

PURPOSE

To outline the processes that Croydon Community School & OPTIONS 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-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 by others in the event of an injury or accident whilst they are performing volunteer school work in good faith.

POLICY

Croydon Community School & OPTIONS is committed to implementing and following practices which protect the safety and wellbeing of children and our staff and volunteers. Croydon Community School & OPTIONS also recognises the role that volunteers play in enriching the educational experience of our young people.

The procedures set out below are designed to ensure that Croydon Community School & OPTIONS' 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 may choose to volunteer in response to school requests for assistance through the school newsletter, communication from advisors or requests from the students themselves, for example. From time to time the school may ask for assistance with working bees or fundraising activities.

Alternatively, members of the school community may feel that they have a unique skill or talent that they wish to share with our young people. After receiving a verbal expression of interest, the school will add the interested person's name to a data base, before matching the interested person to the appropriate program or school activity.

Members of the school community who would like to volunteer are encouraged to contact the principal or general office by phone or email in the first instance. The school will provide an expression of interest form for completion before adding the interested person's details to the volunteer data base.

Suitability checks including Working with Children Checks

Working with students

Croydon Community School & OPTIONS values the many volunteers that assist with a variety of school programs. To ensure that we are meeting our legal obligations under the *Working With Children Act 2005* (Vic) and the Child Safe Standards, Croydon Community School & OPTIONS 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 Croydon Community School & OPTIONS is a child safe environment, we will require volunteers to obtain a WWC Check and produce their valid card to reception for verification in the following circumstances:

- **Volunteers who are not parent/family members** of any student at the school are required to have a WWC Check 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, parents/carers/guardians and other members of the school community may volunteer to do work that is not child-related such as volunteering on the weekend for gardening or maintenance, working bees, fundraising events, school council, participating in sub committees of school council during which children will not be, or would not reasonably be expected to be, present.

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.

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 Policy / Statement of Commitment to Child Safety], our Child Safety Code of Conduct, Child Safety Reporting Obligations Policy, our Statement of Values and School Philosophy and our Emergency Management Policy. 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 Croydon Community School & OPTIONS.

Croydon Community School & OPTIONS 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 must complete an OHS induction before commencing any volunteer work at the school.

All volunteers will be provided an induction in relation to Croydon Community School & OPTIONS' 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. In most cases volunteer staff will be working under supervision of advisors, school leadership or designated education support staff when undertaking any voluntary work with our students.

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.

Confidentiality

From time to time visitors to the school might hear or see information about individual members of the school community. The school asks that visitors and volunteers respect the privacy and confidentiality of staff, young people and their families. Any information obtained at school must not be discussed with anybody but the teacher you are working with or with the school principal.

RELATED DOCUMENTS AND POLICIES

Reference:

DET Equal Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination

(<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/hrweb/Documents/Equal-Opportunity-anti-discrimination-Policy.pdf>)

DET Sexual Harassment Policy

https://www.education.vic.gov.au/hrweb/Documents/Sexual_Harassment_Policy.pdf

DET Workplace Bullying

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/hrweb/safetyhw/Pages/workplacebullying.aspx>

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

Please refer also to the school's:

- Child Safety Policy / Statement of Commitment to Child Safety
- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Child Safety Reporting Obligations Policy
- Emergency Management Policy
- Incursions (Safety Of Children Working with External Providers) Policy
- Registers (Maintenance of) Policy
- Statement of Values and School Philosophy
- Visitors Policy
- Working With Children (Suitability) Checks – Volunteers and Visitors Policy

REVIEW CYCLE

This Policy was last approved by School Council on 25th March, 2019 and is scheduled for review in March 2022.