



Volunteers Policy



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact the school office on 9560 6494

PURPOSE

To outline the processes that Jells Park Primary School will follow to recruit, screen, supervise and manage volunteers to provide a child safe environment, and to explain the legal rights of volunteers.

SCOPE

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

DEFINITIONS

Child-related work: work that usually involves direct contact (including in person, over the phone, written and online communication) with a child that is a central part of that person's duties. It does not include work that involves occasional contact with children that is incidental to the work.

Closely related family member: parent, carer, parent/carer's spouse or domestic partner, stepparent, parent/carer's mother or father in-law, grandparent, uncle or aunt, brother or sister, including step or half siblings.

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

School work: 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 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 legally protected (ie indemnified) from action by others in the event of an injury or accident whilst they are performing volunteer school work in good faith.

POLICY

Jells Park Primary School is committed to implementing and following practices which protect the safety and wellbeing of children and our staff and volunteers. Jells Park Primary School also recognises the valuable contribution that volunteers provide to our school community and the work that we do].

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

Becoming a volunteer

Members of our school community who would like to volunteer are encouraged to contact their classroom teacher or the school office. The classroom teacher may also call for parent volunteers to assist with camps and excursions

Working with students

Jells Park Primary School values the many volunteers that assist eg: in our classrooms/with sports events/camps/excursions/school concerts/other events and programs. To ensure that we are meeting our legal obligations under the *Worker Screening Act* and the Child Safe Standards, Jells Park Primary School is required to undertake suitability checks which in most cases will involve asking for evidence of a Working With Children (WWC) Check and may also involve undertaking reference, proof of identity and work history involving children checks and evidence of vaccination status.

Considering our legal obligations, and our commitment to ensuring that Jells Park Primary School is a child safe environment, we will require volunteers to obtain a WWC Check and produce their valid card to the office for verification to be copied and kept on file in the following circumstances:

- **Volunteers who are not parent/family members** of any student at the school 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 activities 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.
[Note that volunteers who are parents, or closely related family members of a child at the school who volunteer as part of an activity that their child is participating in or usually participate in are **not** required to have a WWC Check under the *Worker Screening Act*. However, DET recommends that schools do require parents to obtain one in these circumstances given the degree of contact volunteers may have with students in these situations – see [Suitability Check Flowchart for Schools](#) and the Department's Policy and

Advisory Library (PAL) — [Working with Children and other Suitability Checks for School Volunteers and Visitors](#).

- **Parent/family volunteers** who regularly assist in school activities, regardless of whether their own child is participating or not
[Note: volunteers who are parents, or closely related family members of a child at the school who volunteer as part of an activity that their child is participating in or usually participate in are not required to have a WWC Check under the *Worker Screening Act*. However, DET recommends that schools consider requiring a WWC Check in circumstances where the parent is regularly volunteering given the degree of contact volunteers may have with students in these situations – see [Suitability Check Flowchart for Schools](#) on the Department’s Policy and Advisory Library — [Working with Children and other Suitability Checks for School Volunteers and Visitors](#)
- **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
[Note: under the *Worker Screening Act*, school council members are not required to have a WWC Check. However DET recommends principals, as Executive Officers of School Council, consider recommending that School Council members obtain a WWC Check in circumstances where they will be working alongside student School Council members. This would support compliance with the Child Safe Standards which require schools to implement practices for a child-safe environment, including making appropriate suitability checks (at the discretion of the school) for any work performed by an adult where children are present or reasonably expected to be present.]

In addition, depending on the nature of the volunteer work, our 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

On some occasions, parents and other members of the school community may volunteer to do work that is not child-related. For example, volunteering on the weekend for gardening, maintenance, working bees, parents and friends club coordination, school council, participating in sub-committees of 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 WWC Checks or other suitability checks as they are not engaged in child-related work and children are not generally present during these activities. However, Jells Park Primary School reserves the right to undertake suitability checks, including requiring proof of identity and WWC Check, at its discretion if considered necessary for any particular activities or circumstances.

Management and supervision

Volunteer workers will be expected to comply with any reasonable direction of the principal (or their nominee). This will include the requirement to follow our school’s policies, including, but not limited to our Child Safety Policy, 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 Jells Park Primary School.

Jells Park Primary School will provide any appropriate induction and/or training for all volunteer workers. The principal (or their nominee) will determine what induction and/or training is necessary depending on what type of work the volunteer will be engaged in and will ensure a record is kept of the induction undertaken.

All volunteers will be provided induction in relation to Jells Park Primary School's child safety practices, including reporting obligations and procedures. Our school has a Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures which all staff and volunteers should be aware of.

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

Compensation

Personal injury

Volunteer workers are covered by the Department of Education and Training's Workers' Compensation Policy if they suffer personal injury in the course of engaging in school work.

