

Springvale Park Special Developmental School



Volunteers Policy



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help understanding the information in this policy, please contact School's office on 9546 7666

Springvale Park SDS is located in the south-eastern suburb of Springvale, approximately 30km from Melbourne and enjoys an outstanding reputation within the local community. We strive to achieve the best educational outcomes for all students. We seek to provide an open and friendly learning environment that values and actively encourages visitors to the school. At the same time, we recognise our duty of care to ensure a safe environment for our students and staff and we recognise our responsibility to protect and preserve our resources against theft, vandalism and misuse.

At Springvale Park Special Developmental School (SPSDS), we consider the health, safety and wellbeing of all children and young people to be our highest priority. We strive to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and young people at our school at all times. We have zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated seriously and consistently. We are committed to creating a safe, respectful and inclusive school environment where all students can be happy, confident and resilient, regardless of their sexual or gender identity, cultural background disability or other circumstances. We take account of the diversity of all children, including the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disabilities and vulnerable children.

PURPOSE

To outline the processes that Springvale Park Special Developmental 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.

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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

Springvale Park Special Developmental School is committed to implementing and following practices which protect the safety and wellbeing of children and our staff and volunteers. Springvale Park Special Developmental School 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 Springvale Park Special Developmental School's volunteers are suitable to work with children and are well-placed to make a positive contribution to our school community.

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Becoming a volunteer

Members of our school community who would like to volunteer are encouraged to approach the Assistant Principal and fill out certain forms and must provide the names and contact details for a minimum of two referees.

Suitability checks including Working with Children Checks

Springvale Park Special Developmental School will conduct an identity check on all volunteers and evidence of identity must be provided, e.g. drivers licence, passport. Anyone with a criminal history of violence, abuse of children or serious drug or fraud charges will be excluded.

Working with students

Springvale Park Special Developmental School values the volunteers that assist in our classrooms and other events and programs. To ensure that we are meeting our legal obligations under the *Working with Children Act 2005* (Vic) and the Child Safe Standards, Springvale Park Special Developmental School is required to undertake suitability checks which will include a Working with Children Check, proof of identity, work history involving children and/or reference checks.

Considering our legal obligations, and our commitment to ensuring that Springvale Park Special Developmental School is a child safe environment, we will require volunteers to obtain a WWC Check and produce their valid card to the Assistant Principal 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.

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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 e.g.: working bees, parents and friends club coordination, school council, during which children will not be, or would not reasonably be expected to be, present.

At Springvale Park Special Developmental School, volunteers for this type of work will still be required to provide a valid WWC Check and proof of ID.

School council members and volunteers on any sub-committee of school council will be asked to provide a valid WWC Check. 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 our school which will have an impact on students do have a valid WWC Check.

Training and induction

Under the Child Safe Standards volunteers must have 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, Springvale Park SDS 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. 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, Values and School Philosophy. 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 Springvale Park SDS School.

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Springvale Park Special Developmental School 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 Springvale Park Special Developmental School'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 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 Principal/Assistant Principal 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.

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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
- Discussed in an annual staff briefing/meeting
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request

RELATED POLICIES AND RESOURCES

Statement of Values, Visitors Policy, Statement of Commitment to Child Safety/Child Safe Policy, Child Safety Code of Conduct

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](#)

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Evaluation

- This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's review cycle, at least once every three years.

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	5 th December 2022
Consultation	School Council
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	December 2025