



**Warrnambool East**  
PRIMARY SCHOOL



# Volunteers Policy



## 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, 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

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.

Volunteers:

- Are actively encouraged to be involved in school activities, and will be invited to do so.
- Will be sought formally through the school newsletter, written invitations and personal approaches, as well as informally through conversation and opportunity.
- Will be directed by teachers, who will be ultimately responsible for student management.
- Will be required to register at the office and wear a visitor's lanyard whilst in the school, signing in and out as required.
- Will undergo an induction process on arrival carried out by the supervising staff member
- Will not be required to carry out tasks with which they are uncomfortable
- Must not supervise students on their own, and must be within eyesight of a VIT registered teacher
- Are required to carry out tasks in a manner consistent with school expectations, including maintenance of a professional, co-operative and confidential working environment.
- May be sought to assist with camps and excursions. A WWC Check must be provided.
- Are expected to be treated with respect, and expected to treat staff and students with respect
- Should not approach classroom teachers on perceived controversial issues. Any issues should be raised with the Principal or Assistant Principal immediately.
- May have their volunteer capacity terminated or denied at any time by the Principal (or School Council or teacher in consultation with the Principal).

## **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.

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 **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, 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 2024
Consultation	School Council June 2024 School Newsletter LINK June 2024 Staff Bulletin June 2024
Approved by	Principal – Marina Milich
Next scheduled review date	June 2026

Implementation guide	
Is it compulsory for all Victorian government schools to have a policy addressing this issue?	Yes, a local school policy addressing this issue is required by the Department's <a href="#">Volunteers in Schools Policy on the Policy and Advisory Library</a> .  In addition, the child safety aspects of the policy are required by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimum Standards for school registration</li> <li>• Ministerial Order 870 (ending 30 June 2022)</li> <li>• Ministerial Order 1359 (commencing 1 July 2022)</li> </ul>
Does this policy have to be approved by school council?	No.
Recommended consultation	School council consultation is recommended.  The sections in this template that are marked in yellow should be tailored to your school community.
What is the basis of this policy?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimum Standards for school registration</li> <li>• Ministerial Order 870 (ending 30 June 2022)</li> <li>• Ministerial Order 1359 (commencing 1 July 2022)</li> <li>• Duty of care</li> <li>• <a href="#">Education and Training Reform Act 2006</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2012</a></li> <li>• The Department's Policy and Advisory Library: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ <a href="#">Working with Children and Other Suitability Checks for School Volunteers and Visitors</a></li> <li>◦ <a href="#">Volunteers in Schools</a></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Mandatory minimum review cycle	2 years

