

VOLUNTEERS POLICY & VOLUNTEERS' WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECKS POLICY



*Charles La Trobe P-12 College takes a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse and is fully committed to ensuring that its strategies, policies, procedures and practices meet all **Child Safety Standards** as specified in Ministerial Order No. 870 (2015).*

VOLUNTEERS POLICY

RATIONALE

- Volunteers add significantly to the human resources available to the school, and consequently volunteers deserve encouragement, effective management, support and recognition.
- Volunteer school workers are not liable in any civil proceedings for anything done, or not done, in good faith in providing a community service.
- Volunteer school workers are covered by the Department's Workers Compensation policy if they suffer personal injury in the course of engaging in school work.
- Schools must develop and implement school level policies and procedures for the recruitment, screening and management of volunteers, consistent with the requirements of Ministerial Order 870: Child Safe Standards.

PURPOSE

- To explain the legal rights of volunteer workers in the school.
- To provide assurance to our volunteer workers regarding their legal rights and responsibilities.
- To ensure Charles La Trobe College complies with Child Safe Standards 1, 2 & 6.
- To ensure the school complies with DET policy and guidelines and legislative requirements of the
 - *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* - sections 5.6.2, 5.6.3
 - *Workers Compensation Act 1958*
 - *Wrongs Act 1958* – section 37(1)

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Definition

A volunteer school worker is a person who voluntarily engages in school work or approved community work, without payment or reward. 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 any 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 well protected from legal action by others.

Important: *Voluntary work carried out to meet Centrelink requirements:* people who perform unpaid work in schools under the "Work for the Dole" program and "Community Work" programs administered by Centrelink have insurance cover provided by the Federal Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, and may perform work in schools. Other Centrelink benefit recipients involved in "voluntary" work in order to fulfill their recipient obligations are **not** covered by an Australian Government insurance scheme. Schools however may accept this group of Centrelink benefit recipients to work as volunteers in Victorian government schools and note that they are insured by the Department.

IMPLEMENTATION

- The safety and wellbeing of children is this school's highest priority.
- The safety of all workers at the school also is a very high priority.
- Volunteers are actively encouraged to partake in school activities, and will be invited to do so.
- The school will assess and verify the suitability of volunteers, see: [Suitability Checks for School Volunteers and Visitors](#)

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- The Principal has the discretion as to the ongoing suitability of a volunteer working in their school and may determine at any time whether a person is suitable to volunteer at the school.

Managing Volunteers

- A volunteer is expected to comply with any reasonable direction of a Principal (or their nominee). This will include the requirement to agree and abide by the school's Child Safety Policy/Statement of Commitment to Child Safety and the school's Child Safety Code of Conduct.
- Volunteers will be inducted, trained and supervised according to the school's procedures for staff/volunteer induction and management. This includes being familiar with school level procedures for identifying and reporting suspected child abuse.
- Volunteers must be provided with any completed risk assessments and Safe Work Procedures for each item of restricted plant or equipment.
- Volunteers will be required to register at the administration office daily, and wear a visitors badge whilst in the school. Volunteers will be invited to use the staff room and facilities.
- The Principal should notify the Employee Conduct Branch as soon as possible after becoming aware of a reportable allegation involving a volunteer, so that the Employee Conduct Branch can assess the allegations and report them to the CCYP, if appropriate. See: [Reportable Conduct Scheme](#)

Failure to Protect

- Any staff member in a position of authority (Principals, Assistant Principals, and Campus Principals), who becomes aware that an adult associated with their organisation (such as an employee, contractor, volunteer or visitor) poses a risk of sexual abuse to a child under the care, authority or supervision of the organisation, must take all reasonable steps to remove or reduce that risk. This may include, for example, removing the adult from child-related work pending investigation. If a staff member in a position of authority fails to take reasonable steps in these circumstances, this may amount to a criminal offence.
- Volunteer workers are covered by DET'S Workers Compensation policy if they suffer personal injury in the course of engaging in school work or when travelling to or from the place where the school work is to occur.
- If a volunteer school worker suffers damage to his or her property in the course of carrying out school work, the Minister may authorise such compensation as the Minister thinks reasonable in the circumstances. Claims of this nature are to be directed to:

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Legal Division

People & Executive Services Group

Department of Education and Training

Level 3, 2 Treasury Place

East Melbourne 3002

Working Bees

- It is the responsibility of the School Council appointed Coordinator to ensure that volunteers working at working bees comply with OH&S requirements. For further information, please refer to the website below with links to Volunteer Workers and Working Bees.
- In managing volunteers, the Principal needs to:
 - *Refer to the Department's Volunteer Work and Working Bee Procedure for processes and role accountabilities.*
 - *Check that volunteer workers have a current Working with Children's Check, where applicable.*
 - *Check relevant Safe Work Method Statement (SWMS) are completed prior to volunteer workers performing high risk tasks.*
 - *Provide relevant Safe Work Procedures (SWP) for tasks identified as high risk.*
 - *Induct volunteer workers using the Volunteer Work and Working Bee OHS Induction Checklist prior to working on site.*
 - *Report any volunteer worker or employee injury on eduSafe.*
 - *Provide first aid information to any persons coming on site.*
 - *Ensure children on site are appropriately supervised, if applicable.*
 - *Provide details of the Emergency Management Plan and procedures including evacuations points to all persons on site.*
- The Principal will determine the types of works to be undertaken by volunteer workers and assess the level of risk associated with the works. Examples of volunteer work include:
 - parents/carers assisting in a classroom
 - gardening/landscaping

