



WATTLE PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL

Volunteers Policy

Ratified by School Council: 2016

Rationale

Volunteers at our school bring with them a range of skills and experience that can enhance the learning opportunities of children. We welcome and encourage volunteers from the local community.

Definition of volunteer:

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 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 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.

Wattle Park volunteers include:

- Members of the governing body
- Relatives of pupils
- University students
- Previous members of staff
- Local residents
- Members of the local community
- Secondary school students

The types of activities that volunteers are engaged in might include:

- Working with children after training through the school's Parent Helpers program
- Running before or after school clubs
- Coaching sporting teams
- Working with children on the computer
- Accompanying school visits, excursions and camps
- Working Bees
- Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden program
- Guest speaker/expert helper
- Assisting with extra curricula and non-curriculum based activities such as Father's or Mother's Day stalls, school fete, BBQ's etc
- Assisting in classrooms with small group activities across the curriculum

Commitment to Child Safety

At Wattle Park Primary School we are committed to Child Safety. All volunteers are required to familiarise themselves with and adhere to our school "Child Safe Policy" and sign our "Child Safe Code of Conduct." These are available on the school website and at the school office.

If a child discloses something, this information must be shared promptly with the Principal or Assistant Principal. We cannot offer unconditional confidentiality when a child discloses something; however, reassurance can be given that the best interests of the child will be maintained. If you need to report an incident or have concerns about a child's safety, a Child Safe Incident Report Form can be found on the school website or is available at the school office.

Volunteers who are concerned about anything another adult in the school does or says should raise the matter with the Principal or Assistant Principal.

Requirements

The Working with Children Check helps protect children from physical and sexual harm. It does this by screening people's criminal records and professional conduct, and by preventing those who pose an unjustifiable risk to children from working with or caring for them. The Working with Children Check for volunteers is free of charge.

All volunteers at Wattle Park Primary School are required to have a Working with Children Check (WWC Check) to provide evidence of their suitability.

All paid employees such as teacher aides, administration staff, instrumental music teachers etc are required to have a Working with Children Check. To apply for a Working With Children Check, please go to:

<http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/>

A copy of your working with Children Check along with a signed copy of the Child Safe Code of Conduct must be provided to the school and will be recorded on a register in the school office. It is your responsibility to update your Working with Children check as required.

If a volunteer or staff member's occupation exempts them from the requirement to have a Working with Children Check (e.g. police officers, teachers) they must provide evidence to support their claim to an exemption.

All volunteers must sign in at the office prior to commencing any work at the school.

Becoming a volunteer

Anyone wishing to become a volunteer, either for a one off event or on a more regular basis should approach their child's class teacher, the principal or the assistant principal. Before starting in school and to ensure the safety of our pupils at all times, all volunteers must meet the requirements above. All volunteers who wish to work in the classroom are strongly encouraged to complete the "Parent Helper Program" which is held at the beginning of each year.

Confidentiality

Volunteers in school are bound by confidentiality. All staff members, voluntary helpers and visitors should be aware that information relating to individual children or members of staff is totally confidential. Whilst in school volunteers may hear conversations which are of a confidential nature. These cover aspects such as children's academic progress, behaviour, or home circumstances. All information relating to individual children and staff is totally confidential and volunteers must respect this.

Issues affecting children

Any concerns that volunteers have about the children they work with/ come into contact with must be shared with the class teacher and not with the parents of the child or any persons outside school. These comments, particularly if taken out of context can cause distress to the parents of the child if not heard directly from the school.

Issues affecting adults in school

All adults in our school can expect their personal and health issues to remain confidential unless:

- it impinges on their terms of contract;
- it endangers pupils or other members of staff;
- there is a legal obligation to disclose such information;
- it is necessary for legal proceedings;
- despite the duty of confidence the staff member's interest or the wider public interest justifies disclosure.

Supervision

All volunteers work under the supervision of the class teacher to which they are assigned or to a responsible person in charge of an outside curriculum event such as the Principal. Although teachers retain responsibility for children at all times, this does not require volunteers to be in their direct supervision at all times. Volunteers should feel confident to carry out the task they have been assigned and should seek further advice/guidance from the teacher in the event of a query or problem regarding a child's behaviour or understanding of a task.

Health and Safety

The school has Emergency Procedures which are found in all classrooms. Class teachers should ensure that volunteers are clear about emergency procedures (e.g. fire evacuation) and about any safety aspects associated with a particular task (e.g. using cookery equipment). If a volunteer attends a school trip, their emergency contact details will be requested. Volunteers need to exercise due care and attention and report any obvious hazards or concerns to the class teacher, assistant principal or principal.

Complaints Procedure

Any complaints made about a volunteer or by a volunteer will be referred to the Principal or Assistant Principal for investigation.

The school has the right to take the following actions:

- Speak with the volunteer about a breach in the volunteer agreement
- Offer an alternative placement for a volunteer
- Inform the volunteer that they are no longer permitted to help in school

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 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.

Evaluation

The school council will regularly review its policy and procedures as part of its cyclic policy and procedures review schedule.

Reference Policies and Procedures

Child Safe school policies can be accessed online at <http://wattleparkps.vic.edu.au/> :

- WPPS Child Safe Policy
- WPPS Code of Conduct (APPENDIX 1)
- WPPS Incident Report Form (APPENDIX 2)
- WPPS Volunteers Policy