



VOLUNTEERS POLICY

File location: U:\PUBLIC\Policies & Procedures\Approved Policies\Volunteers Policy.doc

Authorised by: **Principal**

Approved by School Council:
22/5/19

Date Created: 07/09/16

Last Updated: 14/5/19

Review Date: 2020

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PURPOSE:

To outline the processes that Horsham 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 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 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
- 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 approved volunteer school work in good faith.

POLICY

Voluntary workers can make a significant contribution to the school community by giving their time and sharing their skills and expertise with others. Volunteers may have a wide range of interests and abilities that complement school programs, thus providing a wider range of interactions and experiences for the benefit of students. Volunteers deserve encouragement, effective management, support, and recognition.

Horsham College has a zero tolerance of child abuse and as such, all care will be taken when inducting volunteers into our school.

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

BECOMING A VOLUNTEER

- Volunteers are actively encouraged to be involved in school activities, and will be invited to do so. Volunteers can assist with classes as per invitations of the classroom teacher. Volunteers will not be required to carry out tasks with which they are uncomfortable
- Volunteers will be sought formally through the college newsletter and local newspapers, written invitations and personal approaches, as well as informally through conversation and opportunity
- All volunteers must be approved by the Principal and/or School Council depending on the type of volunteering, before they can commence any volunteer work associated to Horsham College

SUITABILITY CHECKS - INCLUDING WORKING WITH CHILDREN'S CHECK

Working with students

Horsham College values the many volunteers that assist in our classrooms, with sports events, camps, excursions, school productions, Deb Ball, canteen and other events and activities. To ensure that we are meeting our legal obligations under the *Working With Children Act 2005* (Vic) and the Child Safe Standards, Horsham College 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 Horsham College is a child safe environment, we will require volunteers to obtain a WWC Check and produce their valid card to the Principal for verification. 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.

The Principal, School Council or teacher (in consultation with the Principal) may terminate or deny any invitation of assistance of a volunteer at any time.

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, volunteering for gardening, maintenance, working bees, parents and friends club coordination, School Council, participating in sub-committees of School Council and fundraising groups that meet 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 Working with Children or other suitability checks as they are not engaged in child-related work and children are not generally present during these activities. However, Horsham College 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.

School Council members and volunteers on any sub-committee of School Council will be asked to provide a valid WWC Check. Whilst we acknowledge that these volunteers will 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 school which will have an impact on students do have a valid WWC Check.

MANAGEMENT AND SUPERVISION

- Volunteer workers will be expected to maintain confidentiality and 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 Policy, Statement of Commitment to Child Safety, Child Safety Code of Conduct and our College 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 Horsham College
- Horsham College 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
- The supervising teacher will direct the work and be ultimately responsible for any student discipline issue, not the volunteer
- All volunteers will be required to follow Horsham College's child safety policies and practices, including reporting obligations and procedures
- The Principal (or their nominee) will determine what supervision, if any, of volunteers is required for the type of work being performed
- Volunteers should not approach classroom teachers on perceived controversial issues. Any issues should be raised with the Principal or Assistant Principal
- Staff and Volunteers are expected to treat each other with respect at all times
- Volunteers will be required to register at the administration office on any day of attendance, and wear a visitor's badge whilst in the school, signing in and out as required

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