

# VOLUNTEERS POLICY



## Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Pascoe Vale South Primary School.

## PURPOSE

To outline the processes that Pascoe Vale South 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 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 South Primary School is committed to implementing and following practices which protect the safety and wellbeing of children and our staff and volunteers. Pascoe Vale South Primary School also recognises the valuable contribution that volunteers provide to our school community and the work that we do.

The procedures set out below are designed to ensure that Pascoe Vale South 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.

1. The Principal of the school or the School Council may seek volunteers formally through the school Principal Post, Compass, written invitations and personal approaches, as well as informally through conversations.
2. Volunteers offering their services to school will need to complete a 'Working with Children Check' before they work with students.
3. The Principal of the School may terminate any invitation to a person to assist a school as a volunteer school worker.
4. A volunteer school worker will at all times comply with any direction or instruction given to him/her by the Principal or relevant classroom teacher.
5. Volunteers will be provided with appropriate training before commencing their volunteer role to assist them in carrying out their tasks at school in an effective manner.
6. Volunteers will participate in training provided by the school, prior to working at the school, which covers the following areas: a. Occupational Health and Safety b. Privacy and Confidentiality c. Anti - Discrimination/Equal Opportunity d. Sexual Harassment Policy e. Teacher Duty of Care f. Teachers and Mandatory Reporting g. Student Management h. Appropriate behaviour when working with students i. Volunteer Policy and any relevant codes of practice
7. Volunteers who work with students in the learning spaces are required to read the Parent and Community Helpers expectations information.
8. Volunteers who work with students in the learning spaces will be required to sign the Pascoe Vale South Primary School Parent and Volunteer agreement.
9. Volunteers are required to carry out tasks in a manner consistent with school expectations/values, including the maintenance of a professional, cooperative and confidential working environment.

10. Volunteers should maintain an appropriate standard of conduct at all times – this includes speaking style/language, respect for personal space and care with any physical contact.
11. Volunteers will be expected to respect the professional standing and roles of school staff members.
12. School Staff members and volunteers will be expected to treat each other with respect.
13. Volunteers may be sought to assist with school camps and excursions. School Council requires that volunteers assisting with offsite school camps provide a satisfactory police records check prior to their participation (WWC).
14. Department of Education and Training policy states that ‘Accredited Police Records’ and ‘Working with Children’ checks are required for volunteer workers who come into regular contact with students at the school’.
15. Volunteers are not to approach classroom teachers on controversial issues. Such issues are to be addressed through the Principal or Assistant Principal.
16. If staff have any issues related to the volunteers’ program they should be brought to the attention of their Unit leader, Assistant Principal or Principal.
17. Concerns by staff or parents regarding the work of a volunteer should be raised with the Principal or Assistant Principal immediately. Such concerns will be discussed promptly with the volunteer concerned and appropriate action taken.
18. Volunteers will be required to sign in at the office on their arrival. \* Volunteers will be invited to use staff toilets and staffroom facilities.
19. Volunteer workers undertaking school work on behalf of, and with the approval of, the school council or principal are indemnified as to their personal liability in similar terms to teachers.
20. A volunteer school worker who suffers injury arising out of or in the course of engaging in any school work is entitled to be paid compensation in accordance with the provisions of the *Workplace injury rehabilitation and compensation act 2013* as if the person was a worker employed by the Department and the personal injury suffered arose out of or in the course of employment with the Department.
21. Individual or groups of volunteers will be acknowledged for their contributions throughout the year.

#### **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 Clearances**

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

Pascoe Vale South 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 *Worker Screening Act* and the Child Safe Standards, Pascoe Vale South 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.

Considering our legal obligations, and our commitment to ensuring that Pascoe Vale South Primary School is a child safe environment, we will require volunteers to obtain a WWC Clearance and produce their valid card to the office for verification in the following circumstances:

- **Volunteers who are not parent/family members** of any student at the school 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, school council, participating in sub-committees of school council, fundraising groups that meet in the evenings during which children will not be, or would not reasonably be expected to be, present.

At Pascoe Vale South Primary school volunteers for this type of work will still be required to provide a valid WWC Check and proof of ID upon request of the school.

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, our volunteers will 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 Induction Pack 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, Pascoe Vale South 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 Safety Policy, 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 (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 Pascoe Vale South 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 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 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
- Included in induction processes for relevant staff
- Included as a link in all invitations to prospective volunteers
- Included in our staff handbook/manual
- Discussed in an annual staff briefing/meeting
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request

## RELATED POLICIES AND RESOURCES

Pascoe Vale South Primary School policies and resources relevant to this policy include:

*Statement of Values and School Philosophy, Visitors Policy, Child Safety Policy, Child Safety Code of Conduct, Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures, Inclusion and*

Diversity Policy and can be found on the school website <https://www.pvsps.vic.edu.au/page/7/Our-Policies>

Department policies:

- [Equal Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination](#)
- [Child Safe Standards](#)
- [Privacy and Information Sharing](#)
- [Records Management – School Records](#)
- [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	July 2022
Consultation	School Council – July 2022 school communication portal – Compass - Term 3, 2022 School staff – Term 3, 2022
Approved by	Carmel Lancuba - Principal
Next scheduled review date	2026