



# Findon Primary School

## Volunteer Policy

### PURPOSE

To outline the processes that Findon Primary School will follow to recruit, screen, supervise and manage volunteers in order to provide a child safe environment, and 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 connected work:* work authorised by the school governing authority/provider of a school boarding services and performed by an adult in a school or school boarding premises environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

*Child related work:* As defined by the *Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic)*, child related work is 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 direct contact with children that is incidental to the work.

*Closely related family member:* parent/caregiver, parent/caregiver's spouse or domestic partner, stepparent, parent/caregiver'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 schoolwork 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

This policy applies to the recruitment, screening, supervision and management of all people who volunteer at our school. Findon Primary School is committed to implementing and following practices which protect the safety and wellbeing of students, staff and volunteers. The school recognises the valuable contribution that volunteers provide to our school community and the support of the work that we do.

Volunteers who have a current Working With Children's Check (WWCC) may assist in the following:

- Classroom reading and numeracy activities (younger siblings may be welcomed with the agreement of the classroom teacher, under parental supervision and if the child will not disrupt the learning program)
- The SAKG program – volunteers are encouraged to support with the kitchen cooking sessions, but due to the nature and the Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) concerns of the program younger siblings cannot be in attendance

- Canteen fundraisers (such as sausage sizzles) – volunteers are encouraged to support but due to the nature and the OH&S concerns of the program younger siblings cannot be in attendance
- External events including excursions, sporting events and camps – require volunteers to be actively supervising so no younger siblings can attend.

The procedures set out below are designed to ensure that volunteers at Findon PS 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 contact with the school.

### **Suitability checks including Working with Children Checks (WWCC)**

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

Findon PS values the many volunteers that assist in our classrooms/with sports events/school productions/and other events and programs. To ensure that we are meeting our legal obligations under the *Worker Screening Act* and the Child Safe Standards, Findon PS is required to undertake suitability checks which in most cases will involve asking for evidence of a WWCC 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 Findon PS is a child safe environment, we will require volunteers to obtain a WWCC and produce their valid card to the office for verification in the following circumstances:

- **Volunteers who are not parent/caregiver or family members** of any student at the school if they are engaged in child related work regardless of whether they are being supervised.
- **Parent/caregivers or 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/caregiver or family volunteers** who assist with excursions (including swimming), camps and similar events, regardless of whether their own child is participating or not.
- **Parent/caregiver or family volunteers** who regularly assist in school activities, regardless of whether their own child is participating or not
- **Parent/caregiver or 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.

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

On some occasions, parents/caregivers 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, Community Link coordination, School Council, participating in sub committees or 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 WWCC or other suitability checks as they are not engaged in child related work and children are not generally present during these activities. However, Findon PS reserves the right to undertake suitability checks, including requiring proof of identity and WWCC, at its discretion, if considered necessary for any activities or circumstances. School Council members and volunteers on any subcommittee of School Council will be asked to provide evidence of a valid WWCC. 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 WWCC.

### **Training and induction**

Under the Child Safe Standards volunteers must have an appropriate induction and training in child safety and wellbeing.

To support us to maintain a child safe environment, before engaging in any work where children are present or reasonably likely to be present, volunteers must familiarise themselves with the policies, procedures and code of conduct, and ensure the actions and requirements in these documents are followed when volunteering for our school. Depending on the nature and responsibilities of their role, Findon may also require volunteers to complete additional child safety training.

### **Management and supervision**

Volunteer workers will be expected to comply with any reasonable direction of the Principal. 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 (DE) 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 (or their nominee) will determine the level of school staff supervision required for volunteers, depending on the type of work being performed, and with a focus on ensuring the safety and wellbeing of students.

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 Findon PS.

### **Privacy and information sharing**

Volunteers must ensure that any student information they become aware of because of their volunteer work is managed sensitively and in accordance with the Schools' Privacy Policy and the Department's policy on Privacy and Information Sharing.

Under these policies, student information can and should be shared with relevant school staff to:

- support the student's education, wellbeing and health
- reduce the risk of reasonably foreseeable harm to the student, other students, staff or visitors
- make reasonable adjustments to accommodate the student's disability. or
- provide a safe and secure workplace.

Volunteers must immediately report any child safety concerns that they become aware of, to a member of staff to ensure appropriate action. There are some circumstances where volunteers may also be obliged to disclose information to authorities outside of the school such as to Victoria Police. For further information on child safety responding and reporting obligations refer to: Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures.

### **Records management**

While it is unlikely, volunteers will be responsible for any school records during their volunteer work, any school records that volunteers are responsible for must be provided to the Office Administration staff to ensure they are managed in accordance with the Department's policy: Records Management – Schools.

### **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 schoolwork.

#### Property damage

If a volunteer worker suffers damage to their property in the course of carrying out schoolwork, 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 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.

## COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Discussed at staff meetings/briefings as required
- Made available publicly on our school website
- Included as annual reference in school newsletter
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request

## RELATED POLICIES AND RESOURCES

Findon Primary School policies and resources relevant to this policy include:

- [Statement of Values and School Philosophy](#)
- [Visitors Policy](#)
- [Volunteers Policy](#)
- [Child Safety Code of Conduct](#)
- [Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedure](#)

Department policies:

- [Equal Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination](#)
- [Child Safe Standards](#)
- [Privacy and Information Sharing](#)
- [Records Management – School Records](#)
- [Sexual Harassment](#)
- [Volunteers in Schools](#)
- [Volunteer OHS Management](#)
- [Working with Children and Other Suitability Checks for School Volunteers and Visitors](#)
- [Workplace Bullying](#)



### Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Findon Primary School on 03 9404 1362 or [findon.ps@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:findon.ps@education.vic.gov.au)

## POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy reviewed/ratified	July 2024
Approved by	School Council
Next scheduled review date	July 2026 (2-year review cycle)