# VOLUNTEERS

#  POLICY

**Help for non-English speakers**

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact the school office on (02) 60241188.

## **Purpose**

To outline the processes that Wodonga West Children’s Centre 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 (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**

Wodonga West Children’s Centre is committed to implementing and following practices which protect the safety and wellbeing of children and our staff and volunteers. Wodonga West Children’s Centre 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 Wodonga West Children’s Centre 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 make contact with the School Principal by phone or email to make an appointment to discuss the ways in which you may be able to support the school. The school will also provide information in the school newsletter regarding dates for information sessions and induction training for those who wish to help out in the classroom as part of our Classroom Helpers Program.

**COVID-19 vaccination information**

Under the directions issued by the Victorian Chief Health Officer, volunteers attending school to work are required to be vaccinated or provide evidence that they are medically excepted. Our school is required to collect, record and hold vaccination information from relevant visitors and volunteers to ensure they meet these requirements.

For Department policy on COVID-19 mandatory vaccinations for visitors, including advice on the type of information that schools are required to collect, record and hold, refer to:

* [COVID-19 Vaccinations – Visitors and Volunteers Working on School Sites](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/covid-19-vaccinations-visitors-volunteers/policy)

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

***Working with students***

Wodonga West Children’s Centre values the many volunteers that assist in our classrooms, with sports events, in our SAG Kitchen program, school concerts other events and programs. To ensure that we are meeting our legal obligations under the *Worker Screening* *Act* and the Child Safe Standards, Wodonga West Children’s Centre 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 Wodonga West Children’s Centre is a child safe environment, we will require volunteers to obtain a WWC Clearance and produce their valid card to the school 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

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 eg: volunteering on the weekend for gardening, maintenance, working bees, parents and friends club coordination, school council, participating in sub-committees of school council 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, Wodonga West Children’s Centre 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.

### **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 Wodonga West Children’s Centre.

Wodonga West Children’s Centre will provide any appropriate induction and/or training for all volunteer workers such as the specific induction for volunteers in our Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program or Classroom helpers program. 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 and will ensure a record is kept of the induction undertaken.

All volunteers will be provided induction in relation to Wodonga West Children’s Centre child safety practices, including reporting obligations and procedures. Our school has a Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures 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.

### **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
* Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request

## **Related policies and resources**

Wodonga West Children’s Centre policies:

*Statement of Values*,

 *Visitors Policy,*

*Child Safe Policy,*

 *Child Safety Code of Conduct*

Department policies:

* [Equal Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/equal-opportunity/policy-and-guidelines)
* [Child Safe Standards](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/child-safe-standards/policy)
* [Sexual Harassment](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/sexual-harassment/policy-and-guidelines)
* [Volunteers in Schools](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/volunteers/policy)
* [Volunteer OHS Management](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/volunteer-ohs-management/policy)
* [Working with Children and Other Suitability Checks for School Volunteers and Visitors](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/suitability-checks/policy)
* [Workplace Bullying](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/workplace-bullying/policy)

## **policy review and approval**

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| Policy last reviewed | 23/2/2022 |
| Consultation | March 2022 |
| Approved by | Principal |
| Next scheduled review date | March 2025 |