



## Volunteer Policy

### RATIONALE

A Volunteer school worker is a person who voluntarily engages in school work or approved community work without payment or reward.

All schools greatly appreciate parents who assist positively with the implementation of the school's programs. Volunteers however must comply with the school's expectations and practices.

### PURPOSE

To outline the processes that Narre Warren North 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:* 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 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**

Narre Warren North Primary School is committed to implementing and following practices which protect the safety and wellbeing of children and our staff and volunteers. Narre Warren North 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 Narre Warren North 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**

Volunteers are actively encouraged to partake in school activities, and will be invited to do so. Volunteers will be sought formally through the newsletter, written invitations and personal approaches, as well as informally through conversation and opportunity.

The school will seek to provide a variety of opportunities for volunteer participation, particularly opportunities for mothers, fathers, grandparents, and opportunities for volunteers to be involved in classes of older children or specialist classes.

Volunteers may be sought to assist with school camps and excursions. School Council requires that volunteers assisting with school camps, excursions and swimming programs provide a satisfactory Working with Children Clearance (WWCC) prior to their participation as outlined below.

### **COVID-19 vaccination information**

Training policy with respect to the requirements relating to attendance on school site 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*

Narre Warren North Primary School values the many volunteers that assist in our school programs. To ensure that we are meeting our legal obligations under the *Worker Screening Act* and the Child Safe Standards, Narre Warren North 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 Narre Warren North 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 Narre Warren North Primary, 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 Narre Warren North Primary, e.g.: volunteering on the weekend for gardening, maintenance, fete coordination, or 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, Narre Warren North 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.

## **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, Narre Warren North Primary School may also require volunteers to complete additional child safety training.

Volunteers will be provided with an appropriate induction as well as any support, professional development or instruction necessary to help them carry out their tasks at school in a confident and effective manner.

Volunteers are required to carry out tasks in a manner consistent with school expectations, including maintenance of a professional, cooperative and confidential working environment.

Volunteers should maintain appropriate standards of conduct at all times – this includes speaking style/language, respect for personal space and care with any physical contact and will be expected to respect the professional standing and roles of school staff members.

## **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, our Child Safety Code of Conduct, 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 Narre Warren North Primary School.

Volunteers will be required to sign in at the office daily, and wear a visitor's lanyard displaying their WWCC whilst in the school. On leaving the school volunteers are to sign out at the office and return the lanyard.

## **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 (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures*.

No volunteers will be allowed to photograph children without parental permission in accordance with the *Privacy Act*. This does not preclude parents photographing their own children at school events such as concerts, assemblies and sporting events.

## **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 Assistant 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
- Provided to all prospective volunteers
- Included in our staff handbook/manual
- Discussed in an annual staff meeting
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request

## **RELATED POLICIES AND RESOURCES**

Narre Warren North 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

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

<b>Policy last reviewed</b>	10 <sup>th</sup> May 2022
<b>Consultation</b>	Newsletter: 18 <sup>th</sup> May 2022 School Council: 7 <sup>th</sup> June 2022
<b>Approved by</b>	Principal
<b>Endorsed by School Council on</b>	7 <sup>th</sup> June 2022
<b>Next review date</b>	May 2024