



VOLUNTEERS POLICY

1 Rationale

Moreland Primary School recognises that the involvement of parents/carers and other volunteers and visitors from the community can play an important role in children's development and learning. Schools are educational institutions and are not public places; therefore, this policy seeks to provide a safe, open and friendly learning environment which values and actively encourages volunteers and visitors to our school. We recognise our duty of care to ensure a safe environment for our students, staff, visitors and volunteers.

2 Aim

To maximize the number and variety of effective volunteers who contribute to our school. To provide volunteers with the support and recognition they deserve. To ensure that volunteers that have unsupervised access to students have a Working with Children check prior to commencement of work. This policy is to be read in conjunction with Working with Children Check and Criminal Record Checks.

3 Implementation

Volunteer school workers are not liable in any civil proceedings for anything done, or not done, in good faith in providing a community service.

3.1 Definition of volunteer

A volunteer school worker is a person who voluntarily engages in school work or approved community work, without payment or reward. 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 any 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 well protected from legal action by others.

3.2 Volunteer Checks

School must establish and implement policies to assess and verify the suitability of volunteers who will work with children including requiring all volunteers to provide evidence of their suitability. This evidence is generally a working with children check (WWC Check); however, if a volunteer's occupation exempts them from the requirement to also have a WWC check e.g. police officers, teachers, they must provide evidence to support their claim to an exemption.



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In addition to a WWC Check a school may also consider it necessary that a criminal record check is conducted through the Department. This may occur when possible offences are relevant to the duties of the volunteer, for example dishonesty offences, which are not part of the WWC Check. The school covers the cost of the criminal record check.

3.2.1 *Commencing volunteering*

A volunteer can commence work in a school when they provide a receipt as proof they have applied for a WWC Check with the Department of Justice.

3.2.2 *Working with Children Check*

The WWC Check is a minimum checking standard set by the Working with Children Act 2005 for those who work with children, either on a paid or voluntary basis.

To be a volunteer at a school a Working with Children Card provided by the Department of Justice is required. This card is:

- valid for 5 years
- transferable between volunteer organisations
- free of charge for volunteers, but cannot be used for paid employment.

Note: WWC Checks for paid employment can be used to show suitability for volunteer work.

3.3 Occupational Health & Safety

The Principal (or OHS Nominee) is to determine the types of works to be undertaken by volunteer workers and assess the level of risk associated with the works. The Principal (or OHS Nominee) is to identify the hazards associated with the tasks and not to engage a volunteer worker for any high risk tasks. The Principal (or OHS Nominee) are to induct all volunteer workers.

3.4 Compensation

3.4.1 *Personal injury*

Volunteer school workers are covered by the Department's Workers Compensation policy if they suffer personal injury in the course of engaging in school work.

3.4.2 *Property damage*

If a volunteer school worker suffers damage to their property in the course of carrying out school work, the Minister may authorise such compensation as the Minister thinks reasonable in the circumstances. Claims of this nature are to be directed to:

Legal Division
People and Executive Services Group
Department of Education and Training
2 Treasury Place
East Melbourne 3002



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4 References and Appendices

- DET Volunteer Workers
(<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/governance/Pages/volunteers.aspx>)
- Volunteer Workers and Working Bees
(<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/management/Pages/volunteerworkers.aspx>)
- Volunteer Checks
(<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/community/pages/volunteers.aspx>)
- Appendix A: Privacy Agreement for Volunteers

5 Evaluation

Amendments to the policy will be made on a needs basis or as new directives become available.

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle.



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6 Appendix A: Privacy Agreement for Volunteers

Welcome to Moreland Primary school. Volunteers are very generous people and we thank you for your support and help. We would like you to consider yourself a welcomed member of our teaching and learning community.

Moreland Primary School must abide by a Code of Conduct and restrictions under Victorian Government Privacy laws.

Volunteers should hold a current Working with Children Check. We require a photocopy of this card to be held at the office. The Principal, at his/her discretion, may approve a volunteer to assist in the school who does not hold a Working with Children Check.

6.1 Code of Conduct for Volunteers

Moreland Primary School is a cheerful place where both learning and teaching is enjoyable, and safety is important for students and staff, including volunteers.

PLEASE.....

- enjoy yourself!
- encourage our students by prompting them, giving them time to think, and then praising them for their efforts.
- remember that you are an example to the students.
- take care of yourself and the students you are working with. We take our Occupational Health & Safety Policy seriously and work within the rules.
- remember that privacy is important to all of us, and abide by the privacy rules.

6.2 Privacy Agreement

This agreement is between _____ and Moreland Primary School.

During and after my participation and support in the education program at Moreland Primary School I agree to maintain the privacy of all students, staff and parents of Moreland Primary School. I am aware that I must not use any incident, knowledge or detail that may violate the privacy of others.

Signed _____(Volunteer) Dated _____

Signed _____(Principal) Dated _____