



North Geelong Secondary College

VOLUNTEERS POLICY



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact North Geelong Secondary College on 03 5240 5800 or north.geelong.sc@education.vic.gov.au.

PURPOSE

To outline the processes that North Geelong Secondary College 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 college.

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 members: 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:

- 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 (i.e., indemnified) from action by others in the event of an injury or accident whilst they are performing volunteer schoolwork in good faith.

POLICY

College Statement

North Geelong Secondary College is committed to implementing and following practices which protect the safety and wellbeing of children and our staff and volunteers. North Geelong Secondary College appreciates the support provided by volunteers and also recognises the valuable contribution that volunteers provide to our college community and the work that they do.

The procedures set out below are designed to ensure that North Geelong Secondary College's volunteers are suitable to work with children and are well-placed to make a positive contribution to our college community.

Becoming a volunteer

Members of our college community who would like to volunteer are encouraged to express their offer of assistance through the Administration Office, where it will be directed to the college principal. The college may ask for volunteers to assist at specific events e.g. Breakfast Club, Multicultural Day.

Working with students

North Geelong Secondary College values the many volunteers that assist with sports events/camps/excursions/concerts/other events and programs. To ensure that we are meeting our legal obligations under the Worker Screening Act and the Child Safe Standards, North Geelong Secondary College 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 North Geelong Secondary College is a child safe environment, we will require volunteers to obtain a WWC clearance and produce their valid card to the Administration Office for verification in the following circumstances:

Volunteers who are not a parent/carer or family member of any student at the college if they are engaged in child-related work regardless of whether they are being supervised.

Parent/carer or family member volunteers who are assisting with any classroom or college 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/carer or family member volunteers who assist with excursions (including swimming), camps and similar events, regardless of whether their own child is participating or not.

Parent/carer or family member volunteers who regularly assist in college activities, regardless of whether their own child is participating or not

Parent/carer or 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 college 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 and other members of the college 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 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.

At North Geelong Secondary College, volunteers for this type of work will still be required to provide a valid WWC clearance/proof of ID.

School council members and volunteers on any sub-committee of the 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 college which will have an impact on students do have a valid WWC clearance.

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 college.

Depending on the nature and responsibilities of their role, North Geelong Secondary College may also require volunteers to complete additional child safety training.

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 college policies, including, but not limited to our Child Safety Policy and our Child Safety Code of Conduct.

Volunteer workers will also be expected to act consistently with Department of Education 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 college 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 North Geelong Secondary College.

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 college Privacy Policy and the Department's policy on Privacy and Information Sharing.

Under these policies, student information can and should be shared with relevant college 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 college 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 college records during their volunteer work, any college records that volunteers are responsible for must be provided to the Business Manager to ensure they are managed in accordance with the Department's policy: Records Management – Schools.

Compensation

Personal injury

Volunteer workers are covered by the Department of Education Workers' Compensation Policy if they suffer personal injury in the course of engaging in schoolwork.

Property damage

If a volunteer worker suffers damage to their property in the course of carrying out schoolwork, 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 public liability insurance policy applies when a volunteer worker engaged in schoolwork 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 college community in the following ways

- Available publicly on our college website
- Included in induction processes for relevant staff
- Included as a link in all invitations to prospective volunteers
- Included in our staff handbook/manual
- Discussed in an annual staff briefing/meeting
- Made available in hard copy from college administration upon request

FURTHER INFORMATION and RESOURCES

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies on the Department's Policy and Advisory Library (PAL):

Equal Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination

Child Safe Standards

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	20/02/2024
Consultation	School Council 19/03/2024
Approved by	Principal
Next Scheduled Review Date	Before 12/2028