



## **CHILD SAFETY INDUCTION PACK-VOLUNTEERS**

### Purpose

Thank you for your interest in volunteering at our school. The purpose of this induction pack is to ensure Pearcedale Primary School volunteers are familiar with our policies and procedures relating to child safety and understand the important role they play in maintaining and promoting the safety of our students.

Volunteers must read the suite of policies and procedures in the links below before commencing any work where children are likely to be present.

### Key messages

- Pearcedale Primary School is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children. We want children attending our school to be safe, happy and respected.
- We are committed to creating inclusive environment where diversity is supported and students feel safe to bring their whole selves to school.
- Allegations and concerns relating to the safety and wellbeing of our school community will be treated very seriously and consistently with our policies and procedures.
- We are committed to preventing child abuse, identifying risks early and removing and reducing these risks.
- Everyone has a role to ensure children are safe – if something doesn't feel right, speak up. If you have any concerns about any inappropriate behaviours in the school community you should speak to the Principal or Assistant Principal. If this would not be appropriate in the circumstances, you can contact the Regional Office of the Department of Education and Training on 1300 338 691.

### Induction materials – must read

This induction pack contains the following documents that all new volunteers must read and familiarise themselves with. Please click on the hyperlinks to access each document. If you would prefer a hard copy of this pack, please contact the team in the office who will happily provide you with one.

- Pearcedale Primary School Volunteers Policy
- Pearcedale Primary School Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Pearcedale Primary School Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures
- Pearcedale Primary School Child Safety Code of Conduct

- [PROTECT: Four Critical Actions for Schools – Responding to incidents, disclosures and suspicions of child abuse](#)
- [PROTECT: Identify child abuse](#)

## Contact

We value your feedback on ways we can continue to improve and strengthen our child safety approach and encourage you to contact the school office with any comments or questions.

## VOLUNTEERS POLICY



If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact the school office- 59786250

### PURPOSE

To outline the processes that Pearcedale 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-connected work:* work authorised by the school governing authority/provider of a school boarding services and performed by an adult in a school or school boarding premises environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

*Child-related work:* As defined by the *Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic)*, child-related work is 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 direct 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

Pearcedale Primary School is committed to implementing and following practices which protect the safety and wellbeing of children and our staff and volunteers. Pearcedale Primary School values the importance of volunteers at our school recognizing 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 Pearcedale Primary School'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, Principal or Assistant Principal.

### **COVID-19 vaccination information**

Our school follows Department of Education and Training policy with respect to the requirements relating to attendance on school sites and COVID-19 vaccinations.

For further information, refer to:

- [COVID-19 Vaccinations – Visitors and Volunteers on School Sites](#)

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

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

Pearcedale Primary School 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 *Worker Screening Act* and the Child Safe Standards, Pearcedale Primary School is required to undertake suitability checks which in most cases will involve asking for evidence of a Working with Children (WWC) Clearance and may also involve undertaking reference, proof of identity, qualification and work history involving children checks.

It is **not** an offence under the *Worker Screening Act* for people to engage in child-related work without a WWC Clearance if they have:

- applied for the WWC check and the application has not been finally decided or withdrawn; and
- the person has not previously been given a WWC Exclusion under the *Worker Screening Act* or a corresponding working with children law.

As a result, schools may consider accepting evidence of the *application* for a WWC Check, in place of the WWC Clearance, provided the person provides the school with evidence of the final WWC Clearance when it comes through. In these circumstances, schools should consider appropriate additional supervision of the volunteer. If schools would like to allow the application for a WWC Check as sufficient evidence to commence engaging in volunteer work, they can include the following sentence in the above paragraph: "Where prospective volunteers are required under the law and this policy to have a WWC Clearance, the principal has the discretion to accept evidence of a WWC check application in order to commence volunteer work, provided the volunteer provides the school with evidence of the application outcome (clearance or exclusion) as soon as practicable after the applicant receives it"

Considering our legal obligations, and our commitment to ensuring that Pearcedale Primary School is a child safe environment, we will require volunteers to obtain a WWC Clearance and produce their valid card at the school office for verification in the following circumstances:

