

VOLUNTEERS POLICY

Pascoe Vale Primary School

PURPOSE

To outline the processes that Pascoe Vale Primary School (PVPS) 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

PVPS is committed to implementing and following practices which protect the safety and wellbeing of children and our staff and volunteers. PVPS also recognises the valuable contribution that volunteers provide to our school community and the work that they do.

The procedures set out below are designed to ensure that PVPS'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 take part in school activities. They will be invited to do so, formally through the school newsletter, via written invitations and personal approaches, as well as informally through conversation and as opportunity arises. The school will seek to provide a variety of opportunities for volunteer participation for all family and community members. Individual or groups of volunteers will be highlighted in the newsletter, publicising their contributions to the school where appropriate. In term 4 each year, volunteers will be recognised and thanked for their contributions throughout the year.

Working with students

PVPS 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, PVPS is required to undertake suitability checks which may include a Working With Children Check (WWC Check), proof of identity, work history involving children and/or reference checks.

Considering our legal obligations, and our commitment to ensuring that PVPS is a child safe environment, we will require volunteers to obtain a WWC Check (see Exemptions from applying for a WWC Check). All volunteers will be required to produce their valid card to the office for verification, register at the administration office prior to volunteering on the day and display their WWC Check whilst volunteering.

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 including 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 and other fundraising groups that meet in the evenings.

Volunteers for this type of work are not required to have a WWC Check or other suitability check as they are not engaged in child related work and children are generally not present during these activities. However, PVPS reserves the right to undertake suitability checks including 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 / 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 PVPS.

PVPS 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 PVPS's 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

- *Child Safe Policy:*
<http://www.pvps.vic.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Standard-2-Child-Safe-Policy.pdf>
- *Child Safety Code of Conduct:*
<http://www.pvps.vic.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Standard-3-Child-Safe-Code-of-Conduct.pdf>

EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle, next review 2021.
This policy was last ratified by School Council on the 15/08/2018.

Exemptions from Applying for a Check
Department of Justice Information Line: 1300 652 879
Reference: www.justice.vic.gov.au

An exemption means that you do not need to apply for a Working with Children (WWC) Check, even if you undertake 'child-related work'. If an exemption applies, a person is not prevented from applying for a WWCC.

N.B. There have been changes to the *Working with Children Act 2005 (Act)* which commenced on 1 August 2017. They are:-

1. The definition of 'direct contact' with children has been expanded to include oral, written or electronic communication as well as face-to-face and physical contact; and

2. A WWC Check is now required for anyone engaging in 'child-related work' regardless of whether contact with a child is supervised by another person or not. This means that a volunteer or visitor who is supervised by a teacher must have a WWC Check if they engage in 'child related work'.

Policy and Advisory Guide: www.education.vic.gov.au: <http://enewswwcc.justice.vic.gov.au>

The WWC Check exemptions are:

- **People under the age of 18 years**
- **18 or 19 year old student volunteers where the volunteer work is at or has been organised by the student's educational institution**
For example: Khalil, 18, is a student at Happy Valley Secondary College. He has been asked to lead a peer support group of Year 7 students. As this activity has been organised by his school, he does not need to apply for a WWC Check to do this.
- **Visiting workers who do not ordinarily live and perform 'child-related work' in Victoria**
For example: Keith lives in New South Wales and coaches a baseball team that is selected to play in a one-off competition to be held in Victoria. Because Keith does not ordinarily live and perform 'child-related work' in Victoria and will only be in Victoria for a few days, he does not need to apply for a WWC Check.
- **Sworn Victoria Police officers (who are not suspended from duty)**
Sworn police officers are exempt from needing a WWC Check for any 'child-related work' as they are already checked by a similar scheme.
- **Members of the Australian Federal Police within the meaning of the *Australian Federal Police Act 1979* (who are not suspended from duty)**
Members of the Australian Federal Police are exempt from needing a WWC Check for any 'child-related work' as they are already checked by a similar scheme.
- **Teachers who have current registration with the Victorian Institute of Teaching**
Teachers with current registration with the Victorian Institute of Teaching are exempt from needing a WWC Check for any 'child-related work' as they are already checked by a similar scheme.

- **Certain drivers who hold a current driver accreditation under the *Transport (Compliance and Miscellaneous) Act 1983***
- Certain persons who engage in work of a kind that requires a current driver accreditation under Div 6 or Pt VI of that Act and would ordinarily require a WWC Check are exempt from a WWC Check subject to some exceptions, including where a person has been given a Negative Notice and has not been subsequently given an Assessment Notice.