



## Volunteers



### Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact Warrnambool East Primary School - 55624100.

## PURPOSE

To outline the processes that Warrnambool East PS 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, step-parent, 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/carers' 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 school work in good faith.

## **POLICY**

WEPS is committed to implementing and following practices which protect the safety and wellbeing of children and our staff and volunteers. WEPS 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 WEPS 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 make themselves known to staff, and to communicate the type of activity they wish to volunteer for.

Volunteers are welcome to assist on a regular or casual basis, provided their involvement aligns with the needs and operational requirements of the school.

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



WEPS values the many volunteers that assist in classrooms, with sports events, camps, excursions, Kitchen Garden and other events and programs. To ensure that we are meeting our legal obligations under the *Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic)* and the Child Safe Standards, WEPS 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.

NOTE: It is not an offence under the *Worker Screening Act* for people to engage in child-related work without a WWC Clearance if they have:

- applied for the WWC Check and the application has not been finally decided or withdrawn; and
- the person has not previously been given a WWC Exclusion under the *Worker Screening Act* or a corresponding working with children law.

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 WEPS is a child safe environment, **we will require volunteers to obtain a WWC Check and produce their valid card** to the supervising teacher who will photocopy the card and forward 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 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, fund raising, school council, participating in sub-committees of school council, during which children will not be, or would not reasonably be expected to be present.

At WEPS volunteers for this type of work **will still be required** to provide a valid WWC Check.

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

## **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 **Volunteer Handbook (attached to this policy)** and ensure the actions and requirements in these documents are followed when volunteering for our school.

Please review the school Child Safe Policies.

[Child Safe Standards](#) – Warrnambool East Primary School.

Depending on the nature and responsibilities of their role, Warrnambool East 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 and Wellbeing Policy, Child Safety Conduct Policy and Statement of School Values and Philosophy Policy.

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 WEPS.

WEPS 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 WEPS' 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.

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.

### **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 coordinating staff member 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

- School Website
- Staff Bulletin
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request

## RELATED POLICIES AND RESOURCES

Example School policies and resources relevant to this policy include:

*Statement of Values and School Philosophy, Visitors Policy, Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, Child Safety Code of Conduct, Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures, Inclusion and Diversity Policy, Example School Child Safety Induction Pack*

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       | June 2026                                                                                |
| Consultation               | School Council June 2026<br>School Newsletter LINK June 2026<br>Staff Bulletin June 2026 |
| Approved by                | Principal – Marina Milich                                                                |
| Next scheduled review date | June 2028                                                                                |



## Volunteer Handbook and Child Safe Induction Pack

Thank you for your interest in volunteering at our school. The purpose of this induction pack is to ensure WEPS volunteers are familiar with our policies and procedures relating to child safety and understand the important role they play in maintaining and promoting the safety of our students.

Volunteers must read the suite of policies and procedures in the links below before commencing any work where children are likely to be present.

### Key messages

- WEPS is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children. We want children attending our school to be safe, happy and respected.
- We are committed to creating inclusive environment where diversity is supported and students feel safe to bring their whole selves to school.
- Allegations and concerns relating to the safety and wellbeing of our school community will be treated very seriously and consistently with our policies and procedures.
- We are committed to preventing child abuse, identifying risks early and removing and reducing these risks.
- Everyone has a role to ensure children are safe – if something doesn't feel right, speak up. If you have any concerns about any inappropriate behaviours in the school community you should speak to the Principal or Assistant Principal. If this would not be appropriate in the circumstances, you can contact the XX Regional Office of the Department of Education and Training on 1300 338 691.

### Induction materials – must read

This induction pack contains the following documents that all new volunteers must read and familiarise themselves with. Please click on the hyperlinks to access each document. If you would prefer a hard copy of this pack, please contact the team in the office who will happily provide you with one.

