

VOLUNTEERS POLICY



PURPOSE

To outline the processes that Frankston Heights Primary 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/provider of a school boarding services and performed by an adult in a school or school boarding premises 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. 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 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 classroom support, fundraising and assisting with excursion/camps, 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

Frankston Heights Primary School is committed to implementing and following practices which protect the safety and wellbeing of children and our staff and volunteers. The school recognises the importance of developing strong relationships between the community, home and school. Volunteers are encouraged to contribute and support many facets of school life. The school appreciates the valuable contribution volunteers provide to our school community and the work that we do.

The procedures set out below are designed to ensure that the 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

There are many opportunities for members of our school community to volunteer. Volunteer commitment and involvement is integral to achieving successful outcomes for our students. Our school prides itself on welcoming and encouraging strong community engagement and participation through classroom helpers, working bees, fundraising, excursions and camps.

Members of our school community who would like to volunteer are encouraged to contact the school office for further information. Invitations to assist with school programs will be made via the school newsletter, Sentral, letter sent home from the school or through personal contact.

COVID-19 vaccination information

Our school follows Department of Education and Training policy with respect to the requirements relating to attendance on school sites and COVID-19 vaccinations.

For further information, refer to:

- [COVID-19 Vaccinations – Visitors and Volunteers on School Sites](#)

Suitability checks including Working with Children Clearances

Working with students

Frankston Heights Primary School values the many volunteers that assist in our classrooms and with sport 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, Frankston Heights Primary 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.

Where prospective volunteers are required under the law and this policy to have a WWC Clearance, the Principal has the discretion to accept evidence of a WWC check application in order to commence volunteer work, provided the volunteer provides the school with evidence of the application outcome (clearance or exclusion) as soon as practicable after the applicant receives it.

Considering our legal obligations, and our commitment to ensuring that Frankston Heights Primary School is a child safe environment, we will require volunteers to obtain a WWC Clearance and produce their valid card to the office, where it will be copied and kept on file, 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.
- **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, 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.

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 on the weekend for gardening, maintenance, working bees, Friends of Heights meetings, School Council, participating in sub-committees of School Council, 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, Frankston Heights Primary 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.

Training and induction

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

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 Child Safety Induction Pack 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, Frankston Heights Primary School may also require volunteers to complete additional child safety training.

Volunteers supporting curriculum programs and school events will be briefed by the staff member in charge, prior to commencement, of their roles and responsibilities, including matters of supervision and safety. All classroom helpers are required to complete the school's Classroom Helpers online training course before working in the classroom.

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, Child Safety Code of Conduct, Respectful Behaviour within the

School Community Policy, Statement of Values and School Philosophy Statement, Volunteer Guidelines and Confidentiality Agreement.

Volunteer workers will also be expected to act consistently with Department of Education and Training 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.

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 Example 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 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 office 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 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.

COMMUNICATION

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

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included as a link in all invitations to prospective volunteers, including the Classroom Helper's online training course.

RELATED POLICIES AND RESOURCES

Frankston Heights Primary School policies and resources relevant to this policy include:

- *Statement of Values and School Philosophy*
- *Visitors Policy*
- *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy*
- *Child Safety Code of Conduct*
- *Child Safety Responding and Reporting Policy and Procedures*
- *Child Safety Volunteers Induction Pack.*

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 REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	August 2022
Consultation	School Council - August 2022 School Community (via Sentral) - October 2022
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	August 2024

CHILD SAFETY VOLUNTEERS INDUCTION PACK



PURPOSE

Thank you for your interest in volunteering at our school. The purpose of this induction pack is to ensure Frankston Heights Primary School volunteers are familiar with our policies and procedures relating to child safety and understand the important role they play in maintaining and promoting the safety of our students.

Volunteers must read the suite of policies and procedures in the links below before commencing any work where children are likely to be present.

Key messages

- Frankston Heights Primary School is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children. We want children attending our school to be safe, happy and respected.
- We are committed to creating an inclusive environment where diversity is supported and students feel safe to bring their whole selves to school.
- Allegations and concerns relating to the safety and wellbeing of our school community will be treated very seriously and consistently with our policies and procedures.
- We are committed to preventing child abuse, identifying risks early and removing and reducing these risks.
- Everyone has a role to ensure children are safe – if something doesn't feel right, speak up. If you have any concerns about any inappropriate behaviours in the school community you should speak to the Principal or Assistant Principal. If this would not be appropriate in the circumstances, you can contact the South Eastern Regional Office of the Department of Education and Training on 1300 338 738.

Induction materials

This induction pack contains the following documents that all new volunteers must read and familiarise themselves with. Please click on the hyperlinks to access each document. If you would prefer a hard copy of this pack, please contact the office.

