</b> |                |
| <b>Author</b>           | Anne Rochford  |
| <b>Approved By</b>      | School Council |

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| <b>Date Reviewed</b>          | Annually   |
| <b>Responsible for Review</b> | Assistant Principal  |
| <b>Review Date</b>            |  |
| <b>References</b>             | <p>Volunteer checks<br/> <a href="http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/community/Pages/volunteers.aspx">http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/community/Pages/volunteers.aspx</a></p> <p>Volunteer workers<br/> <a href="http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/governance/pages/volunteers.aspx">http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/governance/pages/volunteers.aspx</a></p> |

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<sup>i</sup> The WWC Check is a minimum checking standard set by the *Working with Children Act 2005* for those who work with children, either on a paid or voluntary basis.

To be a volunteer at a school a Working with Children Card provided by the Department of Justice is required. This card is:

- valid for 5 years
- transferable between volunteer organisations
- free of charge for volunteers, but cannot be used for paid employment.

**Note:** WWC Checks for paid employment can be used to show suitability for volunteer work.