



VISITORS AND VOLUNTEERS POLICY



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact Moonee Ponds Primary School on 9375 2511.

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-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

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 *Mission, Vision and Values, Child Safety Policy, Statement of Commitment to Child Safety, Child Safety Code of Conduct and Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy*.

The procedures set out below are designed to ensure that Moonee Ponds Primary School's volunteers are suitable to work with children and are well-placed to make a positive contribution to our school community.

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

- Parents and carers
- 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 Families, Fairness and Housing 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

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.

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 Clearance 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, MPPS Mission, Vision and Values, Equal Opportunity policy, Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy as well as Department policies such as the [Sexual Harassment Policy](#) and [Workplace Bullying 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 is available and visible to visitors when they sign in.

Working with Children Clearance and other suitability checks

Working with students

All visitors who are engaged in **child-related work** (see definition above) must have a valid Working with Children (WWC) Clearance. Additional suitability checks may also be required such as reference, proof of identity, qualification and work history involving children checks.

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 Worker Screening Act and the Child Safe Standards, Moonee Ponds 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.

Considering our legal obligations, and our commitment to ensuring that MPPS is a child safe environment, we will require volunteers to obtain a WWC Clearance 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:

- **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.
- **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.
- **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
- **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

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

Sworn Victoria Police officers or sworn Australian Federal Police officers are exempt from requiring a WWC Clearance 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 and Working with Children 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.

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 for 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.

Parents or carers who are prohibited from entering the school under a court order or direction of the Principal are not permitted to visit the school. Our school maintains and provides office

staff with a list of restricted parents/carers which may include identifying photographs and any other information as required depending on the level of risk posed.

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.

Training and induction

Under the Child Safe Standards volunteers must have an appropriate induction and training in child safety and wellbeing.

To support us to maintain a child safe environment, before engaging in any work where children are present or reasonably likely to be present, volunteers must familiarise themselves with the policies, procedures and code of conduct referred to in our Child Safety Induction Pack and ensure the actions and requirements in these documents are followed when volunteering for our school.

Depending on the nature and responsibilities of their role, Moonee Ponds Primary School may also require volunteers to complete additional child safety training.

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 (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 MPPS.

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 Principal (or nominee) to ensure they are managed in accordance with the Department's policy: [Records Management – Schools](#).

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.

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
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request

RELATED POLICIES AND RESOURCES:

MPPS School Policies and resources relevant to this policy can be found on our School Website at: <http://www.mpp.vic.edu.au/school-council/school-policies/> and include:

- 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 and Excursions Policy
- Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures

➤ Inclusion and Diversity Policy

Department policies:

- [Child Safe Standards](#)
- [Visitors in Schools](#)
- [Contractor OHS Management](#)
- [Equal Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination](#)
- [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	24 August 2022
Consultation	Education Policy Sub Committee 8.8.22 Staff 19.8.22 Parents/Carers Community 19.8.22
Approved by	Matthew Bott, Principal School Council
Next scheduled review date	2024 (2 years)