



VISITORS AND VOLUNTEERS POLICY

Purpose:

To provide a safe and secure learning and teaching environment for students and staff by establishing processes to monitor and manage visitors to Moonee Ponds Primary School (MPPS).

To outline the processes that MPPS 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 any visitors who may attend school grounds when the school is open for instruction between the hours of 8:45am to 3:35pm Monday to Friday. Outside of these times, our front office is not staffed and the only visitors who are permitted on school grounds are parents/carers or their delegates who are dropping off or picking up students from Outside School Hours Care, school events such as parent teacher interviews, concerts, sport or other school activities, and community and other groups who have entered into contracts or agreements with the school to use school premises outside of school hours.

This policy applies to the recruitment, screening, 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
- 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



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by others in the event of an injury or accident whilst they are performing volunteer school work in good faith.

Implementation:

MPPS strives to create an open and inclusive school community, and encourages parents and carers to be actively involved in their child's development and education. We also strive to foster strong partnerships with local community services, schools and other organisations.

MPPS is committed to implementing and following practices which protect the safety and wellbeing of children and our staff and volunteers. MPPS also recognises the valuable contribution that volunteers provide to our school community and the work that we do.

MPPS is not a public place. The Principal has the authority to permit or deny entry to school grounds, and encourages all visitors to familiarise themselves with our school's *Statement of Values, Child Safe Policy, Statement of Commitment to Child Safety, Child Safe Code of Conduct and Student Engagement Policy*.

From time to time, different members of the public may visit our school. Visitors may include, but are not limited to:

- Parents
- Volunteers
- Prospective parents, students and employees
- Invited speakers, sessional instructors and others addressing learning and development
- Public officials (eg Members of Parliament, local councillors)
- Persons conducting business eg: uniform suppliers, booksellers, official school photographers, commercial salespeople
- Tradespeople
- Children's services agencies
- Department of Health and Human Services workers
- Victoria Police
- Persons authorised to enter school premises (eg Worksafe inspectors, health officers etc)
- Other Department of Education and Training staff (including allied health staff) or contractors
- NDIS therapists or other allied health or health practitioners

The procedures set out below are designed to ensure that MPPS'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 the school (Principal, Assistant Principal or classroom teacher (as appropriate)) with their offer of assistance. The school will also at times request volunteers from the school community for specific events such as sporting events, school camps, school excursions, classroom support or fundraising activities. As part of this request, information regarding the process for volunteering will be included in the request for assistance.



Suitability checks including Working with Children Checks

Working with students

All visitors who are engaged in **child-related work** (see definition above) must have a valid Working with Children (WWC) Check.

MPPS 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 *Working with Children Act 2005* (Vic) and the Child Safe Standards, MPPS 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.

Considering our legal obligations, and our commitment to ensuring that MPPS is a child safe environment, we will require volunteers to obtain a WWC Check and produce their valid card to the School office at the start of the school year or before volunteering for an event for verification in the following circumstances:

- **Parent/family volunteers** who assist with excursions (including swimming), camps and similar events, regardless of whether their own child is participating or not.
- **Parent/family volunteers** who regularly assist in school activities, regardless of whether their own child is participating or not

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

In some circumstances, visitors and volunteers to MPPS who are **not** engaged in child-related work will also be required to produce a valid WWC Check depending on the particular circumstances of their visit. For example, MPPS will require a valid WWC Check for:

- **visitors who will be working regularly with children** during the time they are visiting, even though direct contact with children is not a central part of their normal duties
- **visitors (e.g. contractors)**, who will regularly be performing work at the school and in circumstances where they will be performing their work in an area where they will be unsupervised and around children.

Further background checks, including references, may also be requested at the discretion of the Principal.

Visitors who will be working in areas away from students (e.g. a visiting auditor who will be located in the front office with administration staff) or who will be supervised and accompanied by a staff member during their visit (e.g. a Member of Parliament, a journalist, a prospective parent on a school tour) will not be required to have a WWC Check.

