



VOLUNTEERS POLICY

ISSUE DATE: MARCH 2024 | REVIEW DATE: MARCH 2026

PURPOSE

To outline the processes that Coburg North Primary School (CNPS) 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-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, 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

CNPS is committed to implementing and following practices which protect the safety and wellbeing of children and our staff and volunteers. At CNPS, we believe in the power of community involvement to enhance the learning environment for our students. We invite you to join us in making a difference by volunteering your time and talents.

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

Becoming a volunteer

At CNPS, the contribution of school community members is deeply valued, and parents/carers are warmly welcomed to volunteer in various capacities. Volunteering at the school is seen as a rewarding way to actively participate in the educational process and contribute to the nurturing environment that the school strives to maintain. There are three main areas where parent volunteers can significantly impact:

1. **Classroom Assistance:** Volunteers can support teachers by assisting with a variety of classroom activities. These activities may include tasks such as updating home reading materials, engaging with students through reading activities, and preparing essential classroom resources. Their involvement can enhance the learning experience for all students.

2. **Grounds Maintenance:** The school prides itself on the beauty and functionality of its environment. Volunteers can assist the Building and Maintenance staff in various outdoor projects, including maintaining the kitchen garden, Coburg Crop, and ensuring the grounds remain welcoming and safe spaces for students.

3. **Camps and Excursions:** CNPS offers numerous opportunities throughout the year for volunteers to accompany students on educational camps and excursions. This allows them to engage with students in a different setting and provide valuable support during these enriching experiences.

How to Volunteer

- **Expression of Interest:** In weeks 2-4 of the school year, CNPS will issue a Compass post to gauge interest among parents/carers in volunteering opportunities. This initial step involves completing a short survey to indicate their areas of interest and availability.

- **Workshop and Induction:** Before commencing any volunteer work, it is essential for volunteers to attend a workshop and induction session. These sessions are designed to equip them with the necessary information and training to ensure a fulfilling and effective volunteering experience.

- **Clearance and Documentation:** To ensure the safety and well-being of students, all volunteers must provide a valid Working with Children's Check and sign an Induction Checklist. These documents must be submitted and approved before any volunteer activities can begin.

Volunteering at CNPS is more than just a contribution of time; it's a way for parents and carers to engage with and enrich the school community. Their participation helps foster a supportive environment where every student can thrive. CNPS looks forward to welcoming new members into its vibrant community of volunteers.

Suitability checks including Working with Children Clearances

Working with students

CNPS 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, CNPS 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, qualification and work history involving children checks.

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

- **Volunteers who are not 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, CNPS 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, volunteering on the weekend for gardening, maintenance, working bees, parents and friends 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.

At CNPS, volunteers for this type of work will still be required to provide a valid WWC Clearance.

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 policies on

the school's website 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, CNPS 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 and Wellbeing 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 (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 CNPS.

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 staff to ensure they are managed in accordance with the Department's policy: [Records Management – Schools](#).

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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.

RELATED POLICIES AND RESOURCES

CNPS policies and resources relevant to this policy include:

- [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.](#)

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](#)

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	March 2024
Consultation with School Council	March 2024
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	March 2026