

# NARRE WARREN NORTH PRIMARY SCHOOL



## VOLUNTEERS POLICY

### RATIONALE

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 OF THE POLICY

To outline the processes that Narre Warren North Primary will follow to recruit, screen, supervise and manage volunteers to provide a child safe environment, and to explain the legal rights of volunteers.

They add significantly to the human resources available to the school, and consequently volunteers deserve encouragement, effective management, support and recognition.

To maximise the number and variety of effective volunteers who contribute to our school.

To provide volunteers with the support and recognition they deserve.

To enhance the educational programs at the school, to build the partnerships between home and school, to provide opportunities for parent volunteers to develop their skills and become active participants in their children's education.

### 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**

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 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 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**

Members of our school community who would like to volunteer 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.

### **Suitability checks including Working with Children Clearances**

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

Narre Warren North Primary School values the many volunteers that assist our school programs such as, in our classrooms, sport events, camps, excursions, school concerts and other events and 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 and may also involve undertaking reference, proof of identity, qualification and work history involving children checks.

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 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 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 school administration staff 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 if assisting in the school.

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, Parents' and Friends' Committee coordination, School Council, participating in sub-committees of School Council, etc during which children will not be, or would not reasonably be expected to be, present.

### **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 reasonably 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.

### **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 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 Narre Warren North 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 Business Manager 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.

### Additional Guidelines for Action at Narre Warren North Primary School

1. 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.
2. Volunteers are required to carry out tasks in a manner consistent with school expectations, including maintenance of a professional, cooperative and confidential working environment (refer to the school's Volunteer and Confidentiality Policy).
3. Volunteers are to be supervised by teachers at all times, e.g. they need to be visible at all times.
4. 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.
5. Volunteers will be expected to respect the professional standing and roles of school staff members.
6. Volunteers will not be required to carry out tasks with which they are uncomfortable or untrained.
7. Volunteers are not to approach classroom teachers on controversial issues. Such issues are to be addressed through the Principal or Assistant Principal.
8. Concerns by staff or parents regarding the work of a volunteer should be raised with the Principal or Assistant Principal. Such concerns will be discussed promptly with the volunteer concerned and appropriate action taken.
9. 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.
10. Regular visitors to the school will be informed about school routines including the school's Emergency Management Plan.
11. 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.
12. Volunteer workers undertaking schoolwork 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.

13.

#### **Please note:**

*\*\*Children not of school age are not able to be present when parents are assisting in the classroom.*

*\*\*If the guidelines are not adhered to you will be unable to assist in the classroom.*

### **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 document to prospective volunteers
- Discussed in an annual staff briefing/meeting

## RELATED POLICIES AND RESOURCES

Narre Warren North Primary School policies and resources relevant to this policy include:

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	6 <sup>th</sup> May, 2024
Consultation	School Council 2024
Approved by	Principal 2024 School Council: 21 <sup>st</sup> May 2024
Next scheduled review date	May 2026