Sworn Victoria Police officers or sworn Australian Federal Police officers are exempt from requiring a WWC Check, but may be asked to verify that they are sworn officers by providing proof of identification.



On some occasions, parents and other members of the school community may volunteer to do work that is not child-related. For example, volunteering on the weekend for gardening, maintenance, working bees, parents association/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 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, MPPS 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.

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.

Sign-in procedure

All visitors and volunteers to MPPS are required to report to the school office on arrival (see exceptions below in relation to parents/carers). Visitors must:

- Record their name, contact details (phone number), date and time of visit and purpose of visit in the Compass Kiosk at the School Office
- Provide proof of identification to office staff upon request
- Produce their valid Working with Children Check where required by this policy (see below)
- Wear a visitor's lanyard at all times
- Follow instruction from school staff and abide by all relevant policies relating to appropriate conduct on school grounds including: Child Safety Code of Conduct, Equal Opportunity policy and Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy.
- Contractors will be required to complete further checks (including an induction) and documents in relation to OHS requirements and approved works completed in the school.
- Return to the office upon departure, sign out at the Compass Kiosk and return visitor's lanyard.

MPPS will ensure that our school's Child Safety Code of Conduct/Child Safety Statement of Commitment are available and visible to visitors when they sign in.

Invited speakers and presenters

On occasion, MPPS may invite external speakers or providers to deliver incursions, presentations, workshops and special programs for our students. Consistent with Department of Education and Training requirements, MPPS will:

- ensure that the content of presentations and programs by external providers contributes to the educational development of our students and is consistent with curriculum objectives
- ensure that any proposed visit, programs or content delivered by visitors complies with the requirement that education in Victorian government schools is secular and is consistent with the values of public education, Department policies and the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (Vic). In particular, programs delivered by visitors are to be 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, speech and association
- the values of openness and tolerance
- respect the range of views held by students and their families.

Parent visitors

We understand that there may occasionally be a reason why a parent or carer may want to speak to or see their child at school, during school hours.

If there is a particular pressing or unavoidable issue that cannot wait until the end of the school day, we ask that parents or carers call the school office to make the request to speak to or see their child during school hours.

We also ask that parents avoid arranging to visit their children at school wherever possible, as this can cause inappropriate disruptions to the school day.

All parents or carers who visit our school during school hours, other than for the purposes of school pick-ups and drop-offs or for specific school events (eg parent teacher interviews, concerts, assemblies etc), are required to sign in as a visitor at the school office.

Other visitors

All business operators, tradespeople and other visitors attending the school to conduct work must report to the school office upon arrival for instruction and follow the sign in procedure outlined above.

Management and supervision of Volunteers

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 Policy / Statement of Commitment to Child Safety, our Child Safety Code of Conduct and our Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy including our Mission, Vision and Statement of Values. 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 MPPS.

MPPS will provide any 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 MPPS's child safety practices, including reporting obligations and procedures. Our school has a Child Safety Reporting Obligations Policy which all staff and volunteers should be aware of.



The Principal (or their nominee) will determine what supervision, if any, of volunteers is required for the type of work being performed.

Compensation for Volunteers

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.

Related Policies and Resources:

MPPS School Policies: <http://www.mpp.vic.edu.au/school-council/school-policies/>

- Statement of Commitment to Child Safety/Child Safe Policy
- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- MPPS Mission, Vision and Statement of Values
- Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
- Camps Policy
- Excursions and Incursions Policy

School Policy and Advisory Guide

- DET Duty of Care : <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/duty-of-care/policy>
- DET Visitors in schools: <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/visitors>
- DET Volunteers in Schools: <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/volunteers>
- DET Volunteer OHS Management: <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/volunteer-ohs-management/policy>
- Department of Justice and Regulation-Working with Children Check www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/

Related Legislation

- *Working with Children Act 2005*
- *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*

Evaluation:

This Policy will be evaluated as part of the school's four year review cycle.

Key Person responsible for development of the MPPS Visitors and Volunteers Policy:

Principal

This policy was last ratified by School Council in....

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