

VOLUNTEERS POLICY

PURPOSE

To outline the processes that Monash Children's Hospital School (MCHS) will follow to recruit, screen, supervise and manage volunteers to provide a child safe environment, and to explain the legal rights of volunteers. **Please note – all volunteers at MCHS are recruited, screened and supervised by the Monash Children's Hospital Volunteer Coordinator on behalf of Monash Children's Hospital.**

SCOPE

This policy applies only to the 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



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- 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

Monash Children's Hospital School (MCHS) is committed to implementing and following practices which protect the safety and wellbeing of children and our staff and volunteers. Monash Children's Hospital School (MCHS) recognises the valuable contribution that volunteers provide to our school/hospital community and the work that we do.

The procedures set out below are designed to ensure that Monash Children's Hospital School (MCHS) 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 community who would like to volunteer are encouraged to contact the Volunteer Coordinator of Monash Children's Hospital and express an interest in becoming a volunteer within the hospital. The Volunteer Coordinator will then explain the application process to follow.

Suitability checks including Working with Children Checks

Monash Children's Hospital (Volunteer Coordinator) is responsible to the recruitment process of all volunteers with the hospital. They will arrange interviews and carry out screening protocols for all volunteers. The Volunteer Coordinator will involve a member of MCHS to be on an interview panel of a volunteer who has expressed interest in volunteering at MCHS.



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Working with students

Monash Children's Hospital School values the volunteers that assist in our school. To ensure that we are meeting our legal obligations under the *Working With Children Act 2005* (Vic) and the Child Safe Standards, Monash Children's Hospital 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. **Once again – please note that this is the responsibility of the MCH Volunteer Coordinator.**

Considering our legal obligations, and our commitment to ensuring that Monash Children's Hospital is a child safe environment, we will require volunteers to obtain a WWC Check and produce their valid card 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. 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. This is a legal requirement under the *Working with Children Check Act*.

In addition, volunteers must at all times (when on-site) wear their names badge and security identity pass.

Non child-related work

Please note: volunteers who are not engaged in child-related work (e.g. MCH Fundraiser Walk) 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/hospital) for any **child-connected** work which is work performed where children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

On some occasions, parents and other members of the school community may volunteer to do work that is not child-related. For example; parents and friends club coordination, school council, participating in sub-committees of school council, MCH Fundraiser Walk coordination, other



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fundraising groups which meet at times when 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, Monash Children's Hospital 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.

Please note: some schools may choose to ask all school councillors to have a WWC Check, or other suitability checks, even if the Council has no current student members. School council members and volunteers on any sub-committee of school council will be asked to provide a valid WWC Check. Whilst we acknowledge that these volunteers will not be engaging in child-related work as part of their role, even when there is a student sitting on the school council, we believe that it is important that our volunteers, who are involved in making important decisions about our school which will have an impact on students, do have a valid WWC Check.

Management and supervision

Volunteer workers will be expected to comply with any reasonable direction of the MCH Volunteer Coordinator/School 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 Monash Children's Hospital School. They will liaise and discuss this with the MCH Volunteer Coordinator who has overall responsibility for Volunteers at Monash Children's Hospital.



Monash Children's Hospital School will provide 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 Monash Children's Hospital School child safety practices, including reporting obligations and procedures. Our school has a Child Safety Reporting Policy that is shared with Volunteers.

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. This would be discussed with the MCH Volunteer Coordinator.

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 but will firstly discuss this with the MCH Volunteer Coordinator.

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

This policy relates to the following MCHS policies:

Statement of Values, Visitors Policy

Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

Child Safe Standards Policy.

This policy also is aligned directly with the overarching Volunteers policy from Monash Children's Hospital and the MCH Volunteers handbook.

This policy also relates directly to the localised MCHS Volunteer Induction Booklet and the Volunteering at MCHS overall protocols and responsibilities document.

REVIEW CYCLE

This policy was last approved by school council on 10 May 2021 and is scheduled for review in May 2025.

