



Volunteer Policy

Purpose:

To outline the processes that Whittlesea Secondary College 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 College, which includes School Council, Parent and Friend groups etc.

Definitions:

Child-connected work: work authorised by the College 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 the College, by the school council, any parents' club or association or any other body organised to promote the welfare of Whittlesea Secondary College.
- Any activity carried out for the welfare of the College 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 (i.e., indemnified) from action by others in the event of an injury or accident whilst they are performing volunteer schoolwork in good faith.

- *Note Whittlesea Secondary College do NOT engage volunteers to assist with excursions or camps.*



Policy:

Whittlesea Secondary College is committed to implementing and following practices which protect the safety and wellbeing of children and our staff and volunteers. Whittlesea Secondary College also recognises the valuable contribution that our volunteers provide to our College community.

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

Becoming a volunteer

Members of our College community who would like to volunteer on our School Council or Parents and Friend Group are encouraged to express their offer of assistance through the General Office, where it will be directed to the College Principal.

Suitability checks including Working with Children Clearances

To ensure that we are meeting our legal obligations under the *Worker Screening Act* and the Child Safe Standards, Whittlesea Secondary College 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 Whittlesea Secondary College is a child safe environment, we will require volunteers to obtain a WWC clearance and produce their valid card 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 College 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/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.

NOTE: 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 College 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, meeting 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 Clearance or other suitability checks as they are not engaged in child-related work and children are not generally present during these activities. However, we reserve the right to undertake suitability checks, including proof of identity, WWC clearance, at its discretion if considered necessary for any 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 sometimes 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 College which will have an impact on students do have a valid WWC Clearance – we will request a copy of this at the start of each year, to be managed by the Business Manager on School Council.

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 College.

Depending on the nature and responsibilities of their role, Whittlesea Secondary College 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 College's policies, including, but not limited to our Child Safety Policy and our Child Safety Code of Conduct.

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](#)
- [Workplace Bullying](#).

The principal (or their nominee) will determine the level of College 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 a person is suitable to volunteer at Whittlesea Secondary College.



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 College 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 Whittlesea Secondary College staff to ensure appropriate action. There are some circumstances where volunteers may also be obliged to disclose information to authorities outside of the College 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 student College 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's Workers' Compensation Policy if they suffer personal injury while engaging in schoolwork.

Property damage

If a volunteer worker suffers damage to their property while 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 College community in the following ways:

- Provided to staff at induction and included in staff handbook/manual
- Discussed at staff meetings/briefings as required
- Made available publicly on our College website
- Included in induction processes for relevant staff
- Included as a link in all invitations to prospective volunteers
- Included as annual reference via COMPASS
- Made available in hard copy from College administration upon request

Further Information and Resources:

Whittlesea Secondary College Policies:

- [Statement of School Values and School Philosophy](#)
- [Visitor Policy](#)
- [Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy](#)
- [Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures](#)
- [Child Safety wellbeing policy](#)
- [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 2026
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Policy approved	School Council March 2026
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