

## VOLUNTEER WORKERS

### Rationale

- Volunteers add significantly to the human resources available to the school, and consequently volunteers deserve encouragement, effective management, support and recognition.
- Volunteer school workers are not liable in any civil proceedings for anything done, or not done, in good faith in providing a community service.

### Purpose

- To explain the legal rights of volunteer workers in the school.
- To provide assurance to our volunteer workers regarding their legal rights and responsibilities.
- To ensure Newport Gardens Primary School complies with DET policy and guidelines and legislative requirements of the
  - Education and Training Reform Act 2006 - sections 5.6.2, 5.6.3
  - Workers Compensation Act 1958
  - Wrongs Act 1958 – section 37(1)

### Definitions

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

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 any 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 fundraising and assisting with excursions, are well protected from legal action by others.

### Important

“Voluntary” work carried out to meet Centrelink requirements

People who perform unpaid work in schools under the “Work for the Dole” program and “Community Work” programs administered by Centrelink have insurance cover provided by the Federal Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, and may perform work in schools.

Other Centrelink benefit recipients involved in “voluntary” work in order to fulfill their recipient obligations are **not** covered by an Australian Government insurance scheme and are **not** insured to work in Victorian government schools. Schools may not accept this group of Centrelink benefit recipients to work as volunteers in Victorian government schools.

### Implementation

- Volunteers are actively encouraged to partake in school activities, and will be invited to do so.
- All volunteers must have a current Working with Children Check and this must be recorded at the school office prior to volunteer work being undertaken.
- Volunteers will be required to register at the administration office daily, and wear a visitors badge whilst in the school. Volunteers will be invited to use the staff room and facilities.
- Volunteer workers are covered by DET'S Workers Compensation policy if they suffer personal injury in the course of engaging in school work or when travelling to or from the place where the school work is to occur.
- If a volunteer school worker suffers damage to his or her property in the course of carrying out school work, the Minister may authorise such compensation as the Minister thinks reasonable in the circumstances. Claims of this nature are to be directed to:

The Manager  
Liability Services Unit  
Executive and Ministerial Services  
Department of Education and Early Childhood Development  
Level 3, 2 Treasury Place  
East Melbourne 3002

- It is the responsibility of the School Council appointed Coordinator to ensure that volunteers working at working bees comply with OH&S requirements. For further information, please refer to the website below with links to Volunteer Workers and Working Bees.
- The Principal will determine the types of works to be undertaken by volunteer workers and assess the level of risk associated with the works. Examples of volunteer work include:
  - parents assisting in a classroom
  - gardening/landscaping
  - painting
  - clean-up of grounds
  - school fete
  - theatre performances or presentation days
  - school excursions
  - school camps
- The Principal will not engage a volunteer worker for any high risk tasks, including:
  - Rip Saw (Table Saw, Bench Saw)
  - Band Saw or Panel Saw
  - Docking Saw (Cross-Cut Saw, Radial Arm Saw)
  - Triton Work Centre
  - Portable Circular Saw
  - Circular Saw Table
  - Slide Compound Mitre Saw & Compound Mitre Saw
  - Reciprocating Saw
  - Guillotine (Powered or manually-operated)
  - Grinder (Pedestal or Bench)
  - Buzzer (Surface Planer)
  - Thicknesser
  - Spindle Moulder
  - Power Wood Shaper
  - Portable Planer
  - Metal Cut-off Saw
  - Table Inverted Router
  - Portable Plunge Router (unsecured) i.e. without template or guide fence

#### **Volunteer Worker OHS Induction**

The Principal, OHS Nominee and/or other suitably qualified person must induct all volunteer workers using the Volunteer Worker OHS Induction Checklist, or equivalent template.

- All volunteer workers must be made aware of the school's first aid arrangements.
- Any volunteer injury will be reported on eduSafe.
- Please refer also to the school's Working with Children Check – Volunteers Policy and the Visitors to the School Policy.

#### **Evaluation**

- This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle or if guidelines change (latest DET update A-Z Index early November 2015 but DET's OHS Management System website early May 2016).

This update was ratified by School Council on August 16<sup>th</sup> 2016

Reference:

[www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/community/Pages/volunteers.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/community/Pages/volunteers.aspx)

