Yarraville West Primary School
Volunteers Policy

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	May 2025
Consultation	Parents and School Staff
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	May 2027

PURPOSE

To outline the processes that Yarraville West Primary School 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

Yarraville West Primary School is committed to implementing and following practices which protect the safety and wellbeing of children and our staff and volunteers. Yarraville West Primary School 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 Yarraville West Primary School's volunteers are suitable to work with children and are well-placed to make a positive contribution to our school community.

Becoming a volunteer

Volunteers are tremendously welcomed and appreciated at Yarraville West. Many of our programs thrive because of parent involvement, including classroom reading, sports activities and excursions to name just a few. Invitations for parents to assist in the school's programs will be extended regularly through newsletters or directly from teachers.

When working in a school-related activity, volunteers do so with the understanding that their role is to support the teachers and the school's program. If you would like to be a volunteer we request that you follow these guidelines to ensure a successful experience for all.

Please:

- Do not pass opinions on such matters as discipline or teaching styles outside the classroom or school.
- Avoid comparing children and their work. All children learn at different rates and have different strengths and growth needs.
- Give all children equal time and attention where possible.
- Encourage children to be independent – we expect children to try everything themselves before we help them.
- Be aware that you may not be working with your own child.
- Do not try to lift, carry or move a child in any way.
- Tell the classroom teacher if a child discusses a matter that concerns you.
- Be aware that some days/times may not suit individual classroom teachers.
- Be aware that unforeseeable events may mean a timetable change for the class at short notice, and therefore classroom help may not be required.

Confidentiality is essential for all Volunteers. You may see children struggling with work or becoming upset. You might also hear/see other information concerning a child while you are helping. It is vital that you do not share anything about specific children other than with the classroom teacher. The responsibility for informing parents of any concerns about a child remains with the class teacher. (see Information Privacy Act 2000)

It is a requirement of all volunteers to have read the YWPS Child Safe Code of Conduct. This document can be accessed by the school's website, or if you would prefer a hard copy, please ask for one at the office. This document outlines clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children. Volunteers who do not comply with the school's guidelines and Child Safe Code of conduct will be required to relinquish their role.

Suitability checks including Working with Children Clearances

Working with students

Yarraville West Primary School values the many volunteers that assist 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 *Worker Screening Act* and the Child Safe Standards, Yarraville West Primary School 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. Where prospective volunteers are required under the law and this policy to have a WWC Clearance, the principal has the discretion to accept evidence of a WWC check application in order to commence volunteer work, provided the volunteer provides the school with evidence of the application outcome (clearance or exclusion) as soon as practicable after the applicant receives it

Considering our legal obligations, and our commitment to ensuring that Yarraville West Primary School is a child safe environment, we will require volunteers to obtain a WWC Clearance and produce their valid card to the office for verification in the following circumstances:

- **Volunteers who are <u>not</u> 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
- **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.

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, school council or 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, Yarraville West Primary School 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.

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 referred to in our Child Safety Induction Pack 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, Yarraville West Primary School 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 (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. 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 Yarraville West Primary School.

Yarraville West Primary 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 and will ensure a record is kept of the induction undertaken.

All volunteers will be provided induction in relation to Yarraville West Primary School's 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.

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 Business Manager 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 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

The Statement of Values and School Philosophy, *Visitors Policy, Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, Child Safety Code of Conduct, Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures, Inclusion and Diversity Policy, Child Safety Induction Pack, Volunteer OHS Induction Handbook.*

Yarraville West Primary School policies can be found on our website

https://ywps.vic.edu.au

Statement of Values
Visitors Policy
Child Safety Policy
Child Safety Code of Conduct

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

Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact the office.