

Avondale Primary School

VOLUNTEERS POLICY



Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

Avondale Primary School is a child safe organisation which welcomes all children, young people and their families.

We are committed to providing environments where our students are safe and feel safe, where their participation is valued, their views respected, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Our child safe policies, strategies and practices are inclusive of the needs of all children and students.

Avondale Primary school's approach to creating and maintaining a child safe school environment is guided by our school philosophy and values. At Avondale Primary School our vision is 'to create a community that strives for excellence through high quality learning, engagement and wellbeing for all.'

We have no tolerance for child abuse and take proactive steps to identify and manage any risk of harm to students in our school environments.

We promote positive relationships between students and adults and between students and their peers. These relationships are based on trust and respect.

When child safety concerns are raised or identified, we treat these seriously and respond promptly and thoroughly.

Particular attention is given to the child safety needs of Aboriginal students, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, international students, students with disabilities, those unable to live at home, children and young people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex, queer and asexual (LGBTIQ+) and other students experiencing risk or vulnerability. Inappropriate or harmful behaviour targeting students based on these or other characteristics, such as racism or homophobia, are not tolerated at our school, and any instances identified will be addressed with appropriate consequences.

Child safety is a shared responsibility. Every person involved in our school has an important role in promoting child safety and wellbeing and promptly raising any issues or concerns about a child's safety.

We are committed to regularly reviewing our child safe practices, and seeking input from our students, families, staff, and volunteers to inform our ongoing strategies.



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact the school office on 9318 1755.

PURPOSE

To outline the processes that Avondale 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-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.

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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

Avondale Primary School is committed to implementing and following practices which protect the safety and wellbeing of children and our staff and volunteers. At Avondale Primary, we believe that the education of our students is a partnership between home and school and parents are encouraged to actively participate in their child's education. The implementation of the school's philosophy to develop each student is enhanced by an active and supportive community. Avondale Primary School 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 Avondale 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

Members of our school community are encouraged to participate in a wide range of areas including:

- Fundraising activities
- School Council & subcommittees
- School canteen
- Classroom support
- Library assistance
- Excursions and In school activities, including sporting events

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Any members of our school community who would like to volunteer at Avondale Primary School are asked to complete the Expression of Interest Google Doc for their child's grade, contact their child's classroom teacher or visit the admin office. The school may also call for volunteers at different times for special events through the newsletter, website or Compass announcements.

Suitability checks including Working with Children Clearances

Working with students

Avondale Primary School values the many volunteers that assist in our classrooms, with sports events, excursions, school concerts and fundraising events. To ensure that we are meeting our legal obligations under the *Worker Screening Act* and the Child Safe Standards, Avondale Primary School is required to undertake suitability checks which in most cases will involve asking for evidence of a Working Children (WWC) Clearance. Additional suitability checks may also be required depending on the volunteer role, such as reference, proof of identity, qualification and work history involving children checks.

Considering our legal obligations, and our commitment to ensuring that Avondale Primary School is a child safe environment, we require all volunteers to obtain a Working with Children Clearance, attend a volunteer Child Safety/OHS induction session and produce their valid card to the admin office for verification and documentation. This includes all child -related and non child-related work.

School council members and volunteers on any sub-committee of the School Council will be asked to provide evidence of a valid WWC Clearance. Whilst we acknowledge that these volunteers will not be engaging in child-related work as part of their role 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 have 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 reasonable likely to be present, volunteers must familiarise themselves with the policies, procedures 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, Avondale 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

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to our Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, our Child Safety Code of Conduct, 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. All volunteers will be under the direct supervision of a VIT qualified teacher or staff member of Avondale Primary School.

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 Avondale Primary School.

All volunteers at Avondale Primary School are required to report to the school office on arrival and sign in at the Compass kiosk. Volunteers must:

- record their name, signature, date and time of visit and purpose of visit in the visitors sign in kiosk
- provide proof of identification to office staff upon request
- produce their valid Working with Children Check Clearance if the school does not already have a copy on file
- wear a volunteer/visitor's badge at all times
- return to the office upon departure, sign out and return volunteer/visitor's badge

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 (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures*.

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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 Principal 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 and staff handbook
- included as a link in Volunteer Information Pack
- discussed in an annual staff briefing/meeting
- made available in hard copy from school office upon request

RELATED POLICIES AND RESOURCES:

- [Statement of Values and School Philosophy](#)
- [Visitors Policy](#)
- [Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy](#)
- [Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures](#)
- [Inclusion and Diversity Policy](#)
- [Child Safety Code of Conduct](#)
- Child Safety Volunteer Induction handbook

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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	26 November 2024
Consultation	Education Subcommittee School Council
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	26 November 2026