



VOLUNTEERS POLICY

Schools and school councils are bound by laws that require a Working With Children Check (WWC Check) for adults undertaking child-related work in a school, and must adhere to Department policies regarding suitability checks for employees, visitors and volunteers.

Purpose

To provide a safe and secure environment for students and staff.

To establish protocols and procedures that effectively monitor and manage volunteers without compromising the open and inclusive nature of the school.

Scope

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

- carrying out the functions of a school council
- 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.

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

Volunteer school workers are not liable in any civil proceedings for anything done, or not done, in good faith in providing a community service.

People who perform unpaid work in schools under the "Work for the Dole" program and "Community Work" programs administered by Centrelink have insurance cover provided by the Federal Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, and may perform work in schools.

Other Centrelink benefit recipients involved in "voluntary" work in order to fulfil their recipient obligations are not 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 and note that they are insured by the Department.

Policy

At Alexandra Secondary College we seek to provide an open and friendly learning environment, which values and actively encourages volunteers to the school. At the same time, we recognise our duty of care to ensure a safe environment for our students and staff.

We assess and verify the suitability of volunteers, see: [Suitability Checks for School Volunteers and Visitors](#)

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

Programs delivered by volunteers must be delivered in a manner that supports and promotes the principles and practice of Australian democracy including a commitment to the following, as outlined in s 1.2.1 of the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (Vic):

- elected government
- the rule of law
- equal rights for all before the law
- freedom of religion
- freedom of speech and association
- the values of openness and tolerance.

Duty of Care

Principals and teachers have duty of care to their students. The duty requires principals and teachers to take all reasonable steps to reduce risk, including the provision of suitable and safe premises and the provision of an adequate system of supervision. The duty is *non-delegable*, meaning that it cannot be assigned to another party.

Visitors who are attending the school to deliver incursions, presentations, seminars or other activities and programs to students will be fully supervised by school staff at all times.

Where necessary, the school will assess and verify the suitability of volunteers who will work with children. The evidence required is generally a working with children check (WWC Check). However, if a visitor's occupation exempts them from the requirement to have a WWC check e.g. police officers, teachers, they must provide evidence to the school support their claim to an exemption. [Suitability Checks for School Volunteers and Visitors](#)

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 / Statement of Commitment to Child Safety and the school's Child Safety Code of Conduct.

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

Reportable Conduct Scheme

Principals should 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 CCYP, if appropriate. See: [Reportable Conduct Scheme](#)

Failure to Protect

Any staff member in a position of authority (Principals, Assistant Principals, and Campus Principals), 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 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.

Compensation for personal injury or property damage

Volunteer school workers are covered by the Department's Workers 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 3002

Further Information and Resources

Related Policies

- [Fetes](#)
- [Negligence Claims Process](#)
- [Personal Liability of School Employees](#)
- [Responding to Legal Claims, Writs and Subpoenas](#)
- [Suitability Checks for School Volunteers and Visitors](#)

Related Legislation

- Education and Training Reform Act 2006 - sections 5.6.2, 5.6.3
- Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2013
- Wrongs Act 1958 – section 37(1)

Department Resources

- [Contractor and Volunteer Worker OHS Management](#)

- [PROTECT](#) resources
- [Volunteer Workers and Working Bees](#)

Related School Policies

- Duty of Care Policy
- Visitors Policy
- Child Safe practices and policies

Review Cycle

This policy was last updated in May 2018 and is scheduled for review in May 2020

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Author	
Approved By	Principal (Operational)
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