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- painting
 - clean-up of grounds
 - school fete
 - theatre performances or presentation days
 - school excursions
 - school camps
- The Principal will not engage a volunteer worker for any high risk tasks, including:
- Rip Saw (Table Saw, Bench Saw)
 - Band Saw or Panel Saw
 - Docking Saw (Cross-Cut Saw, Radial Arm Saw)
 - Triton Work Centre
 - Portable Circular Saw
 - Circular Saw Table
 - Slide Compound Mitre Saw & Compound Mitre Saw
 - Reciprocating Saw
 - Guillotine (Powered or manually-operated)
 - Grinder (Pedestal or Bench)
 - Buzzer (Surface Planer)
 - Thicknesser
 - Spindle Moulder
 - Power Wood Shaper

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- Portable Planer
 - Metal Cut-off Saw
 - Table Inverted Router
 - Portable Plunge Router (unsecured) i.e. without template or guide fence
- The Principal will ensure that all electrical equipment brought onto the site has been tested and tagged prior to use.

Volunteer Worker OHS Induction

- The Principal, OHS Nominee and/or other suitably qualified person must induct all volunteer workers using the **Volunteer Worker OHS Induction Checklist**, or equivalent template.
- All volunteer workers must be made aware of the school's first aid arrangements.
- Any volunteer injury will be reported on eduSafe.
- Further information will be obtained from DET's Contractor and Volunteer OHS Management document.
- Please refer also to the school's Working with Children Check – Volunteers Policy, the Visitors to the School Policy and the Child Safe Standards.

EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle or if guidelines change (latest DET update July 2018).

RATIFICATION

The previous update was ratified by the College Council on 15th February, 2018.

This policy was re-ratified on 15th August 2019.

REFERENCE

www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/community/Pages/volunteers.aspx

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VOLUNTEERS WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK POLICY

RATIONALE

- Schools are required to exercise their legal obligations in regard to suitability checks, including Working with Children Checks for adults who work with children at schools, and for work undertaken by school visitors and volunteers.
- In order to adequately discharge their duty of care schools are legally required to take reasonable steps to minimise the risks of reasonable foreseeable harm to their students: see [Duty of Care](#).
- Schools and School Councils are bound by laws that require a Working with Children Check (WWC Check) for adults undertaking child-related work in a school, and must adhere to Department policies regarding suitability checks for employees, visitors and volunteers.
- Schools and School Councils are also required to establish and implement school-level policies and procedures to assess and verify the suitability of adults who engage in child-connected work.
- Working with Children Checks are required by law only for people who engage in child-related work, unless an exemption applies (e.g. parent supervising their own child, Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registered teacher, police officer).
- However, the law only sets out the minimum requirements for who must have a WWC check and schools can require, as school policy, that other people who will be attending the school as visitors, volunteers, employees or contractors to have a WWC check.
- To assist in determining whether a person (employee, volunteer, visitor) will be engaged in child-related or child-connected work, and thus what suitability checks may be appropriate, see: [Working with Children check flowchart \(docx - 111.5kb\)](#)
- For child-connected work, it is up to each school to determine whether they will require WWC Checks for individuals, based on the nature of the person's interaction with children. Each school is unique and what checks are required should reflect the risks of each individual school setting, the school community and what duties the individual will be performing.
- Schools are encouraged to develop their own specific policies and practices, keeping in mind the broad intent of the Child Safe Standards to embed a child safe culture that has zero tolerance for child abuse.
 - **Note:** Suitability requirements for both child-related and child connected work apply to adult volunteers and visitors to the school, including contractors.
- Under legislation schools must make reasonable efforts to gather, verify and record information about a person who they are proposing to engage in child-connected work, in accordance with legal requirements and the school's own policy. This may include:
 - confirming identity e.g. drivers licence or other photo identification
 - WWC Check
 - VIT teacher registration
 - confirming professional qualifications
 - National Police Record Check
 - personal references that address the persons suitability for the job and working with children.

