

## VOLUNTEER WORKERS POLICY

### Rationale

- Volunteers add significantly to the human resources available to the school, and consequently volunteers deserve encouragement, effective management, support and recognition.
- Volunteer school workers are not liable in any civil proceedings for anything done, or not done, in good faith in providing a community service.
- Volunteer school workers are covered by the Department of Education and Training (DET) Workers Compensation policy if they suffer personal injury in the course of engaging in school work.

### Purpose

- To explain the legal rights of volunteer workers in the school.
- To provide assurance to our volunteer workers regarding their legal rights and responsibilities.
- To ensure Tarneit Rise Primary School complies with Child Safe Standards 1, 2 & 6.
- To ensure the school complies with DET policy and guidelines and legislative requirements of the
  - Education and Training Reform Act 2006 - sections 5.6.2, 5.6.3
  - Workers Compensation Act 1958
  - Wrongs Act 1958 – section 37(1)

### Definitions

A volunteer school worker is a person who voluntarily engages in school work or approved community work, without payment or reward.

School work means:

- carrying out the functions of the 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 any 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 well protected from legal action by others.

**Important:** "Voluntary" work carried out to meet Centrelink requirements:

People who perform unpaid work in schools under the "Work for the Dole" program and "Community Work" programs administered by Centrelink have insurance cover provided by the Federal Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, and may perform work in schools.

Other Centrelink benefit recipients involved in "voluntary" work in order to fulfill their recipient obligations are **not** covered by an Australian Government insurance scheme. Schools however may

accept this group of Centrelink benefit recipients to work as volunteers in Victorian government schools and note that they are insured by the Department.

### **Implementation**

- The safety and wellbeing of children is this school's highest priority.
- The safety of all workers at the school is also a very high priority.
- Volunteers are actively encouraged to partake in school activities, and will be invited to do so.
- All volunteers must have a current Working with Children Check, with Tarneit Rise Primary School listed as a volunteer organisation and this must be recorded at the school office prior to volunteer work being undertaken.
- Volunteers will be required to register at the administration office daily, and wear a visitors' badge whilst in the school. Volunteers will be invited to use the staff room and facilities.
- Volunteers will be provided a copy of the school's Child safety Code of Conduct, to be read, understood and followed.
- 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.
- 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
- It is the responsibility of the School Council appointed coordinator to ensure that volunteers working at working bees comply with OH&S requirements. For further information, please refer to the website below with links to Volunteer Workers and Working Bees.
- The principal needs to:
  - Refer to the Department's Volunteer Work and Working Bee Procedure for processes and role accountabilities.
  - Check that volunteer workers have a current Working with Children's Check, where applicable.
  - Check relevant Safe Work Method Statement (SWMS) are completed prior to volunteer workers performing high risk tasks.
  - Provide relevant Safe Work Procedures (SWP) for tasks identified as high risk.
  - Induct volunteer workers using the Volunteer Work and Working Bee OHS Induction Checklist prior to working on site.
  - Report any volunteer worker or employee injury on [eduSafe](#).
  - Provide first aid information to any persons coming on site.
  - Ensure children on site are appropriately supervised, if a.
  - Provide details of the Emergency Management Plan and procedures including evacuations points to all persons on site.
- The Principal will determine the types of works to be undertaken by volunteer workers and assess the level of risk associated with the works. Examples of volunteer work include:
  - parents/carers assisting in a classroom
  - gardening/landscaping
  - painting

- clean-up of grounds
- school fete
- theatre performances or presentation days
- school excursions
- school camps
- The principal and/or management OHS nominee will not to engage a volunteer worker for any high risk tasks, including:
  - confined space entry
  - demolition works
  - hazardous manual handling
  - hot works (e.g. welding)
  - powered mobile plant ( e.g. forklift)
  - removal or disturbance of asbestos
  - temporary supports for structural alterations
  - tilt-up or precast concrete
  - trenches or shafts deeper than one and half metres
  - use of explosives
  - use of Hazardous Substances and Dangerous Goods
  - working at height (two metres or more)
  - works in tunnels
  - work that is in, on or near:
    - artificial temperature extremes (e.g. work in an operating cool room or freezer)
    - chemical, fuel or refrigerant lines
    - contaminated or flammable atmospheres
    - electrical installations or services
    - pressurised gas distribution mains or piping
    - roads
    - telecommunications towers
    - water/liquids that pose a drowning risk
- The Principal will not engage a volunteer worker to use any high risk powered tools, including:
 

Rip Saw (Table Saw, Bench Saw)	Grinder (Pedestal or Bench)
Band Saw or Panel Saw	Buzzer (Surface Planer)
Docking Saw (Cross-Cut Saw, Radial Arm Saw)	Thickneser
Triton Work Centre	Spindle Moulder
Portable Circular Saw	Power Wood Shaper
Circular Saw Table	Portable Planer
Slide Compound Mitre Saw & Compound Mitre Saw	Metal Cut-off Saw
Reciprocating Saw	Table Inverted Router
Guillotine (Powered or manually-operated)	Portable Plunge Router (unsecured) i.e. without template or guide fence
- The principal will ensure that all electrical equipment brought into the school has been tested and tagged prior to use.

Volunteer Worker OHS Induction

The Principal, OHS nominee and/or other suitably qualified person must induct all volunteer workers using the Volunteer Worker OHS Induction Checklist, or equivalent template.

- All volunteer workers must be made aware of the school's first aid arrangements.

- Any volunteer injury will be reported on eduSafe.
- Further information will be obtained from DET's [Contractor and Volunteer Worker OHS Management](#) document.
- Please refer also to the school's Working with Children Check – Volunteers Policy, the Visitors to the School Policy and the Child Safe Standards.

**Evaluation**

- This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle or if guidelines change (latest DET update A-Z Index early December 2017 but DET's OHS Management System website November 2017).

<u>Ratification Date</u>	<u>Review Date</u>	<u>Policy Number</u>	<u>Version Number</u>	<u>Date Produced</u>
October 2017	2020	88	1	September 2017

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)