



# Volunteer and Confidentiality

## Policy

Policy review team members: Deb Hawkins, Dean Charge, Deb Gardener, Jane Herring, Carolyn Smith, Kim Wheeler, Bev Harvey, Michelle Polley

This policy was last ratified by School Council on 21/6/2021

### Rationale:

At Mt Eliza Primary School, we greatly appreciate parents and the community who assist and support our school programs.

Mt Eliza Primary School is committed to implementing and following practices, which protect the safety and wellbeing of children and our staff and volunteers.

Confidentiality is a fundamental attribute of any professional organisation. The protection of confidential information relating to others is a serious moral, professional, ethical and legal responsibility that our school recognises and upholds.

This policy will outline the processes that Mt Eliza 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.

This policy applies to the recruitment, screening, supervision and management of all people who volunteer at our school.

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

### Aims:

To outline the processes that Mt Eliza 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.

To ensure that confidential information is managed in a manner consistent with community expectations, professional standards and legal obligations.

### 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, step-parent, 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.

## Implementation:

Mt Eliza Primary School invites, welcomes and values parent/volunteer participation and support for school programs. Programs may be classroom based, e.g. parent helpers or beyond e.g. excursions, camps, sports teams, arts exhibitions, canteen, kitchen garden program, etc.

Mt Eliza Primary School is committed to implementing and following practices which protect the safety and wellbeing of children and our staff and volunteers.

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

### WORKING WITH STUDENTS:

Mt Eliza Primary School values the many volunteers that assist our school community. To ensure that we are meeting our legal obligations under the *Working With Children Act 2005* (Vic) and the Child Safe Standards, Mt Eliza Primary School 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 Mt Eliza Primary School is a child safe environment, we will require volunteers to obtain a WWC Check and produce their valid card to the office 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.

Any person whose duties usually involve or are likely to involve work in a school (paid or unpaid) is considered to be engaged in 'child-related work' and must be compliant with the Working with Children Act 2005 (the Act). [www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol\\_act/](http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol_act/).

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, volunteering on the weekend for gardening, maintenance, working bees, parents and friends club co-ordination, school council, participating in sub-committees of school council, fete co-ordination, other fundraising groups that meet in the evenings during which children will not be, or would not reasonably be expected to be, present.

At Mt Eliza Primary School, volunteers for this type of work will still be required to provide a valid WWC.

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.

### **ORGANISATION WITHIN THE SCHOOL:**

Parent helpers/staff support/volunteer workers are expected to assist the programs within the following guidelines:

- Parent helpers/staff support/volunteer workers are expected to act with impartiality towards all children. Positive interactions are an expectation. Any discipline problems must be referred to the teacher.
- Parent helpers/staff support/volunteer workers will be under the direction of the teacher responsible for the class or group of children.
- Parent helpers/staff support/volunteer workers are in a position of trust and should not discuss with any other parent, children, friend or neighbour any personal information about students, staff or other parent helpers/staff support/volunteer workers learnt whilst involved in school programs.

### **SCHOOL CAMPS AND OTHER PROGRAMS:**

Volunteers will need to have a current *Working with Children Check* prior to the camp

- Parent helpers/staff support/volunteers for school camps are selected by the teachers involved after giving consideration to the following:
  - Expression of interest
  - Skills/experience/interests/qualifications offered
  - Gender balance (if applicable)
  - Willingness to supervise/assist with groups and activities that do not necessarily include their own child

### **PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT :**

#### **Principles**

*Mt Eliza Primary School's Parent Code of Conduct is developed to promote a supportive environment where effective communication is the key to support children at school and to promote a sense of belonging and pride within our school community. This is formed on the following principles:*

- All individuals are valued and treated with respect
- Workplace participants have a right to work in a secure environment, without intimidation, bullying or harassment
- Parents/guardians have a right to expect that their children will be educated in a secure environment in which care, courtesy and respect for the rights of others are encouraged
- Teachers have a right to expect that they will be able to teach in an orderly and co-operative environment
- Parents/guardians have an obligation to support the school in its efforts to maintain a positive teaching and learning environment
- Principals and staff have an obligation to fairly, reasonable and consistently, implement the Code of

Conduct.

**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 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 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 Mt Eliza Primary School.

Mt Eliza Primary School will provide induction or training appropriate to the role of the volunteer worker in the school. The Principal or their nominee will determine what induction or training is necessary depending on the type of work the volunteer will be engaged in.

All volunteers will be provided induction in relation to Mt Eliza Primary School child safety practices, including reporting obligations and procedures.

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

**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.

**Evaluation:**

This policy will be reviewed as part of MEPS 4 year review cycle.

School Council President: Dean Charge

Signature:

Date:



**MT ELIZA PRIMARY SCHOOL**  
**VOLUNTEER AND CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT**

Mt Eliza Primary School must have received the signed Volunteer and Confidentiality Agreement form and a copy of your **Working with Children Check** prior to commencing any voluntary work within the school or classroom.

**Name**..... Parent/Other

**Note:** If 'Other' is circled, please specify relationship to student:.....

I have a current *Working With Children Check*.....Yes / No

I have / will provide a copy of my *Working With Children Check* to Mt Eliza Primary School

I have read and agree to comply with the guidelines contained in this document.

**Signature:** ..... **Date:** .....

**Name:** ..... Parent / Other (please circle)

**Note:** If 'Other' is circled, please specify relationship to student:.....

I have a current *Working With Children Check*.....Yes / No

I have / will provide a copy of my *Working With Children Check* to Mt Eliza Primary School

I have read and agree to comply with the guidelines contained in this document.

**Signature:** ..... **Date:** .....

**Child's name:**.....**Grade:**.....

**Child's name:**..... **Grade:**.....

**Child's name:**..... **Grade:**.....

**Child's name:**..... **Grade:**.....