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Applying for the WWC Check

- The WWC Check is conducted by the Department of Justice. Applications must be lodged at one of the participating Australia Post outlets in Victoria. For a list of Australia Post outlets where a WWC Check application may be made see: www.auspost.com.au.
- WWC Check applicants need to complete an online 'Application for WWC Check' form at www.justice.vic.gov.au/workingwithchildren before going to a participating Australia Post outlet with proof of identity documents to lodge the application.
- If the employee passes the WWC Check s/he will be issued a WWC Card which also acts as an 'Assessment Notice'. An Assessment Notice means the employee has passed the WWC Check and may work in 'child-related work'.
- A WWC Check applicant who is issued with an Interim Negative Notice or a Negative Notice should contact the Working with Children Unit within the Department of Justice, telephone 1300 652 879 to discuss any right of appeal that may exist or visit their website for further information at: www.justice.vic.gov.au/workingwithchildren

PURPOSE

- To ensure volunteers approved to work with children at Charles La Trobe College meet the legal requirements of the *Working with Children Act 2005*.
- To ensure children under our care are protected from being exposed to inappropriate people.
- To ensure all people engaged in 'child related work' with our students have Working with Children Checks.
- To provide an environment that is safe and secure.
- To ensure the school has strategies to enhance compliance with the Child Safe Standards 2 and 4.
- To ensure the school discharges its duty of care towards children.

DEFINITIONS

Child-related work:

- involves an adult working with under 18 years old (both paid and unpaid work);

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- having direct contact with children (physical, face-to-face, written, oral or electronic contact) and;
- is a usual part of the person's duties (and is not occasional or incidental to their work).

A WWC Check is required for anyone engaging in 'child-related work' regardless of whether contact with a child is supervised by another person or not. This means even if a volunteer or visitor is supervised by a teacher, they must still have (and provide evidence of) a WWC Check if they intend to engage in 'child related work'.

A WWC Check is not legally required if the person:

- qualifies for an exemption (e.g. Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registered teacher, police officer, parent whose child is participating or ordinarily participates in the relevant activity, or person working with a child who is closely related to them)
- is supervising a student in practical training organised by their educational institution
- takes part in an activity with a child in the same way that a child participates. e.g. as other players in a chess team.

For more guidance on when a WWC Check is legally required, see the [Working with Children Checks](#) website.

More broadly defined than child-related work, child-connected work is authorised by the Principal, School Council or Department and performed by an adult in a school environment (including online and school camps) when children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

IMPLEMENTATION

- The safety and wellbeing of every child at the school is our highest priority.
- The school will inform volunteers and visitors of the need to have a Working with Children Check.
- In assessing what suitability checks should be made, the school will consider what (if any) level of risk is acceptable or reasonable in the circumstances, and adopt appropriate risk mitigation strategies. Strategies may include:
 - considering how much time the individual spends on school premises to perform their work while children are present

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- considering whether the individual will be able to move freely around the school without staff members accompanying them or in close proximity to staff members
 - adding a clause in contractor service agreements about the need to comply with the Child Safe Standards
 - taking reasonable precautions to supervise individuals, including their contact with children, where this is considered necessary
- As a general rule, the following child-related work or positions will require WWC Checks:
- attendant care
 - school camps
 - excursions (including swimming)
 - literacy and numeracy support
 - homework clubs, breakfast lunch clubs and other student support activities
 - distance education
 - classroom/library assistant
 - sporting/musical and other extracurricular coaches
 - canteen and uniform shop assistant
 - allied health/NDIS therapists
 - Department staff who are working with children
 - Special Religious Instruction practitioners.

Note: Parents/carers are legally exempt from the requirement to hold a WWC Check when volunteering in an activity in which their child normally participates. In this instance requiring a WWC Check is at the discretion of the school - but is recommended where the parent is regularly involved in the volunteer activity and working directly with children, and/or the nature of the activity poses a higher risk, e.g. overnight camps, swimming or activities involving close contact, etc.

- As a general rule, the following child-connected work will require a WWC Check: Activities:

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- fete / fundraising activities
 - working bee assistance (outside school hours)
 - parents and friends clubs.
 - Positions: external tradespeople, e.g. gardening, building and grounds maintenance.
- All people required to have Working with Children checks are issued a WWC Check Card which School Council expects will be photocopied by school staff and that person's name added to the school's register of 'approved volunteers and others as above.' Only persons on the school register are able to work or volunteer at the school or during school related activities.
- School Council requires that all persons directly involved in school camps, excursions, sleep-overs, teaching of swimming lessons, transport of children without staff members present (rare), extra-curricular activities such as school sporting teams etc. all must have WWC Checks.
- School Council will consider other activities such as incursions on a case-by-case basis.
- Please refer also to the school's *Volunteer Workers Policy*, *Visitors to the School Policy*, the *Incursions (Safety of Children Working with External Providers) Policy* and the Child Safe Standards.

EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle or if guidelines change (latest DET update early May 2018).

RATIFICATION

This policy requires school council ratification.

The first update was ratified by the College Council on 15th February, 2018.

This policy was re-ratified on 15th August 2019.

REFERENCE

www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/community/Pages/volunteers.aspx