



WILLOW GROVE PRIMARY SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS POLICY

PURPOSE

To outline the processes that Willow Grove 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

Willow Grove Primary School is committed to implementing and following practices which protect the safety and wellbeing of children and our staff and volunteers. Willow Grove Primary School also recognises the valuable contribution that volunteers provide to our school community and the work that we do. Volunteers have talents, interests and skills which can enrich our children's educational experience.

The procedures set out below are designed to ensure that Willow Grove 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 who would like to volunteer are encouraged to approach the Principal or any other member of staff. Additionally the school may seek to engage volunteers by:

- Inviting parents/carers to participate in school community committees as part of the orientation process. New families will receive a parent handbook and school tour with an invitation to become actively involved in our school community.
- Advertising for volunteers in our school newsletter when assistance is needed for specific events, committees or programs.
- Sending an email or written note home to parents/carers requesting assistance for specific events or programs such as camps, excursions, school production etc.
- The Principal, teachers or other members of staff approaching individual parents/carers or other community members encouraging them to become involved in a specific event, committee or program.

Suitability checks including Working with Children Checks

Working with students

Willow Grove Primary School values the many volunteers that assist in our classrooms, with sports events, camps/excursions, school concerts, lunch orders, brekky club, school committees and other events and programs. To ensure that we are meeting our legal obligations under the *Working With Children Act 2005* (Vic) and the Child Safe Standards, Willow Grove Primary School is required to undertake suitability checks which may include a Working With Children Check, proof of identity, work history involving children and/or reference checks.

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

- **Volunteers who are not parent/family members** of any student at the school are required to have a WWC Check 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 classrooms or 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.

At Willow Grove Primary School all volunteers (including parents/carers, family and non-family) **are required** to have a Working with Children Check for the following Non child-related work:

- any work performed where children are present or reasonably expected to be present regardless of whether the volunteer is being supervised. Examples include volunteering for preparation of lunch orders, contacting library books, gardening or maintenance during school hours etc.

All volunteers (including parents/carers, family and non-family) are **not required** to have a Working with Children or other suitability check for the following Non-child related work:

- work performed where children will not be, or would not reasonably be expected to be, present. For example volunteering on the weekend for gardening, maintenance or working bees. School council, participating in sub-committees of school council and fundraising committee that meets in the evenings.

However, Willow Grove Primary School reserves the right to undertake suitability checks, including proof of identity, Working with Children Checks, at its discretion if considered necessary for any particular activities or circumstances. When determining

if a WWC Check is required the principal may refer to the flowchart in [Appendix A](#) attached to this policy.

Management and supervision

School staff will welcome the participation of all volunteers.

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 Safe Policy (which includes our Statement of Commitment to Child Safety and our Child Safety Code of Conduct) and our school Vision and Values. 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 Willow Grove Primary School.

Willow Grove 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.

All volunteers will be provided induction in relation to Willow Grove Primary School's child safety practices, including reporting obligations and procedures. Our school has a Child Safety Reporting Obligations Policy 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

Volunteers may in the course of their work have access to personal information of students, staff, and others in the community.

Volunteer workers are expected to comply with the Department of Education and Training School's Privacy Policy, and should not disclose any personal information they have accessed except in the manner allowed by this Policy. If in doubt about the handling of personal information, volunteers should seek advice from school staff.

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

- Statement of Vision and Values
- Visitors Policy
- Child Safe Policy (which includes our Statement of Commitment to Child Safety and our Child Safety Code of Conduct)
- Department of Education and Training Privacy Policy

REVIEW CYCLE

This policy was last approved by school council on 20th October 2020 and is scheduled for review in 2023.

APPENDIX A

Suitability Check Flowchart for Schools