Property damage

If a volunteer worker suffers damage to their property in the course of carrying out school work, the Minister (or delegate) may authorise such compensation as they consider reasonable in the circumstances. Claims of this nature should be directed to the principal who will direct them to the Department's Legal Division.

Public liability insurance

The Department of Education and Training's public liability insurance policy applies when a volunteer worker engaged in school work is legally liable for:

- a claim for bodily injury to a third party
- damage to or the destruction of a third party's property.

COVID-19 Mandatory Vaccination directions issued by the Victorian Chief Health Officer 13th October 2021

Schools must collect, record and hold vaccination information for all other visitors and volunteers working on school sites who will or may be in close proximity to children, students or staff.

The following information outlines how schools must manage the vaccination directions for all other visitors and volunteers working on school sites, including how they collect and record relevant vaccination information.

Vaccination information

Under the vaccination directions, vaccination information is information about a person's vaccination status including whether they are fully vaccinated, partially vaccinated, medically excepted or unvaccinated. Vaccination information includes information that is derived from a record of information that was made under, or in accordance with, the Australian Immunisation Register Act 2015 (Cth) and can be shown in documents such as:

- a letter from a medical practitioner confirming the person's vaccination status or confirming the person is medically excepted
- a certificate of immunisation (for example, a COVID-19 digital certificate)
- an immunisation history statement obtained from the Australian Immunisation Register.

Only certain medical practitioners can provide a letter. For more information, refer to the following topic below: Who is a medical practitioner?

Medically 'excepted persons'

In line with the vaccination directions, volunteers and visitors working on school sites may be able to show that they are an 'excepted person'.

From 18 October 2021, volunteers and visitors working on school sites who are considered 'excepted persons' under the vaccination directions may attend school sites to conduct their work.

This is a very limited category and applies only if the person has a certificate from an authorised medical practitioner showing that they are unable to receive a dose, or a further dose, of an approved COVID-19 vaccine due to a 'medical contraindication' or an acute medical illness (including COVID-19).

A medical contraindication must be one of the following issues related to the administration of an approved COVID-19 vaccine:

- anaphylaxis after a previous dose
- anaphylaxis to any component of the vaccine, including polysorbate or polyethylene glycol
- in relation to AstraZeneca:
 - history of capillary leak syndrome or
 - thrombosis with thrombocytopenia occurring after a previous dose
- in relation to Comirnaty (Pfizer) or Spikevax (Moderna):
 - myocarditis or pericarditis attributed to a previous dose of either Comirnaty or Spikevax
- the occurrence of any other serious adverse event that has been:
 - attributed to a previous dose of a COVID-19 vaccine by an experienced immunisation provider or medical specialist (and not attributed to any another identifiable cause)

- reported to state adverse event programs and/or the Therapeutic Goods Administration.

Who is a medical practitioner?

A medical practitioner, for the purpose of the vaccination directions, is limited to the following types of practitioners:

- a general practice registrar on an approved 3GA training placement
- a public health physician
- a general physician
- an infectious disease physician
- a clinical immunologist
- a gynaecologist
- an obstetrician
- a general practitioner who is vocationally registered
- a general practitioner who is a fellow of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP)
- a general practitioner who is a fellow of the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM).

This means that only medical practitioners from the list above can provide vaccination information including a letter showing evidence of vaccination or certification that a person is an excepted person under the prescribed

Collecting vaccination information from volunteers and visitors

Vaccination information must be collected for volunteers and visitors working on school sites who will or may be in close proximity to children, students or staff.

Schools must collect, record and hold vaccination information for all other workers not listed in the section above and volunteers on school sites who will or may be in close proximity to children, students or staff.

For the purposes of this policy, this includes, but is not limited to:

- casual relief teachers
- providers of incursions
- Breakfast Club suppliers
- IT personnel (not engaged by school ICT and TSSP as they will be managed centrally as per above)
- students on placement
- services or works contractors not working within a designated construction site secured separately (for example, by fencing or hoarding) by a contractor from the rest of the school site (for example, for maintenance services or works)
- external therapists, NDIS providers or other allied health staff
- bus drivers and supervisors (if they enter the school premises)
- auditors
- volunteers performing volunteer work at the school (for example, parent helpers)
- all other persons contracted, engaged or requested to perform work at a school site, regardless of their employer

It does not include:

- delivery personnel
- visiting parents and carers (once visitors are permitted), unless they are visiting a school to perform volunteer work (for example, parent helpers)
- workers employed by external OSHC providers engaged by the school council because that information must be collected by the provider
- visitors or volunteers working on school sites that are not, or are not likely to be, in close proximity to children, students or staff (for example, if work is performed wholly after hours and no staff or students are on site or likely to be on site).

All volunteers and visitors working on school sites listed in paragraph 3 above must provide vaccination information when attending on site. If unable to provide evidence of vaccination, they must be directed to leave the school.

