

VOLUNTEERS POLICY

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Volunteers Policy applies to all primary and secondary Catholic schools (**Schools**) managed and operated by the Diocese of Sale Catholic Education Limited (**DOSCEL**) in the Diocese of Sale, State of Victoria.

DOSCEL schools are committed to providing safe and secure learning environment for all their students. This policy reflects the direction given by Victorian's Child Safe Standards under *Ministerial Order 1359: Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools and School Boarding Premises*.

All DOSCEL volunteers must:

- participate in child safety and wellbeing induction programs and training
- act in accordance with DOSCEL and School Child Safety policies and procedures, including but not limited to the School Child Safety Code of Conduct
- understand and enact, where required, the PROTECT guidelines: Four Critical Actions for Schools.

2.0 PURPOSE

To provide a safe and secure learning and teaching environment for students and staff by establishing processes to monitor and manage volunteers to all DOSCEL Schools.

3.0 SCOPE

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

4.0 DEFINITIONS

Child-connected work: work authorised by the DOSCEL and performed by an adult in a school 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.

Volunteer worker: A volunteer working at a DOSCEL school 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 advisory committee
- any activity carried out for the welfare of a school, by the School Advisory Committee, 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
- assisting in the work of any DOSCEL school.

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.

5.0 PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES

DOSCEL Schools are committed to implementing and following practices which protect the safety and wellbeing of children, young people, staff, contractors and volunteers.

DOSCEL Schools are expected to engage volunteers in accordance with the DOSCEL Guidelines on the Engagement of Volunteers (**Guidelines**). These Guidelines should be read in conjunction with the following procedures that are designed to ensure that DOSCEL School's engage volunteers who are suitable to work with children and are well-placed to make a positive contribution to the Catholic mission and values of the school as well as to the whole school community.

5.1 Becoming a volunteer

Members of school communities who would like to volunteer are encouraged to contact their local DOSCEL school for direction.

In the event that Schools require volunteers for specific events, Schools will follow usual procedures for passing on information to parents, guardians, carers and the wider school community asking for volunteers and including relevant information pertaining to the task.

5.2 Suitability checks including Working with Children Clearances

In accordance with The *Worker Screening Act 2020* (Vic.) and *Ministerial Order 1359: Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools and School Boarding Premises*, volunteers must undergo appropriate screening measures and suitability checks before being allowed to engage in child related work.

Volunteers must:

- record their name, signature, date, time of visit and purpose of visit via the visitors' book or online system
- produce evidence of their valid Working with Children Clearance (**WWCC**)

- provide proof of identification to school staff upon request
- comply with the School's practice concerning identification (e.g. lanyard or name tag)
- follow instruction from school staff and abide by all relevant school policies relating to appropriate conduct on school grounds including but not limited to the Schools Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct.
- return to the school office, or equivalent, upon departure, sign out and return any identifying lanyard, tag, sticker etc.

Schools will ensure that their school's Child Safety Code of Conduct is available and visible to volunteers when they sign in.

All volunteers who are engaged in child-related work must have a valid WWCC. In some circumstances, volunteers at DOSCEL Schools who are **not** engaged in child-related work will also be required to produce a valid WWCC depending on the particular circumstances of their visit.

Sworn Victoria Police officers or sworn Australian Federal Police officers are exempt from requiring a WWCC but may be asked to verify that they are sworn officers by providing proof of identification.

5.3 Working with students

To ensure that DOSCEL Schools are meeting their legal obligations under the *Worker Screening Act 2020* (Vic.) and the Child Safe Standards, volunteers are required to undertake suitability checks which in most cases will involve asking for evidence of a WWCC or WWCC Application (at the Principals discretion). They may also need to provide references, proof of identity, qualification and work/volunteer history involving children.

5.4 Non-child-related work

On some occasions, parents, guardians, carers 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' groups, School Advisory Committee, participating in sub-committees of the School Advisory Committee, 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 WWCC or other suitability checks as they are not engaged in child-related work and children are not generally present during these activities. However, Schools reserve the right to undertake suitability checks, including requiring proof of identity and WWCC, at their discretion if considered necessary for any particular activities or circumstances.

Under Victorian's Child Safe Standards *Ministerial Order 1359: Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools and School Boarding Premises* – Child Safe Standard 3: Child and student empowerment assigns a greater focus on student voice. As such, School Advisory Committee members who have formerly not required to have WWCC may need to hold a valid WWCC.

Principals have discretion in making this decision in consultation with the DOSCEL Secretariat.

5.5 Training and induction

Under the Child Safe Standards, volunteers must have an appropriate induction and training in child safety and wellbeing by Schools.

Volunteers must familiarise themselves with the Schools Child Safety and Wellbeing policies, Code of Conduct and the Schools Values and Philosophy.

Volunteers engaged in child-connected work in DOSCEL Schools are aware of their responsibilities to children and young people, information sharing and reporting obligations and record-keeping obligations.

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

5.6 Management and supervision

Volunteer workers will be expected to comply with any reasonable direction of the principal and other staff. This will include the requirement to follow the School's policies including, but not limited to, the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, Child Safety Code of Conduct, School's Values and Philosophy.

Volunteer workers will also be expected to act consistently with other DOSCEL and School policies including those relating to Duty of Care, Mandatory Reporting, On-site and Off-site Supervision of Students and Records Management.

The principal or appointed staff will determine the level of school staff supervision required for volunteers, depending on the type of work being performed, with a focus on ensuring the safety and wellbeing of students.

5.7 Privacy and information-sharing

Volunteers engaged in child-connected work in DOSCEL Schools are aware of their responsibilities to children and young people, information sharing and reporting and record-keeping obligations.

Volunteers must immediately report any child safety concerns that they become aware of to a member of staff. For further information on child safety responding and reporting obligations, refer to the DOSCEL Protection of Children - Reporting Obligations Procedure.

5.8 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 principal or supervising staff member to ensure they are managed in accordance with the DOSCEL Record Management Policy.

6.0 EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Schools and families in DOSCEL Schools have a Volunteer Policy that is clear and transparent to guide them through the processes and procedures pertaining to volunteers to the school.

7.0 REFERENCES AND LEGISLATION

- [Australian Privacy Principles 2014 \(Cth\)](#)
- [Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 \(Vic.\)](#)
- [Child Wellbeing and Safety \(Information Sharing\) Regulations 2018](#)
- [Education and Training Reform Act 2006 \(Vic.\)](#)
- [Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 \(Vic.\)](#)
- [Ministerial Order No. 1359: Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools and School Boarding Premises \(made under the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 \(Vic.\)\)](#)
- [Privacy Act 1988 \(Cth\)](#)

8.0 RELATED POLICIES AND RESOURCES

- *DOSCEL Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy*
- *DOSCEL Child Safety Code of Conduct*
- *DOSCEL Duty of Care Policy*
- *DOSCEL Guidelines on the Engagement of Volunteers*
- *DOSCEL Mandatory Reporting Policy*
- *DOSCEL Protection of Children - Reporting Obligations Procedure*
- *DOSCEL Recruitment and Engagement Policy*
- *DOSCEL Visitors Policy*

9.0 REVIEW

Implementation Date: December 2022

Review Date: December 2024