



Warrnambool East
PRIMARY SCHOOL



Volunteers Policy

Rationale

Voluntary workers can make a significant contribution to the school community by giving their time and sharing their skills and expertise with others. Volunteers may have a wide range of interests and abilities that complement school programs, thus providing a wider range of interactions and experiences for the benefit of students. Volunteers deserve encouragement, effective management, support and recognition.

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

Aims

- To ensure that every volunteer who contributes to our school is appropriately screened via a thorough process with the intent of mitigating the risk of child abuse occurring.
- To maximise the number and variety of effective volunteers who contribute to our school.
- To encourage volunteers from both the school community and the wider community to engage and assist within our educational programs.
- To provide volunteers with the support and recognition of their services and assistance.
- To ensure that volunteers involved in activities which involve student contact are of sound character and have been deemed suitable to volunteer in school, especially in terms of providing a specialised service of skills were assisting.
- To ensure that the privacy of staff, students and volunteers is respected.

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.

Child Safety: encompasses matters related to protecting all children from child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse, and responding to incidents or allegations of child abuse.

Child Abuse:

- Any act committed against a child involving a sexual offence or an offence under section 49B(2) of the Crimes Act 1958 (grooming)
- The infliction on a child of physical violence, or serious emotional or psychological harm
- Serious neglect of a child

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.

Implementation

Warrnambool East Primary School is committed to implementing and following practices which protect the safety and wellbeing of children and our staff and volunteers. Volunteers:

- Are actively encouraged to be involved in school activities, and will be invited to do so.
- Will be sought formally through the school newsletter, written invitations and personal approaches, as well as informally through conversation and opportunity.
- Will be directed by teachers, who will be ultimately responsible for student management.
- Will be required to register at the office and wear a visitor's lanyard whilst in the school, signing in and out as required.
- Will undergo an induction process on arrival carried out by the supervising staff member
- Will not be required to carry out tasks with which they are uncomfortable
- Must not supervise students on their own, and must be within eyesight of a VIT registered teacher
- Are required to carry out tasks in a manner consistent with school expectations, including maintenance of a professional, co-operative and confidential working environment.
- May be sought to assist with camps and excursions. A WWC Check must be provided.
- Are expected to be treated with respect, and expected to treat staff and students with respect
- Should not approach classroom teachers on perceived controversial issues. Any issues should be raised with the Principal or Assistant Principal immediately.
- May have their volunteer capacity terminated or denied at any time by the Principal (or School Council or teacher in consultation with the Principal).

The procedures set out below are designed to ensure that WEPS 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 make themselves known to staff, and to communicate the type of activity they wish to volunteer for.

Volunteers are welcome to assist on a regular or casual basis.

Suitability checks including Working with Children Checks

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, Warrnambool East PS chooses to go above the minimum requirements under the WWC Act.

Working with students

WEPS values the many volunteers that assist in our classrooms, and with sports events, camps, excursions, banking 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, WEPS is 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 WEPS is a child safe environment, we will require volunteers to obtain a WWC Check and produce their valid card to the supervising teacher who will photocopy the card and forward to the business manager 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 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.
- **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 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, fund raising, school council, participating in sub-committees of school council, during which children will not be, or would not reasonably be expected to be, present.

At WEPS volunteers for this type of work **will still be required** to provide a valid WWC Check.

School council members and volunteers on any sub-committee of school council will be asked to provide a valid WWC Check. Whilst we acknowledge that these volunteers will not be engaging in child-related work as part of their role, even when there is a student sitting on the school council, we believe that it is important that our volunteers who are involved in making important decisions about our school which will have an impact on students do have a valid WWC Check

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 school values. 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 WEPS.

WEPS 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.

All volunteers will be provided induction in relation to WEPS' child safety practices, including reporting obligations and procedures. Our school has a Child Safety Reporting Obligations Policy 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.

Related Policies and Resources

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/governance/Pages/volunteers.aspx>

<https://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafes/Pages/default.html>

Evaluation:

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's two-year review cycle.

Ratified by School Council	Kate Haberfield	Mar 2019	Review Mar 2022
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<p>Is it compulsory for all Victorian government schools to have a policy addressing this issue?</p>	<p>Yes, a local school policy addressing this issue is required by the Department's Volunteers in Schools Policy on the <i>Policy and Advisory Library</i>.</p> <p>In addition, the child safety aspects of the policy are required by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum Standards for school registration • Ministerial Order 870
<p>Does this policy have to be approved by school council?</p>	<p>No.</p>
<p>Recommended consultation</p>	<p>School council consultation is recommended.</p> <p>The sections in this template that are marked in yellow should be tailored to your school community.</p>
<p>What is the basis of this policy?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum Standards for school registration • Ministerial Order 870 - Child Safe Standards (Standard 4) • Duty of care • <i>Education and Training Reform Act 2006</i> • <i>Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2013</i> • The Department's Policy and Advisory Library: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with Children and Other Suitability Checks for School Volunteers and Visitors • Volunteers in Schools
<p>Recommended review cycle</p>	<p>3-4 years</p>