- WEPS Volunteers Policy
- WEPS School Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy [Child Safe Standards](#)



- WEPS School Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures [Child Safe Standards](#)
- WEPS School Child Safety Code of Conduct [Child Safe Standards](#)
- [PROTECT: Four Critical Actions for Schools – Responding to incidents, disclosures and suspicions of child abuse](#)
- [PROTECT: Identify child abuse](#)

### **Contact**

We value your feedback on ways we can continue to improve and strengthen our child safety approach and encourage you to contact [insert contact details eg principal or assistant principal] with any comments or questions.

At Warrnambool East Primary School (WEPS), we encourage parents and community members to actively support student learning by becoming involved in a range of school and classroom activities. We greatly appreciate the valuable contribution volunteers make to our school community and learning programs.

Programs and activities may include:

- Listening to students read
- Supporting classroom activities such as cooking, arts and crafts
- Attending excursions and camps
- Providing administrative support such as laminating teaching aids and covering library books
- Supporting fundraising activities

### **Commitment to Child Safety**

Warrnambool East Primary School is committed to providing a child safe and child friendly environment where children and young people are safe and feel safe.

WEPS has zero tolerance for child abuse, racism, discrimination and harmful behaviour toward children.

All staff, volunteers, visitors and members of our school community have a responsibility to promote the safety, wellbeing and inclusion of all children.

WEPS is committed to ensuring culturally safe environments for:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children
- children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds



- children with disability
- children who identify as LGBTQIA+

### **Classroom Helpers and Volunteer Workers**

When parents/carers assist with school programs, they are considered volunteers working at the school.

Any person whose duties usually involve or are likely to involve work in a school (paid or unpaid) is considered to be engaged in “child-related work” and must comply with the Working with Children Act 2005.

All volunteers engaged in child-related work must hold a current Working With Children Check (WWCC) and provide a copy to the school prior to volunteering. For further information, visit: [Working with Children Victoria](#)

A receipt of application is acceptable until the official WWCC card is received.

### **Duty of Care**

A duty of care applies while students are under the care of the school. This duty applies equally to school-based activities and out-of-school activities.

Volunteers work under the supervision and direction of school staff at all times and are not responsible for students without teacher oversight.

Classroom helpers, staff support personnel and volunteers are expected to:

- Treat all students in a positive, impartial and fair manner
- Work under the direction of the teacher responsible for the class or group
- Refer any behaviour management issues to the classroom teacher
- Maintain professional standards and confidentiality
- Respect the privacy and dignity of all students and families
- Be willing to assist all children within the classroom, not only their own child
- Follow school policies and procedures at all times

Volunteers must not:

- Discipline students
- Use physical punishment
- Photograph or video students unless authorised by staff
- Share information about students, staff or families on social media
- Discuss confidential student information outside the school setting
- Access confidential student records or information



If a volunteer has concerns about the safety or wellbeing of a child, they must immediately report these concerns to the Principal, Assistant Principal or classroom teacher.

### **Code of Conduct**

At WEPS, we have high expectations of our parent and volunteer community.

We expect all parents and volunteers will:

- Promote a positive attitude towards learning
- Encourage children to demonstrate positive behaviours and appropriate conflict resolution strategies
- Support school decisions regarding behaviour management
- Use respectful and appropriate language at all times
- Treat all students, staff and community members respectfully
- Follow staff directions while volunteering
- Contact the school if they have questions or concerns
- Maintain confidentiality and professionalism

Volunteers are expected to model positive behaviour and uphold the values of the school community.

### **WEPS Procedures**

- Classroom helpers and volunteers must provide the school with a current Working With Children Check.
- A register of volunteers and copies of WWCCs will be maintained at the school office.
- All volunteers must sign in and sign out electronically at the office.
- Volunteers will be provided with a WEPS visitor lanyard to wear while onsite.
- Volunteers should remain within approved school areas relevant to their volunteer role.
- Mobile phones should only be used for personal reasons in designated areas and not during volunteer activities unless authorised by staff.

### **Occupational Health and Safety**

The school is committed to ensuring the safety, health and wellbeing of staff, students, volunteers and visitors.

