



WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE – VOLUNTEERING

POLICY

NOTE: This policy must be read in conjunction with the
WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE – VOLUNTEERING – PROCEDURES

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RELATED POLICIES:	<i>Working With Children And Young People – Volunteering – Procedures</i> <i>Within Reach of Us All - ACT Government Schools Plan 2002-2004</i> <i>Student Support Action Plan 2002-2004</i> <i>Services to Indigenous People Action Plan 2002-2004</i> <i>Parents/Carers as Partners in Schooling</i> <i>Paid Tutors – Policy and Implementation Guidelines</i> <i>Agenda for Volunteering for the ACT Community</i>

1. PURPOSE

1.1 The purposes of this policy are to:

- Affirm volunteering as a highly desirable part of the ACT Government school system which is encouraged in a diversity of roles
- Provide a framework to protect the rights of students to work and learn in a safe, well organised environment; and
- Provide a strategy and framework that supports volunteers in ACT Government schools.

2. DEFINITIONS

2.2 *Volunteer:* a person who supports educational programs of schools either through direct contact with students or through school activities without financial gain or reward.

2.3 *Student:* a child or young person enrolled in an ACT Government school or preschool.

2.4 *Parent/Carer:* people with parental responsibility and guardians of students.

2.5 *Principal:* includes the:

- principal of a school
- Manager for Preschool Services, Special Education, Student Support Services
- Executive Officer for Preschools and Schools Operations
- or their delegated officer/s.

2.6 *Teacher:* Staff member with appropriate teaching qualifications employed under the *Public Sector Management Act 1994* to fill teaching and/or teaching support

roles in schools or the central office. Also including exchange teachers working in similar roles through authorised exchange programs.

- 2.7 *Departmental officers:* Staff members other than teachers who during the course of their employment may be required to interact with students and/or volunteers. Includes School Assistants, Office Managers, Registrars, Caretakers, other school based staff, Professional Officers, Children's Youth and Family Services staff and Central Office staff.
- 2.8 *Supervisor:* Teacher or departmental officer delegated by the principal to be responsible for educational programs or related activities supported by one or more volunteers.
- 2.9 *Educational program:* tasks/activities related to the school curriculum.
- 2.10 *Schools:* all Government preschools, primary schools, special schools, alternate educational settings, high schools and secondary colleges.
- 2.11 *Sector:* schools belonging to a single category: preschool, primary school, high school, secondary college, special school and alternative educational settings.
- 2.12 *Screening:* the process of checking a person's police record.
- 2.13 *Screening report:* record of criminal convictions having regard to the *ACT Spent Convictions Act 2000* and its exemptions.

3. APPLICATION OF THIS POLICY

- 3.1 This policy applies to volunteers who support educational programs of ACT Government schools including those volunteers from community organisations and local sports clubs who provide support without financial gain or reward.
- 3.2 All volunteers working with students in the delivery of educational programs will be considered to be volunteers under the auspices of the ACT Government.

4. VOLUNTEERING IN ACT GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

- 4.1 There is a traditional and positive relationship between volunteers and schools which is reflected across the preschool to secondary college sectors in a range of classroom, enrichment and support activities.
- 4.2 Recognised benefits of volunteering include:
 - Expanding social, cultural and educational outcomes for students
 - Facilitating input of indigenous communities in ACT Government education
 - Enabling greater exposure to the socio-cultural and linguistic diversity that community resources bring to schools
 - Increasing communication between ACT Government schools and the community
 - Providing schools with a broader resource base from which to draw in providing opportunities for excellence and innovation, and
 - Enhancing community spirit and cohesion.
- 4.3 The value of volunteers is recognised in the *Within Reach of Us All - ACT Government Schools Plan - 2002-2004; Student Support Action Plan 2002-2004; Services to Indigenous People Action Plan 2002-2004; and the Parents/Carers as Partners in Schooling Policy.*

5. SUPPORT FOR VOLUNTEERS

- 5.1 Schools are encouraged to develop a volunteer action plan to better assist the recruitment and use of volunteers to support school programs and students learning.
- 5.2 Schools are encouraged to provide access to a range of induction, training and support opportunities for volunteers in schools.
- 5.3 The department in conjunction with schools will provide volunteers with information regarding their rights and responsibilities.
- 5.4 The department in conjunction with schools will provide training and support opportunities for staff with key supervisory roles for volunteers.
- 5.5 Volunteers in schools will be covered by ACT Government insurance arrangements in place at the time. There is protection for volunteers who may accidentally incur legal liability for third party injury and/or damage to third party property.

