

Volunteers Policy

December 2022



**VIRTUAL
SCHOOL VICTORIA**



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact Virtual School Victoria on 8480 0000 or feedback@vsv.vic.edu.au.

Purpose

To outline the processes that Virtual School Victoria (VSV) 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-connected work: work authorised by the school governing authority and performed by an adult in a school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

Child-related work: As defined by the *Worker Screening Act 2020* (Vic), child-related work is 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
- Helping 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 (i.e. indemnified) from action by others in the event of an injury or accident whilst they are performing volunteer school work in good faith.

Policy

VSV is committed to implementing and following practices which protect the safety and wellbeing of children and our staff and volunteers. VSV recognises the valuable contribution of volunteers, parent and carers to our school community and the work that we do.

The procedures set out below are designed to ensure that VSV'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 the school or subject teachers with details of their interest. On occasion, VSV may call for volunteers. These opportunities may be published in the Newsletter, on Social Media platforms and/or in emails to relevant parties.

COVID-19 vaccination information

VSV abides by the current [COVID-19 Safety and Management Plan](#) which applies to all schools and outlines the key OH&S risks and links to the latest guidance. This document in conjunction with the School Operations Guide sets out the approach for managing safety risks in accordance with the minimum requirements for the COVIDSafe plans.

Volunteers at VSV are strongly encouraged to keep up to date with all recommended and available vaccinations to help prevent illness from COVID-19. Routine school visitor record keeping arrangements will continue to apply including those outlined in the VSV Camps and Excursions Policy.

Sign in procedure

All visitors to VSV are required to report to reception on arrival. Visitors must:

- Record their name, signature, date and time of visit and purpose of visit using the electronic sign in system at reception.
- Provide proof of identification to office staff upon request
- Produce evidence of their valid Working with Children (WWC) Clearance where required by the [Visitors Policy](#).
- Wear a visitor's name tag at all times
- Follow instruction from school staff and abide by all relevant school policies relating to appropriate conduct on school grounds including [Child Safety Code of Conduct](#), Respect for School Staff and Statement of Values as well as Department policies such as the [Sexual Harassment Policy](#) and [Workplace Bullying Policy](#)
- Return to reception upon departure, sign out and return visitor's name tag

For Department policy on COVID-19 mandatory vaccinations for visitors, including advice on the type of information that schools are required to collect, record and hold, refer to:

- [COVID-19 Vaccinations – Visitors and Volunteers Working on School Sites](#)

Suitability checks including Working with Children Clearances

Working with students

VSV values the volunteers that assist with seminars and incursions, sports events, camps, excursions, Arts events and other events and programs. To ensure that we are meeting our legal obligations under the *Worker Screening Act* and the Child Safe Standards, VSV is required to undertake suitability checks which in most cases will involve asking for evidence of a Working With Children (WWC) Clearance and may also involve undertaking reference, proof of identity and work history involving children checks.

Considering our legal obligations, and our commitment to ensuring that VSV is a child safe environment, we will require volunteers to obtain a WWC Clearance and produce their valid card to the HR Manager for verification in the following circumstances:

- **Volunteers who are not parent/carer/family members** of any student at the school if they are engaged in child-related work regardless of whether they are being supervised.
- **Parent/carer/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/carer/family volunteers** who assist with excursions (including swimming), incursions, camps and similar events, regardless of whether their own child is participating or not.
- **Parent/carer/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.

Note: Parents, carers and family members who attend excursions, incursions, camps and other school activities as the support person for their own child are not required to hold a WWC Clearance unless the activity involves an overnight component.

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, 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 Clearance or other suitability checks as they are not engaged in child-related work and children are not generally present during these activities. However, VSV reserves the right to undertake suitability checks, including requiring proof of identity and WWC Clearance, at its discretion if considered necessary for any particular activities or circumstances.

School council members and volunteers on any sub-committee of School Council will be asked to provide evidence of a valid WWC Clearance. 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 Clearance.

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. 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 VSV.

VSV 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.

To support us to maintain a child safe environment, before engaging in any work where children are present or reasonably likely to be present, all volunteers will be provided induction in relation to VSV'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.

Privacy and information-sharing

Volunteers must ensure that any student information they become aware of because of their volunteer work is managed sensitively and in accordance with the [Schools' Privacy Policy](#)

and the Department's policy on [Privacy and Information Sharing](#).

Under these policies, student information can and should be shared with relevant school staff to:

- support the student's education, wellbeing and health;
- reduce the risk of reasonably foreseeable harm to the student, other students, staff or visitors;
- make reasonable adjustments to accommodate the student's disability; or
- provide a safe and secure workplace.

Volunteers must immediately report any child safety concerns that they become aware of to a member of staff to ensure appropriate action. There are some circumstances where volunteers may also be obliged to disclose information to authorities outside of the school such as to Victoria Police. For further information on child safety responding and reporting obligations refer to: *Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures*.

Records management

While it is unlikely volunteers will be responsible for any school records during their volunteer work, any school records that volunteers are responsible for must be provided to a member of Principal Class to ensure they are managed in accordance with the Department's policy: [Records Management – Schools](#).

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.

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
- Discussed in relevant staff meetings
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request

Related policies and resources

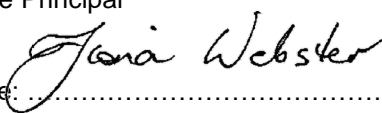
VSV school policies:

- [Statement of Values and School Philosophy](#)
- [Student Wellbeing, Inclusion and Engagement Policy](#)
- Child Safety Policies including the [Child Safety Code of Conduct](#)
- [Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures](#)
- [Duty of Care Policy](#)
- [Safe and Inclusive Virtual Learning Policy](#)
- Critical Incident Policy
- [Visitors Policy](#)
- Camps and Excursions Policy
- OHS Policy

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](#)

Policy review and approval

Created date	December 2022
Consultation	School Council – Date: 18 th October 2022 – 13 th December 2022 School Community – Date: 18 th October 2022 – 28 th October 2022
Endorsed by	Fiona Webster Executive Principal  Signature:
Endorsed on	Date: 13th December 2022
Next review date	October 2024



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