



NEERIM SOUTH PRIMARY SCHOOL Volunteers Policy



Respect

Learning

Teamwork

Perseverance

1. Rationale

- 1.1. To outline the processes that Neerim South Primary School (NSPS) will follow to recruit, screen, supervise and manage volunteers to provide a child safe environment, and to explain the legal rights of volunteers.
- 1.2. NSPS is committed to implementing and following practices which protect the safety and wellbeing of children and our staff and volunteers. NSPS recognises the valuable contribution that volunteers provide to our school community and the work that we do.
- 1.3. The procedures set out below are designed to ensure that NSPS's volunteers are suitable to work with children and are well-placed to make a positive contribution to our school community.

2. Scope

- 2.1. This policy applies to the recruitment, screening, supervision and management of all people who volunteer at our school.

3. Definitions (as per Ministerial Order 870¹)

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.

¹ Note: The definitions below are based on the relevant legislation, and must not be amended

Definitions (continued) (as per Ministerial Order 870)

Child abuse²

Child abuse includes:

- any act committed against a child involving:
 - a sexual offence, or
 - an offence under section 49B(2) of the Crimes Act 1958 (grooming)
- the infliction, on a child, of:
 - physical violence
 - serious emotional or psychological harm
 - serious neglect of a child

Child-connected work

- Child-connected work means work authorised by the school governing authority and performed by an adult in a school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

Child safety

Child safety encompasses matters related to protecting all children from child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse, and responding to incidents or allegations of child abuse.

School environment

School environment means any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by the school governing authority for use by a child during or outside school hours, including:

- a campus of the school
- online school environments (including email and intranet systems)
- other locations provided by the school for a child's use (including, without limitation, locations used for school camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions, and other events)

School staff

School staff being: an individual working in a school environment who is:

- directly engaged or employed by a school governing authority
- a volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary)
- a minister of religion

4. Implementation

4.1. Becoming a volunteer

Members of our school community who would like to volunteer are encouraged to contact the office.

4.2. Suitability checks including Working with Children Checks

[Note: The Working With Children Act 2005 (Vic) only sets out the minimum requirements for WWC Checks. The Child Safe Standards are another law relevant to schools that requires appropriate screening measures/suitability checks to be undertaken in relation to volunteers and visitors. To ensure compliance with both pieces of legislation and Department policy, schools may choose to go above the minimum requirements under the WWC Act, depending on the nature and risk of the activities the volunteer will be engaged in. There are different options below that you can adopt to suit your school community.]

² Definitions from 3.2(f) Child Safe Environment.

<p>Working with students</p>	
	<p>NSPS values the many volunteers that assist eg: in our classrooms/with sports events/camps/excursions/school concerts/other events and programs. To ensure that we are meeting our legal obligations under the Working With Children Act 2005 (Vic) and the Child Safe Standards, NSPS is required to undertake suitability checks which may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a Working With Children Check, • proof of identity, • work history involving children and/or reference checks <p>Considering our legal obligations, and our commitment to ensuring that NSPS 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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. <i>[This is a legal requirement under the Working with Children Check Act and must not be changed]</i> • 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. <i>[This is a legal requirement under the Working with Children Check Act and must not be changed]</i> • Parent/family volunteers who assist with excursions (including swimming), camps and similar events, regardless of whether their own child is participating or not. <i>[Note that volunteers who are parents, or closely related family members of a child at the school who volunteer as part of an activity that their child is participating in or usually participate in are not required to have a WWC Check under the WWC Act. However, DET recommends that schools do require parents to obtain one in these circumstances given the degree of contact volunteers may have with students in these situations – see Suitability Check Flowchart for Schools on the School Policy and Advisory Guide – Suitability Checks for School Volunteers and Visitors page. Schools can choose to add further activities to this list where there is a higher degree of risk posed.]</i>

Working with students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent/family volunteers who regularly assist in school activities, regardless of whether their own child is participating or not <i>(Refer to the School Policy and Advisory Guide – Suitability Checks for School Volunteers and Visitors page)</i> • 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 <p><i>In addition, depending on the nature of the volunteer work, Neerim South Primary School may ask our volunteers 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.</i></p>
Non child-related work	<p><i>[Note: At law, volunteers who are not engaged in child-related work (eg fete planning and organisation) do not need a WWC Check under the WWC Act. However, the Child Safe Standards require appropriate suitability checks (at the discretion of the school) for any child-connected work which is work performed where children are present or reasonably expected to be present. Below are options that you could adopt at your school.]</i></p> <p>On some occasions, parents and other members of the school community may volunteer to do work that is not child-related. For example, volunteering on the weekend for gardening, maintenance, working bees, parents and friend’s club coordination, school council, participating in sub-committees of school council, fete coordination, other fundraising groups that meet in the evenings during which children will not be, or would not reasonably be expected to be, present.</p> <p>Volunteers for this type of work are not required to have Working with Children or other suitability checks as they are not engaged in child-related work and children are not generally present during these activities. However, NSPS reserves the right to undertake suitability checks, including proof of identity, Working with Children Checks, at its discretion if considered necessary for any particular activities or circumstances.</p>

4.3. 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 [Statement of Commitment to Child Safety](#), our [Child Safety Code of Conduct](#) and our [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 NSPS.

NSPS 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 NSPS's child safety practices, including reporting obligations and procedures. Our school has a Child Safety 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. **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

5. Related Policies

1.1 Philosophy

1.5 School Privacy Policy

3.2(d) Visitors Policy

3.2(e) Duty of Care

3.2(f) Child Safe Environment Policy

3.2(g) Child Safety Code of Conduct (see 7.0 Child Safety - Standard 3)

3.2(h) Statement of Commitment (to Child Safety)

3.4(a) Mandatory Reporting

7.6 Standard 6 Risk Management

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/community/pages/volunteers.aspx>

Attachment – Suitability Check Flowchart for Schools (see page 6)

6. Evaluation

- 6.1. This policy will be reviewed as part of DET's directive to review this policy five-yearly or more often if necessary due to changes in regulations or circumstances.

7. Revision History

Date	Description	Author
15/11/2018	Original. To be presented to SC 19/11/2018	Environment SC
19/11/2018	Ratified by School Council	Environment SC

Suitability Check Flowchart for Schools