- **Volunteers who are not parent/family members** of any student at the school if they are engaged in child-related work regardless of whether they are being supervised. [This is a legal requirement under the *Worker Screening 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 *Worker Screening Act*]
- **Parent/family volunteers** who assist with excursions (including swimming), camps and similar events, regardless of whether their own child is participating or not. [Note that volunteers who are parents, or closely related family members of a child at the school who volunteer as part of an activity that their child is participating in or usually participate in are **not** required to have a WWC Clearance under the *Worker Screening Act*. However, DET recommends that schools do require parents to obtain one in these circumstances given the degree of contact volunteers may have with students in these situations – see [Suitability Check Flowchart for Schools](#) and the Department's Policy and Advisory Library (PAL) — [Working with Children and other Suitability Checks for School Volunteers and Visitors](#). Schools can choose to add further activities to this list where there is a higher degree of risk posed.]
- **Parent/family volunteers** who regularly assist in school activities, regardless of whether their own child is participating or not  
[Note: volunteers who are parents, or closely related family members of a child at the school who volunteer as part of an activity that their child is participating in or usually participate in are not required to have a WWC Clearance under the *Worker Screening Act*. However, DET recommends that schools consider requiring a WWC Clearance in circumstances where the parent is regularly volunteering given the degree of contact volunteers may have with students in these situations – see

[Suitability Check Flowchart for Schools](#) on the Department's Policy and Advisory Library — [Working with Children and other Suitability Checks for School Volunteers and Visitors](#) page.]

- **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  
[Note: under the *Worker Screening Act*, school council members are not required to have a WWC Clearance. However DET recommends principals, as Executive Officers of School Council, consider recommending that School Council members obtain a WWC Clearance in circumstances where they will be working alongside student School Council members. This would support compliance with the Child Safe Standards which require schools to implement practices for a child-safe environment, including making appropriate suitability checks (at the discretion of the school) for any work performed by an adult where children are present or reasonably expected to be present.]
- Principals should consider adding other categories where you would like to impose a requirement for a WWC Clearance or other suitability check, relevant to your school context.

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**

On some occasions, parents and other members of the school community may volunteer to do work that is not child-related. For example, eg: volunteering on the weekend for gardening, maintenance, working bees, parents and friends club coordination, school council, participating in sub-committees of school council, fete coordination, 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 WWC Clearances or other suitability checks as they are not engaged in child-related work and children are not generally present during these activities. However, Pearcedale Primary School reserves the right to undertake suitability checks, including requiring proof of identity and WWC Clearance, at its discretion if considered necessary for any particular activities or circumstances.

School council members and volunteers on any sub-committee of School Council will be asked to provide evidence of a valid WWC Clearance. 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 Clearance

### **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 and Wellbeing 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 (or their nominee) will determine the level of school staff supervision required for volunteers, depending on the type of work being performed, and with a focus on ensuring the safety and wellbeing of students.

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 Pearcedale Primary School.

## **Privacy and information-sharing**

Volunteers must ensure that any student information they become aware of because of their volunteer work is managed sensitively and in accordance with the [Schools' Privacy Policy](#) and the Department's policy on [Privacy and Information Sharing](#).

Under these policies, student information can and should be shared with relevant school staff to:

- support the student's education, wellbeing and health;
- reduce the risk of reasonably foreseeable harm to the student, other students, staff or visitors;
- make reasonable adjustments to accommodate the student's disability; or
- provide a safe and secure workplace.

Volunteers must immediately report any child safety concerns that they become aware of to a member of staff to ensure appropriate action. There are some circumstances where volunteers may also be obliged to disclose information to authorities outside of the school such as to Victoria Police. For further information on child safety responding and reporting obligations refer to: *Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures*.

## **Records management**

While it is unlikely volunteers will be responsible for any school records during their volunteer work, any school records that volunteers are responsible for must be provided to the school office] to ensure they are managed in accordance with the Department's policy: [Records Management – Schools](#).

## **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.

## COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in induction processes for relevant staff
- Included as a link in all invitations to prospective volunteers
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request

## RELATED POLICIES AND RESOURCES

Pearcedale Primary School policies and resources relevant to this policy include:

*Statement of Values and School Philosophy, Visitors Policy, Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, Child Safety Code of Conduct, Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures, Inclusion and Diversity Policy, Pearcedale Primary School Child Safety Induction Pack]*

Department policies:

- [Equal Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination](#)
- [Child Safe Standards](#)
- [Privacy and Information Sharing](#)
- [Records Management – School Records](#)
- [Sexual Harassment](#)
- [Volunteers in Schools](#)
- [Volunteer OHS Management](#)
- [Working with Children and Other Suitability Checks for School Volunteers and Visitors](#)
- [Workplace Bullying](#)

## POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	3rd August 2022
Consultation	Via School website August 2024



Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	August 2024