



# VOLUNTEER POLICY

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**Policy Owner: Business Manager**

**Approver: Principal**

## PURPOSE

To outline the processes that Fairhills High School will follow to recruit, screen, supervise and manage volunteers to provide a child safe environment, and to explain the legal rights of volunteers.

## POLICY

Fairhills High School is committed to implementing and following practices which protect the safety and wellbeing of children and our staff and volunteers. Fairhills High School also recognises the valuable contribution that volunteers provide to our school community and the work that we do.

The guidelines set out below are designed to ensure that Fairhills High School's volunteers are suitable to work with children and are well-placed to make a positive contribution to our school community.

## SCOPE

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

## IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES

Detailed implementation guidelines are developed by the staff through the established consultative committee process. These are developed within the parameters of the Council policy and can be changed as circumstances or strategies change without further reference to Council.

## 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.

## **GUIDELINES**

### **Becoming a volunteer**

Members of our school community who would like to volunteer are encouraged to contact the school by phoning or emailing the General Office and they will be directed to discuss participation with the appropriate member of staff.

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

#### ***Working with students***

Fairhills High School values the many volunteers that assist in a variety of 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, Fairhills High School is required to undertake suitability checks which may include a Working With Children Check, proof of identity, work history involving children and/or reference checks.

Considering our legal obligations, and our commitment to ensuring that Fairhills High School is a child safe environment, we will require volunteers to obtain a WWC Check and produce their valid card to the General Office staff upon signing in for verification in the following circumstances. This is a legal requirement within the suitability checking/screening processes under the *Working With Children Act 2005* (Vic) and must be complied with before undertaking any activity with children within the school. A copy of the valid Working With Children card, as well as any other relevant material, will be taken by the General Office and kept on file.

Therefore :

- **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, sport, musicals 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
- **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

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.

Volunteers are required to immediately inform the school of any changes to their circumstance which could impact on the validity or appositeness of their current Working with Children Check.

### ***Non child-related work***

On some occasions, parents and other members of our school community may volunteer to do work that is not child-related. For example, volunteering on the weekend for gardening, maintenance, or working bees, 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 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, Fairhills High School 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.

Note that School Council members and volunteers on any sub-committee of School Council will be asked 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, 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 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 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 Fairhills High School.

Fairhills High 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 Fairhills High School's child safety practices, including reporting obligations and procedures. Our school has a Child Safety Reporting Obligations Guideline which all staff and volunteers are made 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 schoolwork is legally liable for:

- a claim for bodily injury to a third party
- damage to or the destruction of a third party's property.

## **RELATED POLICIES AND RESOURCES**

- Statement of Values and School Philosophy
- Visitors Policy
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Child Safety Code of Conduct

