



*“Working Together for a Better Future”*

## **VOLUNTEERS POLICY**



### **Help for non-English speakers**

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact Wallan Primary School.

### **PURPOSE**

To outline the processes that Wallan 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-connected work:* work authorised by the school governing authority/provider of a school boarding services and performed by an adult in a school or school boarding premises environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

*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**

Wallan Primary School is committed to implementing and following practices which protect the safety and wellbeing of children and our staff and volunteers. Wallan Primary School values the contribution of volunteers who support the school and enhance the education programs provided.

The procedures set out below are designed to ensure that Wallan 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 the school office or their classroom teacher. Teachers regularly ask for volunteers through the Compass Parent Portal and other correspondence sent home with students.

### **COVID-19 vaccination information**

Our school follows Department of Education and Training policy with respect to the requirements relating to attendance on school sites and COVID-19 vaccinations.

For further information, refer to [COVID-19 Vaccinations – Visitors and Volunteers on School Sites](#)

### **Suitability checks including Working with Children Checks**

Wallan Primary School complies with:

- The *Worker Screening Act 2020* (Vic).
- Child Safe Standards, requiring appropriate screening measures/suitability checks to be undertaken in relation to volunteers and visitors.
- ensuring all volunteers have a current "Working with Children's Card."

### **Working with students**

Wallan Primary School values the many volunteers that assist in classrooms, at a range of sporting events, as well as supporting camps and excursions.

To ensure that we are meeting our legal obligations under the *Worker Screening Act* and the Child Safe Standards, Wallan Primary School is required to undertake suitability checks which in most cases

will involve asking for evidence of a Working with Children (WWC) Clearance. Additional suitability checks may also be required depending on the volunteer role, such as reference, proof of identity, qualification and work history involving children checks.

Where prospective volunteers are required under the law and this policy to have a WWC Clearance, the principal has the discretion to accept evidence of a WWC check application in order to commence volunteer work, provided the volunteer provides the school with evidence of the application outcome (clearance or exclusion) as soon as practicable after the applicant receives it.

Considering our legal obligations, and our commitment to ensuring that Wallan Primary School is a child safe environment, we will require volunteers to obtain a WWC Check and produce their valid card 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 assist with excursions (including swimming), camps and similar events, regardless of whether their own child is participating or not.
- **Parent/family volunteers** who assist with excursions, 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***

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.

### **Training and induction**

Under the Child Safe Standards volunteers must have an appropriate induction and training in child safety and wellbeing.

To support us to maintain a child safe environment, before engaging in any work where children are present or reasonable likely to be present, volunteers must familiarise themselves with the policies, procedures and code of conduct referred to in our Child Safety Policies and supporting documents,

and ensure the actions and requirements in these documents are followed when volunteering for our school.

Depending on the nature and responsibilities of their role, Wallan Primary School may also require volunteers to complete additional child safety training.

### **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 Safe Policy, Child Safe Code of Conduct, Child Safety Reporting Obligations Policy, Student Engagement Policy, Statement of Values and School Philosophy, and all Child Safe Standards.

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 (or their nominee) will determine the level of school staff supervision required for volunteers, depending on the type of work being performed, and with a focus on ensuring the safety and wellbeing of students.

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 Wallan Primary School.

### **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 (including Mandatory Reporting) 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 the Assistant Principal 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
- Discussed in an annual staff briefing/meeting
- Made available in hard copy from school office upon request

## **Related policies and resources**

- *Statement of Values*
- *Visitors Policy*
- *Child Safe Policy*
- *Child Safety Code of Conduct*

## **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

Policy last reviewed	April 2022
Consultation	Principal and School Council
Approved by	Principal and School Council
Next scheduled review date	April 2026