



## Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand this policy, please contact reception on 9826 0711 or at

[mhs@mhs.vic.edu.au](mailto:mhs@mhs.vic.edu.au).

## Purpose

To outline the processes that Melbourne High 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 our school.

## Definitions

*Child-connected work:* work authorised by the school governing authority and performed by an adult in a school 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 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

Melbourne High School is committed to implementing and following practices which protect the safety and wellbeing of children and our staff and volunteers. Melbourne High School recognises the valuable contribution that volunteers provide to our school community and the work that we do.

The procedures set out below are designed to ensure that Melbourne High School's 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 who would like to volunteer are encouraged to approach the relevant department head or human resources. As part of the engagement process, volunteers will be asked to complete a Volunteer Agreement and follow the appropriate onboarding and induction process based on the volunteering role.

### Suitability checks including Working with Children Clearances

#### *Working with students*

Melbourne High School values the many volunteers that assist in our classrooms, with sports events, camps, excursions, school concerts, other events and programs. To ensure that we are meeting our legal obligations under the *Worker Screening Act* and the Child Safe Standards, Melbourne High School 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 Melbourne High School is a child safe environment, we will require volunteers to obtain a WWC Clearance and produce their valid card (digital or physical) to Human Resources Manager and their supervisor for verification in the following circumstances:

- **Volunteers who are not parent/family members** of any student at the school 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. Examples include working in the uniform shop, working at a fete sausage sizzle, working with Friends of Music at school concerts etc.
- **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. Examples include parents who regularly volunteer for school activities and events (more than once or twice)
- **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.

- Families hosting students on exchange, all adult family members residing with the student are required to have a WWC check.

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.

Situations in which WWC Clearance is NOT required:

- Parents/families who are attendees (but are not volunteers for) a school event such as an information evening, school music concerts, school picnics
- Parents/families who are attendees (but are not the organisers of) a social activity organised by a parents' club or association such as a picnic, barbeque or "parent experience" activity (such as a Parent Rowing session, Millgrove Parents Camp if not staying on to volunteer at the Working Bee)

### ***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 for maintenance support, parents and friends club coordination, 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 WWC Clearances or other suitability checks as they are not engaged in child-related work and children are not generally present during these activities. However, Melbourne High School reserves the right to undertake suitability checks, including requiring proof of identity and WWC Clearance, at its discretion if considered necessary for any particular activities or circumstances.

Melbourne High School council members and volunteers on any sub-committee of 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 school which will have an impact on students do have a valid WWC Clearance [and/or insert any other checks that you would like to require at your school].

### **Occupational Health and Safety**

Volunteers must take reasonable care for their own health, safety and wellbeing and that of others who may be affected by their actions or omissions while volunteering. This includes participating in and completing all applicable induction activities, based on what task/s they are performing.

### **Child Safety**

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 Volunteer Agreement and ensure the actions and requirements in these documents are followed when volunteering for our school.

Depending on the nature and responsibilities of their role, Melbourne High School 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 school's policies, including, but not limited to our Child Safety Policy, our Child Safety Code of Conduct, Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures, Inclusion and Diversity Policy, Occupational Health and Safety Policy and our Statement of Values and School Philosophy.

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 school 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.

Each volunteer performing child-related work must have a staff member supervisor assigned to them. The supervising staff member must inform the HR Manager of the duties to be performed by the volunteer, and ensure all relevant induction and WWCC has been completed before commencing volunteer work.

The HR Manager will collect the volunteer information and maintain a register with the following information: volunteer contact detail, emergency contacts, duties/ role, WWCC card number and expiry date, supervising staff member (where relevant), commencement date and completion date (if relevant), Volunteer agreement date signed, references checks completed (where deemed necessary).

For school-related activities organized by an MHS-associated parent club or association, a list of recruited volunteers will be submitted by the club/association to the HR Manager as soon as feasibly possible but no later than 2 days in advance in order for the HR Manager to cross-check the volunteer register to ensure that all volunteers have appropriate WWC Clearance.

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 Melbourne High School.

## **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 [Schools' Privacy Policy](#) and the Department's policy on [Privacy and Information Sharing](#).

Under these policies, student information can and should be shared with relevant school 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 school 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 school records during their volunteer work, any school records that volunteers are responsible for must be provided to the supervising staff member 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'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'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.

## Communication

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on our school's 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 school administration upon request

## RELATED POLICIES AND RESOURCES

- Melbourne High School Statement of Purpose
- Melbourne High School Statement of Commitment to Child Safety
- Melbourne High School Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Melbourne High School Sexual Harassment and Workplace Bullying policy
- Melbourne High School Staff Code of Conduct

Department policies:

- [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 Approval and review

<b>Created date</b>	April 2026
<b>Consultation</b>	Consultation on this policy is mandatory. Consultation with School Council 19 May 2026.
<b>Approved by</b>	Principal
<b>Approved on</b>	16 June 2026
<b>Next review date</b>	June 2028