- Frankston Heights Primary School Volunteers Policy
- Frankston Heights Primary School Child Safety Policy
- Frankston Heights Primary School Child Safety Responding and Reporting Policy and Procedures
- Frankston Heights Primary School Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Frankston Heights Primary School Volunteer Guidelines and Confidentiality Agreement
- [PROTECT: Four Critical Actions for Schools – Responding to incidents, disclosures and suspicions of child abuse](#)
- [PROTECT: Identify child abuse](#)

FHPS VOLUNTEER GUIDELINES AND CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT



Volunteer helpers are always welcome at Frankston Heights Primary School. We continue to work hard to reflect the school's aims of establishing strong relationships between the community, home and school, and involving volunteer helpers fully and actively in student learning and in the life of our school. The safety of all students is paramount and the volunteer guidelines and confidentiality declaration have been put in place to protect their wellbeing.

Frankston Heights Primary School recognises that volunteer helpers have a wide variety of experiences and skills which can support our curriculum programs. We encourage volunteers to support our learning programs under the close guidance and direction of the teacher in charge. Any support offered, as long as it is pre-arranged with the teacher, is welcomed and valued in helping to support the education of the students in our care.

If you would like to be a volunteer, we request that you follow these guidelines to ensure a successful experience for all.

Please:

- sign in at the front office prior to the commencement of your volunteer work, sign out once completed and wear a visitor lanyard at all times whilst onsite
- avoid comparing students and their work/ability
- do not read student communication books or diaries
- do not text or approach a parent of a student after assisting with a curriculum program or event
- give all students equal time and attention where possible
- encourage students to be independent - we expect students to try themselves before we help them
- be aware that you may not always be working with your own child
- do not lift, carry or move a student in any way
- inform the teacher in charge if a student discusses a matter that concerns you
- inform the teacher in charge if you are unavailable
- make alternative arrangements for younger children to ensure student learning is maximised without distractions
- do not post any comments about the school or photos of students on social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc.)
- leave your phone in your bag on silent at all times
- do not take photos of any student or the learning environment
- follow the teachers' instructions and planned activities at all times
- wear appropriate, practical smart-casual clothing and shoes
- do not share food with any of the students
- do not administer any medicine to any student at any time
- use appropriate language at all times, offensive language is not permitted
- show respect to all staff, students and parents and other school community members within the school.

Please note a volunteer worker refers to any of the following: parent, carer, family member, pre-service teacher, work experience student, community volunteer.

FHPS CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

When undertaking the various roles or jobs at the school, we ask you to be aware of the following guidelines regarding confidentiality.

- All student's classroom work, records, results, behaviour, special needs and health/medical conditions are highly confidential and must not be discussed or referred to with any other person except when speaking with the teacher or education assistants about the role or support you might be providing in the classroom. Discussing students with other parents and community members is not permitted at any time.
- Events and serious incidents do occur from time to time in a school. The circumstances of these situations and the actions taken by the school are best explained to the parents and the community by the school administration. If you are concerned by what you see or hear in the school, we appreciate you discussing this with the staff member you are working with and/or the Principal. False or misguided information can seriously affect a school's reputation, and more importantly the incorrect perception of an individual student, and it is important that the school handles incidents in a considered and careful manner. You are not permitted to discuss any events or serious incidents outside of the classroom and social media is not to be used to voice your opinion. These will be considered as breaches of the volunteer guidelines.
- You may be informed by a student or have access to information about a student's health background or family situation, which is of a sensitive nature. This is privileged information and must not be shared with any other person outside the school. If you feel the information you receive has the potential to place a student at risk, you have an obligation to discuss the matter with the teacher and/or Principal.

Please sign and return the form below to the office, to acknowledge that you have read and understood the volunteer guidelines. You will not be permitted to volunteer in curriculum programs until you have signed this form, and presented your Working with Children Check (WWCC) to the school office.

FRANKSTON HEIGHTS PRIMARY SCHOOL VOLUNTEER GUIDELINES AND CONFIDENTIALITY FORM

I _____ have read the school's guidelines (above) on for volunteer helpers and understand the need for confidentiality when working with students within the school. I will adhere to the guidelines at all times and understand my responsibilities within my role.

Volunteer name

Volunteer signature

Date

Principal/Assistant Principal name

Principal/Assistant Principal signature

Date

FOUR CRITICAL ACTIONS FOR SCHOOLS

Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse

YOU MUST TAKE ACTION

As a school staff member, you play a **critical role** in protecting children in your care.

- You **must** act, by following the Four Critical Actions, as soon as you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief* that a child has, or is at risk of being abused.
- You **must** act if you form a suspicion/ reasonable belief, even if you are unsure and have not directly observed child abuse (e.g. if the victim or another person tells you about the abuse).
- It is strongly recommended that you use the **Responding to Suspected Child Abuse template** to keep clear and comprehensive notes, even if you make a decision not to report.