6. SCREENING

- 6.1 **Duty of care** is the responsibility to exercise reasonable care to protect the safety of any student against injury that should reasonably have been foreseen. This duty exists whenever a student/teacher relationship exists, while students are on school premises during hours, when the school is open and while on school based activities taking place elsewhere.
- 6.2 Screening of Volunteers is **not required**:
 - if there is direct supervision by a teacher or departmental officer and the volunteer remains within eyesight, earshot or close proximity
 - if there is indirect supervision by a teacher or departmental officer and the volunteer has only brief periods where they are out of eyesight, earshot or close proximity.
- 6.3 Screening of Volunteers **is required**:
 - where there is limited supervision by a teacher or departmental officer or a duty of care assessment indicates that the volunteers should be screened.
 - in any situation where the principal assesses that the nature of the activity and/or the type of contact with students is such that the duty of care responsibilities of the teacher or departmental officer would require that volunteers should be screened.
- 6.4 Where possible schools should modify volunteer tasks/activities to increase the level of supervision so that screening is not required.

7. MANAGEMENT OF VOLUNTEERS

- 7.1 Detailed procedures for the *Working with Children and Young People – Volunteering* policy are contained in the *Working with Children and Young People – Volunteering – Procedures*.
- 7.2 The management of volunteers in schools and educational programs is the responsibility of the principal.
- 7.3 In recognition of the range of schools, their individual needs and their environments, school based policies and procedures may be developed to complement this policy.

7.4 The principal in each school must identify tasks/activities undertaken by volunteers and assess the duty of care responsibilities in accordance with Clause 6 based on:

- the nature of the activity
- its location
- the group of students
- the type of contact with students, and
- the level of supervision by a teacher or departmental officer.



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PROCEDURES

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1. PRINCIPLES

- 1.2 These procedures provide a minimum requirement in the provision of a safe well organised learning environment for students. An integral part of that environment is the involvement of volunteers in educational programs.
- 1.3 Schools may adapt the *Working with Children and Young People - Volunteering* policy and procedures beyond the minimum requirement to include screening for a wider range of tasks/activities.
- 1.4 In applying the *Working with Children and Young People - Volunteering* policy and procedures for the involvement of volunteers, concepts of fairness and equity should be observed.
- 1.5 The principles of privacy as determined by the *Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)* will be applied to the collection, use, storage and disclosure of personal information in all circumstances.

2. WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PROCEDURES

2.1 Application of policy

- The principal will provide staff and volunteers with clear advice on their roles and responsibilities in relation to the policy and procedures.
- Clarification and interpretation of the policy and procedures is available for principals and volunteers by contacting Workplace & Legal Support (Phone: 620 59149).
- The principal/supervisor should address any breach of this policy in accordance with the principles of natural justice. The principal may decline the services of the volunteer.

2.2 Code of Conduct for Volunteers

- To assist schools in providing a safe environment and a positive educational climate, volunteers will be asked to comply with the *Code of Conduct for Volunteers*.
- The *Code of Conduct for Volunteers* has been formulated to clarify the type of conduct that is expected of volunteers when supporting educational programs in ACT Government schools.

2.3 Volunteer Nomination Form

- All volunteers should provide a completed *Volunteer Nomination Form* to each school before commencement of volunteer activities. Schools should provide assistance to complete this form where it is necessary. Assistance is also provided by the *Volunteer Nomination Form information sheet*.
- A volunteer will need to provide an updated form when personal details change.
- The completed *Volunteer Nomination Form* may be copied and used in other schools. Copies of forms cannot be used in subsequent years.
- Schools will arrange the secure storage of all *Volunteer Nomination Forms* in accordance with the department's record keeping policy and provisions of the *Privacy Act 1988*.

2.4 Daily Sign in Form

- The *Daily Sign in Form* will record the date, start and finish times and the tasks undertaken by a volunteer and should be completed for each visit.
- Schools will arrange the secure storage of all *Daily Sign in Forms* in accordance with the school's record keeping policy.

