



Volunteers and Visitors in Schools

Purpose of this policy

To ensure Research Primary School effectively screens, manages and supervises volunteers and visitors to our school. We seek to provide an open and friendly learning environment, which values and actively encourages volunteers and visitors to our school. At the same time, we recognise our duty of care to ensure a safe environment for our students and staff.

Definition of volunteers and visitors

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

Visitors are defined as all people other than staff members, students and parents or guardians charged with the task of delivering or collecting children at the start or end of the school day.

Working with children checks

Schools are bound by laws that require a working with children check for adults undertaking child-related work in a schools. Working with children checks are required by law only for people who engage in child-related work, unless an exemption applies (eg. a parent supervising their own child, VIT registered teacher, police officer).

Child-related work;

- involves an adult working with an under 18 year old
- involves having direct contact with children
- is a usual part of their duties (not occasional or incidental to their work)

For more information on WWCC please refer to <http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/>

Guidelines

Research Primary School;

- requires all volunteers and visitors arriving and departing during school hours to use a visitor's register to record their name, signature, date, time in and out, and the purpose of the visit
- requires volunteers and visitors to tick whether they have a working with children check and present their card when appropriate, and read the child safe policy
- will take a copy of the working with children's check where appropriate and record it in the "working with children register"
- will provide volunteers and visitors with a pass to wear while at school
- ensures that emergency exits and emergency management plans and procedures are available to volunteers and visitors

- will provide volunteers and visitors with an overview of the school before commencing their volunteer role to assist them in carrying out their tasks in an effective manner
- ensures that any programs or content delivered by volunteers and visitors complies with the requirement that education in Victorian government schools is secular
- ensures that any programs delivered by volunteers and visitors are delivered in a manner that supports and promotes the principles and practice of Australian democracy including a commitment to elected government, the rule of law, equal rights for all before the law, freedom of religion, freedom of speech and association and the values of openness and tolerance
- will invite parent helpers via the newsletter or through personal contact to assist in the schools programs
- teachers will brief parent helpers on their roles and responsibilities for short term projects such as a day excursions or classroom activities. At the same time matters of supervision and safety will also be discussed
- will provide appropriate training for parent helpers assisting with longer term activities such as camps
- will conduct formal programs such as “Classroom Helpers” to skill and recruit parent helpers on a needs basis

Volunteers and Visitors must be mindful of privacy and confidential matters relating to the school community. See additional material.

Concerns about volunteers or visitors should be raised with the principal. Those who are not reliable or do not meet the schools expectations will be required to relinquish their role.

Volunteers or visitors who do not have a personal connection or vested interest with the school will not be able to volunteer. This is in order to minimise risk of harm to students and is screened by the Principal.

Date policy ratified – November 2018

Date policy reviewed – 2022

Additional material

Volunteers/visitors and privacy in the school community

As a volunteer or visitor you may occasionally access personal information of students, staff, and others in the school community. There are legislative requirements that prescribe how an individual’s personal information can be collected, used and disclosed, stored and accessed. Personal information includes health information.

Personal Information is any information that identifies an individual; it may be enrolment information, health or student progress information. Schools have a responsibility to ensure the personal information they possess is used for the purposes it was collected and is adequately secured.

For example, schools may collect and display student health information in a secured staff room to ensure students receive appropriate care. The information should not be used or disclosed for other purposes. Similarly, schools may take some limited student information off premises when on excursions. Schools are obliged to ensure personal information is secured and used for appropriate purposes.

What do I need to do as a volunteer or visitor?

- Ensure that you have only that personal information required to undertake your role as a volunteer
- Ask yourself, do I need all the available information, or just a part of the available information to undertake my role?
- Ask yourself, is this information relevant to my role or the task I'm going to do?
- Don't disclose any personal information that you may have accessed in your role as a volunteer or visitor
- Only use personal information for the purpose it was disclosed to you in your role as a volunteer or visitor
- Ensure that personal data is appropriately secured, particularly if it is taken off the school premises, e.g. medical information taken on an excursion
- If emailing personal information off site place the personal information in a word document and password protect the document. Don't include the password in the email
- If taking personal information on a laptop or a memory stick out of school, ensure all documents containing personal information are password protected
- If in doubt about the handling of personal information, seek advice from staff
- Individuals can complain to the Department of Education and Training or the Victorian Privacy Commissioner if they feel their privacy has been breached
- If you have a question or concern about handling of the personal information in the school, speak to the school or contact the Department of Education and Training on 9637 2000

Responsible management of personal information is everyone's business.