



VOLUNTEERS POLICY (2024 – 2026)



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand this policy, please contact Morang South Primary School office on 9404 1548.

PURPOSE

To outline the processes that Morang South 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: 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

Morang South Primary School is committed to implementing and following practices which protect the safety and wellbeing of children and our staff and volunteers. Morang South Primary School recognises that volunteers make significant contributions to the school community by giving their time and sharing their skills and expertise with others. Volunteers' interests and abilities can complement school programs and provide a wide range of interactions and experiences to support student engagement in school and learning.

The procedures set out below are designed to ensure that Morang South Primary 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 speak to the office staff or classroom teachers. Volunteers are actively encouraged to partake in school activities, and at times will be invited to do so, including volunteering at school camps. The school will seek to provide a variety of opportunities for volunteer participation, particularly opportunities for parents and grandparents. Morang South Primary School values all volunteers that assist with classroom programs, sports events, camps, excursions, specialist classes, school concerts/other events and programs. Volunteers may be sought formally through a Compass notification, written invitations and personal approaches, as well as informally through conversation and opportunity.

Volunteers are required to carry out tasks in a manner consistent with school expectations, including maintenance of a professional, cooperative and confidential approach. They must be aware of the importance of environments that are supportive of all children's emotional, psychological and physical safety. Volunteers will be required to register at the administration office daily and have a Compass on-site Volunteers slips whilst in the school.

Volunteers will be invited to use the staff room and facilities as required during their time working in the school.

Individuals or groups of volunteers will be thanked at appropriate times in Compass bulletins, publicising their contributions to the school. A morning tea will be provided in Term 4 to thank volunteers for their contributions throughout the year.

Suitability checks including Working with Children Clearances

Working with students

Morang South Primary School values the many volunteers that assist in roles within our school community, for example in our classrooms, with sports events, at camps and excursions, for school concerts, and at various other events, fundraisers and programs. To ensure that we are meeting our legal obligations under the Worker Screening Act (Vic) and the Child Safe Standards, Morang South Primary school is required to undertake suitability checks which in most cases will involve asking for evidence of a Working With Children Check (WWC) Clearance. Additional suitability checks may also be required depending on the volunteer role, such as proof of identity, work history involving children, qualifications and/or reference checks.

It's not enough to just see a volunteer's/worker's card. Individual Volunteers must update their details to include the name of Morang South Primary School via their MyCheck account. Then, the WWC system will send the school a letter of confirmation with a photocopy of their card. This ensures all records are kept up to date and that the school can be contacted should any of the individual's circumstances change, or the individual's card is surrendered or revoked. The Morang South Primary School contact details below can be used for communication purposes:

- email address: morang.south.ps@education.vic.gov.au
- postal address: 77 gorge Road, South Morang 3752
- phone number: 03 9404 1548

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. However, preference for volunteer roles will be given to prospective volunteers who have provided a full WWC Clearance. Limitations or additional supervision of a volunteer will be considered in circumstances where a final WWC Clearance has not been received.

It is not an offence under the Worker Screening Act for people to engage in child-related work without a WWC Clearance if they have:

- applied for the WWC check and the application has not been finally decided or withdrawn; and
- the person has not previously been given a WWC Exclusion under the Worker Screening Act or a corresponding working with children law.

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

- **Volunteers who are not parent/family members** of any student at the school 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, 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 for gardening, maintenance, working bees, parents and friends association coordination, feedback groups, participating in sub-committees of school council, fete coordination, as well as other fundraising groups during which children will not be, or would not reasonably be expected to be, present.

At Morang South Primary School, volunteers for this type of work will still be required to provide a valid WWC Clearance and if requested any proof of ID, references or work history.

School council members and volunteers on any sub-committee of school council will be asked to provide a valid WWC Clearance. Whilst we acknowledge that these volunteers will not be engaging in child-related work as part of their role, 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.

Training and induction

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 **Child Safe Standards Policy Information - Volunteers Induction Booklet** 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, Morang South Primary 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 Safe Policy
- Child Safe - Code of Conduct
- Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations
- Statement of Values and School Philosophy
- Volunteers Policy

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 or continue to volunteer at Morang South Primary School.

Our school has a Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy which all staff and volunteers should be aware of. Volunteers must report any concern or suspicion where a child's safety may be at risk to the classroom teacher, Assistant Principal or Principal.

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 Business Manager 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 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

Morang South policies and resources relevant to this policy include:

- Statement of Values and School Philosophy
- Visitors Policy
- Child Safe Policy
- Child Safe Code of Conduct
- Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures
- Student Engagement, Wellbeing and Inclusion Policy

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	September 2024
Consultation	October 23 rd 2024
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	September 2026