UPPER YARRA
SECONDARY COLLEGE
www.uysc.vic.edu.au

Volunteers

Promoting healthy, safe, and respectful school communities.

Purpose

To outline the processes Upper Yarra Secondary College 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 Upper Yarra Secondary College.

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 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.

Implementation

Upper Yarra Secondary College is committed to implementing and following practices which protect the safety and wellbeing of children, our staff and volunteers.

Upper Yarra Secondary College also recognises the valuable contribution that volunteers provide to our school community and the work that we do.

The procedures set out below are designed to ensure that Upper Yarra Secondary College'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 College on 59671 877 to discuss these opportunities.

Suitability checks, Working with Children Clearances

Working with students

Upper Yarra Secondary College values the many volunteers that assist with sports 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*, Upper Yarra Secondary College 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 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 Upper Yarra Secondary College is a child safe environment, we require volunteers to obtain a WWC Clearance and produce their valid card to the Business Manager 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. This is a legal requirement under the Worker Screening Act.
- **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. This is a legal requirement under the Worker Screening Act.
- **Parent/family volunteers** who assist with excursions (including swimming), camps and similar events, regardless of whether their own child is participating or not. (Note that volunteers who are parents, or closely related family members of a child at the school who volunteer as part of an activity that their child is participating in or usually participate in are **not** required to have a WWC Clearance under the *Worker Screening Act*. However, DET recommends that schools do require parents to obtain one in these circumstances given the degree of contact volunteers may have with students in these situations.)
- Parent/family volunteers who regularly assist in school activities, regardless of whether their own child is participating or not. (Note that volunteers who are parents, or closely related family members of a child at the school who volunteer as part of an activity that their child is participating in or usually participate in are **not** required to have a WWC Clearance under the *Worker Screening Act*. However, DET recommends that schools do require parents to obtain one in these circumstances given the degree of contact volunteers may have with students in these situations.)

- **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. Note: under the *Worker Screening Act*, school council members are not required to have a WWC Clearance. However DET recommends principals, as Executive Officers of School Council, consider recommending that School Council members obtain a WWC Clearance in circumstances where they will be working alongside student School Council members. This would support compliance with the Child Safe Standards which require schools to implement practices for a child-safe environment, including making appropriate suitability checks (at the discretion of the school) for any work performed by an adult where children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

In addition, depending on the nature of the volunteer work, the College 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, school council, participating in sub-committees of school council, fete coordination, other fundraising groups 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, Upper Yarra Secondary College reserves the right to undertake suitability checks, including requiring proof of identity and WWC Clearance, at its discretion if considered necessary for any activities or circumstances.

School council members and volunteers on any sub-committee of School Council will be asked to provide evidence of a valid WWC Clearance. Whilst we acknowledge that these volunteers will not be engaging in child-related work as part of their role, even when there is a student sitting on the School Council, we believe that it is important that our volunteers who are involved in making important decisions about the College 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 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, Upper Yarra Secondary College 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 College policies, including, but not limited to UYSC's *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, Child Safety Code of Conduct* and our *Statement of Values and School Philosophy.*

Volunteer workers will 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 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 decide about the ongoing suitability of a volunteer worker and may determine at any time whether a person is suitable to volunteer at Upper Yarra Secondary College.

All volunteers will be provided induction in relation to Upper Yarra Secondary College's child safety practices, including reporting obligations and procedures. Our school has a *Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures* 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.

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 the Business Manager and/or Assistant Principals 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 while engaging in school work.

Property damage

If a volunteer worker suffers damage to their property while 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 the College website.
- Included in UYSC staff induction processes.
- Included as a link in all invitations to prospective volunteers
- Hard copy available from the College administration upon request.

Further information and resources

The Department of Education and Training's Policies

- Equal Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination
- Child Safe Standards
- Sexual Harassment
- Volunteers in Schools
- Volunteer OHS Management
- Working with Children and Other Suitability Checks for School Volunteers and Visitors
- Workplace Bullying
- Privacy and Information Sharing
- Records management-School Records

Links to UYSC Policies:

- Statement of Values
- Visitors Policy
- Child Safe Policy
- Child Safety Code of Conduct

Review and approval

Ratified By: UYSC School Council	
Review Date: November 2024	Responsible for Review: Principal Scott Tully School Council President Lincoln Wilson
Next review date: November 2026	