

D19 Volunteers Policy

1. Statement of Purpose

As a community minded organisation, Pulteney Grammar School welcomes and actively encourages the participation of volunteers in school life. PGS is committed to ensuring that volunteers are supported and their contribution is acknowledged and valued. This Policy provides the minimum requirements for the management and oversight of volunteers working for the School.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all volunteers at Pulteney including The Board of Governors and sub-committees.

3. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy the following definitions apply:

3.1 Close proximity

In a location or role where regular opportunities arise for formal or informal contact, conversation or observation of children and young people.

3.2 Line Manager

The person who is responsible for the recruitment and management of the Volunteer. The Line Manager may have direct supervision of the Volunteer or may delegate the direct supervision to a suitable paid employee or Volunteer.

3.3 Probity

The level of integrity necessary to ensure the honest, conscientious and safe conduct of one's working and volunteering relationships and activities.

3.4 Volunteer

A person who undertakes defined activities of their own free will to support educational programs and services at Pulteney either through direct contact with children and students, student practicum placements or site activities, and without payment (other than out of pocket expenses).

4. Objectives and Principles

4.1 Objectives

The objectives of this policy are to:

- affirm volunteering as an important and valued part of the School's programs that forms important links with our community;

- minimise and guard against potential risks to children, and young people;
- ensure volunteer management practices meet best practice in line with the National Standards for Volunteer Involvement and relevant and legislative requirements as they apply to persons volunteering in education and early childhood settings;
- maintain consistency of volunteer management practices in the School;
- support volunteers by ensuring a safe, respectful and well organised environment, in accord with the School's ethos of a quality learning and performance culture.

4.2 Principles

This document is based on the following principles:

- National Standards for Volunteer Involvement.
- The rights of children and young people to learn in a safe, respectful and well organised environment are paramount and will take priority over other interests.
- Persons must be suitable to volunteer with or be in close proximity to children and young people.
- Suspected or known risks to children and young people must be responded to immediately.
- Volunteering is a highly desirable and valuable part of the School, which is encouraged, supported and acknowledged.

5. Volunteer Engagement

Volunteers must only be engaged to complement, not replace, the work of paid staff. Accordingly, line managers must not engage volunteers to backfill an employee who is ill or on leave or to fill a vacant budgeted position.

Volunteers must not be asked to perform tasks:

- for which they are untrained, unqualified or not appropriately experienced;
- which puts themselves or children and young people in a potentially vulnerable or unsafe situation;
- where there is a conflict of interest;
- where they have sole direct supervision of students.

While volunteering can provide opportunities for people to acquire new skills and test possible career paths, the School must never stipulate or otherwise require that volunteering be a pre-requisite to a paid position.

5.1 Recruitment and Selection

The recruitment, selection and screening of volunteers must be undertaken in accordance with anti-discrimination and equal opportunity related legislation and the School's policies and practices.

Volunteers should be recruited on a proactive basis, with the intent of encouraging and broadening the volunteer involvement of the community. Volunteers may be recruited either through an interest in specific tasks or through a general interest in volunteering which will then be matched with a set of mutually agreeable tasks.

All volunteer recruitment must be undertaken by a line manager. Where a volunteer group (such as Parents and Friends) require casual volunteers, any invitation to volunteer, should be discussed with the relevant line manager.

Reference checks must be undertaken by the relevant line manager, (see below), to ensure probity and match volunteer capabilities with suitable roles.

Volunteer roles have written descriptions that include duties, responsibilities, and accountabilities.

5.2 Mandatory Background Screening Check

All Volunteers are required to undergo background screening prior to commencement.

This includes:

- a screening check (Volunteer Working With Children Check WWCC);
- a Volunteer Responding to Risks of Harm, Abuse and Neglect (RRHAN-EC) certificate;
- Reference Checks from two sources.
- Volunteers who accept a position on the Board of Governors or a Board sub-committee are required to provide:
 - a WWCC and a RRHAN-EC Certificate
 - character references so that a history of probity and suitable character can be established.

The School will ensure that any information obtained from the screening check process is handled confidentially.

Screening checks are not required for one-off guest presentations such as guest speakers, concert performers or for attendance at one-off events such as sports days, working bees and whole of School events.

The School has the right to:

- require a Volunteer to withdraw from volunteering programs at any time if concerns exist about their suitability to be working with children;
- bar a Volunteer (parent, caregiver or otherwise) from the School grounds if their behaviour threatens the wellbeing of students, staff or parents.

5.2.1 Obtaining a Screening clearance

WWCC are free for Volunteers. Volunteers may obtain their own screening, provide the School with evidence of an existing Screening or the School can assist in applying for a Screening.

5.2.2 Responding to Risks of Harm, Abuse and Neglect (RRHAN-EC) training

All Volunteers (except the Board of Governors and Sub-committees are required to undergo training in Responding to Risks of Harm, Abuse and Neglect (RRHAN-EC) before commencing in any volunteer capacity at the school.

- Volunteers who hold a Child Safe Environments (CSE) certificate may do the online bridging course to RRHAN-EC.
- Volunteers who do not have a CSE or RRHAN-EC, can do the free full online RRHAN-EC training.

5.2.3 Volunteer suitability

There are specific categories of criminal convictions that present a prima-facie risk of harm to children. A person will not be accepted as a Volunteer if he or she has been convicted of:

- murder or sexual assault;
- violence related offenses;
- an offence relating to pornography;
- an offence involving prostitution;
- a child abuse offence, for example criminal neglect;
- fraud or deception.

5.3 Orientation and Induction

Managers must ensure that Volunteers have access to an orientation and induction process which introduces the Volunteer to the environment and identifies any training needs required to successfully perform their tasks and meet legislative obligations. The Volunteer Induction Checklist may be used to assist with this process.

