



# Heidelberg Primary School

## VOLUNTEERS POLICY

### PURPOSE

To outline the processes that Heidelberg 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 (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

Heidelberg Primary School is committed to implementing and following practices which protect the safety and wellbeing of children and our staff and volunteers. Heidelberg 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 Heidelberg 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 their classroom teacher, who may seek assistance for specific activities or events i.e. classroom help, swimming lessons, attending excursions, working bees etc.

## **Suitability checks - including Working with Children (WWC) Checks**

### ***Working with students***

Heidelberg Primary School values the many volunteers that assist in our classrooms/with sports events/camps/excursions/school concerts/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, Heidelberg Primary School is required to undertake suitability checks which include supplying your WWC card. We will also require volunteers to complete Child Safe and Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) forms. Staff in the school office will assist applicants with these annual requirements, and upon completion will provide compliant volunteers with a PINK card (2022)

Considering our legal obligations, and our commitment to ensuring that Heidelberg Primary School is Pink a child safe environment, we will require volunteers to obtain a WWC Check and be prepared to produce their valid card to staff in 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 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 school activities, regardless of whether their own child is participating or not
- **Parent/community School Council members** sitting on School Council or sub committees.

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 volunteering on the weekend for gardening, maintenance, working bees, parents and friends club coordination, school council, participating in sub-committees

of school council, fete coordination, other fundraising groups that meet in the evenings during which children will not be, or would not reasonably be expected to be, present.

Heidelberg Primary School reserves the right to undertake suitability checks, including proof of identity, WWC Checks, at its discretion if considered necessary for any particular activities or circumstances.

At Heidelberg Primary School, volunteers for this type of work will still be required to provide a valid WWC Check, and undertake to gain an ORANGE card.

School council members and volunteers on any sub-committee of school council will be asked to provide a valid WWC Check and obtain an Pink Card Whilst we acknowledge that these volunteers will not be engaging in child-related work as part of their role, even when there is no 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 and PINK card.

### **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 Policy / Statement of Commitment to Child Safety, our Child Safety Code of Conduct and 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 Heidelberg Primary School.

Heidelberg 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 Heidelberg Primary School child safety practices, including reporting obligations and procedures. Provision of this information forms part of the process for obtaining an PINK card. Our school has a Child Safety Reporting Obligations Policy which all staff and volunteers should be aware of.

Usual induction practices include, but not limited to:

- Provision of OH&S information – health & safety, first aid, reporting hazards, emergency procedures etc. This information is archived on the Compass Portal, or available in hard copy format from the office;
- Child Safe Practices

The Principal (or their nominee) will determine what supervision, if any, of volunteers is required for the type of work being performed.

## 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.

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.

Any volunteer injury will be reported on eduSafe.

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:

*Legal Division  
People & Executive Services Group  
Department of Education and Training  
Level 3, 2 Treasury Place  
East Melbourne 3002*

## RELATED POLICIES AND RESOURCES

Please refer also to the school's *Visitors to the School Policy* and the *Child Safe Standards*.

## REVIEW CYCLE

This policy was written in October 2022 and will be reviewed as part of the school's three-yearly review cycle or if guidelines change.

This policy was ratified by School Council October 2022

Reference:

[www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/community/Pages/volunteers.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/community/Pages/volunteers.aspx)