



# VOLUNTEERS POLICY 2020

## PURPOSE

To outline the processes that Hopetoun P-12 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 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
- 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

Hopetoun P-12 College is committed to implementing and following practices which protect the safety and wellbeing of children and our staff and volunteers.

Voluntary workers make a significant contribution to the school community by giving their time and sharing their skills and expertise with others. Volunteers 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.

Hopetoun P-12 College aims to;

- Maximise the number and variety of effective volunteers who contribute to our school.
- Encourage volunteers from both the school community and the wider community to engage and assist within the college educational programs.
- Provide volunteers with the support and recognition of their services and assistance.
- Ensure that volunteers involved in activities with potentially high levels of student contact, are of sound character and have been deemed suitable to volunteer in school, especially in terms of providing a specialised service or skills where assisting.
- Ensure volunteers are made aware of and trained in OH&S requirements when volunteering for our school.

The procedures set out below are designed to ensure that Hopetoun P-12 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 participate in school activities, and will be invited to do so. Volunteers can assist with classes at the invitation of the classroom teacher.

Volunteers will be sought formally through the newsletter, written invitations and personal approaches, as well as informally through conversation and opportunity.

Volunteers may be sought to assist with school camps and excursions.

Volunteers are expected to uphold our school values of respect, responsibility and teamwork and staff and volunteers are expected to treat each other with respect.

Volunteers should not approach classroom teachers on controversial issues. Any issues should be raised with the Principal, Assistant Principal or Leading Teacher.

Concerns by staff or parents about the work of a volunteer (including their suitability) are to be raised with the Principal, Assistant Principal or Leading Teacher immediately.

The Principal, school council or teacher may terminate any invitation of assistance of a volunteer at any time.

### Suitability checks including Working with Children Checks

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

Hopetoun P-12 College 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, Hopetoun P-12 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 Hopetoun P-12 College is a child safe environment, we will **require volunteers to obtain a WWC Check** and produce their valid card to Office Staff in the first instance 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. Note: this is a legal requirement under the *Working with Children Check Act*.
- **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. Note: this is a legal requirement under the *Working with Children Check Act*.
- **Parent/family volunteers** who are regularly in school and classroom activities or attending excursions (including swimming), camps and similar events, regardless of whether their own child is participating or not must have a WWCC.
- **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 should have a WWCC.

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***

Note: At law, volunteers who are not engaged in child-related work (eg fete planning and organisation) do not need a WWC Check under the WWC Act. However, the Child Safe Standards require appropriate suitability checks (at the discretion of the school) for any **child-connected** work which is work performed where children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

Hopetoun P-12 College does **not require WWCC** for parents and other members of the school community may volunteer to do work that is not child-related such as volunteering on the weekend for gardening, maintenance, working bees, parents and friends club coordination, non-school council members participating in sub-committees of school council, Presentation Ball Committee, 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. Hopetoun P-12 College, however, 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, our Child Safety Code of Conduct and our Values and School Philosophy statement. 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 Hopetoun P-12 College.

An induction program may be provided to all volunteers which will include information on the *Child Safe Standards*.

All volunteers will be provided with OH&S training as per the Hopetoun P-12 College *Volunteer Worker Occupational Health and Safety Induction Handbook* (2017) appropriate with the type of volunteer work the person is involved in.

All volunteers will be provided induction in relation to Hopetoun P-12 College's child safety practices, including reporting obligations and procedures. Our school has a Child Safety Reporting Obligations Policy 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

Values and Philosophy Statement (2020)

Visitors Policy (2019)

Child Safe Standards (2016/19)

### REVIEW CYCLE

This policy was last approved by school council on 19 February 2020 and is scheduled for review in 2023.