5.3.1 Minimum requirements

A Volunteer Information Booklet will be provided which covers relevant laws and summarises policies and procedures. Topics to be covered include (but are not limited to):

Child Protection

The Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 requires staff and volunteers to notify the Department for Child Protection, through the Child Abuse Report Line (CARL) 131 478 if they suspect on reasonable grounds that a child is at risk of, or has been or is being harmed, abused or neglected. This responsibility is part of the broad duty of care that staff and volunteers have towards the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.

Duty of Care to Students

In order to understand their duty of care obligations in relation to students, volunteers should be aware of the School's:

- behaviour management and harassment policies;
- requirements regarding supervision and confidentiality (both on site and within the community);
- training specific to their area of work;
- expectations regarding personal conduct and interaction with children and young people.

All Volunteers will be required to review and sign the Volunteer Agreement Form before commencing as a Volunteer.

5.3.2 Supervision

Supervision and support is an ongoing and important aspect of volunteer management. Managers are responsible for ensuring that volunteers are appropriately supervised.

The level of supervision of volunteers will vary according to the work performed. Where a volunteer does not have direct contact with students the level of supervision can be negotiated between the volunteer and the person with responsibility for supervising their work. The volunteer must be made aware that compliance with all

relevant policies and guidelines such as the work health and safety requirements is expected.

Where a volunteer does work directly with children and students, the supervision requirements are the same as the above but with the additional requirement that the volunteer must be visible to a staff member at all times. The staff member must be able to quickly and easily view the volunteer from within their work area. For example, a volunteer can work in a corridor area while the staff member teaches in the adjacent classroom or in a section of the Resource Centre that can be viewed by a range of staff.

Volunteers must not be left alone in a separate classroom or building, be involved in duties associated with change rooms, sickrooms or toileting, or be sent on a student excursion without a supervising staff member.

It is not an expectation of the School that Volunteers will transport students, either in their own vehicles or a school vehicle and therefore this should not be a routine requirement. Where there is an exceptional circumstance, permission should be sought from the Principal or Deputy Principals and the Line Manager must ensure that the Volunteer has a current driver's licence, insurance and in the case of using a private vehicle, that the vehicle is registered. Line Managers must also be mindful of requirements such as parental consent and ensuring that groups of students rather than individuals travel with a Volunteer, consistent with the expectations that apply to staff when transporting students in their own vehicles. (Refer Policy D6, Use of Private Vehicles to Transport Students.)

It is not possible to describe all possible scenarios that could arise for staff and volunteers working with students. Staff will need to make a judgement call as to the relative risks of each situation, keeping in mind that their duty of care to children and young people is paramount and must take priority over other interests.

5.4 Acknowledgement and Recognition

An essential part of good volunteer management practice is the acknowledgement and recognition of volunteer contributions. Volunteer acknowledgement and recognition should involve a mixture of informal and formal strategies that are regular and ongoing.

There are a number of special dates throughout the national and international calendar year that acknowledge and celebrate the contribution of volunteers. These include Volunteers Day (South Australia), National Volunteers Week, and International Volunteers Day. The School may schedule volunteer acknowledgement and recognition activities on these days.

5.5 Record Keeping

The School must maintain accurate volunteer management records. The following information must be recorded:

- A complete list of all volunteers actively available for volunteer work at any given time
- full contact details for the volunteer (full name, address, date of birth and emergency contact information). This information should be kept in an accessible place and separate from other confidential information in relation to the volunteer.
- selection documentation;
- WWCC or criminal history screening certificate (Board of Governors or Sub-committees);
- RRHAN-EC Certificate;
- a record for each day on which the volunteer is participating at the site (the date and hours of participation);
- rolls kept of the students working with the volunteer;
- names of staff members to whom the volunteer reports;
- dates and details of any concerns raised by the volunteer and action taken (including any grievance/complaint resolution documentation);
- dates and details of any concerns raised by others about the volunteer and action taken;
- any changes to the original work description and additional screening if conducted
- attendance and training records.

The School will ensure that personal information (medical details, concerns and grievances etc.) in relation to a volunteer is handled confidentially and kept in a secure place.

6. References

- Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017
- Work Health and Safety Act 2012 (SA)
- C13 Privacy Policy Pulteney Grammar School

- C3 Child Protection Policy Pulteney Grammar School
- D10 Work Health and Safety Policy Pulteney Grammar School
- National Standards for Volunteer Involvement
- DECD website

7. Responsibilities

Principal	Is accountable for ensuring that appropriate and relevant policies and procedures are developed, implemented and reviewed on a regular basis, and monitoring issues regarding volunteers.
Executive	Are responsible for approving the policy, and ensuring managers within their areas are following the policy in supporting and managing volunteers
Line Manager	Has responsibility for volunteers within their area including obtaining required documents, inducting and supervising the volunteer.
Volunteer	Is responsible for adhering to this policy and referring any questions they have to the line manager.
Human Resources Manager	Delegated responsibility for reviewing and updating the policy, and ensuring it is communicated to the organisation.
Business Director	Record Keeping of Volunteer personal information, screening and other mandatory probity or training.

8. Version Control

Version	Date Released	Approved By	Amendment
1	February 2008	Principal	Agreement and Guidelines regarding Volunteers, Outside Coaches, Peripatetic Teachers, Student Teachers, Relief Staff, Visiting Specialists and Contractors reviewed
2	April 2010	Principal	Agreement and Guidelines reviewed
3	June 2016	Executive	Volunteers Policy developed
4	March 2020	Executive	Policy updated at review date. Screening Checks section updated.
5	September 2023	Executive	Updated with new Legislative Act, Screening Check Section Updated.