Dromana Secondary College Volunteer Policy

Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Dromana Secondary College by telephoning 03 5987 2805.

PURPOSE

To outline the processes that Dromana Secondary College follows 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, step-parent, 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/carers' 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

Dromana Secondary College is committed to implementing and following practices which protect the safety and wellbeing of children and our staff and volunteers. Dromana Secondary College recognises the extremely 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 Dromana Secondary 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

Members of our school community who would like to volunteer are encouraged to:

- Respond to calls for volunteers via the College Newsletter
- Call the College business manager to express their readiness and availability to volunteer

Suitability checks including Working with Children Clearances

Working with students

Dromana Secondary College values the many volunteers that assist at College events and programs. To ensure that we are meeting our legal obligations under the *Worker Screening Act* and the Child Safe Standards, Dromana Secondary College is required to undertake suitability checks which in most cases will involve asking for evidence of a Working with Children (WWC) Clearance and may also involve undertaking reference, proof of identity, qualification and work history involving children checks.

In the case of nominating for school council, the person must already hold a WWC Clearance to be eligible to nominate (it is not possible to nominate with only an application for a WWC Check).

Considering our legal obligations, and our commitment to ensuring that Example School is a child safe environment, we require volunteers to obtain a WWC Clearance and produce their valid card to the business manager for verification in the following circumstances:

- **Volunteers who are <u>not</u> parent/carer/family members** of any student at the school if they are engaged in child-related work regardless of whether they are being supervised.

- **Parent/carer/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/carer/family volunteers** who assist with excursions (including swimming), camps and similar events, regardless of whether their own child is participating or not.

- **Parent/carer/family volunteers** who regularly assist in school activities, regardless of whether their own child is participating or not

- **Parent/carer/community school council members** sitting on school council
  [Note: Following an update to Ministerial Order 1280 in November 2025, school council members are required to have a WWC Clearance when they nominate to be elected to school council. This is a legal requirement and must not be changed.]

- Principals should consider adding other categories where you would like to impose a requirement for a WWC Clearance or other suitability check, relevant to your school context.

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/carers 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/carers and friends club coordination, 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 WWC Clearances or other suitability checks as they are not engaged in child-related work and children are not generally present during these activities. However, Dromana Secondary College reserves the right to undertake suitability checks, including requiring proof of identity and WWC Clearance, at its discretion if considered necessary for

Training and induction

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, Dromana Secondary College may also require volunteers to complete additional child safety training.

Management and supervision

Volunteer workers are expected to comply with any reasonable direction of the principal (or their nominee). This includes 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 and our Statement of Values and School Philosophy.

Volunteer workers are also expected to act consistently with department 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 (or their nominee) will determine the level of school staff supervision required for volunteers, depending on the type of work being performed, and with a focus on ensuring the safety and wellbeing of students.

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 Dromana Secondary College.

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 department's 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
- 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 to Victoria Police. For further information on processes and practices for identifying and responding to child abuse, refer to Example School's: Child Abuse (including grooming) – Identification and Response 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 business manager to ensure they are managed in accordance with the department's policy: Records Management – Schools.

Compensation

Personal injury

Volunteer workers are covered by the department'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'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.

COMMUNICATION

This Communication section is not mandatory and can be deleted. However for consistency with your other policies you may wish to retain it and/or include it in a spreadsheet listing all your school's policies and outlining the communication method your school uses next to each policy. You can adapt our consolidated spreadsheet of all policies for this purpose – refer to Communicating our Policies

Note: There are no expressly stated requirements relating to how schools must communicate this policy but to ensure student safety and wellbeing it is important to give careful consideration as to the most effective method of ensuring your school community are aware of and understand the requirements under this policy.]

This policy is communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in induction processes for relevant staff
- Included in our staff handbook/manual

RELATED POLICIES AND RESOURCES

, Dromana Secondary College policies and resources relevant to this policy include:

- Statement of Values and School Philosophy
- Visitors Policy
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Child Abuse (including grooming) – Identification and Response Policy and Procedures
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Example School Child Safety Induction Pack

All College policies are available at https://dsc.vic.edu.au/policies/ and/or hard copy from school administration upon request, (telephone 03 5987 2805).

Department policies:

- Child Safe Standards
- Equal Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination
- Privacy and Information Sharing
- Records Management – School Records

- Sexual Harassment
- Volunteers in Schools
- Volunteer OHS Management
- Working with Children and Other Suitability Checks for School Volunteers and Visitors
- Workplace Bullying

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	September 2028
Consultation	College Council
Approved by	Alan Marr, Principal
Next scheduled review date	September 2028