

## OBERON PRIMARY SCHOOL

### VOLUNTEERS POLICY (WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK)



#### PURPOSE

To outline the processes that Oberon 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

Oberon is committed to implementing and following practices which protect the safety and wellbeing of children and our staff and volunteers. Oberon 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 Oberon’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 a classroom teacher or the school Principal. The school will also seek volunteers at times when it may be necessary.

## **Suitability checks including Working with Children Checks**

A WWCC is valid for up to five years and is transferable between jobs and volunteer organisations. A WWCC obtained for the purpose of voluntary work, as indicated by the letter “V” on the card, may not be used for the purposes of paid work.

The WWCC consists of a national criminal history check. Not all criminal offences will be taken into account, only serious sexual, violence or drug offences, or pending charges. Police Checks may be required as well for some activities.

## ***Working with students***

Oberon values the many volunteers that assist our school in various ways. To ensure that we are meeting our legal obligations under the *Working With Children Act 2005* (Vic) and the Child Safe Standards, Oberon 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 Oberon is a child safe environment, we will require volunteers to obtain a WWCC Check and produce their valid card to the school office for verification where the school will keep the relevant details so that it will not be necessary to produce the check on every occasion.

WWCCs will be up-dated on an ongoing basis. At the start of each year all WWCCs will be checked against the Department’s Central Register for continued suitability. This will be done by the Business Manager or delegate.

## **Compulsory WWCC**

Working with Children Checks are compulsory for the following people:

- All School Service Officers (SSO) and Student Support Service Officers (SSSO) employed at Oberon Primary School.
- Technical Support to Schools Program (TSSP) technicians
- Out-of-School-Hours (OSH) staff (e.g. “Extend” staff)
- Student teachers
- Home-stay families
- Tutors working with students during normal school activities at the school
- Parents and volunteers attending school camps
- Parents and volunteers who coach and/or support school sports teams
- Any casual or short-term-staff employed by Oberon Primary School or School Council (e.g. staff employed to assist with maintenance of the school grounds or music tuition)
- Parents and volunteers engaging in work as a volunteer

- Other volunteers engaged in direct and unsupervised or supervised child-related work, either paid or unpaid
- Members of School Council and Parents' Club

### Exemptions

Working with Children Checks are NOT compulsory for the following people:

- Teachers and Principals currently registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT). *Please note:* the VIT requires all teachers to submit a WWCC as part of their registration process.
- Casual relief teachers currently registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching
- People under the age of 18
- Sworn Police officers
- Visitors and workers, including guest speakers who do not ordinarily reside and perform child-related work in Victoria
- Contractors who are in the school outside normal school hours.

However, Oberon 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. During school hours, the above people must be supervised at all times and in a direct line of sight of an Oberon staff member.

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.

### 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, 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 Oberon Primary School.

Oberon 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 Oberon's child safety 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.

All volunteers are welcomed to privileged access in the world of the classroom. They are therefore expected to maintain high levels of discretion about students' learning, behaviours, social groupings and other information that could rightly be considered 'private'. If in the course of their participation they become party to confidential information, they must agree not to divulge the information to any other person.

They will wear a visitor's badge, and comply with all relevant policies, procedures, guidelines and Principal's directives pertaining to visitors of the school.

They should inform the school if they are unable to meet their commitment to the program, and teachers should notify parents when the program has to be cancelled.

## 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

- *Statement of Values and School Philosophy*
- *Visitors Policy*
- *Statement of Commitment to Child Safety/Child Safe Policy, Child Safety Code of Conduct*

## SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

The *Working With Children Act 2005* (Vic)

The Child Safe Standards

## REVIEW CYCLE

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle.

This policy was ratified by the Oberon Primary School Council on 06/08/2019  
Next review date: August 2022