

VOLUNTEERS POLICY



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Statewide Vision Resource Centre.

This Statewide Vision Resource Centre policy is available in braille hard copy and etext format from our administration upon request.

PURPOSE

To outline the processes the Statewide Vision Resource 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 centre.

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 worker is a person who voluntarily engages in centre work or approved community work without payment or reward.

Centre work: Centre work means:

- Carrying out the functions of a school council
- Any activity carried out for the welfare of the centre, by the school council, or association or any other body organised to promote the welfare of the centre
- Any activity carried out for the welfare of the centre at the request of the Principal, Assistant Principal, or school council
- Providing assistance in the work of the centre
- 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 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 centre work in good faith.

POLICY

Statewide Vision Resource Centre is committed to implementing and following practices which protect the safety and wellbeing of children and our staff and volunteers. Statewide Vision Resource Centre also recognises the valuable contribution that volunteers provide to our community and the work that we do

The procedures set out below are designed to ensure that Statewide Vision Resource Centre's volunteers are suitable to work with children and are well-placed to make a positive contribution to our community.

Becoming a volunteer

Members of our community who would like to volunteer are encouraged to register your interest with our Leading Teacher, Assistant Principal, or the office. Parents can also volunteer for community events that are advertised via Webpage and/or in the Bulletin.

COVID-19 vaccination information

Under the directions issued by the Victorian Chief Health Officer, volunteers attending our centre to work are required to be vaccinated or provide evidence that they are medically exempted. Statewide Vision Resource Centre 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](#)

Suitability checks including Working with Children Clearances

Working with students

Statewide Vision Resource Centre values the many volunteers that assist in our programs/with sports events/camps/excursions/other events and programs. To ensure that we are meeting our legal obligations under the *Worker Screening Act* and the Child Safe Standards, Statewide Vision Resource Centre is required to undertake suitability checks which in most cases will involve asking for evidence of a Working with Children (WWC) Check 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 Statewide Vision Resource Centre is a child safe environment, we will require volunteers to obtain a WWC Check and produce their valid card to the office for verification and a copy to be retained on our register in the following circumstances:

- Volunteers who are **not** parent/family members of any student at the centre if they are engaged in child-related work regardless of whether they are being supervised.
- Parent/family volunteers who are assisting with any learning 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 learning activities, regardless of whether their own child is participating or not
- Parent/community School Council members sitting on School Council, regardless of whether their own child is a student member or not

In addition, depending on the nature of the volunteer work, our centre 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 our community may volunteer to do work that is not child related. For example, volunteering on the weekend for gardening, maintenance, working bee, participating in sub-committees of school council, other fundraising groups that meet in the evenings 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, Statewide Vision Resource 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.

School council members and volunteers on any sub-committee of School Council will be asked to provide evidence of a valid WWC Clearance. Whilst we acknowledge that these volunteers will not be engaging in child-related work as part of their role, even when there is a student sitting on the School Council, 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 Clearance

Management and supervision

Volunteer workers will be expected to comply with any reasonable direction of the Assistant Principal (or their nominee). This will include the requirement to follow our 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 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 Statewide Vision Resource Centre.

Statewide Vision Resource Centre will provide any appropriate induction and/or training for all volunteer workers. The Assistant 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 Statewide Vision Resource Centre's child safety practices, including reporting obligations and procedures. Our centre has a Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures which all staff and volunteers should be aware of.

The Assistant 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's Workers' Compensation Policy if they suffer personal injury in the course of engaging in centre work.

Property damage

If a volunteer worker suffers damage to their property in the course of carrying out centre 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's public liability insurance policy applies when a volunteer worker engaged in centre 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 community in the following ways:

- available publicly on our website
- available in hard copy braille and/or etext from administration upon request.

RELATED POLICIES AND RESOURCES

Statewide Vision Resource Centre policies:

- [Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy](#)
- [Child Safety Code of Conduct](#)

- [Statement of Values and School Philosophy](#)

Department policies:

- [Equal Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination](#)
- [Child Safe Standards](#)
- [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	Consultation	Approved by	Next scheduled review date
November 2022	Principal	Principal	November 2025