2.5 Screening

- In general terms the duty of care requires that staff take reasonable care to protect students from injury. Screening of volunteers does not reduce the need for vigilant supervision of students.
- Task modification is encouraged to minimise the need for screening.
- Some schools may modify volunteer tasks/activities to increase the level of supervision so that no volunteer requires screening.
- Costs for screening checks will be covered by departmental funding.
- A departmental identification card, valid in all ACT Government schools for a period of 3 years, will be provided to screened volunteers with approval to work with children and young people.
- Volunteers with a screening report identifying a relevant criminal record will be invited to discuss the matter with Workplace & Legal Support. The principal may also be involved in this discussion.
(*Note: A relevant criminal record is outlined in the attachment "Information for Volunteers completing the Volunteer Nomination Form".*)

3. INSURANCE ARRANGEMENTS FOR VOLUNTEERS

- 3.1 Volunteers who support educational programs will be covered by defined personal accident insurance as detailed in the *Insurance Arrangements for Volunteers Information Sheet*.
- 3.2 Arrangements have been put in place to protect volunteers where a volunteer may accidentally incur legal liability for third party injury and/or damage to third party property. Professional coaches should be referred to *Insurance Arrangements for Volunteers information sheet*.
- 3.3 Insurance coverage is generated when the completed *Volunteer Nomination*

Form is received by the school.

- 3.4 The principal/supervisor must be informed of all injuries or incidents which occur while volunteering. An official record of injuries/incidents may require the completion of appropriate forms and witness statements.
- 3.5 The *Daily Sign in Form* will provide proof of involvement as a volunteer for ACT Insurance Authority purposes.
- 3.6 Claims against insurance by volunteers may be made by contacting Workplace & Legal Support (Phone: 620 59149).
- 3.7 People volunteering under the auspices of a school's Parents & Citizens' Association or Preschool Parent Association for fundraising or associated activities are not covered by these insurance arrangements.

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES - SCHOOLS

- 4.1 Establish an environment that welcomes and encourages volunteers in ACT Government schools and educational programs.
- 4.2 Assess tasks and manage the supervision of educational programs and volunteers.
- 4.3 Establish roles, responsibilities and procedures for staff and volunteers that reflect the specific needs of the school and its environment.
- 4.4 Provide support to volunteers including school specific induction or training for staff and volunteers on their roles and responsibilities.
- 4.5 Monitor the involvement and appropriate use of volunteers in schools.
- 4.6 School based administration will include:
 - *Code of Conduct for Volunteers and Insurance Arrangements for Volunteers* information sheets - annual distribution.
 - *Volunteer Nomination Forms* - distribution, collection and storage
Note: Principals may assist volunteers with information about whether incidents or convictions are relevant to the range of tasks/activities.
 - *Daily Sign in Form* – administration and secure storage.
 - Consent for screening forms and principal's letter - forward to central office.
 - Apply the requirements of the *Privacy Act 1988* to all personal information.

5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES – CENTRAL OFFICE

- 5.1 Clarify and interpret aspects of this policy for principals and volunteers.
- 5.2 Process screening documents and provide opportunity for volunteers to discuss convictions.
- 5.3 Issue departmental identification cards for volunteers with approval to support educational programs for children and young people.
- 5.4 Train staff who coordinate support for volunteers.

5.5 Apply the requirements of the *Privacy Act 1988* to all personal information including screening documents and reports.

6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES – VOLUNTEERS

6.1 Complete the *Volunteer Nomination Form* and present to the school prior to involvement in educational programs.

6.2 Comply with the *Code of Conduct for Volunteers*.

6.3 Complete the *Daily Sign in Form* for each volunteering visit.

6.4 Comply with the school's procedures for visitors to schools.

6.5 Follow the directions of the principal/supervisor and comply with all relevant policies, procedures and guidelines.

6.6 Notify the principal/supervisor of any incidents or injuries that occurred while volunteering.

7. RELATED DOCUMENTS

7.1 For a full explanation of the policy and procedures volunteers should read the *Working with Children and Young People – Volunteering – Information Pack for Volunteers*.

7.2 For a full explanation of the policy and procedures principals, teachers and departmental staff should read the *Working with Children and Young People – Volunteering – Guidelines for Staff*.

8. ATTACHMENTS

8.1 *Code of Conduct for Volunteers*

8.2 *Insurance Arrangements for Volunteers*

8.3 *Volunteer Nomination Form*

8.4 *Volunteer Nomination Form Information Sheet*

8.5 *Daily Sign In Form*

8.6 *Screening Request Forms* (Information Only)

8.7 Screening Request – Letter from Principal

8.8 Poster - Roles and Responsibilities – Schools

8.9 Poster - Roles and Responsibilities – Central Office

8.10 Poster - Roles and Responsibilities – Volunteers