Volunteers are expected to:

- Follow staff instructions regarding safety procedures
- Report hazards, injuries or incidents immediately



- Use equipment safely and appropriately
- Follow emergency management procedures
- Sign in and out for emergency and safety purposes

## **Guidelines for Classroom Helpers and Volunteers**

### **Language**

- Use encouraging and positive language
- Adopt a pleasant tone of voice
- Use warm and open body language

### **Relationships**

- Set a positive example by listening respectfully to staff and students
- Give students opportunities for decision-making by offering limited and appropriate choices
  - Example: “Which book would you like to read?”

### **Physical Contact**

- Accept appropriate child-initiated contact such as high-fives
- Redirect inappropriate contact respectfully
- Reinforce the message that “hugs are for home”
- Discuss any concerns about appropriate contact with the classroom teacher

### **Dress Code**

- Wear clothing appropriate for school activities and learning environments
- Wear suitable footwear for classroom and outdoor activities
- If unsure, ask the classroom teacher or office staff

### **Emergency Procedures**

The school has Emergency and Security Management systems in place.

All volunteers are responsible for familiarising themselves with the school’s emergency procedures and evacuation plans, which are displayed throughout the school.

### **Evacuation**



In the event of an evacuation:

- A bell or continual whistle blasts will sound
- Follow staff instructions immediately
- Move calmly to the designated assembly area
- Remain with the supervising teacher until advised otherwise

### **Lockdown**

In the event of a lockdown:

- Follow classroom teacher instructions immediately
- Remain calm and quiet
- Stay inside until advised by school staff

The school may communicate emergency information to families via Compass, email or phone as information becomes available.

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

#### **What name do the children use when addressing parent helpers?**

Some volunteers prefer to be called by their first name while others prefer a formal title such as Mrs, Mr or Ms. The classroom teacher will discuss this with you. Regardless of the name used, respectful communication is expected at all times.

#### **Where can I apply for a Working With Children Check and how much does it cost?**

Applications can be made online or at participating Australia Post outlets. [Working with Children Victoria](#) There is no cost for volunteer WWCC applications.

#### **What do I need to do when I arrive at school?**

All visitors and volunteers must sign in at the office and wear a WEPS visitor lanyard while onsite. Please remember to sign out when leaving.

#### **Can I bring my toddler or baby while volunteering?**

We ask volunteers to make alternative arrangements for toddlers and babies where possible so that volunteers can fully focus on supporting student learning and classroom activities.

#### **What is the usual time commitment?**

This varies depending on classroom needs and volunteer availability. Many volunteers assist weekly for approximately one hour, however all assistance is appreciated.



**What do I do if I am unable to attend?**

Please notify the classroom teacher or school office if you are unable to attend your scheduled time.

**I noticed another child is struggling with learning. Should I discuss this with their parent?**

No. Volunteers must respect the confidentiality and privacy of all students and families. Any concerns should be discussed only with the classroom teacher.

**The classroom seems noisy compared to when I was at school. Is this okay?**

Modern classrooms often involve collaborative learning, discussion and group activities. Teachers monitor classroom noise levels to ensure they remain appropriate for learning.

**Who is responsible for classroom management?**

The classroom teacher is always responsible for classroom management and student behaviour. Any concerns should be referred to the teacher.

**What if my own child behaves inappropriately while I am volunteering?**

If possible, quietly advise the classroom teacher at the time. If concerns continue, arrange a suitable time to discuss strategies with the teacher privately.

**I cannot help regularly but would still like to volunteer occasionally. Is this possible?**

Yes. Teachers greatly appreciate additional support whenever available. Providing some notice helps staff plan meaningful activities for volunteers.



**Volunteer Acknowledgement** - please submit this slip to the school office once you have read and signed the Volunteer Acknowledgement

I acknowledge that I have read and understood the WEPS Volunteer Handbook and agree to:

- Follow school policies and procedures
- Maintain confidentiality
- Uphold child safety expectations
- Follow staff directions
- Act respectfully toward students, staff and families

Volunteer Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please outline the classes or events you will be volunteering in

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Signature: \_\_\_\_\_