
Volunteers Policy

Date: March 2022

Next Review: March 2025

1. Preamble

- 1.1. Volunteering is a practical expression of the biblical value of serving others and an important expression of partnership within the life of the school. Volunteers serve staff and students practically, and volunteering creates opportunities for adults to model the values of God's kingdom.
- 1.2. There are many areas within the school where voluntary assistance richly enhances the school and enables the school to provide a quality service. Such assistance is highly valued and appreciated.
- 1.3. The exhortation in Colossians 3:23-24 applies equally to volunteers as for remunerated staff members: *"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving."*

2. Definitions

- 2.1. *Volunteers* refer to those workers approved by the school to willingly assist with the school program without remuneration or other financial gain, and include those referred to as parent helpers. Such volunteers may be members of the Swan Hill Christian School (SHCS) community and/or wider community, subject to the conditions detailed within this policy. Note, people visiting the school on a "once off" basis, whose contribution is occasional and incidental, to speak to classes or in other ways contribute to the school program under direct supervision are regarded as visitors rather than volunteers (see *Visitors Policy*).
- 2.2. *Remuneration* refers to payment for goods or services, or reward for employment in the form of pay, salary or wages. It does not include reimbursement of expenses (where appropriate prior approval has been obtained); the giving of moderate gifts of appreciation; or the provision of transport, accommodation and food (for example, for participation in camps and excursions). It also does not include the payment of an approved honorarium in certain instances.

3. Details

- 3.1. While not receiving remuneration for services rendered, volunteers shall be regarded by the school as workers and a primary duty of care is therefore owed to them in the same way as for paid staff members. Such duty of care is reflected in government legislation (for example, in relation to occupational health & safety and equal opportunity & discrimination) and in various school policies.
- 3.2. Volunteers shall have a right to: (1) receive respect, cooperation and support from fellow workers; (2) receive recognition and feedback from supervising staff members; (3) be assigned suitable projects, tasks or jobs; (4) decline to perform tasks that they feel unable to do or would rather not do; and (5) be provided with sufficient information and instruction to perform their duties adequately and safely.
- 3.3. Volunteers are expected to uphold the same standards of conduct as paid staff members.
- 3.4. Volunteers are expected to: (1) abide by all relevant legislation and regulations; (2) follow directions and instructions given by staff members; (3) comply with all school policies, procedures and rules as distributed and/or explained to them; and (4) undertake any training, orientation or induction as required by the school.

- 3.5. Volunteers are required to cooperate with the school's efforts to comply with its legal and ethical duties in relation to providing a healthy and safe workplace and learning environment. They are encouraged to take care to prevent injuries to themselves and others, to report work-related illness or injury; to report situations they believe may constitute a risk or danger; and to share information and ideas about risks and how to control them.
- 3.6. The school, through the Principal, reserves the right to refuse a volunteer or to cease using the services of a volunteer. Such action may apply if at any time a volunteer's actions or presence is deemed to interfere, or to be likely to interfere, with the positive and productive functioning of any aspect of the school.
- 3.7. All volunteers must complete the school's volunteer application process
 - All volunteers (including current parents, past parents, past students and members of the wider community) shall be approved by the Principal.
 - It is the responsibility of the Principal to ensure volunteers are screened and have provided appropriate documentation (as per this policy), and to monitor ongoing compliance with all aspects of this policy.
 - Copies of related paperwork shall be kept on file in the office.
- 3.8. All volunteers aged 18 years and older working directly with students, and/or who have access to students, must have or obtain valid Working with Children Clearance (WWCC) cards (other than as per item 3.9 below). Such WWCCs should nominate the school as a voluntary organisation.
- 3.9. Where the applicant does not have a valid Working With Children Clearance card but is a teacher registered with the VIT, or is a serving officer with Victoria Police or the Australian Federal Police, they will be required to complete the volunteer application process but evidence of currency in the form of a VIT card or police identification (sighted and photocopied), must be attached to the Volunteer Application form.
- 3.10. Generally, duties shall not commence until the school has received the required checks. Where this is not practical, the Principal may use his/her discretion to approve the use of a volunteer for a period of a week or less. In such cases, a visitor declaration form must be signed by the volunteer and the volunteer must operate under the direct physical supervision of a staff member at all times.
- 3.11. Copies of Police Criminal Records Checks and evidence of Working with Children Clearance should be kept in a file in the office.
- 3.12. All volunteers shall be assigned to a staff member by the Principal. Such staff member shall be their direct supervisor and shall ensure that volunteers are provided with all reasonable support, information and instruction as required.
- 3.13. Volunteers working during school times on school premises must sign in and out at reception.
- 3.14. Volunteers shall be restricted from access to confidential student and employee information except where unavoidable to comply with legislation or school policies and procedures (for example, where access to student medical details while on camp is necessary). Volunteers shall be responsible for maintaining confidentiality regarding information seen or heard while working as a volunteer.
- 3.15. School work experience students and tertiary student teachers on placement, where approved to work at the school, shall be regarded as volunteers and shall be subject to the provisions of this policy.
- 3.16. Volunteers should be aware of workplace and other staff-related policies.