

Volunteers Policy

Purpose

To outline the processes that Mackellar 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: 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 direct 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 schoolwork or approved community work without payment or reward.

School work:

- 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 (i.e., indemnified) from action by others in the event of an injury or accident whilst they are performing volunteer schoolwork in good faith.



Policy

Mackellar Primary School is committed to implementing and following practices which protect the safety and wellbeing of children and our staff and volunteers. Mackellar Primary School recognises the valuable contribution that volunteers provide to our school community.

The procedures set out below are designed to ensure Mackellar Primary School's volunteers are suitable to work with children and are well-placed to make a positive contribution to our school community and the work that we do.

Becoming a volunteer

Members of our school community who would like to volunteer are encouraged to contact the office. Volunteers working in classrooms will be required to undertake a '*working in classrooms induction program*' provided by the school prior to commencement. A register of inducted parents will be kept at the school.

Volunteers required for other events may be sought via XUNO, the school newsletter, Facebook or school assemblies.

Suitability checks including Working with Children Checks

Note: 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, schools may choose to go above the minimum requirements under the WWC Act, depending on the nature and risk of the activities the volunteer will be engaged in. There are different options below that you can adopt to suit your school community.

Working with students

Mackellar Primary School values the many volunteers that assist in our school community, in our classrooms, with sports events, excursions 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, Mackellar 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 Mackellar Primary School is a child safe environment, we will require volunteers to obtain a WWC Check and produce their valid card to the office upon entry to the school 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.

Volunteers who are parents, or closely related family members of a child at the school who volunteer as part of an activity that their child is participating in or usually participate in are **not** required to have a WWC Check under the WWC Act. However, DET recommends that schools do require parents to obtain one in these circumstances given the degree of contact volunteers may have with students in these situations – see [Suitability Check Flowchart for Schools](#) on the Department's Policy and Advisory Library — [Working with Children and other Suitability Checks for School Volunteers and Visitors](#) page.

- **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

By law, volunteers who are not engaged in child-related work (e.g., fete planning and organisation) do not need a WWC Check under the WWC Act. However, the Child Safe Standards require appropriate suitability checks (at the discretion of the school) for any **child-connected** work which is work performed where children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

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, 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 WWC Clearances or other suitability checks as they are not engaged in child-related work and children are not generally present during these activities. However, Mackellar Primary School 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.



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, Child Safety Code of Conduct, 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 Mackellar Primary School.

Mackellar 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 an induction in relation to Mackellar Primary School'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 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 may be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on our school’s website
- Included in staff induction and child safety training processes
- Discussed at staff briefings/meetings as required
- Included in our staff handbook
- Included in our parent handbook
- Discussed at parent information nights/sessions
- Included in transition and enrolment packs
- Included as annual reference in school newsletter
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request.

Related policies and resources

- Statement of Values
- Visitors Policy
- Child Safety Policy

Policy review

Policy last reviewed	October, 2022
Consultation	School Council, Education Sub-committee
Approved by	Principal, School Council
Next scheduled review date	October, 2024