* A reasonable belief is a deliberately low threshold. This enables authorities to investigate and take action.

1 RESPONDING TO AN EMERGENCY

If there is no risk of immediate harm go to **Action 2**.

If a child is at immediate risk of harm you **must** ensure their safety by:

- separating alleged victims and others involved
- administering first aid
- calling **000 for urgent medical and/or police assistance** to respond to immediate health or safety concerns
- identifying a contact person at the school for future liaison with Police.

Where necessary you may also need to maintain the integrity of the potential crime scene and preserve evidence.

2 REPORTING TO AUTHORITIES / REFERRING TO SERVICES

As soon as immediate health and safety concerns are addressed you **must** report all incidents, suspicions and disclosures of child abuse as soon as possible. Failure to report physical and sexual child abuse may amount to a criminal offence.

Q: Where does the source of suspected abuse come from?

WITHIN THE SCHOOL

VICTORIA POLICE

You **must** report all instances of suspected child abuse involving a school staff member, contractor, volunteer or visitor to Victoria Police.

You **must also** report internally to:

GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

- School principal and/or leadership team
- Employee Conduct Branch
- DET Incident Support and Operations Centre.

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

- School principal and/or leadership team
- Diocesan education office.

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

- School principal and/or school chairperson
- Commission for Children and Young People on **1300 782 978**.

All allegations of 'reportable conduct' **must** be reported as soon as possible to:

GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

- Employee Conduct Branch

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

- Diocesan education office

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

- Commission for Children and Young People on **1300 782 978**.

WITHIN THE FAMILY OR COMMUNITY

DHHS CHILD PROTECTION

You **must** report to DHHS Child Protection if a child is considered to be:

- in need of protection from child abuse
- at risk of being harmed (or has been harmed) and the harm has had, or is likely to have, a serious impact on the child's safety, stability or development.

VICTORIA POLICE

You **must also** report all instances of suspected sexual abuse (including grooming) to Victoria Police.

You **must also** report internally to:

GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

- School principal and/or leadership team
- DET Incident Support and Operations Centre.

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

- School principal and/or leadership team
- Diocesan education office.

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

- School principal and/or chairperson.

3 CONTACTING PARENTS/CARERS

Your principal **must** consult with DHHS Child Protection or Victoria Police to determine what information can be shared with parents/carers. They may advise:

- not to contact** the parents/carer (e.g. in circumstances where the parents are alleged to have engaged in the abuse, or the child is a mature minor and does not wish for their parent/carer to be contacted)
- to contact** the parents/carers and provide agreed information (this must be done as soon as possible, preferably on the same day of the incident, disclosure or suspicion)
- how to communicate** with all relevant parties with consideration for their safety.

4 PROVIDING ONGOING SUPPORT

Your school **must** provide support for children impacted by abuse. This should include the development of a **Student Support Plan** in consultation with wellbeing professionals. This is an essential part of your duty of care requirements.

Strategies may include development of a safety plan, direct support and referral to wellbeing professionals and support.

You **must** follow the **Four Critical Actions** every time you become aware of a further instance or risk of abuse. This includes reporting new information to authorities.

CONTACT

DHHS CHILD PROTECTION

AREA

North Division **1300 664 977**
South Division **1300 655 795**
East Division **1300 360 391**
West Division (Rural) **1800 075 599**
West Division (Metro) **1300 664 977**

AFTER HOURS

After hours, weekends, public holidays **13 12 78**.

CHILD FIRST

<https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/referral-and-support-teams>

ORANGE DOOR

<https://www.vic.gov.au/familyviolence/the-orange-door.html>

VICTORIA POLICE

000 or your local police station

DET INCIDENT SUPPORT AND OPERATIONS CENTRE

1800 126 126

INCIDENT MANAGEMENT AND SUPPORT UNIT

1800 126 126

EMPLOYEE CONDUCT BRANCH

(03) 9637 2595

DIOCESAN OFFICE

Melbourne **(03) 9267 0228**
Ballarat **(03) 5337 7135**
Sale **(03) 5622 6600**
Sandhurst **(03) 5443 2377**

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS VICTORIA

(03) 9825 7200

THE LOOKOUT

The LOOKOUT has a service directory, information, and evidence based guidance to help you respond to family violence: <http://www.lookout.org.au>.

Family violence victims/survivors can be referred to **1800 Respect** for counselling, information and a referral service: **1800 737 732**.



PROTECT

THE EDUCATION STATE

VICTORIA Education and Training

CECV catholic education commission of victoria inc

Independent Schools Victoria