If you have collected information that a volunteer or visitor working on school sites is fully vaccinated, you do not need to collect any further vaccination information from them.

If you have collected information that a volunteer or visitor working on school sites is:

- partially vaccinated
- unvaccinated but has a booking for their first dose before 25 October 2021

then you will need to collect updated vaccination information from the worker for them to attend onsite after 29 November 2021.

Only volunteers and visitors working on school sites who have provided information that they are fully vaccinated workers or excepted persons are allowed to work onsite after 29 November 2021.

It is not necessary for schools to assess the validity of medical exemption certificates.

Record keeping requirements

When collecting vaccination information from volunteers and visitors working on school sites, the following record keeping requirements apply:

- Any information or documents that cannot be stored in eduPay must be stored on the school's admin server and not on any other third party software, web or cloud based application.
- Vaccination information (for example, certificates and letters) should be placed in a password protected folder on the school admin server with very restricted access. Any hard copy records must be similarly stored securely.
- The Department has created a 'Vaccination Documentation' folder in U drive on the school's admin server with access restricted to the principal class (principals, assistant principals, campus principals) and business managers for schools to store vaccination information for volunteers and visitors working on school sites (for example, certificates and letters).
- Access to record of vaccination information and any other related information (for example, who can and can't attend the site) should be limited to only those staff who are responsible for confirming who is authorised to attend the site, for example, the principal, A/principal, business manager.

- Vaccination information is to be retained until further notice, to meet the vaccination directions issued by the Department of Health and in line with record keeping obligations.
- Schools should provide the data collection statement to persons providing their vaccination information, refer to: Data Collection Statement Contractors and Volunteers (Word).

Exceptional circumstances

There are very limited exceptions to the vaccination directions, and in most cases these will not apply in school settings. An unvaccinated volunteer or visitor working on school sites may be able to attend a school to:

- respond to an emergency at the facility
- fill a vacancy to provide urgent care, to maintain quality of care and/or continue essential operations at the facility due to an emergency situation or a critical unforeseen circumstance – the school must take all reasonable steps to ensure that the person is wearing personal protective equipment including a surgical mask and face shield
- provide urgent specialist clinical or medical care due to an emergency situation or a critical unforeseen circumstance.

These exceptions only apply for the time required to respond to the emergency or critical unforeseen circumstance, and the school should ensure that the unvaccinated volunteer or visiting worker leaves the facility as soon as possible.

Schools should exhaust all other options before calling on an unvaccinated person to respond to an emergency situation. This includes:

- normal procedures for ensuring continuity of care such as engaging CRTs
- following the Department's policy on Reporting and Managing School Incidents to access area-based support. This includes consulting with Regional Emergency Management staff and the relevant school education improvement leader (SEIL) prior to engaging an unvaccinated relevant employee.

If an unvaccinated visiting worker attends a school to respond to an emergency situation, the principal should provide this information when reporting the emergency to the Department's Incident Support and Operations Centre (ISOC) on 1800 126 126, as well as to the relevant SEIL.

Non-compliance with the mandatory vaccination requirements

Schools must take reasonable steps to prevent an unvaccinated volunteer or visitor working on school sites from attending the school to perform work, unless an exception applies.

Schools may need to take the following steps to ensure that unvaccinated volunteers and visitors do not attend school sites to work:

- remind unvaccinated volunteers and visitors of the requirement to not attend school sites to work
- if an unvaccinated volunteer or visitor attends a site to work, ask them to leave the school site immediately
- if an unvaccinated volunteer or visitor refuses to leave a school site, follow the procedures outlined in the Department's Trespass policy including providing a verbal warning directing

the person to leave the school due to the need to protect the health and safety of students and staff at the school and reporting the incident to the Department's ISOC on 1800 126 126.

Whenever a person is becoming aggressive or refuses to leave school land, the principal or school staff should immediately call Victoria Police.

A visitor or volunteer attending a school site as a parent or carer for the purposes of collecting or dropping off children is not considered to be attending for work purposes and will be subject to the same requirements as all other parents collecting or dropping off their children, refer to: School Operations Guide (Word) (staff login required).

COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways [Available publicly on our school's website

- Included in induction processes for relevant staff
- Included in our staff handbook/manual
- Discussed in an annual staff briefing/meeting
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request

RELATED POLICIES AND RESOURCES

Department policies:

- [Equal Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination](#)
- [Child Safe Standards](#)
- [Sexual Harassment](#)
- [Volunteers in Schools](#)
- [Volunteer OHS Management](#)
- [Working with Children and Other Suitability Checks for School Volunteers and Visitors](#)
- [Workplace Bullying](#)
- [COVID-19 Vaccinations – Teaching Service and School Council Employees](#)
- [Contractors – Insurance and Contract Arrangements](#)

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	27 th October 2021
Consultation	Consultation with school council on 27 th October at school council meeting.
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	October 2025

