

## VOLUNTEERS POLICY



### Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact the office on: 9354 3343.

### PURPOSE

To outline the processes that Pascoe Vale North 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

Pascoe Vale North Primary School is committed to implementing and following practices which protect the safety and wellbeing of children and our staff and volunteers. Pascoe Vale North Primary School recognises the valuable contribution that volunteers provide to our school community and the work that we do. Volunteers add significantly to the human resources available to the school, and consequently, volunteers deserve encouragement, effective management, support and recognition. We always aim to maximize the number and variety of effective volunteers who contribute to Pascoe Vale North Primary School.

Volunteers are actively encouraged to take part in school activities and will be invited to do so. Volunteers will be sought formally through the school newsletter, written invitations, and personal approaches, as well as informally through conversation and opportunity. The school will seek to provide a variety of opportunities for volunteer participation for all family and community members.

Volunteers will be provided with an appropriate induction as well as any support, professional development or instruction necessary to help them carry out their tasks at school in a confident and effective manner. Our induction process includes a member of staff meeting with all volunteers, providing them with an information pack which includes:

- Department of Education Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- A copy of the Volunteer Policy
- Emergency Evacuation Plan and Map
- OHS Induction Checklist
- Child Safe Code of Conduct
- Confidentiality Agreement

Volunteers are required to carry out tasks in a manner consistent with school expectations, including maintenance of a professional, cooperative, and confidential working environment. Volunteers will not be required to carry out tasks with which they are uncomfortable or untrained. Individuals or groups of volunteers will be highlighted in the newsletter, publicising their contributions to the school where appropriate.

The procedures set out below are designed to ensure that Pascoe Vale North 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 approach school staff who will direct them to the Principal/Assistant Principal to discuss the opportunities for volunteering and their suitability to do so.

From time to time the school will ask for volunteers when assistance is needed for specific events, and/or excursions, and explain the process for becoming a volunteer (e.g., approach a classroom teacher, fill out an expression of interest form, etc).

Suitability checks including Working with Children Checks

### ***Working with students***

Pascoe Vale North Primary School values the many volunteers that assist 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 *Working With Children Act 2005* (Vic) and the Child Safe Standards, Pascoe Vale North Primary School 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 Pascoe Vale North Primary School is a child safe environment, we will require volunteers to obtain a WWC Check and produce their valid card to the Principal/Assistant Principal/Business Manager for verification during their induction process 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, fundraising coordination, second-hand uniform coordination and sales, 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 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, at Pascoe Vale North Primary School, 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 / 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 Pascoe Vale North Primary School.

Pascoe Vale North 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.

All volunteers will be provided induction in relation to Pascoe Vale North Primary School's child safety practices, including reporting obligations and procedures. Our school has a Child Safety Reporting Obligations Policy, Code of Conduct and Confidentiality agreement 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 schoolwork.

### *Property damage*

If a volunteer worker suffers damage to their property in the course of carrying out schoolwork, 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 schoolwork is legally liable for:

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

## 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
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request.

## RELATED POLICIES AND RESOURCES

A link to related local policies, including *Statement of Values*, *Visitors Policy*, *Statement of Commitment to Child Safety/Child Safe Policy*, *Child Safety Code of Conduct* can be found at:

<http://www.pvnps.vic.edu.au/policies.html>

## POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	March 2025
Consultation	School Council 31st March 2025, newsletter 7th March.
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	2 Years – March 2027