



Volunteers

POLICY

Rationale

Cardinia Primary School recognises that education is a collaborative partnership involving staff, parents, caregivers and members of the community. The contribution of volunteers can significantly add to the human resources available to the school. While the school encourages an open and friendly learning environment, which values and actively encourages volunteers, it also recognises that the school has legal obligations to comply with, including its duty of care to its staff and students to provide a safe and secure environment at all times.

Aim

- To outline the processes that Cardinia 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-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 (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.

Implementation

- Cardinia Primary School is committed to implementing and following practices which protect the safety and wellbeing of children and our staff and volunteers.
- Cardinia 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 volunteers at Cardinia Primary School are suitable to work with children and well-placed to make a positive contribution to our school community.

Becoming a Volunteer

Parent Classroom Help

- Teaching staff will advise parents/carers at the beginning of each school year how they can be involved in their child's education (i.e. hearing students read). Parents/carers will then liaise with the classroom teacher directly. Parents/carers may be asked to undertake a brief training session prior to undertaking any volunteer work.

Other Volunteer Work

- Any parents/carers or members of the public who would like to volunteer at our school on a casual or permanent basis must complete a 'Volunteer Application Form' and return it to the school office. The school's Additional Needs and Wellbeing Coordinator, in consultation with the Principal, will undertake any suitability checks and consider the request having regards to the needs of the school at the time.

Suitability Checks, including Working with Children Checks

Working with Students

- Cardinia Primary School values the many volunteers that assist in our classrooms, with sports events and excursions, providing meals and with other events and programs.
- To ensure that we are meeting our legal obligations under the *Working With Children Act 2005* (Victoria) and the Child Safe Standards, Cardinia Primary School is required to undertake suitability checks, which may include a Working With Children Check (WWC Check), proof of identity, work history involving children and/or reference checks.
- Considering our legal obligations, and our commitment to ensuring that Cardinia Primary School is a child safe environment, we will require volunteers to obtain a WWC Check 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 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, coaching of sporting teams, and any 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;
 - * Parent/family volunteers who transport students without staff members present.
- 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 (e.g. working bees, parents and friends activities, school council, participating in sub-committees of school council, other fundraising groups) 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 a WWC Check or other suitability checks as they are not engaged in child-related work and children are not generally present during these activities. Cardinia Primary School, however, reserves the right to undertake suitability checks, including proof of identity and a WWC Check, at its discretion if considered necessary for any particular activities or circumstances.
- School Council members and volunteers on any sub-committee of School Council will be required 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, 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.

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 *Child Safe Policy* and our *Child Safety Code of Conduct*.
- 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 Cardinia Primary School.
- Cardinia Primary School 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 our child safety practices, including reporting obligation and procedures.
- Our school has a *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.

Review of Arrangement

- Cardinia Primary School reserves the right to review a volunteering arrangement at the end of each term based on the needs of the school and students. This may include ceasing or altering a volunteering arrangement.

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; or
 - * damage to or the destruction of a third party's property.

References

- School Policy and Advisory Guide
 - Volunteers in Schools
 - Volunteer Checks

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed every four (4) years or as deemed necessary.

Ratified

This policy was ratified by School Council on 14th November 2018.