Volunteers in Schools Policy

PURPOSE
To outline the processes that Maryborough Education Centre (MEC) 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

MEC is committed to implementing and following practices which protect the safety and wellbeing of children and our staff and volunteers. MEC recognises the valuable contribution that volunteers provide to our school community and the work that they do. Volunteers are involved in a number of activities at our school including: school canteen, reading, fund raising activities, excursions, sports days, working bees, school productions and Energy Breakthrough.

The procedures set out below are designed to ensure that MEC'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 contact the General Office to complete a form advising of their interest in volunteering to assist with the various activities at our school, or a particular activity. This form is also included in our Student Enrolment Pack. Parents/carers can also contact their child's classroom teacher if they are able to assist with a specific classroom activity.

Suitability checks including Working with Children Checks

All volunteers involved in child and non-child related work are required to have a Working with Children's Check.

To ensure that we are meeting our legal obligations under the Working With Children Act 2005 (Vic) and the Child Safe Standards, MEC is required to undertake suitability checks which may include a Working With Children Check, proof of identity, work history involving children and/or reference checks.

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 / Statement of Beliefs and Values, and our Child Safety Code of Conduct. 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 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 MEC.

MEC 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.

All volunteers will be provided induction in relation to MEC's child safety practices, including reporting obligations and procedures. Our school has a Child Safety Reporting Obligations Policy which all staff and volunteers should be aware of.

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 AND RESOURCES


REVIEW PERIOD
This policy was last updated on Wednesday 29th May, 2019 and is scheduled for review as part of the school’s 3 year review cycle.

This policy was last ratified by School Council on Wednesday 29th May, 2019

Signed:

[Signature]

Paul Rumpff
School Council President

Date: 29.5.19