



VOLUNTEERS POLICY

Edgars Creek Primary School 5310



Help for non-English speakers.

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact the School Office on 9407 7100.

PURPOSE

To outline the processes that Edgars Creek 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.

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 schoolwork 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 (i.e. indemnified) from action by others in the event of an injury or accident whilst they are performing volunteer school work in good faith.

POLICY

Edgars Creek Primary School is committed to implementing and following practices which protect the safety and wellbeing of children and our staff and volunteers. We recognise 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 Edgars Creek 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 contact the school Office or their child's home group teacher. Volunteers will be required to fill in a form registering their interest to assist and will need to complete an induction process prior to any volunteer work. A current Working With Children card will need to be presented and a record kept on file.

Suitability checks including Working with Children Checks

Working with students

Edgars Creek Primary School values the many volunteers that assist in our learning spaces/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, Edgars Creek Primary School is required to undertake suitability checks which in most cases will involve asking for evidence of a Working with 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 Edgars Creek Primary School is a child safe environment, we will require volunteers to obtain a WWC Clearance and produce their valid card to the School 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 learning spaces 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.

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. For example, gardening, maintenance, working bees, parents and friends club coordination, School Council, participating in sub-committees of School Council, or other fundraising groups that may meet in the evenings during which children will not be, or would not reasonably be expected to be, present.

At Edgars Creek Primary School, volunteers for this type of work will still be required to provide a valid WWC Clearance.

School Council members and volunteers on any sub-committee of School Council will be asked to provide 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 do have a valid WWC Clearance.

Training and Education

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 school.

Depending on the nature and responsibilities of their role, Edgars Creek Primary School may also require volunteers to complete additional child safe 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, 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 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 Edgars Creek Primary School.

The Principal (or their nominee) will determine the level of school staff that is required for the type of work being performed.

Volunteers are expected to adhere to the appropriate use of digital technologies as outlined in the ECPS Digital Technologies Policy.

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 Departments' 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 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*.

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 – School.

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 schoolwork.

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.

COMMUNICATIONS

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways

- Available publicly on the school's website
- Included in induction process for relevant staff
- Included as a link in all invitations to prospective volunteers
- Included in our staff handbook
- Discussed in an annual staff briefing/meeting
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request.

RELATED POLICIES AND RESOURCES

The following school policies are also relevant to this Volunteers Policy:

- *Edgars Creek Primary School Camps and Excursions Policy.*
- *Edgars Creek Primary School Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy*
- *Edgars Creek Primary School Visitors Policy*
- *Edgars Creek Primary School Health Care Needs Policy.*
- *Edgars Creek Primary School First Aid Policy.*
- *Edgars Creek Primary School Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy*
- *Edgars Creek Primary School Administration of Medication Policy*
- *Edgars Creek Primary School Emergency Management Plan*
- *Edgars Creek Primary School Statement of Values and School Philosophy*
- *Edgars Creek Primary School Duty of Care Policy*
- *Edgars Creek Primary School Inclusion and Diversity Policy*
- *Edgars Creek Primary School Digital Technologies Policy*
- *Edgars Creek Primary School Child Safety Code of Conduct*
- *Edgars Creek Primary School Responding and Reporting*
- *Edgars Creek Primary School Obligations Policy and Procedures*
- *Edgars Creek Primary School Child Safety Induction Pack*

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	February 2021
Consultation	School council – 26 th May 2022
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	February 2023