

Exford Primary School

VOLUNTEERS POLICY 2020



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Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact exford.ps@education.vic.gov.au

PURPOSE

To outline the processes that Exford 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

Exford Primary School is committed to implementing and following practices which protect the safety and wellbeing of children and our staff and volunteers. Exford Primary School also 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 Exford Primary School's volunteers are suitable to work with children and are well-placed to make a positive contribution to our school community.

GUIDELINES:

1. The Principal of the school or the School Council may seek volunteers formally through the school newsletter, written invitations and personal approaches, as well as informally through conversations.
2. Volunteers offering their services to school will need to complete a 'Working with Children Check' before they work with students.
3. The Principal of the School Council may terminate any invitation to a person to assist a school as a volunteer school worker.
4. A volunteer school worker will at all times comply with any direction or instruction given to him/her by the Principal or relevant classroom teacher.
5. Volunteers will be provided with appropriate training before commencing their volunteer role to assist them in carrying out their tasks at school in an effective manner.
6. Volunteers will be required to participate in training provided by the school, prior to working at the school, which covers the following areas:
 - a. Occupational Health and Safety
 - b. Privacy and Confidentiality
 - c. Anti-Discrimination/Equal Opportunity
 - d. Sexual Harassment Policy
 - e. Teacher Duty of Care
 - f. Teachers and Mandatory Reporting
 - g. School Policy & Student Management
 - h. Appropriate behaviour when working with students
 - i. Volunteer Policy and any relevant Codes Of Practice

7. Volunteers are required to carry out tasks in a manner consistent with school expectations/values, including the maintenance of a professional, cooperative and confidential working environment.
8. Volunteers should maintain appropriate standards of conduct at all times - this includes speaking style/language, respect for personal space and care with any physical contact.
9. Volunteers will be expected to respect the professional standing and roles of school staff members.
10. School Staff members and volunteers will be expected to treat each other with respect.
11. Volunteers may be sought to assist with school camps and excursions. School Council requires that volunteers assisting with offsite school camps provide a satisfactory police records check prior to their participation.
12. Department of Education and Training policy states that 'Accredited Police Records' and 'Working with Children' checks are required for volunteer workers who come into regular contact with students at the school'.
13. Volunteers are not to approach classroom teachers on controversial issues. Such issues are to be addressed through the Principal or Assistant Principal.
14. If staff has any issues related to the volunteers program they should be brought to the attention of the Assistant Principal or Principal.
15. Concerns by staff or parents regarding the work of a volunteer should be raised with the Principal or Assistant Principal immediately. Such concerns will be discussed promptly with the volunteer concerned and appropriate action taken.
16. Volunteers will be required to sign in at the office on their arrival.
17. Volunteers will be invited to use staff toilets and staffroom facilities.
18. Individual or groups of volunteers will be acknowledged in the newsletter, publicising their contributions to the school.
19. A morning tea will be provided in Term 4 to thank volunteers for their contributions throughout the year.

Becoming a volunteer

Members of our school community who would like to volunteer are encouraged to contact the school Principal.

Suitability checks including Working with Children Checks

Working with students

Exford Primary School values the many volunteers that assist in our classrooms, sports events, 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, Exford 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 Exford Primary School is a child safe environment, we will require volunteers to obtain a WWC Check and produce their valid card to school administration 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 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 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. For example, [amend to include relevant non-child-related work at your school eg: 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.

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, Exford 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.

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 Exford Primary School.

Exford 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 Exford Primary School's child safety practices, including reporting obligations and procedures. Our school has a Child Safety Reporting Obligations Policy (Mandatory Reporting) 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.

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

- [Exford Primary School's Child Safe Policy](#)
- [Exford Primary School's Child Safe Code of Conduct](#)
- [Exford Primary School's Visitor Policy](#)
- Further policy information and information about Exford Primary School can be obtained by visiting <http://www.exfordps.vic.edu.au/>

REVIEW CYCLE

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