

Volunteers in Schools Policy

Rossbourne School takes a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse and is fully committed to ensuring that its strategies, policies, procedures and practices meet all Child Safety Standards as specified in Ministerial Order No. 870 (2015)

PURPOSE

To outline the processes that Rossbourne School 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 Rossbourne School including all members of the School Council.

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

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 school work in good faith.

POLICY

Rossbourne School is committed to implementing and following practices which protect the safety and wellbeing of children and our staff and volunteers. Rossbourne School recognises the valuable contribution that volunteers provide to our school community and the work that it does.

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

Suitability checks including Working with Children Checks

Working with students

To ensure that Rossbourne School is meeting its legal obligations under the *Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic)* and the Child Safe Standards, the 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 Rossbourne School is a child safe environment, we will require volunteers to obtain a WWC Check and produce a valid card 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. This is a legal requirement under the *Working with Children Check Act*.
- **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. This is a legal requirement under the *Working with Children Check Act*.
- **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, Rossbourne 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 e.g. gardening, maintenance, working bees, parents and friends club coordination, 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, Rossbourne School reserves the right to undertake suitability checks, including proof of identity, Working with Children Checks, at its discretion if considered necessary for any particular activities or circumstances.

Management and supervision

Volunteers will be expected to comply with any reasonable direction of the Principal (or their nominee). This will include the requirement to follow the school's policies, including, but not limited to the Child Safety Policy, Statement of Commitment to Child Safety, Child Safety Code of Conduct, Statement of Values and School Philosophy and Working with Children Checks.

The Principal has the discretion to make a decision about the ongoing suitability of a volunteer and may determine at any time whether or not a person is suitable to volunteer at Rossbourne School.

Rossbourne School will provide any appropriate induction and/or training for all volunteer workers. The Principal (or nominee) will determine what induction and/or training is necessary depending on what type of work the volunteer will be engaged in.

All volunteers will be provided induction in relation to Rossbourne School Child Safety practices, including reporting obligations and procedures. The school has a Child Safety Responding and 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

Compensation

Personal injury

Volunteer workers will be covered by Rossbourne School's public liability insurance if they suffer personal injury in the course of engaging in school work.

Property damage

If a volunteer suffers damage to their property in the course of carrying out school work, the School Council 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 Chair of School Council.

Public liability insurance

Rossbourne School's public liability insurance policy will apply when a volunteer 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.

See Rossbourne School policies and procedures including Statement of Values and School Philosophy, Visitors to the School, Statement of Commitment to Child Safety, Child Safe Policy, Child Safe Code of Conduct, Working with Children Checks

This policy will be reviewed as part of the Rossbourne School review cycle.

Ratified by Rossbourne School Council: 11 November 2020