

# VOLUNTEERS

## PURPOSE

To outline the processes that Ripponlea Primary School (RPS) 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-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
- 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 school work in good faith.

## POLICY

RPS is committed to implementing and following practices which protect the safety and wellbeing of children and our staff and volunteers. RPS welcomes volunteers to support the building of strong partnerships between RPS and the RPS community. RPS also recognises the valuable contribution

that volunteers make to the RPS community and the work performed by volunteers to assist in the development of children.

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

### **Becoming a volunteer**

Members of the RPS community who would like to volunteer are encouraged to approach a classroom teacher. Class representative volunteers must complete the applicable section of the 'Class Lists and Family Communication' form distributed as part of the enrolment package.

### **Suitability checks including Working with Children Clearances**

#### ***Working with students***

RPS values the many volunteers that assist in RPS classrooms, with sports events, camps, excursions, school concerts and other events and programs. To ensure that RPS is meeting its legal obligations under the *Worker Screening Act* and the Child Safe Standards, RPS is required to undertake suitability checks which may include a Working With Children (WWC) Clearance and may also involve undertaking reference, proof of identity and work history involving children checks.

Considering our legal obligations, and our commitment to ensuring that RPS is a child safe environment, we will require volunteers to obtain a WWC Clearance and produce their valid card to RPS office staff for verification in the following circumstances:

- **Volunteers who are not parent/family members** of any student at RPS are required to have a WWC Check 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.
- **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, RPS 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 RPS 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 outside of school hours 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, RPS reserves the right to undertake suitability checks, including requiring proof of identity or WWC Clearances, at its discretion if considered necessary for any particular activities or circumstances.

### **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 RPS's policies, including, but not limited to our Child Safety Policy, the RPS Child Safety Code of Conduct and RPS – About Our School (Values, Vision, Philosophy & Learning). Volunteer workers will also be expected to act consistently with Department of Education and Training (DET) policies, to the extent that they apply to volunteer workers, including the DET's policies relating to Equal Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination, Sexual Harassment and Workplace Bullying.

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 RPS.

RPS will provide any appropriate induction and/or training for all volunteer workers. The Principal (or their nominee) will determine what induction and/or training is necessary depending on what type of work the volunteer will be engaged in and will ensure a record is kept of the induction undertaken.

All volunteers will be provided induction in relation to RPS's child safety practices, including reporting obligations and procedures. A 'Statement of Commitment to Child Safety' is located at the sign-in point for all volunteers to read prior to working in the school (see Appendix 1). RPS has Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and procedures which all staff and volunteers should be aware of.

Volunteers undertaking coaching of RPS students outside school hours will be required to also agree to the 'Coach's Code of Conduct' (see Appendix 2).

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 are covered by the Department of Education and Training'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 and Training'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.

### **RELATED POLICIES**

- RPS – About Our School (Values, Vision, Philosophy & Learning)
- Visitors
- Camps & Excursions
- Child Safety Policy
- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Child Safety Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting)

Department policies:

- [Equal Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination](#)
- [Child Safe Standards](#)
- [Sexual Harassment](#)
- [Volunteers in Schools](#)
- [Volunteer OHS Management](#)
- [Working with Children and Other Suitability Checks for School Volunteers and Visitors](#)
- [Workplace Bullying](#)

**Ratified by School Council: August 2021**

**Next review date: August 2025**

## APPENDIX 1

### STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY

Ripponlea Primary School is committed to safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. This will be the primary focus of our care and decision-making.

Ripponlea Primary School has ***zero tolerance for child abuse***.

We are committed to providing a child safe environment where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Particular attention will be paid to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as the safety of children with a disability.

Every person involved at Ripponlea has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role he/she plays individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all children and young people is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

#### **Principles for Child Safety**

In our planning, decision-making and operations Ripponlea Primary School will:

- take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety;
- value and empower children to participate in decisions which affect their lives;
- foster a culture of openness that supports all persons to safely disclose risks of harm to children;
- respect diversity in cultures and child rearing practices while keeping child safety paramount;
- provide written guidance on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards children;
- engage only the most suitable people to work with children and have high quality staff and volunteer supervision and professional development;
- ensure children know who to talk with if they are worried or are feeling unsafe, and that they are comfortable and encouraged to raise such issues;
- report suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities;
- share information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and wellbeing of children is at risk; and
- value the input of and communicate regularly with families and carers.

## APPENDIX 2

# Coach's Code of Conduct Agreement outside school hours (before 8:45am and after 3:45pm) at Ripponlea Primary School

I, \_\_\_\_\_, of \_\_\_\_\_  
Full Name Address

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Address cont.

agree to the following terms:

1. I will attach a copy of my Working With Children Check to this agreement.
2. I will abide by Ripponlea Primary School's values and policies including the Child Safety Code of Conduct.
3. I will ensure the supervision of:
  - a) students my charge;
  - b) siblings waiting in a designated area away from the Out-of-School-Hours Care (OSHC).
4. I will refer any concerns about OSHC students to OSHC staff.

I understand that the Principal or the OSHC provider has the right to refuse my team's use of the school court if I breach this agreement.

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Signature

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Date