

Mount Evelyn Primary School

School Policies Manual



Volunteers in Schools Policy



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact Mount Evelyn Primary School on (03) 9736 2233 or email mount.evelyn.ps@education.vic.gov.au

Purpose:

To outline the processes that Mount Evelyn 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.

Implementation:

Mount Evelyn Primary School is committed to implementing and following practices which protect the safety and wellbeing of children and our staff and volunteers. Mount Evelyn Primary School 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 Mount Evelyn PS 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 speak to the relevant classroom teacher or member of the leadership team. Teachers will often ask for volunteers via the school or level newsletters and volunteers for whole school events are sought via Google Forms.

Suitability checks including Working with Children Clearances.

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](#)

Working with students

Mount Evelyn PS values the many volunteers that assist in our classrooms, with sports events, camps, excursions, other events and programs. To ensure that we are meeting our legal obligations under the *Worker Screening Act* and the Child Safe Standards, our school 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 Mount Evelyn Primary School is a child safe environment, we will require volunteers to obtain a WWC Clearance and produce their valid card to the school 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) or camps
- 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 when Junior School Council members are in attendance, 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 volunteers to provide other suitability checks at its discretion. This may include 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. This may include maintenance tasks, working bees, parent association, school council, participating in sub-committees of school council, fair coordination, the fathering project or other groups that meet in the evenings during which children will not be, or would not reasonably be expected to be, present.

At Mount Evelyn PS, volunteers for this type of work will still be required to provide a valid WWC Clearance.

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, 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 our students do have a valid WWC.

Training and induction

Under the Child Safe Standards volunteers must have an appropriate induction and training in child safety and wellbeing.

Mount Evelyn PS. 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 the type of work the volunteer will be engaged in and will ensure a record is kept of the induction undertaken.

All volunteers will be provided induction in relation to Mount Evelyn PS's child safety practices, including reporting obligations and procedures.

Depending on the nature and responsibilities of their role, Mount Evelyn 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 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 Mount Evelyn PS.

The principal (or their nominee) will determine what supervision, if any, of volunteers is required for the type of work being performed.

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 Julie Wilkins, Business Manager to ensure they are managed in accordance with the Department's policy: [Records Management – Schools](#).

Compensation

1. *Personal injury*

Volunteer workers are covered by the Department of Education and Training Workers' Compensation Policy if they suffer personal injury in the course of engaging in school work.

2. *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.

3. *Public liability insurance*

The Department of Education and Training has a public liability insurance policy which 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 on GradeXpert
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request

Related policies and resources

For further specific information please refer to the following Mount Evelyn PS documents:

- Statement of values
- Visitors in Schools Policy
- Child safe policy
- Child safe code of conduct

Or the following 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	15/11/2022
Consultation	School Council 16/11/2022 School community via Parent Forum 5 th & 8 th August & Google Survey August 2022
Approved by	Trevor Vass, Principal
Next scheduled review date	November 2024